

# Morning Shower Launches Business

By Tamara Moore

**F**ew things are worse first thing in the morning than discovering your shower will produce little more than a trickle of water—except maybe having your wife discover this during her morning shower. For Cary Austin, owner of Submersible

Pump Specialists, a drilling and pump installing company in Lubbock, Texas, his wife Karen's discovery early one morning in 1991 led him to a discovery of his own.

"My wife was mad at me," Austin recalls. "When she went to take a shower, the pressure was too low." Having been in the ground water industry since he was 13 years old, Austin had to save face and fix the problem. The lackluster shower experience stemmed from his water system setup. He'd added a 3 gpm drip system to his garden. "My pump was cycling so bad that I put in a choke valve, choked the pump back, but then I didn't have any water left for the house," he remembers. So he corrected the problem with his own invention, now known as the Cycle Stop Valve.

Karen was so pleased with the results that she advised him to "figure out how to sell it," and soon a business was born. To date, Austin has sold several thousand valves, mainly through demonstrating the product at

National Ground Water Association conventions and placing advertisements in the *Water Well Journal* and other industry magazines.

The valve is designed to stop pumps from cycling on and off excessively when variable flow rates are used for an extended period of time. According to Austin, the valve, placed between the pump and the pressure tank, automatically opens and closes to allow for variable flow requirements. The valve is operated by the system pressure: less pressure opens the valve and more pressure closes it. When the water being used is turned off, the valve lets only a small amount of water pass through in order to slowly fill the pressure tank up to the cutoff pressure. It allows large pumps to have long run times on small tanks. Austin says the valve also reduces common problems such as blown capacitors, melted pressure switches, and burned motors.

Austin's invention intrigued water well contractor Dan Ewbank of



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Ewbank Inc., Fairview, Oklahoma, who spotted his ad in the *Water Well Journal*. "We were installing big submersible pumps and were looking for an easier way to regulate them as far as automating without using multiple pressure tanks," remembers Ewbank.

Ewbank was able to save money by coupling the valve with one pressure tank, thus "eliminating a large well house and a lot of large tanks." He now uses the valve in all of his large-pump applications, such as those for his customers with corporate hog farms and golf courses.

Curt James also responded to Austin's ad. A pump salesman with United Pump & Supply, Pasco, Washington, he

discovered he could improve his company's profit margin by selling the Cycle Stop Valve. "Large pressure tanks take up a lot of room and they take a lot of handling, so much so that it's not a profitable venture any longer for distributors (to stock and sell large pressure tanks)," he explains. "We can stock a lot more of the small pressure tanks in the same space that we stock a large tank."

James believes using the Cycle Stop Valve in conjunction with a standard pressure tank (vs. say, an 85-gallon pressure tank) benefits the end user in that "it saves money and doesn't require as large of a pump house. And the most important thing is that the end user is get-

ting the proper run times on his submersible motors." James says he has received a "very positive response" from his valve customers.

Austin's invention has also won over John Liberg, owner and operator of Apple River Well & Pump Co., Hanover, Illinois. He used the Cycle Stop Valve in a drilling project for a 56-room major hotel chain building. He installed two 10 hp centrifugal 110 gpm pumps, which draw out of a 10,000-gallon reservoir, and two WX302 Well-X-Trol pressure tanks. This system supplies "adequate pressure for the entire building, and the hotel is thrilled," says Liberg, who is also president of the Illinois Association of Groundwater Profession-

als. "(The valve) is a great pressure equalizer," he says. "And I plan to use it on my next project: a 200-room ski lodge."

The valve works best when used on large pump applications, says Tommy Stokes of Stokes Drilling Inc., Ozona, Texas. "We used the valve at a country club, where they were burning up a motor every few months because the pump cycled all the time," he recalls. The burned motors ceased with the installation of the Cycle Stop Valve.

With many satisfied and repeat customers, Austin has discovered that necessity really is the mother of invention. And Karen calls her husband the father of the perfect morning shower. **WWJ**



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See page 28 for details.