

# PROBLEM SOLVERS

Logiball has been an innovator and solution provider to municipal utilities for nearly four decades

By Luke Laggis

Some people search for solutions. Some people create them.

Count Roger Bissonnette firmly among the latter. Bissonnette, a civil engineer and trenchless rehabilitation contractor, was searching for equipment that suited his needs back in the early 1980s. He attended trade shows and sought out other resources, but when he couldn't find what he was looking for, he decided to design and build the equipment he needed on his own. And so Logiball was born.

Since then, the company's product line has evolved to include pipe plugs, carriers for sectional liners, maintenance equipment and a complete line of test-and-seal injection packers.

*Municipal Sewer & Water* recently had the opportunity to talk to Logiball President Marc Ancil about the company's mission to solve problems for municipal utilities.

**MSW: What kind of solutions and capabilities does Logiball provide municipal utilities?**

**The economics of grouting can no longer be ignored.**

**Ancil:** In the beginning, Logiball focused on providing inflatable pipe plugs for low-pressure-pipe acceptance testing and the diversion and control of water flows in underground pipes. Still today, Logiball plugs are well known for their durability and versatility versus the alternatives available on the market today. From these designs, other innovations were created, including carriers for installation of sectional CIPP and mechanical locking sleeves. In the last 38 years, the knowledge and expertise, production equipment and materials were better leveraged to enhance the practice and performance of the pressure injection grouting industry to seal mainline and lateral pipes. With the aid of CCTV, Logiball remote packers perform air testing of joints and defects, inject grouting material with accurate pressures and volumes, and then validate a positive seal with final air test.

**MSW: Does being a part of the USL Group help the company leverage other technologies and resources to better serve customers?**

**Ancil:** The common denominator for all USL Group companies is infrastructure repair and preservation. This includes service brands, prod-



Logiball President Marc Ancil

uct brands in the U.S., UK, Dubai and Singapore. To say there is resource sharing among the brands is an understatement. Strength in both above-grade and below-ground technologies provides USL companies a full array of options and unique alternatives for solving problems, and that's exactly how Logiball views itself — *a problem solver*.

**MSW: What is the biggest issue you see municipal wastewater utilities facing?**

**Ancil:** Out of sight, out of mind is no longer an issue. Public works authorities and collections system managers inherited the current problems and are owning the responsibilities to rehabilitate because the cost to treat the excessive volume of I&I and its consequences is now higher than the cost to control. The biggest issue is funding and prioritizing a planned course of action based on condition assessment, flow monitoring data, and anticipated return on investment.

**MSW: Can you provide some insight on the company's product development process?**

**Ancil:** Currently, Logiball manufactures over 500 unique products

Current Logiball President Marc Ancil and company founder Roger Bissonnette exhibiting at a European trade show in 1999.



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THE SUPPLY SIDE

**NAME:**  
Marc Ancil

**JOB TITLE:**  
President

**YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY:**  
38

or SKUs. Some are manufactured complete, made-for-stock and ready to ship same day. Some are semicustomized with pre-built sub-assemblies for customer hybrid solutions. Finally, some devices are 100% custom-engineered and manufactured as customer problems are often one-of-a-kind. So, let's be honest, the process is the product. At a high level, the process is listen, understand, innovate. At a more detailed level, it's listen well, understand thoroughly, innovate like no other. Over time, Logiball has solved more problems, and earned confidence and trust among the municipal market to uniquely solve problems with quality, cost and speed to market.

**MSW: How does Logiball maintain the inventive and entrepreneurial spirit of company founder Roger Bissonnette?**

**Ancil:** Roger was a civil engineer with vision — find the need, supply the need at a reasonable cost. How can we make your life easier? Reduce downtime? Logiball is perceived as a much larger enterprise than we are because of the quality of products, volume of projects, and caliber of service. Fact is, we continue to operate as a well-oiled machine with a team of front-office and back-office personnel with lean production processes and a customer-centric work ethic.

**MSW: How has your product line evolved to meet the needs of utilities with aging infrastructure and limited budgets?**

**Ancil:** There was a time when certain pipe defects would appear in CCTV film and the only default answer was to dig up the pipe or line the pipe. Much of the innovation that's occurred in the last decade is with the conveyance of materials and the ability to overcome obstacles with unique packer solutions. Now, grout-first has taken flight and communities are learning that while stopping active I&I with injection grouting, their need for more-costly CIPP is less. So, the economics of grouting can no longer be ignored.

**MSW: What do you think are the biggest misconceptions about grouting as a means of controlling I&I?**

**Ancil:** One word: confidence. Injecting grouting has a history — in fact, an over 50-year history — of performance, and in the early days substandard practices were allowed to exist. Consequently, mainline grouting was viewed as a temporary maintenance solution with a misconceived belief of a limited life cycle of 5 to 7 years. Today, that's been upgraded based on science, based on new methods and techniques, and a unified education effort by vendors to train operators and technicians how to respond to conditions for a long-term, successful 25-plus-year rehabilitation.

The immediate challenge is building confidence within the engineering community on when and how to specify injection grouting to control I&I, when to specify CIPP for structural repair, and when to specify both.

**MSW: Do you sell direct to contractors and utilities or go through distributors?**

**Ancil:** At this point and time, there are probably fewer than 20 municipalities that are equipped and trained to self-perform injection grouting for mainline pipe, service laterals and manholes. The majority of grouting projects are performed by utility contractors specializing in the restoration of underground pipelines. Logiball leans toward a direct-relationship with the customer for all the right reasons: customized products, technical support and lowest possible cost to customer.

Our line of plugs and carriers are often sold direct or through system providers.

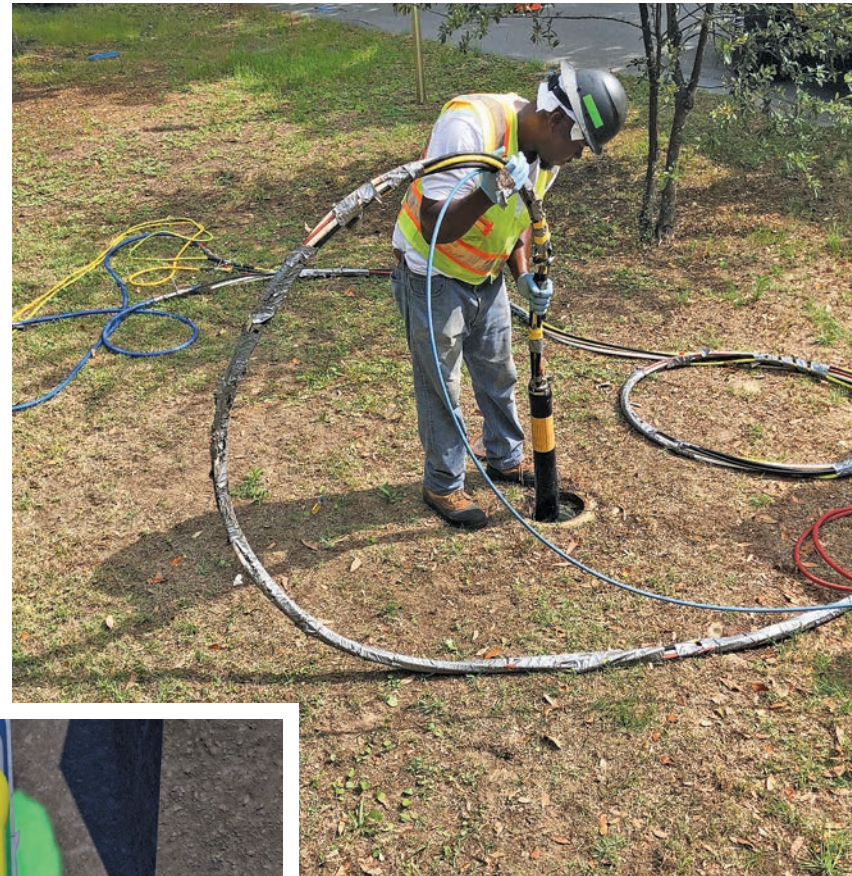
**MSW: What sort of training and support does Logiball offer?**

**Ancil:** Whatever it takes, depending on the product: phone, online, on site, video, user manuals. Logiball is big on education — teaching decision-makers and technicians what they need to know before they invest in equipment. Logiball is active and provides leadership in nascco.org., nastt.org., and WEF Collections in the U.S. and Canada. Logiball actively participates in municipal grouting classes with other vendors and virtual educational opportunities. We can only be as successful as our customers, so we work closely with them to get the job done right the first time.

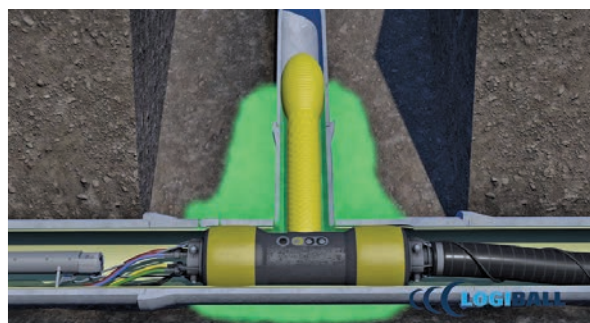
**MSW: Can the average municipal utility use your equipment and do this type of work in-house?**

**Ancil:** Great question. The answer is yes, but there's a "but" in my reply. Municipal workforces are responsible for many tasks and are rarely

**Logiball leans toward a direct-relationship with the customer for all the right reasons: customized products, technical support and lowest possible cost to customer.**



**A wastewater technician launches a Logiball push-pull packer at a cleanout.**



YOUR WINNER IS.....



Logiball Inc.  
has been awarded the

## 2021 Abbott Innovative Product & Services Award: Rehabilitation

Celebrating companies with a state-of-the-art product or service making a significant impact in advancing the trenchless industry in the areas of rehabilitation or new installation. The award is named for the late Joseph L. Abbott, Jr., an active NASTT member since its founding in 1990 and a champion of innovation.

In Recognition of the Long Span Grouting Packer  
A structural stabilization technique, which prevents pipe joint defects from progressing from a crack to a fracture or from a fracture to a break. It does this by eliminating the erosive effects of water infiltration through the defects and by the solidifying of the pipe bedding.



## THE SUPPLY SIDE



A Logiball team member moves a 96-inch test-and-seal injection packer from one side of the shop to the other.

**We can only be as successful as our customers, so we work closely with them to get the job done right the first time.**

given the opportunity to be the best they can be at any one skill. Thus, outsourcing to private contracting firms who do specialize in honing skills and building teamwork may be the best source for the service — including both quality and economy. Many municipalities will decide to self-perform, and their level of success may depend on the tasks required and their frequency.

The more you do something the better you get at it.

### **MSW: What's on the horizon for Logiball? Are new product lines or technologies in development?**

**Ancil:** At Logiball, solving problems in underground pipe is our purpose, therefore process is the product — listen, understand, innovate. There will always be new and improved products on the horizon. Some may have repeatable qualities and become a standard off-the-shelf solution, while others will remain one-off answers to unique conditions.

### **MSW: Is there anything else you'd like people to know?**

**Ancil:** The No. 1 cause of advancing structural decay of underground pipe is movement. The single most significant catalyst to movement in the wastewater collections system is infiltration. Infiltration is groundwater leaching into the system through joints and defects, bringing in fine particles and creating areas of loose soils. Injection grouting is engineered to do one thing better than any other method or technology — provide a positive seal outside the pipe by creating a matrix with the soil and protecting the sewer trench, allowing the existing infrastructure to extend its useful life and cut the cost of treating the influent in half. ♦