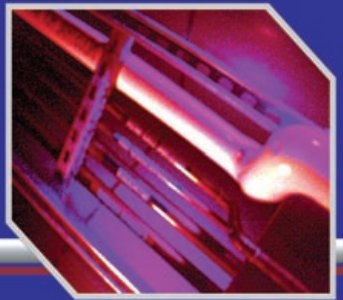




LeDUC & DEXTER INC.

The Premier Plumbing Contractor In The North Bay



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Message from LeDuc & Dexter

Our monthly newsletter is an opportunity to share information, education and promote our industry and customers. We feel that it is beneficial to provide a profile of the working relationships we enjoy with our customers and help to build new relationships for all of us in the construction industry. Bookmark our web site at www.leducanddexterplumbing.com and click on [Subscribe to our Monthly Newsletter](#), then fill in name and e-mail address and that's it!

Can You Do The Servicing & Scheduling Shuffle?

RESIDENTIAL

It's rarely like a waltz. Sometimes it's like the jitterbug or the twist. Each time the dance steps are different. One thing is always the same though, the customer leads and LeDuc & Dexter follows. It's the Servicing and Scheduling Shuffle. Coming into the construction season, it looks like LeDuc & Dexter will have a full dance card. "It looks like a good year. There's a lot of work coming out of the ground," says [Jim Kempers](#), Manager of LeDuc & Dexter's [Residential Department](#), "This is a critical time of the year for bidding."



Residential Dance Floor at Kawana Springs

Timing is critical in this industry, from interest rates to weather and then of course back to servicing and scheduling. "We are known throughout the industry for our scheduling and staffing. It's our policy at LeDuc & Dexter to give our customers what they want, when they want it," states Kempers. One advantage LeDuc & Dexter enjoys is that most of their residential work takes place in a 20-mile radius from their Santa Rosa facility, although they have had jobs in Marin County.

Jim Hopper, Residential Field Superintendent, logs a daily schedule sheet for all of their activity; sometimes this schedule can extend out to 3 or 4 days in advance, "As the schedule builds up we may reach a critical point where we have to tell the customer that we need an extra day to meet a deadline. We are able to do this because we have been responding to their needs and schedule to that point. Then we get in and finish and get out," chimes Kempers. Is it a dance? It certainly has a rhythm with the movement of people and resources from job to job, a stop and go two-step that keeps LeDuc & Dexter in time with their dance partner, who also happens to be their customer. It takes two to do the Servicing and Scheduling Shuffle.

How A Design/Build Team Wins

COMMERCIAL



Cooling Water & Vent Piping at IGC Polycold Product Testing Stations

The essence of a [design/build](#) team is all about winning. Owners, general contractors, engineers and sub-contractors working together in a non-traditional method, as opposed to the bid process, to produce a fast paced, well orchestrated game plan that saves time and money for developers and owners who seek sophisticated results. [Wineries](#), [Hi-Tech](#) facilities, [manufacturing plants](#) and [public facilities](#) lend themselves to the design/build process. Typically the owner selects an architect and a contractor, who selects his "team" of engineering, plumbing, electrical and HVAC contractors to design/build the project.

Most of the commercial work that LeDuc & Dexter performs is design/build. [Bill Zeeb](#), who heads the [Commercial](#)

[Department](#) at LeDuc & Dexter, sees the trend as a positive, "Projects can start before the owner has made final decisions on what he wants, the same job wouldn't go out to bid until after he had made his final decisions." This saves time with a quicker start and gives time to plan as the project evolves. Unlike a project that goes to bid and is awarded to the low bidders, who meet on the job site, "The design/build team all know each other from the early planning stage," says Zeeb, "and the plans are submitted early for permits. There's more coordination. When bidders arrive on the job site they haven't seen the plans, they also compete for space, and it's not as smooth."

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How A Design/Build Team Wins ... continued

As good as design/build sounds, it's not always an automatic green light situation. "Design/build is hard to sell," explains Zeeb, "for one thing, there are no low bidders." The subs have to sell to the general contractor and the general contractor sells the concept to the owner." The benefits can be enormous once the design/build team is in place.

Next month we'll look at the dynamics and relationships within the design/build team and how it helps them win in a big way.

Stryker Sonoma – Winery & Residential Combo

WINERIES

An interesting example of a design/build winery project is [Stryker Sonoma](#) located on Hwy. 128 in Geyserville. The project includes construction of a premium winery and two residential structures. The [design/build](#) team was comprised of [Bill Zeeb](#) of LeDuc & Dexter, Bell Products-HVAC, Napa Electric, Rob Main of The Engineering Partnership with Warren Bowers-estimator, [Sam Turner](#) – project manager and Tom Andrews – President of [Andrews & Thornley General Contractors, Inc.](#) The winery owners, Steve Gaskins and Craig McDonald, were also important members of the team.

Although the plans were shared closely with the owners from the outset of the project to include their input, there was no winemaker aboard yet to contribute a viewpoint. Typically if a winemaker is part of the design/build team they would offer their preferences in terms of the way they would like to see the facility laid out, suitable to the way they like to work. In this case Bill Zeeb was the winemaker by proxy. Warren Bowers explains, "LeDuc & Dexter had past knowledge from working with winemakers and Bill Zeeb knew the needs of a winemaker. They were also knowledgeable and familiar with the intricacies of winery construction with things like concealment of piping and the layout of the crush pad and gas lines. Overall I was impressed with LeDuc & Dexter's professionalism and their response to the owner's concerns."

Since LeDuc & Dexter has a commercial and residential department, they installed all the plumbing in the two residences along with the winery. All three structures have [Hydronic heating and cooling systems](#). Bill Zeeb had this to add, "This winery is a very attractive industrial facility. Even though we had a fast-paced schedule it was a pleasant and friendly atmosphere to work in, very enjoyable." LeDuc & Dexter have joined with Andrews & Thornley on another winery project, Ladera, located in Angwin in the Napa Valley.



Design/Build Piping at Stryker Sonoma

Plumbers & Purdue Boilermakers

EDUCATION

When March Madness and Spring Break were raging on campuses around the nation, a select group of student project managers were measuring their future the way a 3-point shooter studies a wide-open jumper while everyone is yelling, "shoot". It took place on the beautiful Purdue University campus in Lafayette, Indiana. 23 students from around the nation, professor Kirk Alter and guest speaker [Tom LeDuc](#) gathered for a few days to ponder questions of education, technology and success. It was part of a National Foundation program sponsored by [PHCC](#).

With their futures in the construction industry wide open and squarely in front of them, they took advantage of this opportunity to ask Tom LeDuc, "How did you get where you are today?" LeDuc was concise, "It takes total commitment...in my case, total commitment to my partner [Art Dexter](#) and both of us being totally committed to our employees and our company being totally committed to our customers. And you have to stay focused on that commitment." This informal talk took place on the night of arrival over dessert and LeDuc said it set the tone for what he described as, "one of the highlights of my career in this industry."

The next day featured exercises in pre-planning for construction projects and then the topic turned to future technology and innovation. The group reviewed websites of construction companies, including CAD design and electronic applications that are being used in communications. Professor Alter stated that while much of the construction industry is behind in marketing, some companies are extremely advanced in technology that highlights promotion and sophisticated means of sharing information. LeDuc pointed to one construction company he was aware of that handled all purchasing of materials, estimating, inventory and project plans electronically. One of their requirements was that companies that worked with them had to have the capability to communicate with them solely through electronic means. The topic that drew the most surprising responses from LeDuc's perspective was [English as Second Language training](#). Students from Arizona and Texas, areas of thriving Latino communities, were very interested and somewhat awed by the ESL program LeDuc & Dexter has developed for their growing Latino workforce. LeDuc was somewhat surprised that his company was perhaps the only one in the industry with such a program. Later as he was sharing this experience he down played it, "It's really not that big of a deal, it's just another form of education", and a slam dunk is just another form of a lay-up.



Tom LeDuc
Educational Promoter