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November 2023

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**Evaluating
the True Cost of
Stair Tread Safety**

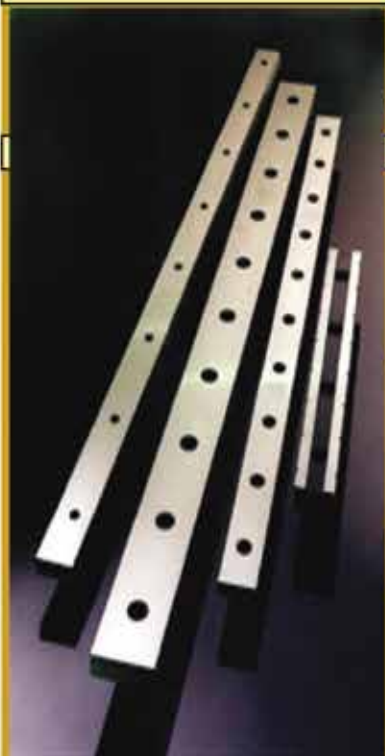
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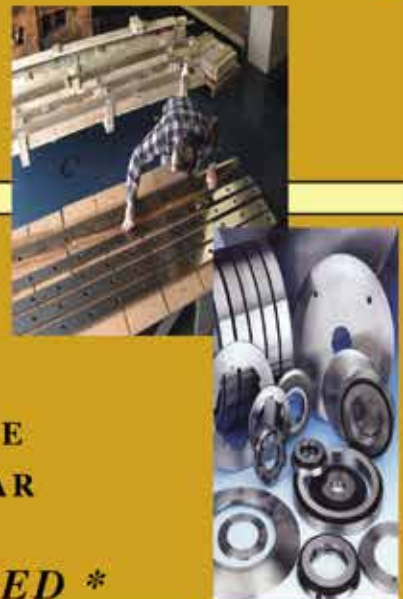
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PRESIDENT

Glen Hobson
205-441-5591
glen@tipsmag.net

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

Bart Beason
205-624-2180
bart@tipsmag.net

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

Steven Hobson
steven@tipsmag.net

EDITOR

Brandon Greenhill
brandon@handfmedia.net

CREATIVE/ WEB DIRECTOR

Jacklyn Greenhill
jacklyn@handfmedia.net

P.O. Box 1568 • Pelham, AL 35124
Phone: 205-441-5591 • Fax: 205-624-2185
www.tipsmag.net
info@tipsmag.net



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Laura Graham Retires after 11 Years with AIDA-America



AIDA-America, metal stamping press manufacturer in Dayton, OH, USA, wishes to thank long-term employee Laura Graham, who retired after 11 years of service. She held multiple positions within the Sales Administration Department and most recently served as Senior Sales Administrator. Please join us in wishing Laura all the best in retirement. Thank you, Laura, for your dedication over the past 11 years!

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Guardians of the Grid: AI-Backed Security Trailers Boost Protection for Utilities





Machine learning and advanced analytics enable mobile CCTV security systems to proactively thwart security threats while also driving operational efficiencies for Utilities and Telecoms

Last year, there was a 71% increase in physical attacks on critical U.S. infrastructure, according to a U.S. government report. For utilities and telecom providers, operational continuity is paramount. Yet, the alarming increase in the number of physical attacks that target these facilities – which could include theft or damage to expensive equipment – is putting uptime in jeopardy.

When it comes to protecting these facilities from an attack, a range of options from CCTV systems to 24-hour security guards are often deployed. However, CCTV security installations have typically focused on “inside the perimeter” protection and often lack the teeth needed to be a deterrent. That is changing with new mobile security trailers, loaded with advanced artificial intelligence (AI) monitoring capabilities which can greatly expand the scope of on-site security. Plus, these smart systems are also proving to add operational efficiencies.

On top of the surge in criminal activities targeting industrial operations is the nationwide shortage of law enforcement. This has the potential to increase response times and puts additional pressure on facilities to fortify their security practices.

“As a solution to this issue, the introduction of mobile security trailers presents a timely opportunity to proactively detect potential security threats before they escalate into more severe situations,” explains Cameron Simon, Senior Vice President of Industrials, Technology & Services for Stallion Infrastructure Services, a leader in mobile security, video surveillance and communications services.



Smart Security

Mobile security trailers, which have become common in retail parking lots in recent years, are now increasingly the go-to equipment for utilities and the telecom industry as well. Made up of a trailer armed with high-definition cameras attached to an extendable mast and powered by solar panels, these systems can be quickly deployed and set up in minutes. They can also be repositioned as threat profiles change.

Mobile security trailers are not new, but sophisticated data analytics is changing how these intelligent systems operate and is enabling a more efficient approach to securing a facility.

According to Simon, the current trend for utilities is reminiscent of the retail industry's surveillance practices. While it has been a customary practice to install numerous cameras inside stores, businesses are now equally keen on monitoring the activities of individuals in the parking lot perimeter or access points before they even enter the premises.

The latest AI-enabled technology provides an opportunity for utilities and telcos to have real-time, continuous monitoring of their projects, people, assets, and environment. This may include identifying whether or not someone is brandishing a weap-

on which is now possible with advanced AI systems. These systems can also alert on vehicles, people and motorcycles as well as spot smoke and fire – which are always a concern.

Uptime

For utilities and telcos, stopping a potential attack, theft or property damage is a real concern, yet it is the potential loss of uptime or business continuity that keeps operators pushing out more security trailers onto their properties.

“Recently, we deployed at a remote facility where some expensive assets were staged for an upcoming project. Someone came in attempting to steal some electronics,” explains Simon “It was a couple of hundred-thousand-dollars-worth of equipment that we prevented from being stolen.

Stallion's advanced analytics detected the intruder before he entered the property, then the virtual-guard monitoring team took over, coordinating with the on-site customer team to proactively apprehend the thief, preventing the crime and potential losses.

“When you look at the utility space specifically, the real value is not just stopping someone from stealing some expensive equipment, it is much more about keeping the power on or the tower in operation,” explains Simon.

Deterrence

The way in which security monitoring trailers are rolled out is in stark contrast to that of traditional CCTV which was built and designed to be fixed installations that often blended into the surroundings.

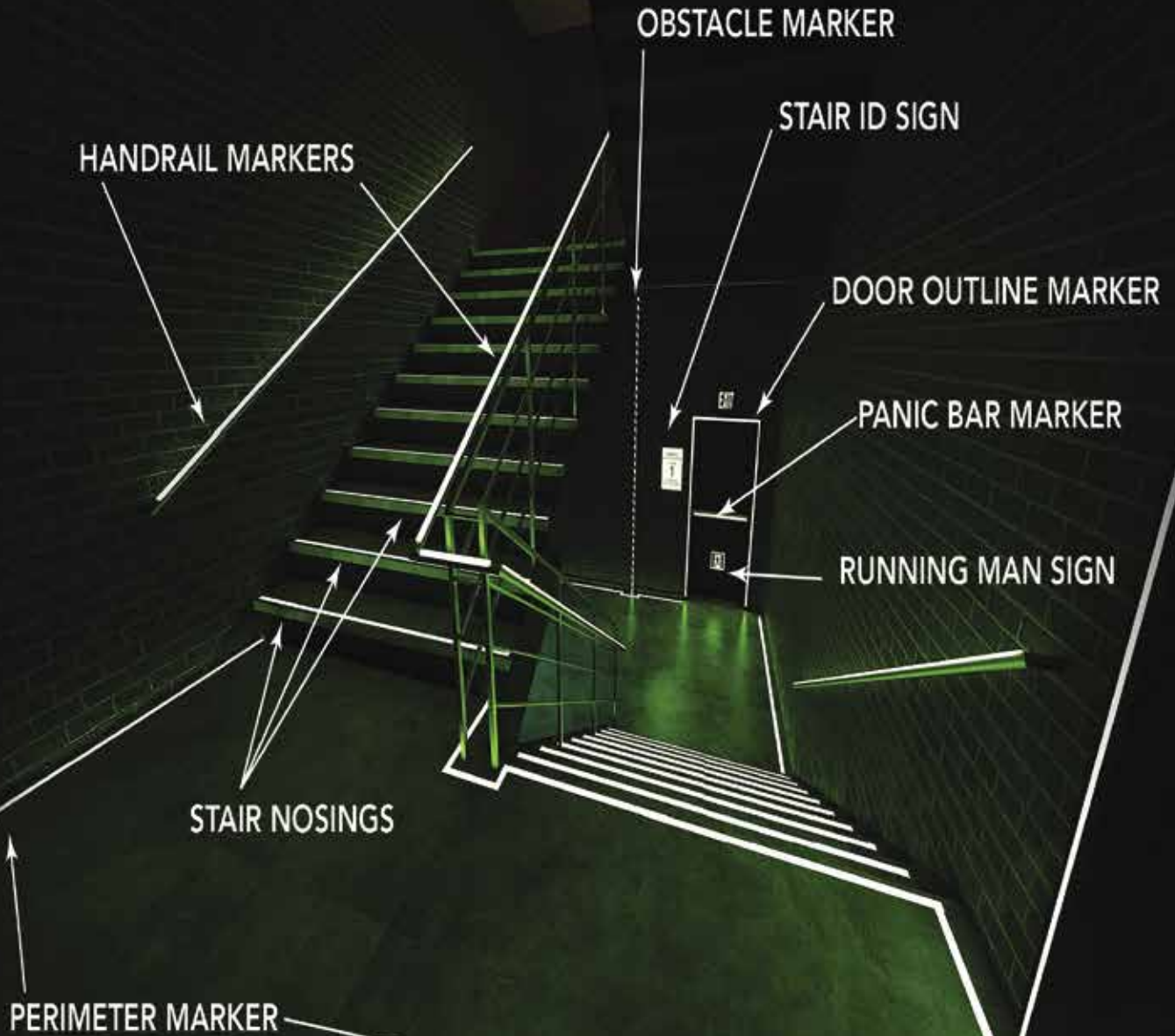
Simon emphasizes the significance of deterrence as the primary defense against potential security threats. Traditional CCTV cameras often act as passive observers, but with the introduction of mobile security trailers, the situation is different.

These trailers are highly visible, sending a clear message that they are actively monitoring the area. The aim is to make people aware of their presence, ensuring that potential wrongdoers are discouraged

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from carrying out any illicit activities.

Popular deterrent features include motion-activated strobe lights and talk-down speakers that can announce that police or security has been alerted to someone's presence.

"At the same time those on-trailer features take action, an alert gets sent to a central monitoring center where trained professionals take over for AI," says Simon. "They can then quickly review the incident and determine actionable next steps in real-time."

Those next steps are typically customized for each facility and may include contacting security guards, local police, or customer representatives.

Operations

Beyond just security, the AI systems on the advanced monitoring trailers can also provide operational efficiencies. For example, it could be as simple as alleviating congestion from multiple deliveries that occur at the same time. It can also be heatmap-ping of activities to make changes to operational workflows.

"There are some job sites that simply need an extra set of eyes out there looking out for environmental exposures or a failure on a piece of equipment," adds Simon. "These advanced systems are not limited to just anti-theft or anti-vandalism. They are truly a second set of eyes and ears out there."

In addition, mobile monitoring trailers offer another notable advantage: the ability to swiftly exchange them in case of maintenance issues. For example, Stallion has strategically positioned nationwide operational facilities and can quickly provide replacement trailers with high-end commercial-grade cameras

and software infrastructure, if needed. To ensure maximum uptime, the company also conducts a daily virtual "pulse check" on each system within its extensive fleet across the country to guarantee uninterrupted operation.

"Is the unit charging adequately? Are the batteries working optimally? Are the cameras and the system working and free of visual obstructions?" asks Simon. "If your systems aren't working properly, that's a potential failure point we intend to proactively manage and prevent."

Another common failure point is connectivity. Trailers should be able to connect with more than just a single cellular service. Simon suggests finding a supplier that can use multiple carriers as well as low-earth orbiting satellites and point-to-point connections for redundancies. This also allows users to log in from anywhere and check in on the facility through a secured portal.

According to Simon, there is a consistent demand for security equipment, both during times of prosperity and adversity. During busy times, companies seek to acquire surveillance systems to manage multiple projects and alleviate the burden on their staff.

However, during tough times, incidents of theft and equipment loss tend to increase, making security measures all the more essential. Hence, the issue of security is a persistent concern that cannot be overlooked, regardless of market conditions.

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Purchase price is just the start. Assessing the total cost of ownership requires long-term analysis, but the savings and increased safety can be significant.

For facility managers, evaluating the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) for purchases is critical to acquiring items at the lowest long-term cost. Assessing TCO requires not only understanding the initial purchase cost but also consideration of the operating costs, longevity, and remaining value beyond its expected life.

TCO is an even more critical analysis when new products enter the market that disrupt the status quo. After all, it is difficult to evaluate the value of an innovative product that promises to be a much more effective, long-term solution but initially costs more, uses different materials, or is applied differently. For facility managers, this is the case when analyzing the TCO of non-skid stair tread striping applied to interior and exterior stairs to prevent slip and fall accidents.

Although simple in concept, the application and maintenance of safety stair tread striping is particularly challenging in outdoor or high-use settings. The traditional choice – non-skid adhesive tape – can peel or wear away in a short time so must be replaced frequently. However, new innovative 100% epoxy-based material containing embedded nonskid aggregate are now available that promise to last much longer, requiring minimal reapplication.

To evaluate the TCO of both options, facility managers can apply a specific formula used for capital equipment, with slight variations for stair treads: $TCO = \text{initial cost (I)} + \text{maintenance costs over 5 years (M)} + \text{estimated downtime (D)} - \text{remaining value after 5 years of depreciation (R)}$.

Initial Cost (I)

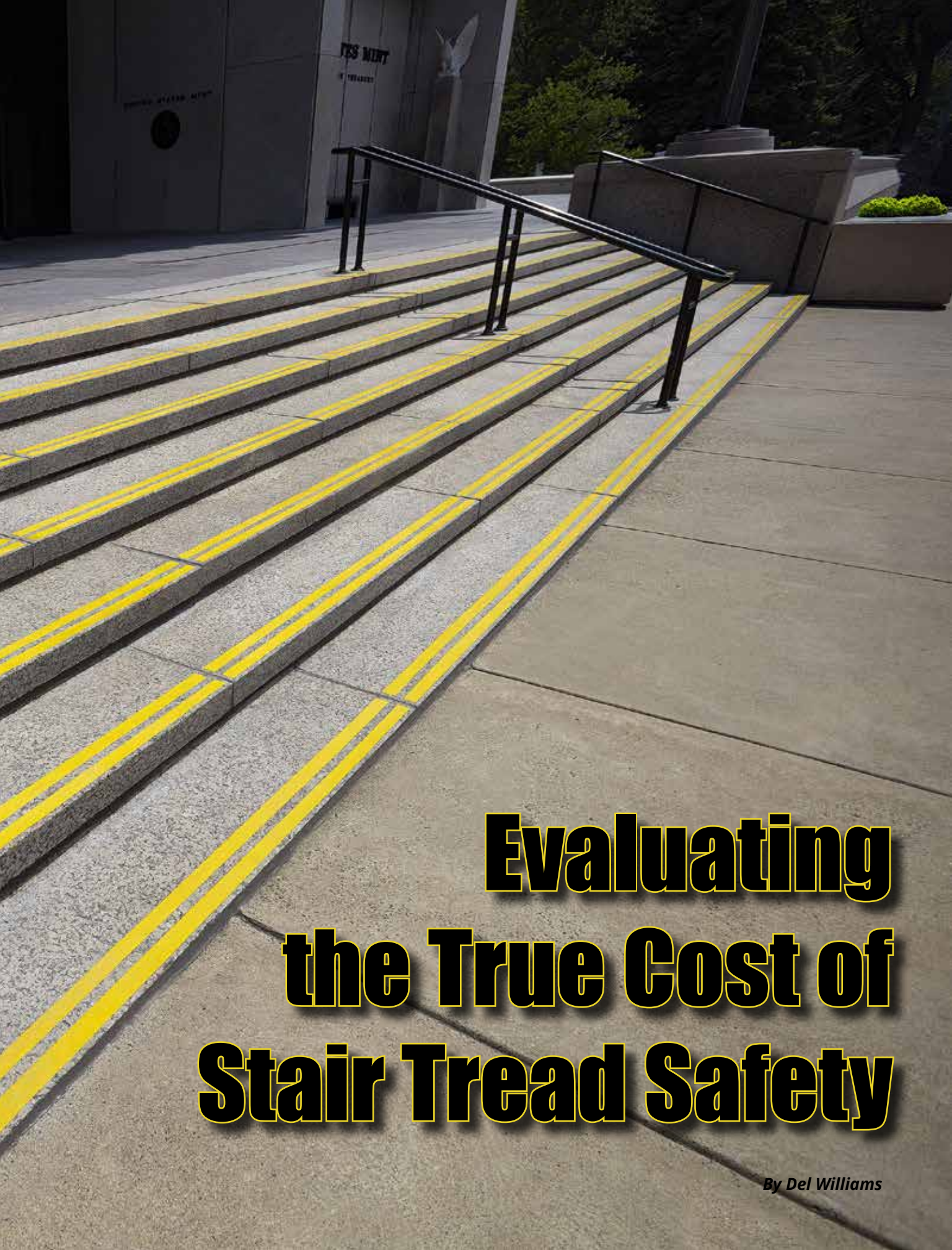
When choosing among alternatives in a purchasing decision, buyers often look at the initial purchase price. However, they should also consider the long-term cost of ownership.

In the case of non-skid adhesive tapes, the initial cost is approximately \$1.50 per linear foot. In typical indoor conditions, non-skid tape generally lasts only about six months before requiring removal and reapplication. At this rate, using the tape costs about \$3 per linear foot per year or \$15 per linear foot over five years.

On exterior stairs or ramps, the expected life of traction tape is only three months but can be considerably shorter particularly in areas exposed to chemicals, moisture, high-temperatures, or high traffic. With a three-month lifespan, tape costs approximately \$6 per linear foot per year or \$30 per linear foot over five years.

Compare tape to a more durable option: a 100% epoxy-based material that creates a superior tread with an initial cost of \$4.50 a linear foot. Designers





Evaluating the True Cost of Stair Tread Safety

By Del Williams



Bajraktari Realty Management Corp.

Maintenance cost should also include facilities personnel's time and labor required for frequent inspection and reapplication of the traction tape. In addition, purchasing and inventory costs accrue when the tape must be continually replaced and kept available for use.

Today, a 100% solids epoxy paste that contains embedded slip resistant aggregate is a more cost effective and long-term stair safety tread solution. These materials create a tread with consistent, superior traction and safety for at least five years, even outdoors, with essentially no maintenance. They also resist UV, moisture, chemicals, ice melt, temperature extremes, aggressive cleaning and pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Because the nonskid aggregate is held in suspension within the formula and is not just adhered to the surface, as with traction tape, it does not wear away. The hardness of the formula (75 Shore D) enhances the abrasion resistant, so the overall tread is much less susceptible to damage compared to traction tape. Unlike tape, if the epoxy material were to be damaged, by an ice chopper for example, it is easily repairable. If damaged, just clean the surface, and reapply. The formula adheres to itself, which is nice added feature. Overall, this innovative formula removes the cost associated with frequent inspection and replacement and significantly lowers the total cost of ownership.

According to Bajraktari, he first used the Form-A-Tread to improve the safety and footing of outdoor stairs in residential projects that could become slippery when wet. "It held up amazingly well to the sun's UV and outdoor weather. Seven years later it still looks as good as the day



created the material to last at least five years in most outdoor applications and many more years in indoor applications. The product from Form-A-Tread Company achieves a strong bond to a wide range of stair tread surfaces and contains embedded nonskid aggregate to increase traction.

While the durable tread initially costs more than non-skid tape, it takes just 18 months to reach the breakeven point for indoor use. After 18 months, the Form-A-Tread stair tread saves the facility the cost of reapplying new non-skid tape every six months. In outdoor applications, the material savings is \$25.50 over the same period of time.

Maintenance (M)

Non-skid tape is difficult to maintain, can become unsightly, and must be frequently inspected and replaced. Since tape cannot be repaired, it must be replaced if damaged. The remaining tape and residual adhesive must be thoroughly removed from the surface before the new tape is applied.

Peeling tape can also pose a trip hazard. Tape often peels off in a short time because it does not bond well, especially to common surfaces like concrete, stone, and masonry. The surface non-skid grit layer can also become ineffective and quickly compromised, especially in hi traffic locations.

Because non-skid tape is not very durable it is primarily used on interior stairs. In outdoor applications, it may only last for as little as a week or less in harsh conditions or consistent exposure to sun, rain, snow, ice melt chemicals, power washing, and other cleaning methods.

"In my experience, non-skid tape comes off repeatedly. It is a temporary solution, so you are wasting your time, energy, and effort every time you reapply it," says Gani Bajraktari, Senior Property Manager at New York-based

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The reality is that in many cases stair tread replacement does not occur immediately, or even for some time if not discovered or facility personnel are busy elsewhere. This can effectively mean the facility is not following its own safety protocols.

Stair tread “downtime” can have serious financial consequences if slip and fall accident occurs, leading to litigation, liability, workers’ compensation claims, and rising insurance rates. A long-term solution that doesn’t require constant replacement minimizes any potential downtime, provides a consistent and predictable level of safety and can reduce the potential for such claims.

According to Bajraktari, the epoxy product not only improved safety and eliminated the need for frequent re-application, but also had a more aesthetic look over time due to the lack of visible wear. He has found the approach surprisingly cost-effective in reducing maintenance, potential liability, and commercial insurance rates. In his experience, the cost to apply the product proved more cost-effective than dealing with additional claims and insurance costs.

we applied it.”

Downtime (D)

The evaluation of TCO includes consideration of any downtime due to equipment failure.

In the case of stair treads, the equivalent of “downtime” is when the safety tread loses adhesion, starts to peel off, is damaged, or the surface traction is worn away.

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Remaining Value After 5 Years (R)

Even with depreciation, capital equipment often retains some value after five years. In a similar way, more durable solutions like 100% solids epoxy pastes with embedded aggregate often still have value far beyond five years.

These epoxy pastes are formulated to create a permanent mechanical bond. Not only does an epoxy paste adhere to the stair tread surface, but it also flows into the microscopic cracks and crevices of concrete or other porous substrates and mechanically bonds. The formula has also shown to have excellent adhesion to smooth surfaces like tile, and steel or aluminum diamond plate.

The bond is so strong that a chisel or angle grinder is required to remove the stair tread line, an advantage in high-traffic areas. Since the aggregate is embedded throughout the entire epoxy paste and not just on the surface, as the

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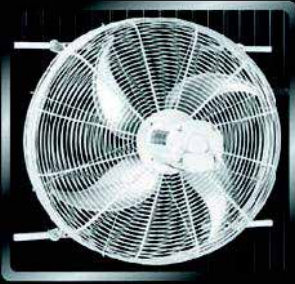
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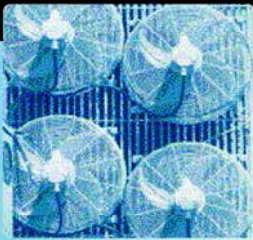
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epoxy paste wears over time new aggregate is continually exposed to provide renewed traction.

"Instead of temporary applications, it is much more effective to solve the problem the first time with a product like Form-A-Tread and be done with it. The footing is amazing, and you feel more secure going up and down the stairs," says Bajraktari.

"As far as durability, I expect the stair treads to last for at least ten years or more in indoor applications," he adds.

Although it is natural for facility managers to seek solutions with the lowest initial cost, considering the TCO is a much more cost-effective alternative. Given this, facilities can achieve significant long-term savings and increased safety by looking beyond short-term choices like non-skid tape in favor of much more durable options like epoxy paste stair tread that does not require continual replacement.

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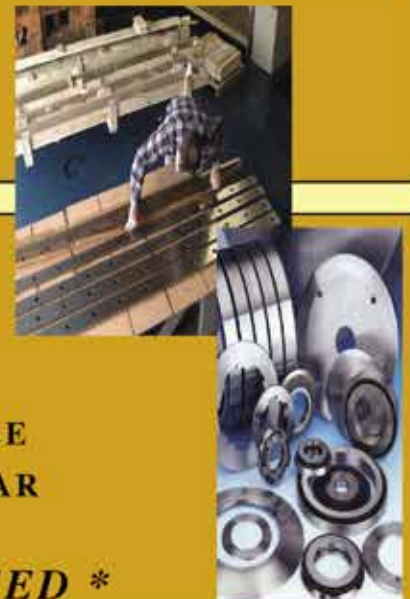
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