

# Serene Scene

August 2022

## Vendor Profile

*Underground surprises are costly! Hickman Consulting Services, LLC identifies potential obstacles before you dig.*

## Employee Spotlight

*Meet Jeff Kennedy, Director of Marketing: While he oversees the department, he's still known to jump in on daily projects like video-editing!*



**Meet Director of Marketing: Jeff Kennedy**

**Project Update: Shotcrete Pool**

**Project Update: Custom Bar Area in Basement Renovation**

**Vendor Profile: Hickman Consulting Services, LLC**

**Photo Credit:** Adam Rinehart



# Project Update

## Shotcrete Pool in Pittsburgh



As a leader in the market, PSW is always bringing exciting new techniques and designs to Pittsburgh. This project is no exception. The focal point of the project is a custom designed and engineered shotcrete pool. Shotcrete is a process of spraying concrete onto a frame of rebar. Building a pool utilizing the shotcrete process not only creates an extremely durable pool, but also provides a tremendous amount of design flexibility. In these images, you can see the concrete being shot onto the rebar frame.



# Project Update

## Basement Renovation in Sewickley includes a Custom Bar Area

Basement renovations are not that uncommon here in Pittsburgh. However, this family is kicking it up a notch. Looking for a centralized space to entertain friends and family, this project in Sewickley will contain a new game room, home theater, bathroom, and, as you can see in these pictures, a new bar.

The bar area, being built by PSW Trade Partners Daum Contracting and [Artisan Custom Woodwork](#), is an example of the complexities of having multiple crews working in close proximity to each other. That's why PSW has teams of specialists that are used to working together as it is imperative for a project like this.





# Meet Jeff

Vendor Profile:

# Hickman Consulting Services, LLC



team works with specialists in the industry to build our projects, I rely on a small team of specialists to assist me with the marketing efforts. For instance, Erin May, from Evolutionare, LLC, is responsible for the design of our newsletters and I think they look amazing."

While his primary responsibility is developing the strategic tools to keep the department running, that doesn't mean Kennedy doesn't get his "hands dirty" from time to time. Most of the videos on the PSW YouTube page were recorded and edited in-house by Kennedy. He also just completed a full redesign of the [pghsw.com](http://pghsw.com) website.

In his spare time, Kennedy is very active in the Pittsburgh Community. He is a certified ice-hockey referee with USA Hockey. He is also an officer in two local Toastmasters Clubs, working with members to improve their public speaking and leadership skills. "I have been very fortunate to have some great people in my life that have taught me the importance of strong values, education, and hard work. I just want to be someone who inspires greatness in others."

When asked about the future of PSW, Kennedy simply stated, "There is no limit to what we can accomplish here, I can't wait to see what comes next."

Director of Marketing

## JEFF KENNEDY

In over 20 years of marketing experience, Jeff Kennedy says he has never worked for a company like PSW. "It's the people that make a difference", Kennedy said with a smile. "Having not come from this industry, I had a lot to learn, and the passion and knowledge this team has is second to none."

Kennedy has had a few roles since joining the PSW family in 2020. He started as a marketing manager and quickly rose to the position of Director of Business Management.

However, after working with the team to develop new processes to run various aspects of the business operations more efficiently, he moved back into a marketing role as the Director of Marketing.

"My passion is marketing. I love the value that we bring to our clients, and I want to share that message." Kennedy is responsible for all aspects of marketing at PSW. But even Kennedy knows he can't do everything himself. "Just like our

I love the *value* that we bring to our clients, and I want to share that message.



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The phrase "out of sight, out of mind" is a dangerous one in the construction industry. When you look in your backyard, you will likely see a surface covered in grass, trees, and other vegetation. But what is under the surface may surprise and shock you.

Pennsylvania has a wide variety of soil types below the surface, including

clay and shale. Each type of soil has different properties and requires different building strategies. Large pockets of stone and rock can require much larger and more sophisticated machines to break through them. There may be water under the surface from underground streams and runoff. There are also the hidden dangers of man-made obstacles such as old

foundations, improperly compacted soils or even, as was seen on one project, a large landfill.

Surprises can often be a logistical nightmare and lead to massive time

ABOVE:

Mobile drilling equipment in client's backyard



## Vendor Profile: Hickman Consulting Services, LLC

(continued)

delays and significant cost increases to a project. PSW's processes were developed based on preparation. For that reason, PSW has developed a relationship with [Hickman Consulting Services, LLC](#).

PSW recently sat down with Jessica Hickman, owner of Hickman Consulting Services, LLC, to speak about her company and relationship with PSW.

### Why are your services important to a residential construction project?

While most people think of geological testing for large-scale commercial projects and well as the oil and gas industry in Western Pennsylvania, we provide a service that is extremely valuable to the residential client by identifying what is under the ground before excavation finds it. We check for depths of rocks, clay slips, water tables, and soil stability. For instance, when you dig a 10-foot hole next to a 2-story house, the weight needs to transfer somewhere. Our job is to make sure the ground is both secure and safe for the homeowner.

### How did you learn about PSW?

We were contact by Shelly Hankins at PSW. My husband Josh had worked with Shelly at an oil and gas company before she landed at PSW. When PSW



ABOVE:

Crews drilling for materials testing

identified a need for a geologist, Shelly remembered us, and the rest is history.

### What do you like about working with PSW?

As a business owner myself, I understand what it takes to run your own company. PSW makes the effort to educate clients and make the process as simple as possible. They want to

do things right the first time. Their employees and trade partners are responsible and respectful.

### Was there ever a project that surprised you or was an interesting case study?

A few years back, we ran into an old landfill at one of PSW's projects. That was a surprise to everyone. There

were large appliances, grills, and other garbage that was simply buried before the home was built. The homeowner had lived there for years and had no idea it was even there.

Sometimes in our industry, we uncover signs of the past. At a project in Charleroi, we found remnants of an old glass factory on a dig. We uncovered the old brick, shards of glass and pottery remnants.

### What advice would you give homeowners thinking about a large residential project?

Do your homework. PSW creates lifestyle experiences – these are not your run of the mill projects. People are paying upwards of two million dollars for their dream living area. They need to know that a certified geologist has tested the site, analyzed the results, and provided their expert advice. If you're spending that much money on a project, you need to know what's under the dirt. Better to find out now than have costly repairs later.

PSW makes the effort to educate clients and make the process as simple as possible.



ABOVE:

Jessica Hickman, owner of Hickman Consulting Services, LLC, with her husband Josh





## **PSW**

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