

Allen family invention transforms oil industry

By **TIFFANY ZWEIFEL**
Special to The Jefferson Star

It's all about family for Derek Allen. The Rigby native says he wouldn't be where he is without them.

Through a joint venture, the Allen family has created a scanning system for the oil and gas industry that will determine when a fire tube needs to be replaced.

"We couldn't have made it if we didn't do it together," Allen said. "The family aspect has really built this business."

Before their invention, oil companies would wait for the imminent failure of their fire tubes, resulting in spills, accidents, and even explosions.

Changing out fire tubes is expensive and the time frame is unpredictable, with some lasting six months and others lasting four years.

"So they waited for it to fail and hoped it didn't cause a catastrophic event," Allen said. "That's what's so exciting for me: to create a market here for something they didn't know they needed. We're pioneering something new."

Allen joined many eastern Idahoans looking for work in the North Dakota oil fields in 2010, with a goal to own a business. He started driving truck, then moved into the general maintenance and upkeep side of the oil industry, or "roustabout" work, fixing leaks and changing belts. When he got a handle on that, he scraped up his savings to start his own company, Elite Energy Services.

Start-up was a grueling process, with no paycheck for six months, but business soon boomed.

"Things got busy, so I decided to bring my family up here. It was a great opportunity to work together as a family again," Allen said.

They soon spotted the trend for failing fire tubes.

"They would always fail no matter what and always spill—some small, some several barrels. We said, 'there's got to be a better way to do this.'"

His father David Allen started to think outside the box. With his medical background, he considered using ultrasound or X-rays to measure the thickness of the fire tubes. He called experts all over the world and discovered a technology in the U.K. called Magnetic Flux Leakage. It led to their prototype scanner that goes inside the tube and gives a graphic image of its thickness.

"So then we had to interpret that data," Derek Allen said. "That's where my brother came in. He is really good with computers. It took two years to get the procedure from inception to completion."

The result was a scanner that is cost-effective, accurate, and provides real-time data. And now that the oil industry has seen results, they can't live without it, Allen said.

But the best part has been working together as a family.

"All the pain and suffering has been worth it. And just to see the family all doing their part and working together. It's just awesome. It hasn't really sunk in yet. It's exciting."

The project has been self-funded.

"We didn't want investors so we could have control and reap the rewards. It pushed us to be successful. So it stays within the family. We are looking

ahead to future generations," he said.

Allen's parents still own their home and property in Rigby, and the family would like to move back and set up a manufacturing facility.

"I think Idaho is a pretty centralized place and it would be nice to be back," Allen said. "I miss it. I grew up there and it's paradise."

For the immediate future, his goal is to complete 500 scans, enabling them to work through every situation and possibility.

"We're halfway through that 500. Of that, 15 percent were ready to fail within the next week or two weeks," Allen said.

That amounted to about 30 sites where they were able to change out the fire tube before failure occurred—preventing spills and accidents.

"The other 85 percent we can predict failure or rescan," Allen said. "Oil companies can go through the winter without emergency situations. They're loving that. The ability to predict this save them so much."

After they complete 500 scans, they will be ready to train other crews. They hope to have six crews up and running by early next year. They've been asked to make their scans available in other states as well.

"That's the plan—move into Wyoming and Utah next year and then Texas," Allen said. "In the next two years, we should have a good foothold in the U.S."

Besides scanning, the company will provide every aspect of fire tube maintenance. And David Allen is still working on new devices and inventions to make fire tubes last longer.

But whatever the future holds, the Allen family will build it together.

OBITUARIES

Kenneth LaMar Thorngren

Kenneth LaMar Thorngren was born October 1, 1939 to Edward and Lena (Lufkin) Thorngren, of Annis, Idaho. He attended schools in Annis and graduated from Rigby High School in 1957. After high school, Ken attended Ricks College in Rexburg and in 1960 began purchasing the family farm



THORNGREN

in Annis and ranch in Kilgore. On August 29, 1962 he married Sandra Pabst of Lorenzo. Their marriage was solemnized in the Idaho Falls LDS temple on May 4, 1996. Ken and Sandra made their home in Annis working together for almost 55 years to make their farm and ranch a success. The couple had five children: Michelle (Ken) Bielenberg, McCammon, Idaho, Jill (Greg Holdeman) Thorngren, Brookings, South Dakota, Matthew (Julie) Thorngren, Washington Terrace, Utah, Michael (Kimberly) Thorngren, Annis, Idaho and Hayden Thorngren McNeill, Annis, Idaho.

Ken loved farming the land and running cattle in Kilgore, a place he described as 'being next to heaven'. He insisted on straight rows in the field and tight fences around the cattle. His family remembers many trips to the ranch to help fix fence, check cattle, get firewood, and camp. Known for his hard work and honesty, Ken was always ready to lend a helping hand to friends, neighbors, and even those he didn't know. Ken taught his children to work hard, be responsible, and treat both people and animals with kindness. Many a night he stayed out late bedding corrals, doctoring sick calves, and making sure that all things, both great and small were cared for.

Gruff on the outside, Ken was a very loving father and grandfather who was adored by his 15 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Grandpa was known for fixing his grandkids milkshakes whenever they asked – even for breakfast! He recounted that his greatest happiness was seeing his children and grandchildren being happy and working hard.

Ken served as secretary of the Island Irrigation Company for 20 years and worked at the container division of Boise Cascade for 23

years where he made many good friends.

After a long battle with Parkinson's disease, Ken passed away on July 27, 2017. Heaven gained a great man who will be dearly missed by his family, friends, and neighbors. Our lives will never be the same, but the lessons and love he gave will be a part of us forever.

Ken is survived by his wife, Sandra, all of his children and grandchildren, his sister Patsy Daley of Annis, Idaho, and brother, Jerry Thorngren of Rigby Idaho. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ed and Lena Thorngren and younger brother, Frank Thorngren.

The family wishes to thank Solace Hospice Care for the wonderful care they provided in Ken's last days. A very special thank you to Kayce and Julie from Solace whose patience, humor, kindness, and medical skills eased his pain and lifted his spirits.

Services were held Tuesday, August 1, 2017, 11:00am, at the Menan LDS Stake Center (698 North 3600 East Menan, Idaho). The Family met with Family and Friends Monday July 31, 2017 from 7:30pm to 9:00pm at the Eckersell Memorial Chapel (101 West Main St. Rigby, Idaho) and on prior to the service from 9:30am to 10:45am. Condolences may be sent to the family online at www.eckersellfuneralhome.com.

Eric Clyde Beck

Eric Clyde Beck, 62, of Menan, Idaho passed away Saturday, July 29, 2017 from a battle with Brain Cancer. He was born January 18, 1955 in Idaho Falls, Idaho at the LDS Hospital, the son of Clyde R. Beck and Maurine Poole Beck.

Eric graduated from Rigby High School in 1973. He served as a missionary for the LDS Church to the England East Mission. After returning from serving a mission, he worked alongside his father, farming and ranching on the family property.

On July 30, 1976, Eric married Julia Jensen in the Idaho Falls LDS Temple. Eric and Julia have been married 41 years. They raised their family in Menan where he con-

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Kids Rodeo — August 17th

Committee President: Kristi Conover

Members: Nichole Nordstrom, Brittany Bond, Dawn Erickson

Events for 14 & under (8th grade and younger)		Pee Wee Events (7 and under)	
Barrel Racing (7-10 years old)	\$10.00	\$5 per contestant (for all 4 events)	
Barrel Racing (11-14 years old)	\$10.00	Dummy Roping (3 throws)	
Pole Bending (7-10 years old)	\$10.00	Barrel Racing - stick horse	
Pole Bending (11-14 years old)	\$10.00	Pole Bending - stick horse	
Girls Goat Tying (9-14 years old)	\$10.00	Ribbon Pull	
Boys Goat Tying (9-14 years old)	\$10.00		
Breakaway - boys & girls (9 yrs. -14 yrs.)	\$ TBD		
Sheep Dressing (teams of 3)	\$15 per team	Pee Wee Barrel Racing	\$5
Dummy Roping (8-14 years old)	\$5.00	on horseback	

RULES AND INFORMATION:

Kids events (in main arena) will begin at 6:00 pm

Pee Wee events (in Keely Lance arena) will begin at 5:00 pm

Both arenas will be running at the same time after 6:00 pm

Email entries only: rigbykidsrodeo@yahoo.com

Entries will be open from July 20 — August 9th

Cash Entries at rodeo

