

# THE Who's Who

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IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

The Blue Book Network and Buyers' Guide

## THE CLIENT'S SUCCESS MATTERS MOST

*Trinity Excavators, LLC builds a top-tier reputation—above ground and below*



Trinity Excavators, LLC uses drones and other technology to assess site conditions and document progress on its excavation and utility installation projects.

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## *Trinity Excavators, LLC* builds a top-tier reputation—above ground and below

by Heather Beal

"I was determined to make something out of myself in the construction industry," says Don M. Pyburn Jr., Founder and President of *Trinity Excavators, LLC* (Trinity), which serves the Houston, Texas, market and the surrounding cities. "I took my first drafting class at the age of 16. My father, Don M. Pyburn Sr., started out as a blue-collar employee and worked his way up to an executive-level position at a construction firm called Brown & Root. He would bring home blueprints—piping and instrumentation drawings—and teach me how to read them."

Immediately after graduating from high school, Don began work as a common laborer and then as a boiler-maker helper at an East Texas paper mill and, for the next decade, worked on multiple projects for Brown & Root and other companies, earning certifications as a pipefitter, instrumentation tech and ironworker. From there he steadily worked his way up the ranks at these companies to become a superintendent and foreman. By his early 30s, he was managing approximately 350 employees and 170 pieces of heavy equipment as executive vice president of operations for Enviro Contractors, Inc.

"I was responsible for the estimating, planning, scheduling and detailed coordination of projects," Don says. "This included being in charge of a \$200 million sludge remediation and environmental cleanup project with Texaco at their Port Arthur, Texas, refinery. That's where I got my soil stabilization experience."

This was just the beginning of Don's 40-plus-year career, which encompasses completing heavy industrial



Pictured left to right are key members of Trinity Excavators, LLC's leadership team: Mandy Burris, Vice President of Administration; Connie Pyburn, Vice President; and Don M. Pyburn Jr., Founder and President with Don M. Pyburn Sr., who inspired his son to pursue a career in the construction industry.

construction projects in the pulp and paper, forest products, power generation and petrochemical industries as well as the commercial market sector. He currently holds a heavy construction license in six states and has built Trinity to become a top-tier excavator in Texas, with more than three dozen employees and the potential to double in size, Don says, as the company launches new initiatives.



A member of Trinity Excavators, LLC's team works to install a portion of the storm sewer system serving the League City Animal Shelter in League City, Texas.



Trinity Excavators, LLC installs a StormTrooper stormwater interceptor, which uses patented technology to remove sediments, trash and oil from stormwater runoff, to serve the Houston Independent School District's Barnett Sports Complex.

**“Keeping every team member and our job sites safe is essential. We live this, breathe it and insist on it.”**

**Don M. Pyburn Jr.,  
Founder and President,  
Trinity Excavators, LLC**

### **SAFETY, MONEY, SUCCESS**

It comes as no surprise, then, that a man who worked his way up from being a common laborer through high-level leadership positions to founding his own company would develop these core values, which appear as taglines on all correspondence from Trinity:

- “Safety is our priority; our families depend on it.”
- “We understand that time is money—your money!”
- “It does not matter who gets the credit as long as we all succeed.”

Don says these beliefs and the company's commitment to “earn the right to be their clients' contractor” has led to 80% of work being from repeat clients.

Trinity is known for its role on high-profile, multimillion-dollar projects, such as the Brazos River Levee Toe Protection Project for Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 121 near Sugar Land, Texas. However, Don is quick to point out that Trinity provides the same quality sitework and utility installation services for clients with smaller sites, but ongoing needs, such as Regions Bank,

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRINITY EXCAVATORS, LLC (LEFT AND CENTER)



Although Trinity Excavators, LLC is known throughout Southeast Texas for its work on high-profile, multimillion-dollar projects, it provides sitework and utility installation services for industrial, petrochemical, land-planning and commercial development projects of all sizes and complexity.

Family Dollar Stores, Inc., PetSuites, CVS Pharmacy and other commercial and heavy industrial businesses.

“We’ve just begun doing site and utility upgrades on the grounds of the FBI/Conroe Police Department Firearms Training Facility, which is a million-dollar-plus project,” Don says. “We’re installing the backflow preventers, meter vaults and lift stations—both sanitary and storm—and doing deep excavations for tie-ins up to 25 feet below grade. We are also working on the Medical Center RV Resort project in Houston near the NRG Stadium.”

Additionally, Gerardo Garcia, Senior Project Manager, says the Trinity team is excited to be partnering with PLW Waterworks, or PLW (formerly known as Pepper-Lawson Waterworks), a nationally recognized contractor, on the Surface Water Treatment Plant project for the city of Pearland in Texas. “PLW, which is the construction manager at risk, vetted and interviewed us and ultimately awarded the early earthwork and drainage package to our team,” Gerardo says. “The project budget is estimated to be \$100 million to place, compact and/or redistribute approximately 125,000 cubic yards of dirt. Trinity will also be installing multiple storm sewer drainage outfalls.”

## TIME IS MONEY

Don is particularly proud of his firm’s work for the Houston Police Foundation’s new Tilman Fertitta Family Tactical Training Center, another prominent Texas project.

Named after Houston entrepreneur Tilman Fertitta, this \$10 million, state-of-the-art police training facility features 44,000 square feet of two-story structures that the Houston Police Department uses to prepare officers for active shooter, hostage, terror and other emergency situations as well as dangerous encounters on the street and at crime scenes. Catwalks connect all parts of this “tactical village” so that instructors can watch and critique the scenarios as they are happening.

Don says he and his team knew that delivering this project on time was crucial. “We worked in inclement weather with wet soil conditions,” he explains. “We excavated the site and put in the wet utilities: fire water, potable water, storm sewer and sanitary sewer.”

## SAFETY MATTERS

When speaking of his crew, Don refers to his company’s slogan, “Safety Is Always Our Priority—Our Families Depend on It.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC GUEL (RIGHT)



Shown second from the right is Don M. Pyburn Jr. of Trinity Excavators, LLC holding an on-site meeting with his crew to discuss the work the company is doing with Raito, Inc. to stabilize the banks of the Brazos River.

“Without us employed and providing for them, where would our families be?” he asks. “Southland Safety, a third-party consultant, professionally manages and monitors our safety program. We document our weekly safety meetings. We also address concerns the minute they arise. Keeping every team member and our job sites safe is essential. We live this, breathe it and insist on it.”

This commitment is underscored by the perfect safety records of Jacob

Young, Equipment Maintenance Manager, and Senior Field Foremen Horacio Flores and Abel Colchado. “Jacob is constantly learning about advances in equipment and technology in order to make efficient and timely repairs,” Don says. “Horacio and Abel are exceptionally proficient in underground utilities construction—both shallow and deep installations. All three of these guys are extremely dedicated and dependable. Together with my wife, Connie Pyburn, and daughter Mandy Burris, they have

helped me build this company to what it is. Connie managed the accounting for Trinity for five years and paid every bill until Mandy joined us as Vice President of Administration. This truly is a family business.”

## THE POWER OF PRECISION

Being knowledgeable, clear and precise also helps keep people and property safe. “We request to sit down with clients before we are awarded a contract to fully understand what their goals are and to offer our input,” Don says. “We make quick decisions every minute of the day—from financial to efficiency to production to quality to safety. We are maneuvering and learning every single day. We have a large amount of civil construction experience and that’s not limited to site work and utilities. We understand tilt wall; we understand concrete. Having this good knowledge base about all the trades involved in civil construction helps us to see what many contractors in our field miss because they don’t have experience with a certain type of construction.”

Don has also invested in technology so that he and his team can better assess existing site conditions and more thoroughly understand the scope of services they will need to provide.

“Utilization of drones and GPS technologies has expedited our growth and increased our productivity,” he says. “About three years ago, we started using GPS technology to complete a pre-topo (preliminary topographic survey) of construction sites. Typically, the engineers complete the drawings and calculations to arrive at what they believe it will



Members of the Trinity Excavators, LLC team. Pictured left to right are: Brandon Goodyk, Ken Watts, Cindy Gelske, Mandy Burris, Connie Pyburn, Don M. Pyburn Jr., Don M. Pyburn Sr., Jacob Young, Taryn McBride, Juan Garcia and Gerardo Garcia.

take to build a job. As sitework and utility contractors, we work off these drawings. Once, in the past, this led to a big discrepancy. We had a project that was stated as requiring 60,000 cubic yards of dirt. We did a topographical survey of the actual ground subsurface before any construction took place and 100,000 cubic yards of dirt was needed.”

“Now,” Don continues, “we take information from the topo back to our office and turn it into a 4D CAD file that shows all cuts and fills so that we can be the most efficient with the whole production. Technology has gone a long way not only to help contractors, but also customers, to understand exactly what they are getting themselves into.”

**SUCCESS OVER CREDIT**

Don explains that he values success more than credit and this attitude is illustrated by the team he brought together for the Brazos River Levee Toe Protection Project. Trinity partnered with Raito, Inc. to bid the project.

“The goal of this project is to halt and prevent soil erosion on the riverbank, which threatens homes in a nearby subdivision,” Don says.

Chris McGhee, Vice President of Corporate Operations for Raito, adds: “Working with a seasoned, professional civil



Senior Field Foremen, Abel Colchado (left) and Horacio Flores (below), have been with the company in excess of five years. They are proficient in all underground utilities as well as sitework.



contractor like Trinity Excavators allows us to concentrate on what we do best—technically challenging deep-soil improvement. We are confident that this will be the first of many important projects successfully executed by the Raito/Trinity team.” Raito is a subsidiary of Raito Kogyo Co., Ltd. (Tokyo, Japan), a firm internationally known for its deep-soil excavation and ground-stabilization expertise.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ERIC GUEL; TRINITY EXCAVATORS, LLC (INSETS)

“Raito has a large drill out there that is a specialty rig,” Don says. “They drill 125 feet down for deep-soil stabilization—and that rig’s mast is at least 100 feet tall. It’s very impressive. We have to dig a pit in the ground to lower our own drill down 10 to 18 feet, depending on where we are working. We are building six structures in place along the bend of the river—installing them in the ground—by drilling down into the earth, injecting cement and mixing it in place. So, it’s like building giant Lego blocks underground. Trinity’s responsibility has been to provide all the land clearing, road construction, excavation, backfill and support services needed to facilitate Raito’s deep-soil excavation.”

### A 24/7 RESPONSIBILITY

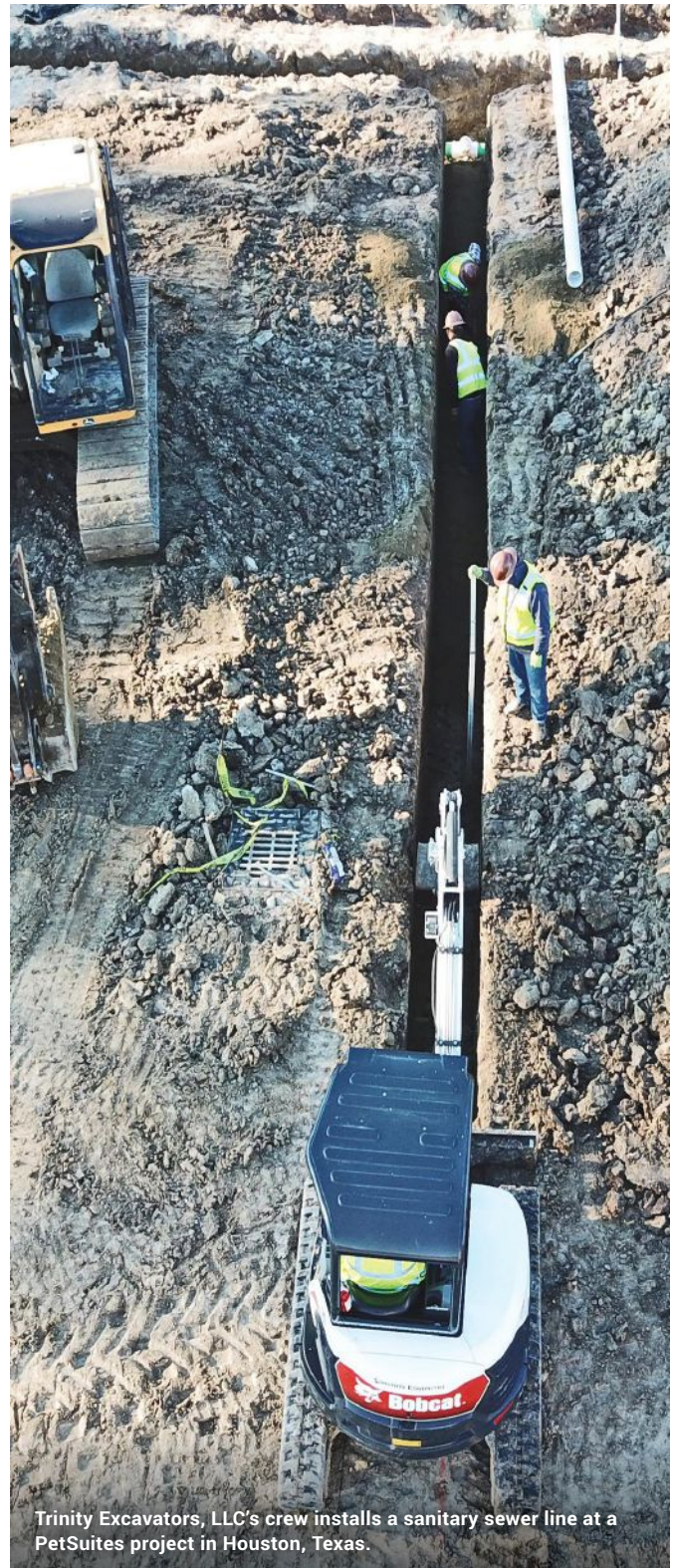
While Don says being a utility contractor in Houston is “a 24/7 responsibility” by itself, he makes serving his community a priority, too.

“Trinity is a strong supporter of the Houston Police Department,” he says. “We volunteer our equipment and services when there is a catastrophic event—be it windstorm or flood. After Hurricane Harvey, the city of Beaumont was without water. So, we bought an 18-wheeler load of bottled water and a 5-ton, military 6x6 vehicle. We hired the chief of police from Montgomery to escort us into Beaumont. When we got there, we helped volunteers distribute the water at churches and a couple of nursing facilities.”

Don notes that the company also takes good care of its employees. “We’re not a bank, but we do what we can,” he says. “We assisted several employees who needed help repairing their homes after Hurricane Harvey. When we have continuous rain scenarios that interrupt our work, we still pay our employees so they can pay their bills. When these guys work for you and do all the hard work that they do, they become your family. How can you not help them in their time of need?”

Looking back on the past 21 years of Trinity’s history, Don recalls: “I started this company with one goal: to build a company on experience, reputation, integrity and moral character.”

Mission accomplished. 🐾



Trinity Excavators, LLC’s crew installs a sanitary sewer line at a PetSuites project in Houston, Texas.

*Heather Beal has 25+ years of experience as a magazine journalist and book author covering all aspects of the built environment.*

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