

# NEW TOOL MAKES CHANGING OUT RETAINING RINGS A SNAP

Channellock's new 929 snap ring plier takes on the kind of bigger jobs typically found in auto repair shops, farms, construction or equipment installation. This new 10" tool completes the CHANNELLOCK® line of snap ring pliers that includes the 6½" (926) and 8" (927).

The 929 handles both internal and external retaining rings up to 4" in diameter. It also includes three sizes of color-coded, interchangeable alloy steel tip sets that switch easily with an included hex key. Like the entire line-up of snap ring pliers, the 929 switches from internal to external rings with a single-motion thumb switch.

The 929 completes the new three-piece RT-3 snap ring pliers set. The RT-3 also includes the 6¼" 926 and 8" 927 snap ring pliers that take on retaining rings up to 1" and 2" in diameter, respectively. Of course, all of these tools come with the unique CHANNELLOCK BLUE® comfort grips.

Check out the complete line of special purpose tools at your industrial or automotive supply house or online at [www.channellock.com](http://www.channellock.com).



The 929 completes the new three-piece RT-3 snap ring pliers set shown above.

Channellock, Inc.  
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WORK HARD. SWEAT BLUE.



**Global attitude, local initiatives**

A message from Bill DeArment

**Quality is built in... not added on**

Quality assurance message from Terry Farrell

**An inside/outside job**

New, easy-to-adjust snap ring pliers

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## BLUE NOTES

This is American Blue™, our quarterly newsletter. If you have a story idea you'd like to see in American Blue, please submit it to:

**IN THIS ISSUE...**



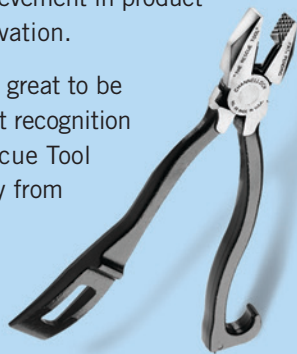
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## POPULAR MECHANICS PICKS RESCUE TOOL FOR TOP HONOR

**PM** EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARDS 08

For the second straight year, CHANNELLOCK® received an Editor's Choice Award from *Popular Mechanics* magazine. *Popular Mechanics*, a leading science and technology magazine, chose our **#88 Rescue Tool** for outstanding achievement in product design and innovation.

While it's always great to be honored, the best recognition for the new Rescue Tool comes every day from America's first responders.



**#88 Rescue Tool**

## IN HIS OWN WORDS

**Firefighter Jason Belin**  
Houston Fire Department

I've had the Rescue Tool for a little more than four months now, and there's nothing that I can't use it for.

I work at an extremely busy fire station in Houston, and the Rescue Tool gets put to use on a daily basis. We've pried open car doors, cut gas lines to homes and cut car battery cables. And, the spanner wrench fits all of our connections – it doesn't matter what size hose fittings, it fits.

I've been a firefighter for more than five years, and the Rescue Tool has changed how I prepare for an emergency scene. I would normally carry a spanner wrench, cable cutters and pliers. Because of the Rescue Tool, I don't have to anymore.

## QUALITY IS BUILT IN... NOT ADDED ON

by **Terry C. Farrell**  
Director of Engineering & Mfg. Services  
Channellock Inc.



Let me first say that some folks think that Quality is like salt, and it is sprinkled on at the end of the assembly line, and that's the end of Quality. If that's the way you do it, you are not going to survive. Here at CHANNELLOCK®, Quality is an integral part of every operation. Our Quality System is patterned after the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2000. The Quality Policy Manual and internal procedures have been developed to meet the requirements of the world market.

CHANNELLOCK® has seen many changes and many more are on their way. It's now more important than ever for us to re-examine manufacturing processes to ensure longevity and growth. As we go through this exercise, one thing becomes apparent: the way we did business a few years ago is no longer a viable option in today's global economy.

Off-shore pressure, coupled with our current economy, has ushered in a new set of terms for competition, forcing many companies to focus on new, improved automation techniques.

There are always a few persons who challenge the benefits of automation, citing fears of workforce reduction. Automation needs not result in layoffs and can often improve the employment security of the existing workforce by opening the doors to higher level opportunities.

Over the past 18 months, CHANNELLOCK® has injected more agility into its production processes to make them leaner and more responsive to real-time customer demands. Many companies have been working for years to reduce waste, via Lean techniques, and to boost the quality of their production lines.

Here at CHANNELLOCK®, we use many tools to help insure quality in our product. Some of these tools are things like KanBan, Lean manufacturing, 5S, value stream mapping, and visual factory management. And of course with all these tools comes training. One of our **"Vision Blue"** key ingredients is the equation:  
**Commitment + Cooperation + Constant Improvement = SUCCESS.**

## BE FIRST TO KNOW

If you always want to be the first to know about new CHANNELLOCK® products, special promotions or events, be sure to check the new CHANNELLOCK® Press Room at [www.channellockpressroom.com](http://www.channellockpressroom.com).

This is where you'll find the first announcement of new products or product improvements. You'll also get up-to-date standings on CHANNELLOCK®-sponsored professional bass angler Paul Hirosky.

While the CHANNELLOCK® Press Room is primarily intended for trade magazine editors and other reporters, the information presented is available to our retailers, online shoppers, trade users and customers, as well. Check it out at [www.channellockpressroom.com](http://www.channellockpressroom.com).

## GLOBAL ATTITUDE, LOCAL INITIATIVES

by **William S. DeArment**  
President and CEO, Channellock, Inc.



In more than 120 years, CHANNELLOCK® has transformed from a company proudly hand forging and selling tools out of a horse cart into a global player in the hand tool arena. No matter the method of distribution, CHANNELLOCK® always delivers highest quality, durability, and performance in hand tool products.

One of the challenges of being a global company is acting responsibly in times of economic uncertainty.

The cost of all raw materials is skyrocketing and shows no signs of stopping. In the past 12 months, our cost of steel has gone up 72 percent. We do not need to dwell on the price of oil...CHANNELLOCK BLUE® plastisol (plier grips) is an oil based product. The rising cost of health care constantly makes the news.

Through all this instability, CHANNELLOCK® has been able to keep our pricing competitive with higher quality import brands for two reasons:

First, Chinese manufacturers are seeing their own new economic challenges. Inflation in China has been, and continues to run, in the 8–12 percent range over the last 7–8 years. The Chinese government recently eliminated their export rebate to local manufacturing. In the case of pliers/hand tools that represented a 13 percent cost increase to Chinese plier makers. Those adjustments along with skyrocketing Chinese material cost increases represent a large part of the ongoing reduction in the pricing between Chinese products and USA products. There have been, and continue to be, many Chinese factories shutting down because as time goes on and costs accelerate, it becomes easier, and more cost effective to return this manufacturing to the USA.

Second, CHANNELLOCK® has invested in several initiatives at our Meadville, Pa., manufacturing facilities that are designed to save energy and resources, thereby reducing costs in our manufacturing processes. This allows CHANNELLOCK® to keep pricing competitive and value-oriented.

A new \$800,000 electric power substation supplies needed electricity directly to our manufacturing facilities, greatly reducing energy costs and natural gas consumption...another fossil fuel with rising costs.

The use of robotics is now a significant part of the CHANNELLOCK® manufacturing process. All robots have been installed without eliminating a single job, and our operations are more productive than ever. Better use of knowledgeable manpower. Working smarter, not harder.

New induction billet heating units in CHANNELLOCK® forging operations superheat forging billets to the exact desired forging temperature in a matter of seconds. This saves tremendous amounts of time and energy.

CHANNELLOCK® dedication to cellular manufacturing brings several processes together in a compact area. Eliminating the need for tools and product to be transported long distances between manufacturing steps. These types of lean manufacturing initiatives have been implemented over the last 10–12 years. This, along with constant attention to our ISO standards, drives CHANNELLOCK® associates to continuously improve processes and products. Because of all of this, we continue to offer one of the finest values in hand tool products in the world.

CHANNELLOCK® is thriving in Northwest Pennsylvania in an industry that is continuously attacked by overseas competitors, in an industry that has seen thousands of jobs go overseas. I am proud to say that we are still here. We are still investing in our operations in Meadville, Pennsylvania and in our people...and in our future.