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The Residential Report is a biannual newsletter published by SMACNA's National Residential Council Steering Committee. Its goal is to provide a sounding board for SMACNA residential contractors to share their experiences and learn more about the residential business.

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## Meet the National Residential Council Steering Committee

### Randy Novak, Novak Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc., Cedar Rapids, IA, Council Chairman

Randy is a third generation to this family business. He started working for Novak Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc., 12 years ago as an apprentice. He progressed to residential sales and now management. He is currently vice president of the firm.

The greatest challenges he sees for his company are staying ahead of the competition technology-wise, implementing the best business practices possible, and maintaining employee relations and customer satisfaction.

Randy formed an employee advisory committee that has produced positive results for the company. One employee from each department meets with Randy every other month in an informal setting for dinner. Together, they brainstorm ideas, discuss problems and come up with fresh ideas to help them work together better.

His vision is to continue to grow his company and establish lifetime employees and customers.

### Richard Spinelli, Bryant Air Conditioning Contractors, Babylon, NY

Richard got his start in the HVAC business in 1977 when he began working for his father, a large mechanical contractor. For nine years he learned all aspects of the HVAC industry by working in his father's service department and was project manager for one year.

He purchased Bryant Air Conditioning Contractors (a 47-year-old company) in 1987. His greatest challenge is to provide his customers with the best-built and most efficient systems that are the latest in design and priced competitively. This is quite a challenge as most of the firm's work is new construction where they deal primarily with the builder and not the customer.

To make certain his company runs at peak performance levels, Rich purchased the latest equipment for manufacturing ductwork, such as computerized cutting tables and a spiral duct machine. His vision for Bryant is to continue and maintain the growth pattern established over the past ten years.

### Dennis J. Plog, Plogco, Inc., Concord, CA

Dennis started in the HVAC business 35 years ago doing shop clean up. Today he's general manager and vice president of Plogco, Inc.

He says the greatest challenges for residential contractors today are low quality, low bid competition and purchasing agents who make decisions based solely on computer spreadsheets.

Dennis' goal for Plogco is to increase market penetration in service and add-on replacement (AOR), while maintaining our residential new construction market (RNC). To achieve this goal he more aggressively markets his service business and AOR market while seeking out niche markets such as prevailing rate RNC.

### Brian Fluetsch, Sunset Air, Inc., Lacey, WA

Brian says he's been in the hvac business all his life. He remembers as a child riding with his Dad to deliver oil and accompanying him on emergency service calls after hours. In 1976 when Brian was in high school, his father, Peter, started Sunset Air. Brian's job was to clean the shop and make end caps and drive cleats. During the summers, home from college, he did some installations.

In 1981, he started full time in the business as the service manager. However, he purchased supplies and managed other employees. Today, at age 38, his title is vice president of operations, and he still wears many other hats.

He acknowledges there are many challenges

in the residential and light commercial business, but the most critical one is to grow their share of market in a profitable manner.

To make Sunset a better company, a few years ago Brian took a hard look at their service department. Motivated by the revolutionary customer service offered at the Nordstrom department store, Sunset had a resurgence of interest in their service department. Delivering extraordinary customer service and creating customers for life became their focus.

Brian's vision for his company is offering great customer service. ■

## Council Recommends Training Sites for EPA Energy Star Program

As part of SMACNA's cooperative efforts with the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Program, the National Residential Council Steering Committee has recommended five cities for targeted training sites for the first and second quarters of 1998. The EPA's Energy Star Program seeks to promote the use of highly efficient HVAC equipment to both contractors and distributors.

The Steering Committee identified Las Vegas, Hartford, Detroit, Sacramento and St. Louis as metropolitan areas where EPA should focus its Energy Star Program training and educational efforts during the first six months of 1998. The Council will be communicating with SMACNA chapters in those areas as the program agenda and schedules are developed by the EPA. ■