

THE WHOLESALER

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution

Working hand in hand



Jason Veal (left) of Tallman Company, a member of Affiliated Distributors, and Anthony Crouch of Crouch & Sons Plumbing were instrumental in getting the Noritz commercial tankless system specified for The Residence Inn in Florence, Ala. The high-efficiency, multi-unit condensing tankless solution features an innovative common venting setup to minimize exterior wall penetrations. The tankless system supplies 130 guest rooms, along with the dining and laundry rooms, with never-ending hot water. (See feature on page 42.)

Small gains but encouraging

ASA distributor members report first positive quarter since 2008

CHICAGO — The American Supply Association distributor members reported a 2.3% improvement in revenues during the second quarter 2010 as compared to the same quarter in 2009. Year-to-date the plumbing,

heating, cooling, and industrial and mechanical pipe, valve and fitting distributors are still behind last year by 1.4% and behind by 15.2% as compared to 2008. For the month of June, the wholesalers reported only the third improved month in the last 18 months over the same periods of the previous



year with a 2.8% improvement, although the month remained 14.1% behind 2008.

For the second month in a row, one-third more distributors reported improved margins in 2010 as compared to 2009. On a year-to-date basis, the number of distributors reporting improved margins is equal to the number reporting reduced margins. Interestingly, (Turn to A better year... page 26)

Northeastern Supply acquires Standard Supply and Equipment

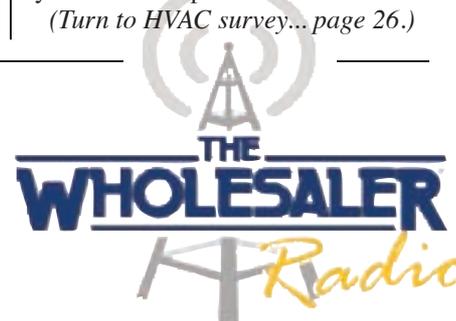
FRONT ROYAL, VA. — On July 26, Northeastern Supply opened its 33rd location by acquisition of Standard Supply and Equipment, 501 E Main St., Front Royal, Va.

Former owner Gary Hickerson will continue to work with Northeastern to help provide a smooth transition and new services and products to customers. (Turn to Acquisition, page 26.)

HARDI and JP Morgan partner on HVAC survey

COLUMBUS, OHIO — HARDI recently completed the second annual mid-season HVAC Distributor Survey in partnership with JP Morgan Equity Research. More than 100 HARDI HVAC equipment distributors reported a strong 2010 thus far, driven largely by weather, continued momentum from the \$1,500 residential tax credits and pent-up demand from last year's weak replacement sales.

(Turn to HVAC survey... page 26.)



Wholesaler helps get commercial condensing tankless system selected for hotel project

FLORENCE, ALA. — Jason Veal, a salesperson for Tallman Company here, was instrumental recently in recommending a dramatically different type of hot water system than what had originally been specified for a local 130-room hotel project. Tallman Company is a wholesale distributor of plumbing and heating supplies based in Florence.

Veal joined forces with contractor customer Anthony Crouch of Crouch & Sons Plumbing LLC to convince ownership of The Residence Inn to switch from the specified pair of large gas boilers to a multiple-unit tankless water heating system because they believed what was specified simply wouldn't work in this application.

By doing so, the pair spared the fa-

“Sometimes there are opportunities to work with an owner to get things changed. ... We just had to do something different because the original spec wouldn't work.”

cility potentially major maintenance problems — and a legion of unhappy hotel guests — while also enabling the owner to cut his ongoing fuel costs substantially. In addition, the innovative venting system recommended by the water heater manufacturer, Noritz America, made sense not only from an engineering perspective, but also helped preserve the appearance of the hotel property.

Looking back on the project after its completion last spring, Veal has no doubt that the switch to tankless

was absolutely the right move: “It was a positive experience for everyone involved.”

Impossible predicament

The original specification for the Florence Residence Inn by Marriott called for a pair of 750-gallon, 750,000-Btu-per-hour boilers, each measuring roughly five feet by 12 feet. The mechanical room where they were to be installed could accommodate both pieces of equipment, but with just a few inches of clearance between each unit and the surrounding walls.

“We told the hotel owner that we could make it work — barely,” recalls Veal, who works as a full-time outside salesperson for Tallman. “But if one unit ever needed servicing,



both would need to be pulled from the space, because there simply wasn't enough room to work. That, in turn, would mean the entire hotel would have to go without hot water until maintenance was finished.”

To no one's surprise, hotel owner Giri Yadla immediately dismissed the notion of going without hot water for any length of time and asked if there were any practical alternatives. Veal immediately saw a fit for tankless because of its space-saving benefits and recommended the Noritz system, which Tallman distributes. As Veal and Crouch explained to Yadla, a multi-unit system would be required to meet all of the hotel's hot-water needs, especially during peak peri-



At The Residence Inn in Florence, Ala., the tankless water heating and common venting solutions proved so effective that the hotel owner anticipates going with this approach on future hotel projects.

ods. These wall hung units would also leave much more room for service work. Furthermore, if one unit had to be shut down, the others would still operate as usual. Guests would see no interruption in service.

While the modularity of tankless technology met the customer's baseline need for readily available hot water, Veal and Crouch also stressed that the hotel would realize significant energy savings. The tankless water heater system only heats water when responding to a specific demand. Instead of using 1.5 million Btu to keep 1,500 gallons of water at a specified temperature 24/7/365 — as with the original spec — the tankless units would work in sequence, firing one by one as needed, to meet present requirements. Once those requirements were met, the units turn down or off, minimizing energy consumption.

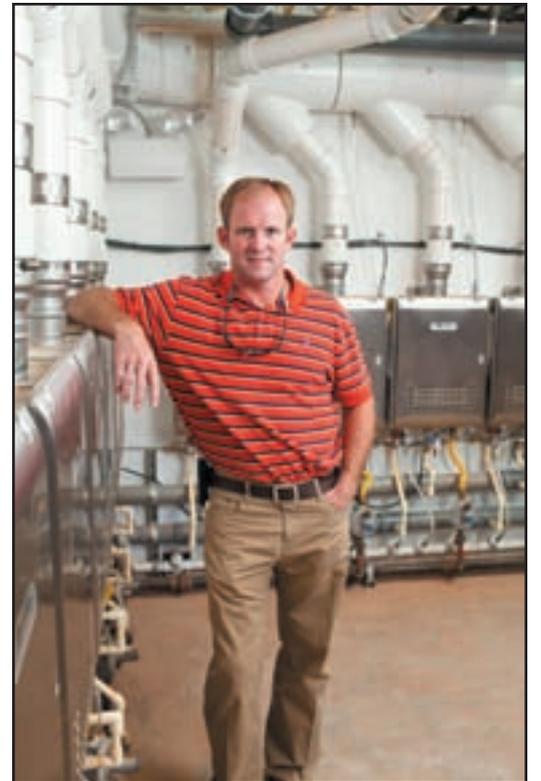
Yadla very much liked what he heard, both in terms of space savings and fuel savings, so the specification was changed and tankless was approved for the application. “We decided to go with a tankless unit because it is more efficient and a great energy-saver,” Yadla commented recently.

Hotel general manager Timothy Pritchett added: “Using a tankless water heating system saves money. The new system will ensure that our visitors will always have hot water.”

Maximizing efficiency, minimizing cost

The new system involves 17 Noritz NCC199-SV condensing gas-fired tankless water heaters: 12 supply the 130 guest rooms; the remaining five handle the dining area

and the laundry room. Each has a thermal efficiency of 93% and a firing range of 11,000 Btu/h to 199,900 Btu/h. The latter calculates into an aggregate maximum input of nearly 3.4



Jason Veal of the Tallman Company: “I've been a big fan of tankless technology for a number of years, and I felt it was the right choice for this customer.”

million Btu/h with a turndown ratio of 309 to 1, allowing the system to comfortably handle both peak and light demand periods with maximum efficiency and minimal cost.

“We expect each water heater to be delivering 4.6 gallons of hot water per minute in the winter, assuming a ground-water temperature of 50°F; and roughly 6.8 gpm in the summer, based on 65°F ground water,” said Tim Gill, Noritz Southeast regional commercial sales manager, who worked with contractor Crouch and Noritz rep Tim Morales of Tim Morales & Associates on the (Turn to ‘Dramatically... page 44.)



In the mechanical room are Giri Yadla (left), director of new construction & facilities management at The Residence Inn by Marriott; and Timothy Pritchett, general manager of the Florence, Ala., Residence Inn.

‘Dramatically different’ water heating system: Tankless setup advised by distributor salesman

(Continued from page 42.)

design of the system.

While the limitations of the mechanical room created the opening for tankless on this project, its space constraints generated its own set of challenges for the design and installation team. Fitting 17 24-inch x 18-inch, tankless water heaters into the 12-foot x 18-foot area was certainly doable with a bit of judicious space management. But these are gas-fired units, so they require venting to the

the common areas and work spaces.

“The pressure through each manifold is maintained at a preset level by a modulating fan that is directed by a controller,” Gill explains. “The controller, in turn, monitors exhaust pressure through a sensor located at the end of the manifold run.”

Installation: Finessing the space

The most prominent element of each venting system is the massive manifold pipe itself, measuring a



Installer Anthony Crouch (left) with Jason Veal, who describes the 17-unit tankless installation at the Florence Residence Inn as “a positive experience for everyone involved.”

outdoors. In simple one- and two-unit installations, each water heater typically has its own through-the-wall vent. But, as Crouch and Gill both noted, hotel ownership was understandably less than thrilled by the idea of 17 separate vents protruding through the exterior wall of its new facility.

Once again, the team delivered an innovative, alternative solution, one

[Veal and Crouch] spared the facility potentially major maintenance problems — and a legion of unhappy hotel guests — while also enabling the owner to cut his ongoing fuel costs substantially.

that Noritz recently unveiled specifically for commercial installs: a fan-assisted, common vent system, whose components are made by Exhausto Inc. The Residence Inn project uses two such manifolds: one to remove all of the emissions from the units servicing the guest rooms; the second for the five units supplying

hefty 10 inches in diameter. Given the dimensions of the surrounding space, including nine-foot ceilings and a 4-foot x 6-foot louvered fan for importing makeup air from outdoors, the Crouch installation team found itself coping with some fairly tight angles.

“The ceiling height was the most serious hurdle,” said Gill. “First, you’ve got the 10-inch PVC manifold and the two-foot-long water heater, plus an additional couple of feet of required clearances. Beneath the water heaters are the hot water, cold water and gas lines. Somehow, Anthony managed to fit all those elements into the available space, but another foot or two of ceiling height would have made things much easier.”

Indeed, the installers literally ran out of space on one of the units supplying the guest rooms. “A 10-by-4 PVC wye is a pretty big fitting,” Veal explained. “When you try to get 12 of those on a single manifold run plus a 10-inch PVC elbow, the spacing gets pretty tight.”

So the installers compromised, removing the last water heater in the



From left: Jason Veal of the Tallman Co.; Giri Yadla, director of new construction & facilities management for Residence Inn by Marriott; Timothy Pritchett, general manager of the Florence, Ala., Residence Inn by Marriott; and Anthony Crouch of Crouch & Sons Plumbing LLC in Florence.

12-unit line from the manifold and equipping it with its own 4-inch direct vent. Thus, the final through-the-wall tally came in at three terminations. As Veal notes, three punch-outs look a whole lot better to hotel management than 17.

And so does the overall footprint of the entire tankless installation, as compared with what might have been with the original boiler tandem. The tankless and common venting solutions proved so effective on this project, the hotel owner anticipates going with this approach on future hotel projects.

While acknowledging that it may be unusual for a wholesaler to change a spec, Veal added, “Sometimes there are opportunities to work with an owner to get things changed. But in this situation, we just had to do something different because the original spec wouldn’t work.”

At the time the Residence Inn job came up for bid, Veal had just joined Tallman after four years with another distributor. Understandably, he was looking to make a big splash with his new employer. “We really wanted this job, of course, but we also felt obliged to do what was best for the project and the owner by finding a workable alternative to the boilers,” he said. “I’ve been a big fan of tankless technology for a number of years, and I felt it was the right choice for this customer.” ■

Installer Anthony Crouch adjusts one of the hot water thermostats in the Residence Inn installation. Each of the tankless units will deliver 4.6 gallons of hot water per minute in the winter, assuming a ground-water temperature of 50°F; and roughly 6.8 gpm in the summer, based on 65°F ground water.

The new system involves 17 Noritz NCC199-SV condensing gas-fired tankless water heaters: 12 supply the 130 guest rooms; the remaining five handle the dining area and the laundry room. Each has a thermal efficiency of 93% and a firing range of 11,000 Btuh to 199,900 Btuh... with an aggregate maximum input of nearly 3.4 million Btuh with a turndown ratio of 309 to 1, the system comfortably handles both peak and light demand periods.

