NY Connection

Official Magazine for the New York State PHCC

Spring 2021

Is Your Website Ready for March 2021?

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Plumber COVID-19 Safety Requires Care and Consistency

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President's Message

By Ryan Truncali

The winter months are settling in and seems if COVID-19 is rearing its ugly head again. The NYSPHCC is here for guidance and support as we continue to navigate through the ever-changing guidelines and restrictions. With that said, I am pleased to share some positive and exciting news with everyone. A little over a year ago, we lost one of our biggest supporters and longtime members Irwin Botto. To honor his memory, the NYSPHCC Executive Committee established a scholarship fund to support graduating high school seniors who plan to attend college or those who wish to enroll in the PHCC eLearning apprenticeship program. The Irwin Botto Memorial Scholarship Program and its committee will be led by Irwin's son, John Botto who will serve as chairman. More information and applications will be available soon.

Also, we are very pleased to announce that the Association of Contracting Plumbers of New York City has rejoined PHCC. We want to take this opportunity to welcome back the chapter and its members! We look forward to continuing and building upon our relationship. As everyone knows, we are stronger together and this is accomplished by being a part of something bigger.

We look forward to a bright future for our industry and our association.

New York State Local Associations

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stevernpm@gmail.com

Get in touch with other contractors and suppliers in your area through these local chapters.

2021 Contractor Application – New Member

	Intro Year 1 50% Discount	Active Full Member Rate
Total	**$462.00**	**$924.00**

Membership Terms & Conditions

1. Full Active Contractor Membership is available to business owners holding an active NYS plumbing license.
   Contractor Member must maintain affiliation with PHCC National, State and Local Federations as described in By-Laws.
   Only Full Active Members can vote, hold office or propose amendments to By-Laws (i.e., paying full dues);
   Introductory Membership is only available to contractors who have never been a PHCC member.
2. A portion of your dues pays for your PHCC national and state dues, as well as any legislative initiatives.
3. NYSPHCC Board of Directors reviews all applications and reserves right to decline membership;
4. In advance of NYSPHCC Board of Directors approving this membership application, the undersign affirms:
   a. I accept and will comply strictly with the laws and regulations stated in the By-Laws of the Association;
   b. Should my membership terminate for any reason, I will immediately cease to display PHCC insignias, logos, or images in my company's print or online material, or fleet vehicles and uniforms.

NYSPHCC Contractor Annual Membership: $924.00 | 1st Year NEW Introductory Member Rate: $462.00

Membership Type: ☐ ACTIVE ☐ Year 1

As in good faith, I hereby affix my signature on this date: _____

Printed Name of Applicant: _____ Signature of Authorized Signer: _____

☐ Check Enclosed (Payable to NYSPHCC)

Company Name: _____ Contractor License #: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Website: _____

Business Type (select all that apply): ☐ Plumbing ☐ HVAC ☐ Residential ☐ Commercial ☐ Service & Repair ☐ New Construction

I understand that by completing this application I consent to receive communication by or on behalf of the NYSPHCC, and PHCC National offices (PHCC). As your association, we believe this information is important to you and your business. PHCC dues are not a charitable contribution for U.S. Federal income tax purposes but may be a business expense deductible. For 2021, PHCC estimates that 5% of your national dues constitute lobbying expenses.

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(PHCC Contractor Member Profile on the next page)

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PHCC CONTRACTOR MEMBER PROFILE

*This member profile is **IMPORTANT!** It is critical we have current and relative information about your company to better serve you. By completing this form, we can direct new customers your way through our PHCC Member Referral Service. Please answer the questions below, indicate changes and return by email at dreddy@nysphcc.org. Thank You.*

• Questions? Contact our office at 716.216.4360

Primary Contact: _____

Title: _____ Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

PRIMARY SPECIALTY / BUSINESS – *Select TWO:*

- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Backflow
- ☐ Drain Cleaning
- ☐ Energy Efficiency Heating
- ☐ Fire Sprinklers
- ☐ Generators
- ☐ Indoor Air Quality
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Radiant Heat
- ☐ Solar Heat
- ☐ Water Filtration
- ☐ Water Efficiency

SECONDARY BUSINESS/Referral Work – *Select all that apply:*

- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Backflow
- ☐ Drain Cleaning
- ☐ Energy Efficiency Heating
- ☐ Fire Sprinklers
- ☐ Generators
- ☐ Indoor Air Quality
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Radiant Heat
- ☐ Solar Heat
- ☐ Water Filtration
- ☐ Water Efficiency

Primary Field of Work – *Select One:*

- ☐ Residential Service & Repair
- ☐ Residential Remodel
- ☐ Residential New Construction
- ☐ Institutional
- ☐ Commercial Service & Repair
- ☐ Commercial Remodel
- ☐ Commercial New Construction
- ☐ Industrial

Other Fields of Work – *Select all that apply:*

- ☐ Residential Service & Repair
- ☐ Residential Remodel
- ☐ Residential New Construction
- ☐ Institutional
- ☐ Commercial Service & Repair
- ☐ Commercial Remodel
- ☐ Commercial New Construction
- ☐ Industrial

Date Business Founded: _____

Number of Employees:

☐ Less than 6 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-20 ☐ 21-40 ☐ More than 40

Number of Commercial Vehicles:

☐ 1-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-30 ☐ More than 30

Type of Shop – *Select all that apply:*

☐ Minority-Owned ☐ Woman-Owned ☐ Veteran-Owned

Volume of Annual Business:

- ☐ Less than $500,000
- ☐ $500,000 to $750,000
- ☐ $750,000 to $1 million
- ☐ $1 million to $2.5 million
- ☐ $2.5 million to $5 million
- ☐ $5 million to $8 million
- ☐ $8 million to $15 million
- ☐ $15 million to $25 million
- ☐ $25 million to $40 million
- ☐ More than $40 million

Volume of *PLUMBING* Products Purchased Annually:

- ☐ Less than $500,000
- ☐ $500,000 to $750,000
- ☐ $750,000 to $1 million
- ☐ $1 million to $2.5 million
- ☐ $2.5 million to $5 million
- ☐ $5 million to $8 million
- ☐ $8 million to $15 million
- ☐ $15 million to $25 million
- ☐ $25 million to $40 million
- ☐ More than $40 million

Volume of *HVAC* Products Purchased Annually:

- ☐ Less than $500,000
- ☐ $500,000 to $750,000
- ☐ $750,000 to $1 million
- ☐ $1 million to $2.5 million
- ☐ $2.5 million to $5 million
- ☐ $5 million to $8 million
- ☐ $8 million to $15 million
- ☐ $15 million to $25 million
- ☐ $25 million to $40 million
- ☐ More than $40 million

Certifications:

☐ NATE ☐ BPI ☐ LEED ☐ Energy Star Credential ☐ Water Auditor ☐ Backflow ☐ Energy Auditor

Return COMPLETED form to: NYSPHCC

PO Box 23, N. Tonawanda, NY 14120 | dreddy@nysphcc.org | 716.216.4360 | www.nysphcc.org

'I knew where I wanted to go, but I didn't know how to get there.'

PHCC Saved My Life

By Hunter Botto, PHCC–National Association President

For more than 20 years, this association has been good to me. A third-generation plumber, I had been working for my family business but had no idea how to run the business side of the things when my dad retired and I took over. I knew where I wanted to go, but I didn't know how to get there. PHCC saved my life. In those early days, I'd sit in PHCC of Long Island meetings on Wednesday nights, make friends and work hard. They helped me with utility issues, code issues, profit and loss statements, and so much more. We even referred each other to our customers if we were overloaded with work. I always felt an obligation to pay it forward, and now I'm getting my chance.

But I can't do it alone. I implore more of you to get involved. It is our responsibility to be the leaders moving forward and teach the next generation. Participate in your local or state chapter meetings and ask what you can do to help, such as serving on a committee, contacting a prospective member or mentoring a young contractor. Consider serving on a PHCC—National committee; go to the "Get Involved" tab at phccweb.org/resourcecenter, find your best fit, and click on "Apply to Volunteer." Help us drive the priorities of PHCC while giving back to the industry at the same time. You can even contact me directly at botto@naphcc.org, and I will help you find a spot.

Talk to your competitors and make them your friends.

The global pandemic that has impacted every part of our personal and professional lives this past year has only reinforced the beauty of our priceless PHCC network. When others shut down, our member businesses stayed open to provide essential services, and we leaned on each other. We didn't look at our peers as competitors; we relied on them as friends to maintain and elevate our industry. We found the answers we needed within our local chapters; we gauged what our peers were doing through our state chapters; and we got much-needed information – especially as it pertained to federal guidelines and relief packages – from PHCC National.

That was the perfect example of all three levels of PHCC working in tandem to get our members through perhaps one of the most difficult periods in our lives, and one of my goals this year is to connect the dots among all of us. I want every member, every local president, every sponsor, every zone director to be in alignment as we work toward fulfilling the priorities of PHCC's Strategic Plan – growing membership, expanding workforce development programs and continuing strong advocacy efforts.

Together, we have a lot of work to do. Among other things, we need to make our voices heard at the state and national level on improving our nation's infrastructure. With an opportunity to attract the millions of newly unemployed people out there, we need to ensure increased funding for workforce training. And we need to protect professional licensure so that we have the very best skilled workers performing our essential work. If we don't, our professional standards, our trade and our infrastructure will suffer.

One of the best days of my life.

PHCC history has shown that we are most powerful when we work together. Our efforts on Capitol Hill are testament to that. I can't begin to tell you how awesome it is to walk into your congressman's or senator's office during the PHCC Legislative Conference each year and talk about the issues impacting your business. They want to know, and they don't know unless we tell them. Fingers crossed we can gather in person next spring for the Legislative Conference. I urge you to mark your calendar for May 25-26 and join us.

Another example of PHCC's power of collaboration was the June 2019 Plumber's Rally in Austin, Texas. I was proud to be among the PHCC representatives joining thousands of plumbers at the Texas State Capitol to voice unified support for preserving the state's plumbing board. Not only was it a victory for our industry, but it was an incredible opportunity for me to really connect with those plumbers. I got to shake hands and share mutual stories about digging trenches and working weekends and all the sleepless nights worrying about my business. I got to tell them about PHCC and the incredible networking and training opportunities we have available and the legislative efforts we're making on their behalf. It was probably one of the best days of my life ... and it was a perfect opportunity to spread the word about our association.

I am excited to have many more days like that in the coming year, and I urge you to join me. Let's get it done and continue to move this industry forward for our mutual benefit. I'm ready! Are you?

PHCC—National Association President Hunter Botto also is associated with Botto Brothers Plumbing & Heating in Hicksville, New York.

Local Chapter Reports

PHCC of WNY

By Steve Reddy, President of PHCC–WNY

COVID — What a pain in the ...!

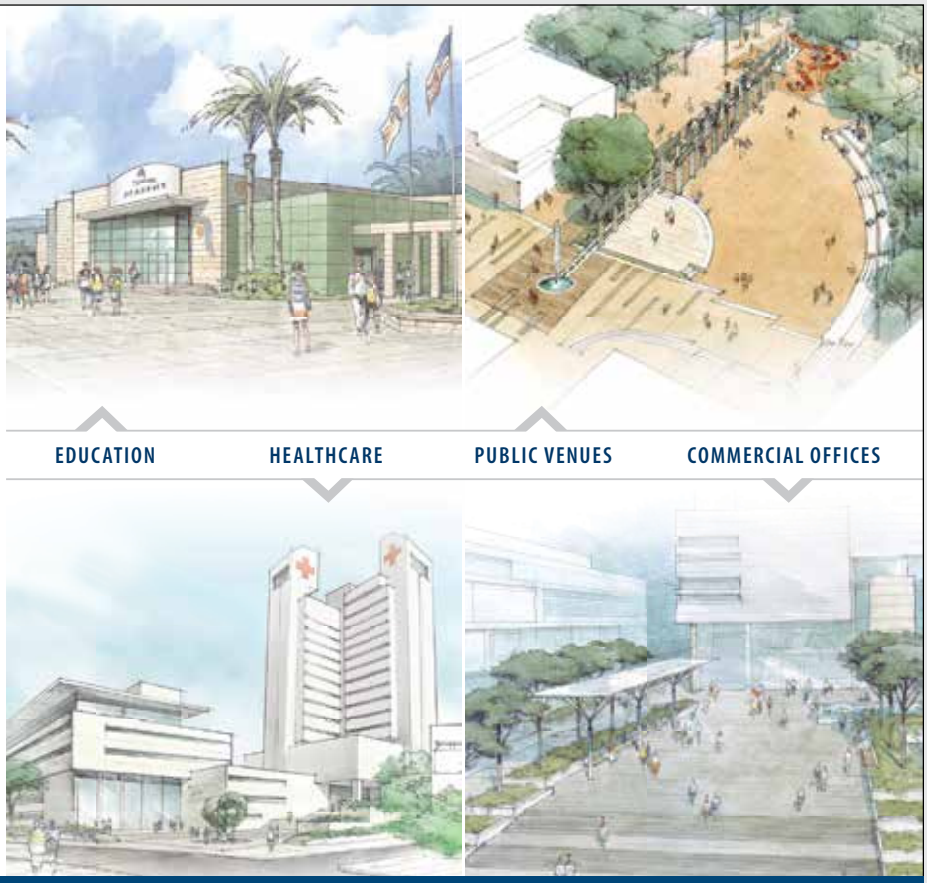
The PHCC of WNY held a meeting October 29th at the Eagle House Restaurant where a locally renowned lobbyist and political pundit gave a talk on the current political situation.

Although the meeting was not well attended a good time was had, the discussions ranged from political to hunting.

The current situation and limitations with regard to meetings and restaurant dining guidelines will continue to make it difficult for us to meet in person. This should not be seen as an obstacle but a challenge.

Wishing you all a happy and prosperous new year.

T&S



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NYSPHCC Legislative Update

By Nick Barella, NYSPHCC Lobbyist

The 2021 Legislative Session officially opened on Wednesday, January 6, amid budget uncertainty, the implementation of COVID-19 vaccinations, and historic events in the nation's capitol.

Since then, it has been a busy few weeks. The Governor presented his 2021 State of the State over a four-day period beginning on Monday, January 11, albeit virtual, and of course in Washington D.C. with the inauguration of President Joe Biden on January 20.

On Tuesday, January 19, Governor Cuomo delivered his 2021 Budget address, and released the accompanying legislation. The $189.7 billion proposal would close a $15 billion two-year gap with a mix of spending reductions, tax and fee increases and a reliance on extra-ordinary unrestricted Federal aid. This would provide for an overall spending reduction of $3.8 billion or 2 percent over current FY 2021 levels.

While the Executive Budget proposal would eliminate the entire two-year General Fund gap brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is still a cumulative five-year budget gap of $17.5 billion.

Thus, the FY 2022 budget includes spending cuts, a "temporary surcharge" on certain wealthy New Yorkers, freezes a middle-class tax cut, and includes other revenue raisers (e.g., an adult use cannabis program and mobile sports betting).

The Executive Budget proposal also includes a provision to trigger automatic across-the-board (ATB) cuts if unrestricted federal aid does not materialize by August 31, 2021, or if the amount is less than that assumed in the financial plan ($6 billion).

In June, the DOB initiated a 20 percent withhold of local aid payments. DOB now expects to revise that to a 5 percent withhold and expects to reconcile and repay amounts that have been withheld in excess of 5 percent in the final quarter of FY 2021.

2021/2022 NEW YORK STATE EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

CANNABIS REGULATION AND TAXATION ACT:

The Executive Budget Proposal would regulate and control the production, distribution, transportation, and sale of cannabis and cannabis related products in New York. The legislation would also impose three different taxes on cannabis products.

MOBILE SPORTS BETTING

The Executive Budget Proposal would allow mobile sports betting in New York, allowing the Gaming Commission to select a platform provider or providers through a competitive bidding process. All revenues would be directed to the State Lottery Fund for education aid.

INCREASE PIT TAX FOR HIGH WAGE EARNERS

The Executive Budget Proposal would require taxpayers with incomes over $5 million to pre-pay three years of excess liability based on five new tax brackets. A refundable tax credit would return the pre-payment to affected taxpayers between 2024 and 2025.

DELAY MIDDLE CLASS TAX CUT

The Executive Budget Proposal would delay the phase-in of the middle-class tax cut, which began in 2018 and was scheduled to fully phase in by 2025. Tax Year 2020 rates will remain in effect for an additional year.

PART-TIME UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Executive Budget Proposal includes language that would permit partial unemployment benefits based on the number of hours actually worked over the course of a week in an effort to incentivize unemployed New Yorkers to assume a part-time job as they search for full-time work.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION ($100,000,000)

The Executive Budget includes $100 million for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Participating communities are nominated by the State's 10 REDCs based on the downtown's potential for transformation. Each winning community is awarded funding to develop a downtown strategic investment plan and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization.

NEW YORK WORKS PROJECTS ($220,000,000)

The Executive Budget includes $220 million for the New York Works Economic Development Fund. The fund will provide additional statewide capital grants to support

Continued on page 10

projects that facilitate the creation of new jobs or retain existing jobs, or fund infrastructure investments necessary to attract new businesses or expand existing businesses in support of economic recovery.

BUDGET PROPOSALS THAT MAY AFFECT NYSPHCC MEMBERS

EDUCATION, LABOR AND FAMILY ASSISTANCE (ELFA) ARTICLE VII BUDGET BILL:

PART W – PROVIDE PAID LEAVE FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION

This bill would require public and private employers to provide up to four hours of paid leave for up to two COVID-19 vaccinations for each employee.

The COVID-19 vaccine will protect New Yorkers and allow them to safely return to the workforce, which will help grow the economy of the State. Employers must provide paid time off to employees to obtain the critical COVID-19 vaccine.

This proposal would require all public and private employers to provide up to four hours of paid leave, at the employee's regular rate of pay, for up to two COVID-19 vaccinations for each employee. An employer that provides or arranges to provide a COVID-19 vaccination at the employee's workplace would need only to provide sufficient time for an employee to obtain the vaccine. Employers would be prohibited from taking retaliatory actions against any employee who would utilize this leave, but they may request relevant documentation from an employee.

PART AA – EXTEND PREVAILING WAGE TO COVERED RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

This bill would create prevailing wage requirements for covered renewable energy projects, defined as construction work and engineering and consulting services performed in connection with either the installation of a renewable energy system, as such term is defined in section 66-p of the public service law, with a capacity over 25 megawatts alternating current and with a total project cost of over ten million dollars; or the installation of a solar energy system with a capacity over 5 megawatts alternating current and with a total project cost of over five million dollars.

The transition to the green economy and creating good paying jobs is a priority for New York State. In order to make this transition and achieve the ambitious goals set forth in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, a focus on renewable energy sources is necessary. A commitment to workers who will build the infrastructure of the green economy must be paramount. Setting clear standards for job quality will ensure the creation of good jobs, protect workers in the ongoing transition of our energy sector, and result in positive economic impacts. This bill would mandate prevailing wage for construction work and engineering and consulting services performed in connection with the installation of renewable energy systems.

REVENUE ARTICLE VII BUDGET LEGISLATION:

PART G – INCREASE WAGE AND WITHHOLDING FILING PENALTY

This bill would increase the maximum penalty imposed on employers for failure to provide complete and accurate wage reporting and withholding reports. Furthermore, it would increase the penalty calculation from $50 per employee to $100 per employee.

Each year the Department must reconcile over 200,000 discrepancies between the withholding reported by employees on their personal income tax returns and the withholding reported by employers on their quarterly combined withholding, wage reporting and unemployment insurance returns (the NYS-45 form). An analysis into the cause of these discrepancies has revealed that well over half of these discrepancies are caused by late or erroneous employer filings. These errors require significant Department resources to resolve and unnecessarily delay taxpayer refunds. Increasing the penalty for failure to timely and correctly file withholding returns would provide a financial incentive for employers to correctly and timely file, increasing tax compliance and improving the Department's ability to issue refunds to taxpayers in a timely manner.

PART II – EXTEND THE HIRE-A-VET CREDIT FOR TWO YEARS

This bill would extend by two years the tax credits provided for hiring veterans under Tax Law §§ 210-B (29) (Franchise Tax on Corporations), 606(a-2) (Personal Income Tax), and 1511(g-1) (Franchise Tax on Insurance Corporations). Currently, the hire a vet credit is available for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 2015, and before January 1, 2022. The credit is available to qualified taxpayers for the hiring of qualified veterans who commenced employment on or after January 1, 2014, and before January 1, 2021. It would extend this credit an additional two years to taxable years beginning before January 1, 2024, for employment commenced before January 1, 2023.

The NYSPHCC will keep you updated on the upcoming budget negotiations and on budget items that affect our members.

Is Your Website Ready for March 2021?

For several years now, Google has been focusing more and more on Mobile Search in determining its search rankings. Sixty-three percent of all Google searches now originate from a mobile device. The amount of mobile searches has grown every year since 2013 and will continue to become the dominant search medium. While Mobile-Friendly has been a growing Google ranking factor, it is about to become THE factor in Google rankings. In March 2021, Google will roll out mobile-first indexing for the entire web.

What does this mean?

Beginning in March 2021, Google will base what it indexes (and your search ranking) on the mobile version of your website. Previously your desktop version of your site was used to determine your indexing and ranking.

Should I Be Worried About Dropping in Google Search Rankings?

You should be concerned about dropping in Google Search Rankings if your site performs poorly on mobile devices, or if you have separate versions of your website for both mobile and desktop.

Check If Your Site Is Mobile-Friendly

Google will still index desktop sites, but it is going to be much harder to rank in Google Search if your website is not mobile-friendly. How do you know if your website is mobile-friendly? Check out Google's Mobile Friendliness Test to see whether or not your site is mobile-friendly. If your site fails this test, your website is not mobile-friendly, and there is a good chance your site will fall in Google search rankings starting in March 2020. Need help getting your site mobile-friendly? We can help!

Need Help Getting Your Site Ready for the Big Google Search Update in March 2021?

Here at Hudson,Ink, we specialize in helping our customers rank highly on Google Search and providing them with easy to understand reports so they know where their customers are coming from, what needs to be improved on their website and making sure their website is always in line with the latest best practices from Google.

If you need some help making sure your website is mobile-friendly and that you are ranking highly on Google Search, email us at coaches@hudsonink.com.

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Plumber COVID-19 Safety Requires Care and Consistency

By Allan Faxon, Safety Dept., Hamond Safety Mgt.

OSHA places plumbers and HVAC workers under the broad heading of "Construction Workers" and does not markedly distinguish them from other trades people in the construction industry but has the COVID-19 pandemic altered the agency's opinion?

Typically, becoming infected with an air or water-borne disease has been far more likely to happen to plumbers than other workers since sewage is contaminated with human feces and often contains up to four types of pathogens, such as bacteria, viruses, protozoa, and parasites, that are responsible for dozens of different illnesses.

The year 2020, however, saw a dramatic re-emphasis on "disease prevention" in the world's population as the COVID-19 virus has spread rapidly, creating a global pandemic. Keeping American workers safe, especially "essential" workers like plumbers, became critical too, and that is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) responsibility.

At the beginning of the outbreak, OSHA relied on existing regulations to require employers to protect their workers, despite criticism by some industry and union leaders that separate standards should be developed specifically for COVID-19 prevention. OSHA responded by stating that *requirements for respiratory protection in construction that were in place before the COVID-19 pandemic remain in place. Under OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard for construction (29 CFR 1926.103), employers must follow 29 CFR 1910.134 the general industry respiratory protection standard.*

The agency eventually began providing COVID-19 guidance that initially was limited in scope but became more comprehensive as health authorities such as the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC) began to better understand the virus. The most current guidance may be found on the OSHA website at the following location:

https://www.osha.gov/coronavirus/control-prevention

But again, this information does not specifically address the activities and environments that are unique to plumbers and HVAC workers. OSHA does not provide separate recommendations because, it states, *for most types of workers, the risk of infection with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) is* ***similar to that of the general American public.*** Therefore, some of the best practices for virus prevention in the plumbing industry are in-line with what has become universally recommended for the entire construction industry (see below):

- **Be aware of who will be at the jobsite**—If it is a residential environment, for example, try to schedule the appointment when no one is home, if possible,

to prevent contact with persons with an unknown behavioral history. If working near someone is unavoidable, do not hesitate to ask if they have been exposed to the virus or have any symptoms. Also, prior to arrival, make it clear that you expect any occupants to be wearing appropriate masks while at the jobsite.

- **Practice social distancing**—Health officials have urged for months that maintaining a minimum of six (6) feet distance between individuals is critical for effective virus prevention. This basic step must be observed continuously whenever other people (co-workers, customers, vendors…etc.) are present.

- **Use proper PPE**—Mask use to prevent virus spread has been widely recommended by health care authorities. While the N95 respirators are the most effective PPE to prevent contamination, they may be difficult to obtain since most have been diverted to health care workers. Surgical masks are the next best choice as are other designs. OSHA, the *Food and Drug Administration* (FDA), and the CDC all offer detailed evaluations and explanations regarding their design and function.

Wash and sanitize—Wash and sanitize hands and tools regularly and do not allow other workers to borrow personal tools unless they are disinfected before being returned. Diluted bleach solution will work for tools and soap and water handing washing for a minimum of 20 seconds will work to clean hands. If hand washing is not practical, use hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60 percent alcohol.

- **Watch and listen**—Employees should be trained by employers to detect signs of illness in themselves, co-workers, and others they encounter. Shortness of breath, cough, fever, headaches, among other indicators, may indicate a COVID-19 infection. They should notify their employers immediately if they experience any of these symptoms or if they notice or become aware of any co-workers who may have them. All infected persons should seek medical attention immediately and quarantine as directed by their health care professional.

Many of the precautions and procedures prescribed by OSHA should be commonly known after almost one year of virus management but complying with these guidelines requires the on-going commitment by employers and employees alike. The plumbing industry has been deemed "essential" so it must adjust as needed to changing conditions to provide a safe and healthful workplace.

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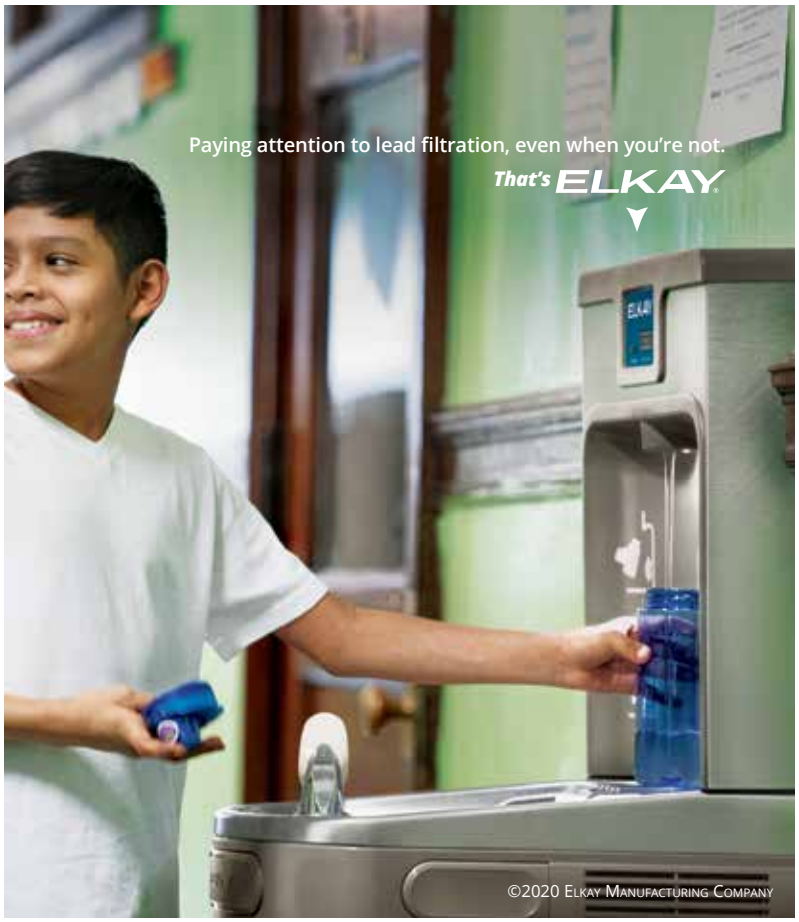

COVID BACKWARDS, 2021 FORWARD

By Mark Breslin

COVID spelled backward is DIVOC.

So, how DIVOC is 2021 going to be different?

Well, the answer, among many, is leadership. If there is ever a test of our country, our industry, our companies, our families, and ourselves – it is our test of leadership. The question is, what do we use as the foundation for this leadership, and what can we take with us, beyond dumpster-fire memories, into this new year of 2021 and beyond. And there are three reasons why:

- Our people are worn out, stressed, and uncertain.
- Asking them to "do more" is not a great option.
- They need something but would not know how to ask for it.

What they want to see most of all is that you care about them. That you are putting people first. A lot of times, this is an organizational throw-away line that substitutes for authentic action. In our industry, it looks more like this: Pay people good money. Say nice things to them from time to time (or not so much) and give them more shit to shovel. It is safe to say that many people wore out their shovels in 2020. A level of fatigue has set in that is easily recognizable. Alcohol sales being up 32% might be some indicator here, but I guess coping comes in a lot of forms.

The truth is that what really jumped out at me is the power of authentic caring by leaders. Maybe that was because of our national state of mind, which is a cross between agitated and anxious. That said, it is the leaders who are exhibiting care, calmness and compassion that seem to stand out.

I will admit, during 2020, I personally found these attributes in short supply more than once. As the pressure stayed on all year, I found myself lacking empathy at times. Lacking patience. Lacking understanding. Worn thin. Not thinking about the feelings of others, challenges, and fears. I imagined myself in other people's shoes, but I did a poor job of it. I guess I failed in my leadership when I acted as though everyone were like me. What I learned was that the moment that I showed human concern, I got the best results. Where my commitment and empathy faded and I ended up empowering others to lead, they did so better than me. I will not forget these lessons. And these are not temporary lessons – they are vital ones even for someone who has held the CEO label for a long, long time.

How do we do it? By stopping long enough to display enough care so they can feel it too. By shifting priorities and perspective. By moving beyond driving for results. By recognizing that the grind does have limits. To instead lend the kind words and actions that compensate for the uncertainty and stresses our people continue to endure. To lead with empathy and care.

The key for all of us leaders as we go forward into 2021 is never to lose focus on what is most important in our leadership role: it is the people first, and they need and deserve the sincere care and empathy that comes with us being the best version of ourselves.

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A Commitment to Professionalism

Stronger than Ever

By Michael Copp, Executive Vice President

Challenging times in 2020 only reinforced the need in plumbing and HVACR industry to come together and maintain high standards. Drawing on our 138-year history, PHCC protected our members and their employees, families and communities – even through a global pandemic – by supplying relevant resources, sharing best practices among our members, advocating to secure business-friendly legislation and regulation, pledging to train new workers, and providing the best education in the industry.

Among PHCC's top accomplishments this past year:

Made great strides in workforce development, including signing a pledge at a White House ceremony to train 75,000 people through the Foundation's plumbing and HVAC apprenticeship programs in January 2020 and witnessing enrollment in the Foundation's Pre-Apprentice Training Program more than double in growth throughout the year.

Quickly responded at the onset of the global pandemic with an online COVID-19 Resource Center, providing members and chapters with safety resources; boilerplate templates and graphics; a comprehensive COVID-19 Recovery Webinar Series; a Contractors Talk portal where members could share tips; and more.

Later transitioned PHCC's Resource Center to an online COVID-19 Recovery Center, adding new resources such customizable safety flyers, updates on federal legislation, and articles on how businesses are reimagining their workspaces.

Boosted member benefits and discounts, including a new multi-employer program that allows members to provide a competitive, turnkey 401(k) benefit to their employees.

Introduced several new timely courses, webinars and other resources from the PHCC Education & Training Department, including a special gateway to offerings from our key industry partners.

Advocated to secure business-friendly legislation, including the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and subsequent extension which benefited many PHCC members.

Leveraged video and PowerPoint presentations to provide helpful instructional guidance from experts on topics such as how to apply for federal loans, loan forgiveness procedures, back-to-work guidance and PPP requirements.

Provided a customizable version of PHCC's updated Crisis Action Plan (with new sample Pandemic Action Plan and model for COVID-19 staff training) to chapters and members, giving them access to important crisis planning resources.

Offered up-to-date articles, regulatory updates and education programs on the latest refrigerant options as the HVACR industry continued the transition to low-GWP refrigerants.

Tapped into creativity, adaptability and modern technology to host PHCCCONNECT2020 – our first annual convention held online – providing a rewarding opportunity for our member contractors, industry partners and affiliated groups to reconnect as an industry. As a bonus, all sessions were available for on-demand viewing following the event.

For a more comprehensive look at this year's accomplishments, check out PHCC's 2019-2020 Annual Report.

This past year is proof that we are stronger together; ... and with more members, we have even more power, more influence, and more to offer each other. If you are a member of PHCC, get more involved in 2021 to not only maximize your membership but to be the leaders moving forward and teach the next generation. If you are not a member of PHCC, we encourage you to join our association to access the valuable education, advocacy and networking resources you need to strengthen your business. Check out all we have to offer via www.phccweb.org/become-a-member, email membership@naphcc.org or call 800-533-7694.

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SUCCESS IS SIMPLE

By Bill Harrison

"Excuse me. Do you really believe that success is simple?" you might ask. The Coach says emphatically "yes." I said it is simple, I didn't say it was easy. You just have to apply two steps to ulimate success. "OK, I'll bite. What are the two steps?"

1 Do the right thing the first time.

2 Do the right thing.

Now, that sounds pretty simple doesn't it? But it isn't easy or everyone would be doing it. We will begin to examine some pitfalls with this simple two step program for success.

How about the company that built the scaffolding right the first time. It was perfect. Unfortunately, no one in the field nor the PM checked the latest plan updates that were available online. The phasing had changed and this scaffold was not due until the folloing month. The right thing to do would have been to check for plan changes.

Then we have the HVAC mechanic who had a checklist (Coach loves checklists) that told him the right thing to do was check the pressure after 30 minutes. He did it at 20 minutes because it was his last call of the day and he wanted to get home. You guessed it; there was a call back the next day. Customers do not like call backs, right?

A customer leaves a message for the PM in the early morning. The PM knows this will be a contentious call so he decides to call the customer back later. Two more messages from the customer and then the customer calls the VP. This became a very nasty situation and the customer was given a concession that would not have happened with a call back that morning. Not doing the right thing can lead to serious consequences.

Can you relate to any of these examples? Let's try some more.

A team member comes in late but you don't mention it. You figure this was just a one time event. Then it happens once a week for the next three weeks. The other team members are grumbling about it. You realize you have not done the right thing. Now you are in a pickle, aren't you? You forgot Coach says: "We always talk to people; not about people." You could have enforced the guidelines the very first time. Then if it continued you have steps you can use from your handbook, right?

Now, what if that team member was a buddy of yours you go fishing with. Now how do think the team members would react.

A final great example was a subcontractor who was installing balcony railings for a high rise apartment building. They didn't double check the measurement per code before installing the railings. When the inspector found it they were already on the third floor, and a ¼ inch low. Ouch!

"We need to recognize that doing the right thing is not always easy. Doing the right thing speaks to our character; and most people really do have a high standard for themselves."

— Bill Harrison, President of PLI, LLC

We need to recognize that doing the right thing is not always easy. Doing the right thing really speaks to our character; and most people really do have a high standard for themselves. When something is cut and dry then we can stick to our guns and do the right thing, but sometimes the situation can get a bit "squishy" and then we are challenged. What if the team member in question is a relative? Do you handle him or her like everyone else when your getting ready for a holiday dinner? I had a client in Tampa, FL that had me help fire his wife. She could work any schedule she wanted; it just had to be set. She wanted to come and go as she pleased but others depended on her. Thus, she got fired. It was the right thing to do but it definitely wasn't easy. They are still married and that was years ago.

Sometimes the right thing to do will cost our company money. Arguing with a customer when we know the company is in the wrong is a no win situation. It is about our reputation but what if this is the time of year when money is really tight. I have seen owners go both ways on this but doing the right thing always turns out for the better.

"We most often get in trouble when we are in a 'hurry up mode.' The coach strongly believes in slow down and go faster."

— Bill Harrison, President of PLI, LLC

We most often get in trouble when we are in a "hurry up mode." The Coach strongly believes in slow down to go faster. It might take an extra ten minutes to make certain we have everything we need before charging out the door to a rush job. What happens when we get to the job and are missing a key part or tool or piece of equipment? What if the right thing was to make sure the drill battery was charged but we didn't do it? It would have taken about one minute to do the right thing. Now we are on the job and the drill is unusable; except as a hammer.

Ever send a tech on a service call who didn't have the skill sets necessary for the job; but he was available. How did that work out? The right thing would be to let the customer know when we could send a qualified tech to their home.

The majority of the time doing the right thing is something very simple and takes only a few minutes. Yes, the steps to success are very simple but obviosly not easy. First, do the right thing. Slow down to go faster. Then do it right the first time. It takes training and discipline to know how to do it right the first time. Then it takes commitmnet from the management to stick to these two steps. Just do it!

Have a question, The Coach can help.

Remember – The Coach does not succeed until you do.

Bill Harrison is president of PLI, LLC.

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