

NY Connection



Official Magazine for the New York State PHCC

Winter 2024



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President's Message



Greetings NYS PHCC Members. I hope everyone is easing into the cooler weather and enjoying the season's changes. While we are still seeing some 80-degree days down on Long Island, the leaves are changing color and we are entering the heating season. With that in mind, I hope everyone is busy and business is profitable.

I am pleased to report we had a solid New York representation at the 2024 PHCC Connect National Convention held in Birmingham, Alabama this past October 7th through 10th. There were great workshops, informative speakers, and social events that provided meaningful education. It was a memorable time. There was a lot of discussion on AI and cybersecurity. I would like to cover these topics as well as other important ones at our 2025 NYS Convention. We are grateful for our sponsors who provided presentations to our Board, Federated Insurance and Milwaukee Tools. We are looking forward to the 2025 PHCC Connect in Grand Rapids, Michigan!

As for our 2025 NYS Convention, please be on the lookout for registration information if you have not already seen it, but it will be held in Savannah, Georgia, May 1-4, 2025 at the wonderful JW Marriott in the historic district, located right on

the riverfront! Registration will be on online form this year and we will be billing for rooms ahead and using a House Account at the JW Marriott to make it a little easier. If you have any questions, please email the office at info@nysphcc.org.

I will defer to our lobbyist, Catalyst, for the Legislative Report, but it sounds like we are finally making headway with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on their proposed HFC regulations as it seems they plan to revise the originally proposed rules. We are also planning our 2025 Lobby Day with Catalyst and hope to have good representation in Albany early next year.

Finally, I want to make it a priority to grow the association and provide meaningful services to our members. If you know of a company in your region or another unrepresented region that could use the help of the NYS PHCC, I kindly urge you to pass along the information or have them contact April, Terry, or myself.

I am always available for a conversation. Please feel free to contact me at any time. My email is ron@willistonplumbing.com and my phone number is 516-746-3353.

Thank you,

Ronald Doughty

President
NYS PHCC

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We will also be emailing the information through our monthly e-newsletter The State Angle!

If you have any questions, please email us at info@nysphcc.org



NYSPHCC CHAPTER REPORTS

Association of Contracting Plumbers of the City of New York (ACP)

By: Terence O'Brien, Executive Vice President

The ACP hosted its annual charity golf outing in May. This year's worthy honoree was the Olivia Hope Foundation. This Foundation was created to honor the wish of Olivia Hope LoRusso, who passed from Acute Myeloid Leukemia in 2017. It was her vision and hope that someday, children afflicted with AML (Acute Myeloid Leukemia) and other childhood cancers would not have to suffer the way she did. There were over 200 attendees at the reception which raised \$154,500 at the May 20th event at Old Westbury Country Club.

In June, the ACP held a reception for its 2024 winners of the Eugene & Raymond Cardoza Memorial Scholarship winners. As a reminder, all scholarship applications are reviewed by an independent panel of educators and selections are based upon academic achievement, community service, and extracurricular activities. These winners were determined by a panel of Fordham professors. Five recipients will receive \$5,000 a year towards a collegiate education. The winners (Sean Hasretli, Thomas R. Mansfield, Nicole M. Radliff, Noah S. Rickman, Kamila Utko) were honored by members of the ACP, including President Robert Greenberg, Local 1 Business Manager Paul O'Connor, and Christina Genovese, daughter of Ray Cardoza / granddaughter of Gene Cardoza.

Lastly, the ACP jointly with Plumbers Local 1 offered and distributed 1,000 applications for its Joint Apprenticeship Training Program. These applicants were vetted, interviewed, and ranked in accordance with NYS DOL regulations and requirements. These candidates will be considered for our upcoming March 2025 class.

PCA of Long Island

By: Jimmy Russo, President

Plumbing Contractors Association of Long Island, under the leadership of President Jimmy Russo of JPR Plumbing and Heating, just hosted their annual golf outing where they raised funds for the benefit of Tunnel to Towers. A great day was had by all as over 180 golfers took to Colonial Springs Golf Course in Farmingdale, New York.

The final donation amount totaled \$100,000 which will go to all of the activities and programs sponsored by Tunnel to Towers, a nationally recognized charity benefiting first responders and veterans who have served our country.

In addition, PCALI has been busy at work with the second year of their new metal trades school where 10 up-and-coming plumbers have been learning and studying how to be the next generation of plumbers on Long Island. PCALI is committed to creating a permanent school that will serve future students who want to become plumbers in the industry. They have identified a location, allocated funds to build out the space, and are now recruiting students for an upcoming class in January 2025.



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Good Communication Skills Help Build Relationships

By: Neal Smith, Safety Specialist-2
Hamond Safety Management

It may not occur to plumbers as they go about their daily tasks that their success or failure may depend as much on their ability to communicate as it does their proficiency with the tools of the trade. Good communication with customers from the beginning of the relationship to the end will provide a windfall of benefits that will last long after the job is done.

Remember the old saying, "You only have one chance to make a first impression"? It applies not only to life's personal encounters but to the plumbing business too. Laying the foundation for a lasting relationship begins with a positive initial encounter. A new customer who has a plumbing problem or needs installation work in a bathroom addition to their home, for example, is like a blank slate. It is up to the plumbing company to write positive messages on this slate to build trust and empathy.

Empathy is putting oneself in another's place to better understand their concerns, while trust is a bond created over time. Without trust especially, generating repeat business can be difficult because if trust is lacking, customers may decide to use a different plumber for future repairs or projects. Following through on promises or commitments is essential for building it.

Begin managing expectations from the beginning by informing the customer upfront about costs, timelines, and discuss any potential problems before they develop. Being transparent and honest about the entire job from start to finish will foster relationship building and ultimately empathy and trust.

When informing the customer about the specifics of the upcoming task, do not forget to listen to any concerns or questions they may have because being a good listener is just as important as speaking well. If a customer believes they are being heard and their opinions respected, they will be more inclined to rely on your professional expertise and judgement. Do not forget to ask them questions too, just to be certain that both parties are on the same page.

After completing the job, touching base with the customer is as important as

establishing trust and empathy. A short email, text, or a phone call will suffice. This step meets two objectives. First, it deepens the relationship with the customer. Second, they will appreciate this gesture because it indicates they have not been forgotten even after the work's completed and the bill paid, an important step in this increasingly customer-centric world.

Cultivating and sustaining a positive image with new contacts is vital in a world where reputation can change quickly from good to bad if a plumbing company receives just a few negative feedback comments. That is why making a good first impression is necessary but, after that, keeping customers happy throughout the process and beyond is even more critical. Plumbers able to accomplish this task will enjoy positive reviews and, most importantly, repeat business derived from a well-deserved reputation built on honesty and integrity.



NYS PHCC Attends Connect 2024



The NYS crew! Including NY-natives PHCC National President Joe Cornetta and Secretary Don Powers, and our NYS President Ron Doughty and Immediate Past President Chris Tryjankowski! We had NYS members from Western NY all the way to NYC and Long Island! Thanks Milwaukee for all your support!

#phccconnect2024

The “Magic City” of Birmingham, Alabama welcomed the New York State PHCC at National’s annual conference “PHCC Connect.” The food, friends, and forums proved to be as spectacular as ever.

On Monday evening, to kickoff the convention, the opening party was held at the Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum. If you have not been, it is a must-see. Floor to floor to floor (and so on) to ceiling to walls of vintage cars and motorcycles and everything in between provided hours of entertainment for guests. On Tuesday, the opening speaker Dr./Commander Mary Kelly on “Why Leaders Fail” provided an insightful and inspiring kickoff for the day which was filled with informative workshops and presentations on various “hot” topics like cybersecurity and AI. Our Board held a meeting at which we received presentations from two of our sponsors, Federated Insurance and Milwaukee Tools. Thanks to both for their ongoing support of the NYS PHCC!

The New York State Chapter was pleased to host a dinner for its members and guests at Helen, a true Birmingham gem located in a two-story 1920s-era shotgun-style building in the City’s downtown. It was a lovely evening and we enjoyed a delectable supper among friends. We cannot thank Milwaukee Tools enough for their sponsorship of this dinner!

Wednesday continued with a keynote presentation from Jeff Butler on Building an Effective Multi-Generational Workplace. All Millennial-jokes aside, Mr. Butler made several key points about closing those cultural gaps between employees of different generations. The day continued with more breakout sessions and in the evening was an Alabama tailgate party under Birmingham’s City Walk, which provided food trucks and games.

The PHCC Educational Foundation also hosted a reception on Wednesday evening, and we are happy to have made a contribution to the Foundation! They were able to raise \$280,000 in 2024. Recently, the Educational Foundation announced its 2024 Scholarship Recipients: fifty-five students were selected to receive scholarship awards totaling \$129,000. Congratulations to all 55! We’d like to give a special shoutout to the New Yorkers: Isabella Gazzola of Lynbrook, NY; Caleb Hayden of Lisbon, NY; Steven Marriaga of New York, NY; and Muhammad Siddiqui of Lynbrook, NY!

Thursday’s closing breakfast was also an awards ceremony and marked the beginning of the new National Board. We congratulate those honorees at the ceremony as well as the incoming National Board of Directors.

Next year’s Connect is being held in Grand Rapids, Michigan from October 27-30, so mark your calendars now!

Catalyst Government Relations Legislative Summary

www.catalystnewyork.com

On September 5th at the Future Energy Economy Summit hosted by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) in Syracuse, Governor Kathy Hochul emphasized the importance of advanced clean energy technologies for renewable energy and economic growth in the state of New York. The Summit aimed to strategize for increasing energy demand while advancing the state’s goal of a zero-emission electricity system. Key points included:

1. Prioritizing the development of New York’s renewable energy grid to harness the benefits of wind and solar.
2. Enhancing research and market development for emissions-free technologies to ensure a reliable and affordable energy grid.
3. Maximizing federal funding opportunities to support economic growth and clean energy initiatives.

Next steps involve leveraging federal programs, advancing zero-emissions technology discussions, and ensuring the next State Energy Plan incorporates advanced emissions-free technologies. The Summit, attended by over 600 participants—in person and virtual—aimed to accelerate renewable energy deployment and support economic growth aligned with the state’s climate goals.

Governor Hochul indicated in her discussions that the NYS Public Service Commission relied on outdated data, which led to miscalculations about the state’s ability to reach the energy mandates of the CLCPA. The Governor’s message

was essentially that we have a set of well-intended laws that she supports but given the post-COVID era we do need to balance what we are doing for our environment and the readiness of our businesses to comply.

DEC HFC Regulation Update

On January 10th the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed a regulation that will phase out the use of hydrofluorocarbons pursuant to the mandate of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

Specifically, Part 494 would adopt prohibitions of certain products and equipment that use certain hydrofluorocarbon substances, specifically those prohibitions on air-conditioning, refrigeration, aerosol propellant, and foam-blowing applications. These prohibitions apply to new or retrofitted equipment, which would apply statewide. As we have engaged in opposition on behalf of the Association as well as other businesses, we are anticipating changes to this proposed regulation.

2025 Forecast

As of mid-October, there are roughly 805 bills that passed both the Senate and the Assembly. Out of those 805 bills, about 371 of them have yet to be acted on by the Governor. We predict in the upcoming months there will be a large influx of acted on bills that will either get vetoed or signed into law. Given this context we will continue to monitor the outcome of the Climate Superfund Act.



If You Can't Measure It, You Can't Improve

It's what tells you what you need to know about your customers' needs and expectations so you can serve them better.

It's what drives customers to choose you over other contractors.

It's what helps you track callbacks so you can minimize their impact ... or lead conversion rates so you know how much time and money you put into making a sale.

It's what helps associations like PHCC identify and build resources around our members' needs.

It's what we use to identify the latest employment and economic trends so that your company can accordingly adjust your strategies every year.

And it's what helps formulate the topics of the articles in this magazine ... not to mention the content offered at CONNECT and other PHCC events.

It's data, and it influences – or should influence – how your business operates. After all, if you can't measure it, you can't improve it.

Fortunately, businesses are realizing the value of data more and more. According to a 2024 survey of data leaders by Wavestone, the percentage of organizations that are “driving business innovation from data” increased from 59.5 percent in 2023 to 77.6 percent this year.

PHCC is Among Those Organizations.

PHCC is working hard to create a more data-driven culture. Those surveys you receive from us in your inbox? They drive everything from the way we communicate with you to the benefits we provide.

On a daily basis, our staff reviews the results of communications and marketing campaigns to see what's working ... and what's not. We also identify industry trends based on data and then conduct deep dive discussions at PHCC Board meetings on the important issues affecting you.

Our Business Intelligence resources, for example, are heavily influenced by data provided by you and by economic and industry experts. We know that when we share trends and member sentiment, that helps influence your sales strategies, purchasing power, and employment efforts, among other business management decisions.

For our association, that information also helps guide the partnerships we seek, the events we host, the issues we advocate for, and the training opportunities we offer.

Key Questions ... Answered in this Issue.

Along the way, we ask ourselves some key questions ... the same questions you're hopefully asking yourselves. How do we use our data? Protect our data? And – the big question these days – how does AI tie into all this?

In this current issue of PHCC Solutions, your PHCC peer contractors and chapter executives share their experiences ... including the AI platforms and software they're incorporating to improve efficiency, cost-effectiveness, employee onboarding, and much more. We also hear from PHCC partners like Federated Insurance that help you manage some of the risks associated with more technology.

So How Do You Cultivate a Data-Driven Organization?

A 2024 article from ASAE, the Center for Association Leadership, suggests it starts at the top ... that's you! “Your data strategy begins with [the CEO] building a case for a data strategy and setting expectations for success milestones.”

Then, according to the report, “instill a data culture.” Include data in conversations; question the “hunches,” and regularly inspect outcomes. Next, “define metrics and apply specific measurements and goal timelines to communicate outcomes with all internal stakeholders.” ASAE suggests tying each metric back to your company's strategic goals and business outcome.

Perhaps the most important guidance from ASAE – and something that we at PHCC regularly examine – is that “leaders must be willing to inspect past choices and seek lessons to inform future decisions.” Leaders, it continues, “must also recognize that teams require support to become data-driven via upskilling, tools, and time.”

Finally, remember that data strategy is a journey, not a destination. As ASAE advises, consider rolling out new ideas in phases, “providing regular success milestones for your company and continuing momentum, and budgeting for ongoing investment of dollars and people as you upskill teams to support growth and innovation.”

Of course, a huge resource in building a data-driven culture is right here at PHCC. Ask questions of your peer contractors. Send your employees to one of the management workshops offered by our PHCC Educational Foundation. Rely on current data from our industry partners. For example, they are providing the Knowledge and Technology Hubs at CONNECT 2024 in Birmingham, and they often share their insights on this hot topic in publications like the PHCC Advocate and the one you're holding in your hands right now!



Cindy Sheridan, CAE is Chief Executive Officer of PHCC—National Association. With decades of association management experience – most recently as the Chief Operating Officer of the PHCC Educational Foundation – Sheridan and her team work to ensure that PHCC contractors are the best choice for

professionalism, reliable products, and knowledgeable service.

Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2024 Legislative and Grassroots Excellence Awards!

By: Mark Valentini, VP of Legislative Affairs, NA-PHCC

Our state chapters continue to work hard ensuring plumbing and HVAC contractors are represented in state capitals across the country. Two chapters were recognized for their exceptional work influencing legislation and raising awareness for the issues impacting our industry.

PHCC of Louisiana won the 2024 PHCC Grassroots Excellence Award. Our chapter in the Bayou State has been busy leveraging its state political action committee to build relationships with state legislators and also played a central role in moving legislation forward that reinforced licensing and workforce development programs to the benefit of our industry.

PHCC of Washington State won the 2024 PHCC Legislative Excellence Award for building a first-class advocacy

program that was key to expanding its membership more than three-fold and worked with our counterparts in organized labor to pass legislation that reformed the plumbing industry with an innovative approach to journeyman-to-apprentice ratios while repealing policies that penalized apprentices.

Advocacy efforts at the state level are no less important than our work at the federal level, especially when it comes to licensing, building codes, and energy policies restricting the use of gas and delivered fuels. PHCC state chapters are at the front lines of those efforts and in an ideal position to represent their industry with state policymakers. Contact Mark Valentini at valentini@naphcc.org to learn more about the resources available to state chapters to help build and reinforce state advocacy infrastructure.



From left to right: Crystal Carter, Jay Huckabee, Terry Smith, and Trey Giglo (PHCC of Louisiana); PHCC VP of Legislative Affairs Mark Valentini with Jason Pritchard, Todd Allred, and Dennis Hamon (PHCC of Washington State)

Inverters Offer New Air Conditioning Alternative

By: Anthony Vacchio, Safety Manager, Hamond Safety Management

For some time now, pressure has been on worldwide for designers to find better ways to heat and cool the built environment. As governmental agencies have continuously tightened regulations and set deadlines for improvement to heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems, they have been forced to keep pace. One recent innovation, called the inverter, has the potential to be the new technology that may have a significant impact on indoor cooling while also having a positive effect on the environment.

Unlike conventional air conditioning systems that are either “on” or “off”, inverters have advanced features, including variable compressor technology. Once an inverter receives the temperature setting information from the building’s occupants, it operates at full speed to

reach the target as quickly as possible. Then, it monitors the indoor temperature closely and, unlike conventional equipment, turns on as soon as it detects even the slightest increase. The residents hardly notice any changes to their personal comfort level because the system adjusts it almost immediately.

Is this new design “too good to be true”? Does the inverter check all the boxes regarding efficiency, environmental friendliness, and affordability, and if so, will it be the answer to the future of air conditioning the built environment? Like so many new and innovative products, inverter units have many advantages, but they also have disadvantages too, at least at this point. Below are listed some of both:

pros

Efficiency: Inverters are significantly more efficient than conventional units, which can only operate at full power when turned on. Variable compressor speed technology allows them to “feather” their fans at low speeds, just enough to tweak the ambient temperature, resulting in as much as 40% lower energy costs when compared to conventional AC systems.

Quietness: Staged compressor speeds mean much quieter operation than a conventional unit to the point that they operate almost silently. This feature contrasts with the distinct noises made by standards systems. In addition, the interior fan can run even without the compressor being engaged.

Consistent Cooling: Inverter air conditioners propel air in many directions which facilitates quick and even cooling for every room within a conditioned space. This is a major improvement over conventional units where thermostats keep their immediate vicinity at the called-for temperature, but other remote spaces may be noticeably warmer.

Compliments Solar Power: Homeowners having both a conventional HVAC system and a solar array know that much of the sun’s energy they store in batteries must be used for cooling and heating. An inverter air conditioner’s efficiency is so much better, however, that only a much smaller portion of solar energy is needed for it to function.

cons

Adequate Insulation: Owners of a poorly insulated structure will not be able to take full advantage of an inverter’s inherent efficient operation and in fact their utility bills may increase, not decrease. Older homes especially should be tested to determine energy efficiency prior to installing an inverter.

Humidity Issues: The fact that an inverter’s compressor runs so infrequently once the desired temperature is reached prevents extraction of humidity from interior spaces. This can lead to discomfort, regardless of the outside temperature, as well as health problems such as asthma, allergies, and mold growth issues.

Expensive: Like so many new technologies, inverters are expensive, even though the demand for this equipment currently is low. Replacement part costs also are significantly higher than those of a conventional system. These factors may discourage some customers from selecting an inverter, even though in the long run they will recover their initial investments due to lower operating costs.

Eventually, inverters may evolve into being the standard bearer for cooling but only when designers can correct certain operational shortcomings, if their availability increases, and they also become more affordable.

In the near term, however, HVAC industry professionals have time to study this entirely new method of cooling to prepare for its potential mass distribution in the future.

I ♥ My Pipe Wrench

The call came from the editor of Solutions magazine – “It’s time to write your final column as PHCC—National President. Can you highlight technology/innovation in the plumbing industry? Please try to stay on topic.” (I guess I veered outside the lane in past articles.)

So, technology/innovation in the plumbing industry ... huh ... I think that started when dad purchased automatic transmissions in our work trucks. It was the best innovation you could ask for ... but I would have needed a hip replacement if I had been working that clutch pedal for the last 40 years.

Somehow, though, I think my PHCC editor wanted more, and I knew I needed to reach out to the experts. Where better to find the latest in technology but with PHCC’s industry partners?

Among Our Generous Partners ...

Richard Simons, a senior vice president at Bradford White, answered the call. Rich was excited about Bradford White’s innovations in high-efficiency gas, electric, heat pump, and space heating products. “Rich, that’s awesome,” I replied, “and I love Bradford White’s commitment to the contractors. Can I use my pipe wrench on all those products?” Rich reminded me that workmanship was not included in the warranty.

Rheem Manufacturing Company has become one of PHCC’s strongest HVAC allies, and Randy Roberts is the best. “What’s new at Rheem?” I asked. “Heat pumps are approaching 50% of the total market, and Rheem continues to be a leader in air and water heat pump technology,” he said. “We’re helping contractors provide consumers with the ultimate in home comfort.”

Thanks, Randy. I’m comfortable swinging wrenches as a plumber, but I know our thousands of HVAC contractors will appreciate that.

Scott Teson represents Milwaukee Tool, which has gone above and beyond to innovate the plumbing world. Battery storage, he said, is amazing. “We power drain cleaning equipment, pipe threaders, lighting, and dozens of hand tools for hours with our battery technology.”

“Hey, Scott,” I replied, “batteries are exciting, but how about Milwaukee’s Cheater Pipe Wrench? That’s what I call innovation.”

My space in this column only allows me to share a sampling of our many valued industry partners. Their commitment to our industry and to PHCC is amazing, and I join all PHCC staff and our members in thanking them for their generous support.



Dad’s Input

What article would be complete without the perspective of my dad, Chick Cornetta, 91 years young and full of energy. When I met up with him, he glanced at his watch – “It’s 5:30 p.m., you only worked half a day?”

“Dad,” I asked, “what’s the greatest innovation in your 70 years in the industry?”

“The pipe wrench,” he quipped. “It requires hands-on manpower to operate. No software program, phone app, artificial intelligence, or charging station ... just your built-in torque wrench,” he added, pointing to his forearm.

A Year With My Wrench

This past year has been amazing. It began at CONNECT 2023 in Cleveland, Ohio, where RIDGID Tools presented me with a 100-year anniversary pipe wrench. At my swearing-in ceremony, I thanked my beautiful wife, Lillian, for her support and pledged I would be a better president than my friend Hunter Botto.

Our PHCC Legislative Conference in May was the largest in years. SkillsUSA renewed my faith that young people want to work with their hands ... so much so that I volunteered to assist next year. Our streamlined PHCC CONNECT 2024 conference will breathe new life into the greatest networking and education convention in the industry.

It was a privilege working with Don Powers and our PHCC—National Executive Committee. Next year, Dan Callies, Jason Pritchard, and Tyler Arndt will lead our Chief Executive Officer, Cindy Sheridan, with fresh ideas.

And thanks to all of you who showed faith in me to better this wonderful association. I’ve absolutely enjoyed my time as your president, especially writing articles for Solutions magazine. I’ve even nicknamed myself the “Ernest Hemingway of Elmont.” I wish my eighth-grade English teacher could see the fruits of her labor.

It’s time to say goodbye as your president, but I have my pipe wrench ... and a whole lot more.



PHCC—National Association President Joe Cornetta is co-owner of Cornetta Bros., Inc., a third-generation plumbing and heating business in Elmont, New York.



The NYS PHCC wants to hear from you!

Interested in writing an op-ed or highlighting your business? Know a vendor who wants to advertise with the NYS PHCC? If the answer is YES, as it should be, please contact us!

Reach us at info@nysphcc.org for further details on how to get in the next issue of *NY Connection*.

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Digital Display: No more guessing games! The full digital display keeps you informed about the backup system's status. No cryptic signals here—just clear information.

No Moving Parts: With the Ion® digital level sensors, our middle system senses water without moving parts. They're reliable, efficient, and won't cause any drama.

Quick Installation: We know you're busy, so we've made installation a breeze. No need to call in reinforcements—set it up and forget it.

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