



LIVING LOCAL

BTU keeps 'crazy busy' with heating, cooling and plumbing

Local business serves residential, commercial, industrial customers

By Ryan McGaughey
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WORTHINGTON — It could be said that this winter has seemed “crazy long” in Worthington and the area ... and we’ve still got to get through March. For the folks at BTU Heating & Cooling & Plumbing, the current season has been “crazy busy.”

The Worthington business, co-owned by Cory and Jacki Bomgaars and located at 341 Oxford St., has actually seen little downtime since last summer, when flooding plagued a significant portion of the region.

“All that rain created a whole bunch of problems,” Jacki said. “With people’s furnaces and water heaters, if a certain portion of them gets submerged, for example, it could potentially fry the unit.”

“While we were busy dealing with those types of issues, the routine maintenance inspections we usually do in the fall had to be put on the back burner because it got cold so fast,” she continued. “Now, we’ve just been crazy busy. We take as many calls as we can, and we’re blessed to have such heavy workloads.”

The Bomgaars, who initially bought a portion of BTU in 2014, officially took complete ownership of the business last month after purchasing the shares owned by Jim Thill, who passed away in March 2018. BTU was founded by Thill and Hardy Boots, and Cory and Jacki had originally purchased Boots’ share of the operation.

BTU’s clientele includes residential, commercial and industrial customers, which also keeps the calendar full for its employees. The company also offers plumbing services — it has added two plumbers in the last four years — and has recently hired two new service techs. Cory’s brothers, Rodney and Scott, are employed part-time at the business, as is Cory’s mom, Cindy.

Jacki, meanwhile, began working full-time at BTU last June.

“The secretary, Mary Kunerth, had been here since the inception of the business, for the most part, and she was ready to retire,” Jacki said. “Cory needed an experienced office person, and ultimately I knew it was time to invest in our family business. This also offers me flexibility so I can bring our kids wherever they need to be during the day without pulling Cory away.”

In addition to offering services for all types of customers, BTU also sells merchandise such as furnaces, air-conditioning

equipment, boilers and water heaters.

“It’s difficult to stock all things relative to heating, cooling and plumbing,” Jacki admitted, “so we don’t have what you’re looking for, we can get it for you. We have the ability to get it from a wholesaler, while the general public does not.”

It’s the service end of the business, though, that keeps BTU employees most active. In winter, for instance, it’s not uncommon for the company to receive a call from someone who has lost heat in their residence or business. Those calls are always placed at the highest priority, Jacki said, but she cautioned that all issues the company addresses can’t always be solved immediately.

“Initially, we will go out and diagnose the problem. Often times it is something we have immediate access to that can be fixed right away, while other times we might have to order a part. It may be a day or two before the part is in.” Jacki

explained. “Then we have to find another time to schedule someone to return and install the part so the problem can be fixed. Things can’t always be done in one day.”

In lieu of troubleshooting wintertime woes, Jacki offered some simple suggestions for homeowners.

“We would recommend regularly checking the batteries in your thermostat and regularly check the filters on your furnace,” she said. “You can also make sure to clear snow near the furnace piping that is vented out through your house. It’s not a bad idea to have a couple of space heaters on hand — at least you have a secondary heat source if your furnace goes out.”

“A little planning ahead can be a saving grace. These are things you can do to potentially keep you from being left without heat.”

BTU expects to remain busy once springtime arrives, as there are several clients already scheduled for air conditioning installations. Additionally, BTU is now in the midst of HVAC work

for the new Lakeside Travel Plaza on U.S. 59/Minnesota 60 and the remodeled Cenex station on North Humiston Avenue, Jacki said.

Other sources of pride for the business are good working relationships with community contractors that get customers the help they need more quickly, as well as an increased level of involvement in the community.

“We took first place in the Tinsel & Tidings on 10th parade,” Jacki noted of BTU’s float entry. “We were really excited by that, as well as by the growing number of floats that were in the parade.”

“We’re already making our plans for next year’s float,” she added.



Jacki (left) and Cory Bomgaars are the co-owners of Worthington’s BTU Heating, Cooling & Plumbing.

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