

Integrity, quality featured at Stahl Plumbing and Heating

By Kristin Radtke

There's no particular secret to the longevity of Green Lake's Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc., other than simple philosophies that relate to a solid foundation of integrity.

For fifteen years, the business at N6270 Depot Road has prided themselves on providing services to their customers based on courtesy, professionalism, and hard work.

Owners Steve and Barb Stahl had lived in Oshkosh before settling in Green Lake. With some plumbing experience gained from working on apartment buildings, Steve started his apprenticeship with Cliff Bryden of Ripon's Bryden Plumbing and Heating.

After three years there, he finished his five-year apprenticeship with Green Lake resident Frank Tomaszewski, who he was also employed with for three years. Additionally, Steve worked briefly for Atomic Plumbing of Ripon before starting his own business.

In its 1991 infancy, Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. was based out of the couple's home, with materials stored in their two-car garage.

It didn't take long before they realized they'd need some additional space.

Steve had worked for Joe Norton, whose boat-building operation was across the road from the former Wisconsin Central Lumber Company on Depot Road.

When the lumberyard became available, the Stahls jumped at the chance to purchase the buildings in the historic part of Green Lake once known as "Lower Town."

"We saw that it was a good time to start a business in Green Lake," Steve reflected. "And it

was something that Barb and I could do together."

The additional space also gave the couple an opportunity to open a showroom, something that no similar local business had at the time.

In the showroom, it's Steve and office manager Heather Armstrong who'll meet with customers, helping them pick out the fixtures that will complement both their home and their budget.

"It's a lot of fun," Heather said of the process that transforms bathrooms into showpieces complementing the individuality of the homeowner.

The showroom features Kohler tubs, sinks, and toilets and other top-of-the-line products such as Rohl, Sigma, and White House, as well as easily-recognizable brands including Delta, Moen, and American Standard.

From new construction, remodeling, and repairs, to water heaters, water softeners, boilers, and hot water heat, Stahl's staff of four have a combined total of 48 years of experience.

One of their plumbers specializes in larger construction and remodeling. Two other plumbers, as well as Steve, provide expertise in service calls and smaller remodeling projects.

"We've been extremely lucky over the years," Steve reflected. "We've been very fortunate to have excellent employees."

Steve said the company thinks so highly of their employees, they're treated like members of the family.

In fact, some of those employees are family. Journeyman Luke Ladwig and apprentice Jake Ladwig are brothers.

Jake's apprenticeship marks the third one Steve's had, in addition to Luke's. His first was one that made him especially proud.

The couple's son, Chris, started his career with the family busi-



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THE STAFF AT Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. includes (L-R) office manager Heather Armstrong, plumber Will Van Rossum, apprentice Jake Ladwig, owner Steve Stahl, and plumber Luke Ladwig.

ness by training with his father. These days, he's one of the top journeymen in the service department at Madison's Benjamin Plumbing, continuing as the second generation of family members in the trade.

"It's important to take on (an) apprentice so the industry keeps going," said Steve. "In Wisconsin, there's a shortage of plumbers. We believe in the apprenticeship program."

Preferring quality over quantity, Steve said the company likes to focus on covering a smaller geographic area, which includes Green Lake, Princeton, Berlin, and Ripon.

"We'd rather try to find more

work in a smaller area than expand," he explained.

Customers also enjoy the informal and welcoming office environment that Stahl strives to maintain. Both Steve and Heather regularly bring pooches Izzy and Ruby along to work in their unofficial capacities as canine greeting committee.

Likewise, Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. believes in getting around. The company's Dodge Sprinter van was featured in the October 2005 issue of *Plumbing and Mechanic* magazine, a national trade publication.

"They're very popular in Europe, and they're just starting to catch on here (in America)."

Steve said of the van with its noticeable modular style and flashy side graphics relating to the business.

Office hours at Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. are 8 a.m. until 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, with Saturdays by appointment.

For a showroom or service appointment, phone (920) 294-3532

Currently in progress, their website has an anticipated completion date of mid-2006, and may be accessed at www.stahlplumb.com



BERLIN JOURNAL NEWSPAPERS PHOTO

THE WIDE ARRAY of sinks available at Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. allow customers to express their individual style when designing a new look for their bathroom.



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LOCATED AT N6270 Depot Road in Green Lake, Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc. features a showroom which showcases high-quality sinks, tubs, and fixtures.



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CREATING THE PERFECT BATHROOM is easy, with assistance from the professionals at Green Lake's Stahl Plumbing and Heating, Inc.