

# OESP News



Oil & Energy Service Professionals

May 2020 Issue

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## OESP Says "Thank You" to Front-Line Workers

OESP would like to express our appreciation to all the front-line workers in our industry who are continuing to do their jobs to the best of their ability. Thank you supplier employees; heating, cooling, hot water, fuel and HVAC technicians; oil and fuel service delivery drivers; the supply chain for fuel and propane; customer service representatives, and all the other professionals on the front line who are working hard to keep everyone's houses operational.

The pandemic has not stopped the calls from coming in from homes with no heat, no hot water, leaking water tanks or in need of new boilers. Due to the airborne nature of the coronavirus, many customers are now asking for UV-light air quality filters because of the need for higher air quality.

**Danny Gentile**, President of the New Haven Chapter and Outsides Sales Rep for Torrcoco said: "We have continued on with no hiccups. We keep taking care of our customers. Stopping is not an option because we have to keep our customers comfortable. Whether it's heat, hot water or refrigeration, we will keep serving."

**Al Breda**, Fairfield County Chapter President, OESP Immediate Past President and Service Manager at Sippin Energy Products said: "Here in Connecticut, CEMA put out a set of screening questions for technicians. CSRs and technicians are asking these questions to ensure safety for homeowners and technicians. The questions involve making sure nobody in the house has any fever or symptoms. If anyone is



symptomatic, our technicians don't go into the house."

"The industry is focused on keeping technicians safe when they have to go into houses. Technicians are provided with masks and gloves and some techs are finding ways to go directly into basements to minimize contact with homeowners," **George McQueeney**, New Haven Chapter Treasurer and Service Manager/Equipment Sales for East River Energy, Inc. said. "Keeping everyone safe is a priority. Technicians and homeowners alike, everyone needs to act carefully."

And the front line continues to the office staff who also deserve a big thank you. "The office staff and CSRs are handling all the phone calls," Gentile explained. "People are scared and concerned and the office staff

*(continued on page 10)*

# THE FUTURE IS NOW, ARE YOU READY TO MOVE ?



## Oil Heat Cares Brings Heat to Wolcott, CT

To whom it may concern,

I am a 71 year old woman/widow with breast cancer, had surgery and went for radiation treatments along with bone treatments every 6 months. The fatigue from these treatments leaves me with no energy to take care of maintaining the wood stove (our #2 source of heat) the way my husband took care of it. My husband recently passed away in July, 2019, and I'm dealing with his loss as well.

My husband and I were planning on getting a new furnace before this winter but unfortunately, he passed away and left me financially strapped. My social security payment has decreased and it's my only income (monthly) so it makes it harder for me to afford a new furnace.

I would appreciate any assistance that can help me with the furnace situation.

Thank you for helping!  
*Linda Mackie*  
 Linda Mackie  
 Wolcott, CT



In November, 2019 the New Haven Chapter of OESP under the leadership of Chapter President **Danny Gentile**, completed an Oil Heat Cares project in Wolcott, CT. Homeowner **Linda Mackie** described in her letter how her furnace was no longer working and the difficulties she was having. The Chapter sprung into action to help.

The team removed the old hot air furnace and installed a new one with new duct work to adapt to the plenums of the new furnace. Torrco provided the hot air furnace, flue pipe and other necessary supplies.

"I would like to thank all the technicians who donated their time to help Mrs. Mackie," Gentile said. "Our chapter loves running these projects, bringing joy to so many."

*Learn more about the work Oil Heat Cares does for our community at [oilheatcares.org](http://oilheatcares.org).*

Left: **James Weissmann**, a technician who helped with the job  
 Right: **Darren Hafford**, D&A Duct Systems

## Message from the President

By Scott Vadino

I have taken over the presidency of OESP during unusual times. We continue to mourn the loss of our friend and mentor, **Ralph Adams**. The world lost a great man just a few short months ago. Meanwhile, the coronavirus pandemic has prevented us from being together for the next few months.

I would like to commend the chapters that have taken advantage of Zoom technology to hold virtual meetings – you'll see a few in the chapter news. We encourage everyone to jump in and give it a shot. It's a good way to "see" each other even when we can't be together. And being together in OESP is so important to us all.

As I begin my presidency, I am happy to say that plenty has been accomplished by the OESP leadership team. Our National Board, chapters and committees are full of so many talented contributors, there are simply too many to thank. But in as best as it can be said, we could not have accomplished so much this year without the extensive support of so many.

We have continued to improve our communications to members and our membership numbers are holding steady thanks to the diligent work of our membership team under the leadership of **George Fantacone**. It is the testament to a hard-working and effective board, committee and management office. The chapters did an excellent job with dues collection this year and we are only missing a handful of renewals.

Our corporate member numbers have remained strong in 2020. We see this as a positive sign that OESP continues to thrive in our industry. The fact that these companies value visibility to our members speaks volumes about our chapters, programs and mission. I commend those who are on the front line of the association continuing to provide this value every day.

Whether you are a manufacturer, a service manager or a technician, OESP provides critical opportunities for education at all levels. While it requires time, energy and passion, we all benefit from a strong and growing, consistent base of opportunity. Please join us in our efforts as often as possible.

I would like to thank the volunteers of Oil Heat Cares, who have done some fantastic work this season, providing heat to many needy families in the various regions served by OESP. Thank you to **Dave Bessette** and his dedicated committee for reviewing the applications and approving such vital projects throughout the year.

This fall's Oilheat Retreat will be taking place at the Doubletree Hotel in Portland, Maine, September 10-13, 2020. Please join us, get even more involved and make an even bigger difference in OESP.

Thank you for empowering me to lead the charge. I hope to see you soon to discuss ways in which we can work even harder to advance the goals of our industry.



## Corporate Members

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## Update on Membership

By George Fantacone

I would like to start by thanking the membership chairs from each chapter who continue to monitor dues payments and follow up with members, ensuring that our numbers stay strong. We have only a handful of outstanding invoices and I commend you for your efforts.

OESP needs your help to continue to build our organization.

The benefits of membership are boundless. Once people join, we want to engage them right away. So, invite a new member to log in to an upcoming Zoom meeting. Let them know about our online training resources. There are many education opportunities available to members and we hope that everyone is taking advantage of them.

Our goal is not only to increase our membership, but to engage our members. We believe this goal is clearly achievable; we just need your help to spread the word about the enormous value of membership.

Membership recruitment is truly the lifeblood of our organization and the Membership Committee needs your help to make our campaigns successful. Our team of dedicated professionals, representing all of the local chapters, is happy to lend time and energy to membership campaigns and many other membership initiatives. Please join us in our efforts as often as possible.

### ***The bottom line?***

Our members have terrific resources available to them, including the best educational material developed by the top trainers in the industry. Without you, there would be no OESP. And without OESP, there would be fewer sources of industry education and networking opportunities for our members.

Thank you for working together to ensure our industry remains healthy and vibrant.



### ***Since our last printed issue, we are proud to welcome these new members:***

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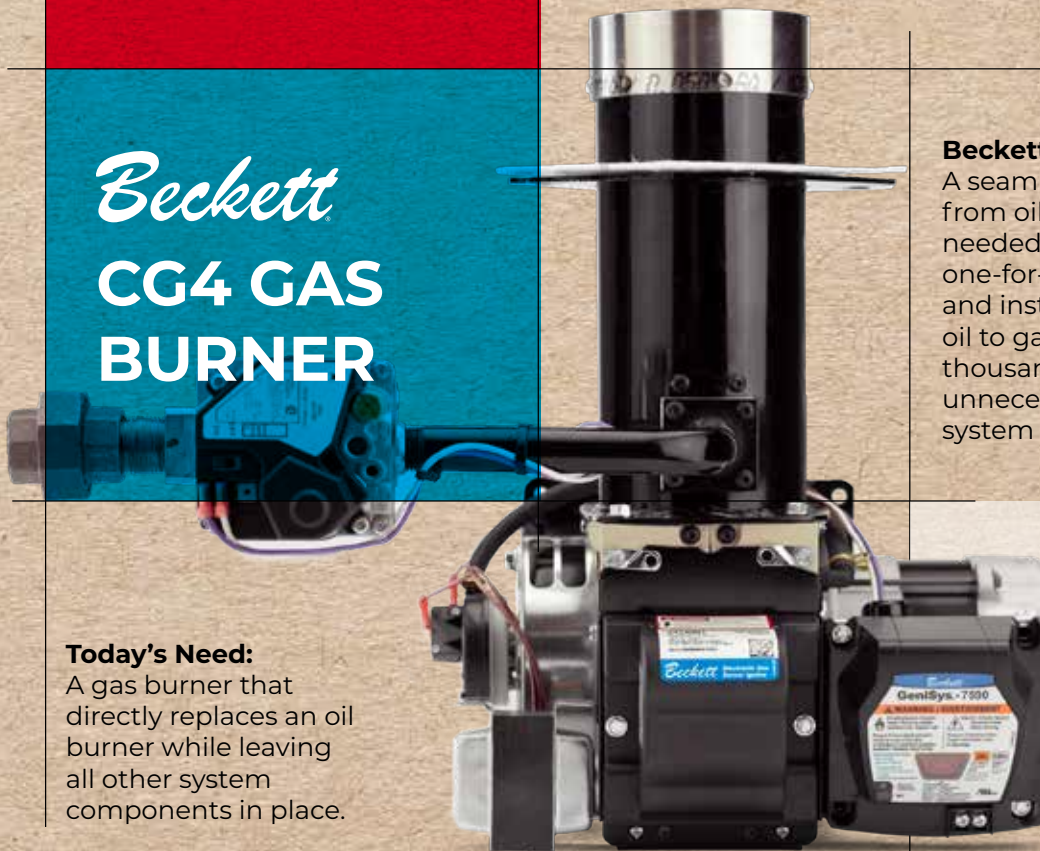


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# Fuel Samples and Tank Maintenance

By Mark Smith

Regular fuel sampling and analysis is an essential component of a sound fuel quality maintenance program, which is why it's one of the core services we provide for our customers. We typically pull fuel samples using a cylindrical stainless-steel device called a "Fuel Thief" which we lower into the tank with a cord to take one sample each from the top, middle, and bottom of the tank. Often, you can see signs of water or microbial contamination with the naked eye, but not always, which is why an independent laboratory analysis is required. A clean-looking fuel sample does not always tell the full story.

We recently pulled the fuel sample from a 10,000 gallon off-road diesel fuel tank, which had been in receipt of a delivery shorty before we arrived. The sample itself looked relatively clean but with further review, there was matter covering the surface of the fuel thief, a corroded metal, which we know, because it responded to our magnet. Where there is tank corrosion, there is usually microbial contamination, and where there is microbial contamination, there is water.

What likely happened is at some point, rain water seeped in through the vent of the tank, humid air carried moisture in during a fuel withdrawal, or our customer was simply on the receiving end of a load of "wet" fuel. However it got there, once in the tank, water promoted air and waterborne microbial life—bacterial cells or fungal spores known in the industry as "bugs"—which live in the water at the bottom of the tank and feed off the hydrocarbons in the fuel at the fuel/water interface. They'll also consume rubber gaskets, O-rings, hoses, tank linings and coatings in an effort to obtain their mineral content. The waste from this process produces water, sludge, corrosive acids and other harmful byproducts. Under the ideal conditions of a warm day (68-86 degrees Fahrenheit), bacteria can double in population every 20 minutes, forming destructive, gel-like colonies known as biofilms. If not addressed, the proliferation of bugs will clog fuel filters, fuel lines and gauges; corrode pumps, injectors and tank bottoms; cause washers, hoses and connectors to swell and blister; degrade fuel, and cause poor fuel economy.

If microbial contamination is detected—either by visual observation of a fuel filter or bottom sample, or by analytical



laboratory testing—cleanup can be both difficult and expensive. In all cases, water bottoms should be drained and a biocide should be added to treat the remaining fuel. In some cases cleanup may be less problematic.

Good housekeeping is the best and most cost-effective preventative measure against microbial contamination. Water should be drained from storage tanks at least every six months, and especially before the start of winter. If all water can't be removed, the remaining in-tank water should be treated with a water-soluble biocide—also every six months. Fuel tanks should be kept at or near capacity to minimize contamination due to the condensation of moist air in the tank. Lastly, tank bottoms should be sampled and analyzed seasonally. While some level of water will undoubtedly be detected, with a sound maintenance program in place, microbial growth—and corrosion—will not.



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**Thank you** to our dedicated photographers around OESP for sending in these fantastic chapter updates! Please remember to give us the names of the people in your photos!

### ***Fairfield County***

Last month, the Fairfield County Chapter held its first virtual meeting. Al Breda, Chapter President, hosted the meeting, while John Moward, Torrcos, was at the controls. There were 22 attendees including many members from other chapters. The group discussed how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting their businesses and what changes they are making. Topics included:

- How do CSRs screen for service calls?
- How are technicians greeting customers?
- What to do when customers crowd field staff?
- Layoffs? Furloughs?

There was plenty of useful information exchanged. For more information on the Fairfield County Chapter, please visit: [fairfield-county.thinkoesp.org](http://fairfield-county.thinkoesp.org).



### ***Connecticut/Pioneer Valley***

All four CT Chapters and Pioneer Valley joined together for a virtual meeting on Thursday, April 16. Nearly 30 members from all the chapters attended and we were pleased to see so many faces we don't normally see. The meeting lasted about 70 minutes, and the main discussion was about how companies are dealing with this ongoing pandemic.

Procedures for responding to customer calls was discussed. The main theme was that it all starts with proper screening being done by the Customer Service Department. The goal is to have a no contact visit to the home for repairs, installation or routine maintenance. If there is any indication of illness in the home, then the call is put off as best as possible. The final decision to go into a home is left with the responding service technician. Most companies said that customer cooperation was exemplary. They also stated that business was down somewhere in the 50% range and some layoffs and furloughs had taken place.

We also discussed what PPE was being used and its availability.

The final discussion was having the wholesalers weigh in on how their operations have been affected, what measures they have put in place to ensure everyone's safety and the availability to secure inventory. Everyday material has not been a problem, but most of the PPE products have seen some price increase as well as difficulty in securing.

Once the formal portion of the meeting was concluded, the Zoom session was left open for another 15-20 minutes to allow some socialization. Everyone was responsible for their own bar tab!

***It's easy to have your chapter featured!*** Just take some photos and send us information about your meeting. Email the pictures and details to the OESP office at [lstrug@thinkoesp.org](mailto:lstrug@thinkoesp.org).

# Sponsor Message: Taco Comfort Solutions Celebrates 100 Year Anniversary

Taco Comfort Solutions® is celebrating and embracing its 100 year history while innovating for the future. Taco, a third-generation, family-owned company based in Cranston, RI, engineers and manufactures high-efficiency heating, cooling, and air quality comfort systems. Taco has sales and manufacturing locations in the United States, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, and Vietnam.

Founded by Elwood White in 1920 as the Thermal Appliance Company, Taco expanded under the leadership of White's son, John Hazen White. As the company grew, the Thermal Appliance Company name was shortened to T-A-C-O, or Taco.

John Hazen White, Jr., or Johnny to those who know him, succeeded his father. Under his leadership, the Taco Family of Companies has grown dramatically. Johnny has carried his father's vision forward, building innovative and dependable heating, cooling, and plumbing solutions. Taco has also been an industry leader through training, investing heavily in onsite, online, and field training programs.

In 2019, Johnny brought Cheryl Merchant on board as President to help drive the future growth of the company.



Throughout Taco's 100 years, the one factor that has remained constant is the White Family ownership. Johnny's sons John III and Ben are actively involved in the company's leadership.

"I think it's so important and such a blessing to maintain ownership of the company within the White family. It allows us to make the right decisions to ensure the success of our employees, customers, and business partners," said White, Jr.

As a company with a long history and deep involvement in the industry we all support, we believe in relationship building and the importance of people-to-people associations. To us, people always come first, and the all-important comfort goal we work for every day means more than just hardware; it's about caring, too.

At Taco Comfort Solutions, we care especially for the dedicated professionals in the deliverable fuels business and organizations like OESP that support them, because our company started and has survived and prospered for 100 years because of you. You are in Taco's DNA, and we hope we are in yours, too.



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# Message from the Executive Director

By Lisa Strug

Hello OESP! It's this time of year that you are normally reading this newsletter at the Eastern Energy Expo. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the EEE has been postponed. And while we were not able to be physically together this year, I would like to commend you for coming together virtually as OESP held it's first-ever online Board of Directors meeting in March.

It was in this meeting that we announced the slate of officers for the upcoming two-year term: President – **Scott Vadino**; Vice Presidents – **Angel Gonzalez**, **George Fantacone**, **Bob O'Brien** and **Dave Westerfield**; Treasurer – **Paul Cuprewich**; Secretary – **Steve Schwanger**; Past President – **Al Breda**.

Scott takes the reigns of OESP in what are certainly very trying times. We all continue to mourn the loss of our friend, mentor and colleague, **Ralph Adams**, who left us less than 2 months ago. And what seems like just days later, we were all locked down in our homes, only essential workers to be able to continue some semblance of life as we know it. We commend Scott for beginning his term during this unusual time and helping OESP to continue forward.

This month we will be holding the May Board of Directors meeting and General membership meeting via Zoom on Saturday, May 16. The BOD meeting will be at 10:00 a.m., followed immediately by the General membership meeting. It is at this meeting that we will vote in the new slate of officers. Check your email for the Zoom link – we look forward to seeing you there.

If you visit the OESP website and enter the Member Area, you'll see we have a new page for online training. Many of our partner manufacturers and trainers have given us access to their free training videos. We hope you will take advantage and use them during this challenging time. By now, you have seen plenty from our great and generous advertisers. **Taco**, **R.W. Beckett**, **Suntec Industries**, **Carlin/Hydrolevel**, **General Filters**, **Wohler**, and **Sid Harvey**. And I am proud to welcome **Roth** and **Weil-McLain** as new Corporate Partners for 2020. Their ads can be found in this issue.

Our Oil Heat Cares program has been on the move in every region of OESP with installations being done consistently. Thank you to the team led by OHC Chair Dave Bessette for enabling well-deserving people to be warm and safe over the past winter. Thank you to the service companies who have generously donated their time. We are tremendously proud of Oil Heat Cares.

On behalf of **Jonathan Jaffe**, **Meredith Levy** and the rest of the OESP management team, it continues to be a pleasure to serve such a proactive organization. We really, truly can't wait to see you.



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(cont'd from front)

deal with quite a bit of it. We don't let our customers panic – we assure them that we have them covered whether it's virus, hurricane or anything else that comes our way."

Also as part of the new procedures, CSRs ask if there's a door to the house that could be left open, and to please leave the tech alone by staying in a different part of the house. Techs are instructed to have homeowners stay six feet apart. "Our CSRs assure our customers that we will have the utmost respect for them and their homes, and this puts them at ease. Homeowners are very cooperative in staying six feet away from the technicians, for everyone's safety," Breda said. "Generally, the homeowner doesn't want to be near us any more than we want to be near them."

Management is also affected. They have had to look at things in different ways, connecting with their office and field staff via technology instead of face-to-face meetings. While this has presented its own challenges, everyone has learned something new and it might just change the way we do business going forward. Thank you to the management who keeps everything organized and enables us all to do our jobs.

At Sippin, there are about 8-10 people in the building and everyone else is remote. "The service dispatcher, service manager, an HR Person and some of management are in the office because techs come in with paperwork and to get parts for jobs," Breda said. "Everyone stays six feet apart or works behind closed doors."

Similarly, processes have had to change. "Under normal circumstances, all the technicians would come in the morning for the parts for that day's work," Breda explained. "Now, we have them coming in at staggered times in the morning or give them parts the night before so all the techs aren't in the office retrieving information at the same time. And, normally we had paper files for billing. Now the billing person is working from home so everything is being done electronically. When we eventually come out of this, some things might look quite different."

And McQueeney told us, "Since I'm working from home, I'm communicating with my technicians via email and text, and



I'm able to print information for billing and jobs remotely from my home. It's a very different setup that we've all had to adapt to."

All the companies continue to prep for the upcoming air conditioning season. New installations that aren't absolutely necessary are being put off for now, but servicing and repairs are taking place as needed. The last thing anyone wants is to be without their AC when it starts to get warm.

So, we owe a great deal of gratitude to our industry's front line. They keep us comfortable in our homes, where we are quite obviously spending a great deal of time. We thank those who are making it possible for adapting to such a new and unusual situation.

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If you choose to participate in the live webinars, we are keeping them highly focused and within a 30 minute



timeframe. The webinars will be followed by a live Q&A session with one of our presenters. It's a great way to learn and have access to industry-leading knowledge at your fingertips.

In addition to the online training courses now offered, you also have access to additional educational video resources as well. They are a great resource for you to learn about various Beckett products — at your own pace and when you have the time. And if you have questions about any of the video content presented, you can submit a question with the click of a button and send us a note... we're always here to help.

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