

Progress: Community

Sea Starr seeks to condition homes for greater health

By JARED ANDERSON
SIUSLAW NEWS

"I think people tend to look at companies like this and think that they are all the same, but I would beg to differ when it comes to our company," said Sea Starr Heating and More co-owner Bryant Kearney. "Our focus isn't just on making your home more comfortable. We want it to be a healthy place for you."

Bryant has been in the heating and air business for about a decade, while his wife, company co-owner Starr Kearney, has been a nurse for 15 years. Back in the day, the business had one goal — comfort.

The scenario that Bryant had seen over and over again was generally the same. First, a strange sound in the furnace or a weak air stream causes people to get too cold or hot, so they call for service.

"A person comes out and then they charge you for the service call, just to tell you that you need to spend another \$5,000 to get your system replaced," Bryant said.

The system is replaced, and that's where the conversation usually ends. The house is warm, things seem okay.

"But heating alone doesn't make your home a healthier place," Bryant said. "It was driving us crazy, realizing there's a whole other story out there to be told about how to

make your home a healthier place. You realize that people aren't telling that story, and then you see an opportunity there."

So a year ago, Bryant and Starr started their company to bring a healthier focus to the heating and air conditioning business in Florence.

To describe that philosophy, Bryant asked, "Have you ever been in a surgery room? In the surgery room, they put that room under what is called positive pressure. What that means is, anything floating in the air, bacteria, viruses, anything like that can lead to infection, when the room is put under positive pressure, all of those things are being pushed out of the room, almost like a balloon that is slowly deflating."

With the airborne bacteria gone, it becomes safe to operate. But what people don't know is "you can literally make your home as sterile as a surgery room, just by changing the pressure in the house," he said.

Most homes are under what is known as "negative pressure."

"A lot of people when they light their fireplace and their smoke drifts out into the living room, they don't realize it's because there's other pressure forces in the house that are causing that negative pressure," Bryant explained.

But a system has to breathe, with

air coming in, air coming out.

"If that intake source is somewhere near an area that has lots of smoke, such as in the kitchen, or the bathroom, where you have gas from your sewer system that is leaching into your system, you can have health issues."



Then there's issues with the lack of humidity.

"That can be a big deal for people," Bryant said. "Often times when heating or cooling the home, what happens is all of the moisture in the home can get pulled into the furnace system and completely dry things out. Properly conditioning the air is important. If anybody has issues with sinuses during the summer or winter times, when the air dries out considerably, a heating and cooling system can help balance that humidity inside the home and make it a much more comfortable place."

Or there's issues with too much humidity.

"Out here on the coast, we have

this beautiful weather here," Bryant said. "You think of air conditioning as something that makes the air cold. But that's not only what it does. It adds or removes humidity, which usually conditions the air and makes it healthier."

Finding the right balance between negative and positive pressure, along with humidity issues, is key to preventing problems such as mold.

And there's filtration, which "is a huge issue," Bryant said. "As a nurse, my wife deals all the time with respiratory issues. Breathing problems, asthma, allergies and, of course, viruses. Flu season is an awful time of the year for people in the medical world. But we have technology that will virtually eliminate all of that in the home."

Instead of just fixing a furnace to make a home more comfortable, heating and air conditioning is a complicated balance of multiple factors that directly affect a person's health.

But Sea Starr has all sorts of gadgets that can help with that, from UV lights to electrostatic filters.

"We can filter out smoke, we can filter out viruses," Bryant said. "Anything down to .1 microns, we can pull out of the air."

The technology isn't cheap, with Bryant reporting that most

companies charge about \$2,500 for the filter.

"But it's something we include, and it's very easy to install. We just include it with every furnace we install."

And as a residential contractor, Bryant will work to take care of all the issues in a home to make sure that there's balance.

"We do windows, insulation, weather stripping, anything comfort related in the home we'll work on."

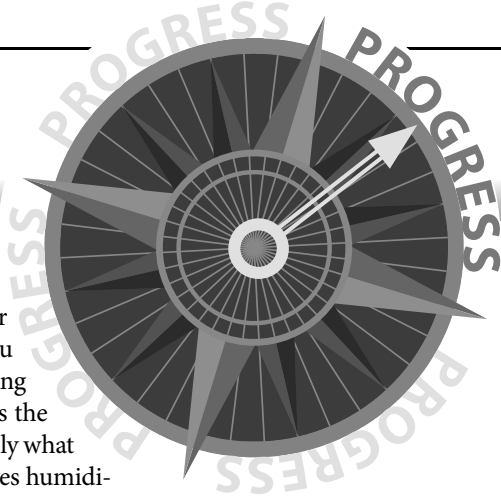
And they'll also help people find a way to pay for it all too.

"I don't know how much other companies out there are really explaining that, but there are some of the most generous rebates I have ever seen available in our community to replace inefficient systems with higher efficiency ones," Bryant said. "We help people through the whole processing of their rebate."

And all of this is done to make Florence a healthier, happier place.

"We just want your home to be the healthiest place in your life."

For more information about Sea Starr Heating and More, call 541-991-9078 or visit www.seastarrheating.com.



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