

TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION FOR THE HVACR INDUSTRY | MAY 2023

# NATE

M A G A Z I N E

## CONNECTING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

HOLISTIC AIR CARE • MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION • HVACR AS A CAREER CHOICE



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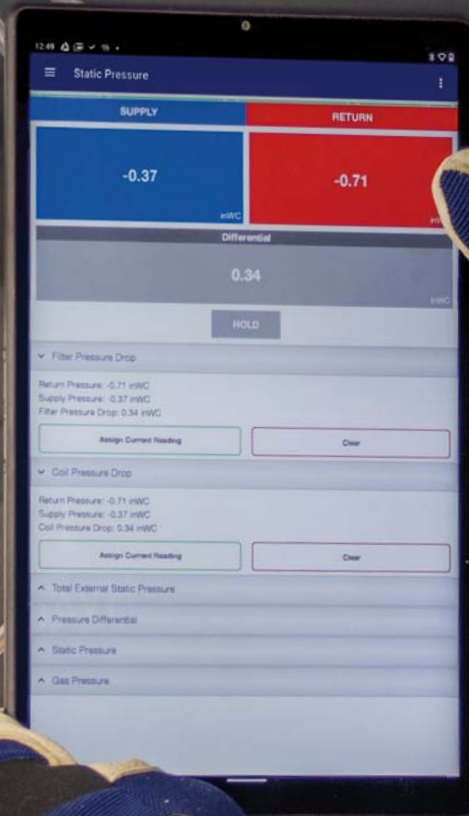
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# NATE Certification: The Gold Standard of the Industry

## BUSINESSES WITH CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS STAND OUT TO CUSTOMERS.

Investing in technician certification and training is essential for any HVACR business looking to provide high-quality service, stay competitive, and save money. Businesses with certified technicians stand out to customers, and technicians are more likely to stay with contractors that prioritize their professional development. In fact, in a recent survey we found that more than three-quarters of technicians said they were more likely to stay with employers that provided career training and support for their certification.

But we know that finding time for technician training and education can be a challenge. That is why we have worked hard to develop tools for new technicians, so they have a clear and straightforward framework to develop their skills. Two years ago we introduced a new certification pathway, the Certified HVAC Professional (CHP-5), giving technicians the ability to earn their NATE certification through a series of five exams. Each exam focuses on a different subject area starting with HVACR fundamentals, making it easier for new technicians to break up their training into manageable chunks and allows contractors to benchmark their technicians' progress as they work towards certification. We now also have official study guides as well as an online training platform, NATE Training Academy, to make it easier for technicians to prepare on their own schedule for their exams.

Making sure our community is aware of these new additions is important to us, and we have been on the road a lot the past year to talk to contractors in person about how we are making NATE more accessible to technicians. Read our feature article to learn more about the trade shows and events we have taken part in over the past few months, and how we are finding opportunities to talk to contractors and technicians in person about certification.

In this issue, you can also see the ways we are staying connected to NATE-certified technicians and the ways technicians are maintaining their NATE certification. Thanks to our Live Online Proctoring and NATE Training Academy, technicians have more ways to maintain their certification through continuing education or re-testing.

In our interview with Chandler Eby with CCTE Skilled Trades Center and Don Brenneman with Airefco, you can also read about how we are finding new ways to reach out to high school students about the benefits of a career in the HVACR industry. Brenneman and Eby are working to create an HVACR program at Evergreen High School in Oregon. The magnet high school is opening this year and aims to connect high school students to the trades and to provide them with the education they need to go into HVACR and other technical fields.

NATE certification not only provides a standardized measure of technicians' knowledge and skills but also the framework to guide your new technicians' development and training. By encouraging your technicians to become NATE-certified, you can ensure that they have the necessary expertise to provide high-quality service to your customers. At NATE, we're determined to make sure our certifications are accessible and the gold standard of our industry. If you ever want to talk to us about how NATE can help your business, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. ●



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As the only manufacturer of both HVACR equipment and refrigerants, Daikin's dedication to next-generation solutions encompasses design, technology, comfort, and performance while also taking environmental impact into consideration with R-32, a refrigerant with lower Global Warming Potential than R-410A. With the new Daikin *ATMOSPHERA*, begin to discover the next generation of Daikin HVAC systems using R-32 refrigerant.

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**R32**



### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Before purchasing this appliance, read important information about its estimated annual energy consumption, yearly operating cost, or energy efficiency rating that is available from your retailer.

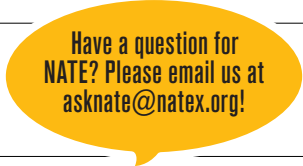
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# You Asked, We Answered

QUESTIONS ASKED BY NATE-CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS, ANSWERED BY THE NATE TEAM AND SHARED WITH YOU.



**I JUST TOOK MY FIRST CERTIFIED HVAC PROFESSIONAL (CHP-5) EXAM. HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO PREPARE FOR MY NEXT EXAM?**

You can take up to six months to prepare and study between each CHP-5 exam. The exam subjects are HVAC Fundamentals, Electrical and Controls, Comfort and Airflow, Installation, and Service. NATE recommends taking the exams in order for the easiest progression, however, you can take the exams in any order you choose.

**I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEW LIVE ONLINE PROCTORED EXAMS. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?**

You can email our customer service team at [askNATE@natex.org](mailto:askNATE@natex.org) or call/text 877-420-6283. We also have more information about Live Online Proctoring on our website, Natex.org. There you can find a step-by-step guide on all details related to our Live Online Proctored exams, including how to schedule an exam and test-taker guidelines.

**I OFFER TECHNICIAN TRAINING COURSES. HOW CAN I MAKE SURE MY COURSES COUNT TOWARDS CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS FOR NATE RECERTIFICATION?**

If your organization provides training courses in HVACR and would like to be NATE-recognized, you can complete an application form on our website to become a Recognized Training Provider (RTP). As an RTP, you can register your courses to provide NATE credit (CEHs) for technicians attending. Additionally, your organization will be searchable on our website when technicians look for CEHs trainings in your area.

**IF I REGISTERED FOR AN IN-PERSON TRAINING, AND THE COURSE IS NOW ONLINE, DO I NEED TO RE-REGISTER FOR THE COURSE?**

If the course content and the length of the training are the same, there's no need to re-register with NATE. If you are interested in finding more online training opportunities, you can find a list of available online training courses on our website.

## Word Search

1. Wiring	C I G I A F C Y Y M C O D E V
2. Connect	G O G W G Q Q K L A P J C W J
3. Pathway	H F E T W V B Z K X W I D P P
4. Flow	T R A I N I N G K E V H L D H
5. Climate	S N M Q W R W S R R R W T T T
6. Training	E J I C O T W E E Z I C N A H
7. Education	G D H Y L U T S Q R C O P Z P
8. Comfort	R T U I F A A J I H V M Q I B
9. Change	Y M Z C M L D N A M X F E Q Y
10. Student	S K Z I A N G N V Y T O D H C
11. Pump	F O L V E T G M F B C R Y W H
12. Exam	K C V T Z E I P Z J V T L E O
13. Service	T N E D U T S O M L C T Z B Z
14. Code	T C E N N O C U N U X H G R I
15. Virtual	B G R S K I G P K N P X Q X K

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# BADGE OF HONOR.

BEING THE BEST ISN'T JUST A TITLE—IT'S A RESPONSIBILITY. AND SO TO ALL OF OUR DEALERS WHO SHARE OUR UNENDING PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE: THANK YOU. WE'RE STRONGER TOGETHER BECAUSE WE RUN TOGETHER.



**TRANE**

TRANE  
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*It's Hard To Stop A Trane.*

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# NATE News



## COO JOHN LANIER NAMED NATE PRESIDENT

At its April 12 meeting, the Board of Trustees of North American Technician Excellence (NATE) named current Chief Operating Officer John Lanier President of the organization, effective immediately. Lanier also serves as Chief Operating Officer of AHRI, which has an administrative service agreement with NATE.

In recent years, under the leadership of John Lanier and the NATE Board of Trustees, the organization intentionally shifted NATE's vision to incorporate technician development in addition to its historical emphasis on testing and certification. In recognition of their excellence and indispensable nature within the industry, NATE began to develop ways to support and train technicians on their path toward certification.

Prior to joining the NATE team, Lanier held a variety of executive leadership roles, most notably as senior vice president of operations at the National Federation of Independent Business, the nation's largest independent business association. Throughout his career, Lanier has gained valuable experience in operations, sales, member benefits, human resources, and information technology.

## REDESIGNED NATE EXAM KATES NOW AVAILABLE

One of the first steps technicians should take when preparing for their next NATE exam is reviewing the exam KATES. All NATE exams are based on Knowledge Areas of Technician Expertise (KATEs), statistically proven job task analysis from experts in the HVACR industry. Each exam's KATEs outline covers all information tested in the exam and should be used as reference material.

Now the NATE Exam KATEs are reformatted to more clearly show the exam information and qualifications, the percentage of each subject on the exam, industry references, and a clear outline of each topic that technicians should be familiar with before sitting for the exam.

NATE has free downloadable KATEs available for every NATE exam, including the Core and Specialty exams, all five CHP-5 exams, entry-level NATE certificates, and more. You can view all the exam KATEs on the NATE website on the Exams Offered page.

## 2023 SERVICE TITAN HVAC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

NATE is proud to announce that the ServiceTitan HVAC National Championship is back for a second year! Technicians that have what it takes to make it through two qualifying rounds will receive an all-expense paid trip to Tampa, Florida. In the Sunshine State, the top technicians will compete to win a share of over \$100,000 in cash and prizes and the well-deserved bragging rights of being crowned the 2023 Champion.

The Round 1 Qualifier is a five-minute digital quiz with questions provided by NATE. Technicians can take the quiz as many times as they want. The top apprentice and professional who score the highest each month will automatically qualify for Round 2. This digital quiz is now open through July 31st.

From the Round 1 Qualifier, the top 38 apprentices and 38 professionals will advance to the next round in the ServiceTitan HVAC National Championship. Visit the competition webpage [HVACNationals.com](http://HVACNationals.com) to keep up with all the latest updates about the ServiceTitan HVAC National Championship.

## QUANTIFYING THE IMPORTANCE OF TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

This past year, NATE worked with Decision Analyst Inc., an independent research group, to survey technicians and contractors about HVACR certification and training. Through the survey, NATE aimed to learn more about technician certification needs, career development in the HVACR industry, and how contractors can provide better training and resources for their technicians.

NATE found that 76% of contractors see their certified technicians as better prepared than their non-certified technicians, and 86% of NATE-certified technicians prefer their NATE certification over any other HVACR certification. Additionally, contractors stated they had more confidence in their NATE-certified technicians and preferred that their technicians become certified.

When asked about career development and training opportunities, three out of four technicians surveyed said they were more likely to stay with their employer if they received assistance with their certification and training. Four out of five NATE-certified technicians have received some form of assistance from their employers. The survey also found that most contractors support technician development, with 85% of contractors surveyed reporting that they provided certification and job development support.

For more information about the technician and contractor survey, contact NATE Marketing Manager Daisy Weill at [dweill@natex.org](mailto:dweill@natex.org).

# Product News

## HEAT PUMPS FOR MILD CLIMATES

The Platinum Series heat pump works as an air conditioner during warm months and runs in reverse to provide heat during cooler months. The American Standard® Heating and Air Conditioning Platinum equipment includes innovative Link technology to control system components. The Duration™ variable-speed compressor runs at lower speeds for longer periods of time, with up to 750 speeds to deliver temperature control and ultra-quiet operation.

The Gold Series heat pumps operate at high or low speeds, ensuring even heating and cooling depending on demand. Similar to the Platinum line, high-quality components include proprietary Spine Fin coils for efficient heat transfer and long-term durability.

The Silver Series heat pumps feature single-stage Duration compressors with Spin Fin coils. For tight spaces and zero-lot-line applications, the product line includes the Silver 15 Side Discharge heat pump.



**American Standard**, [americanstandardair.com/products/heat-pumps/platinum-20-heat-pump/](https://americanstandardair.com/products/heat-pumps/platinum-20-heat-pump/)

## SIDE DISCHARGE HVACR SYSTEM

The Daikin Fit system is a side discharge, smart HVACR system that connects to ducted solutions traditional to the unitary market. The low profile of this outdoor heat pump unit offers solutions when a traditional cube style cannot.

The system is rated up to 17.5 SEER2 and 10 HSPF2. It features a variable-speed compressor for indoor comfort and efficiency; low dBA; enhanced acoustical comfort; and Blue Fin Coat for long condenser coil life and reliability. Side panel access allows ease of service. In addition, the outdoor unit enables an Intelligent Defrost Mode to help prevent frost/ice from building up in cold climate conditions.



**Daikin**, [daikincomfort.com/products/heating-cooling/whole-house/heat-pump](https://daikincomfort.com/products/heating-cooling/whole-house/heat-pump)

## SPLIT SYSTEM AIR CONDITIONER

The GSXV9 is a high-efficiency, variable-speed, inverter-driven split system air conditioner from Goodman®. The 2- to 5-ton system is rated up to 22.5 SEER2. Standard features include variable-speed swing and scroll compressors, integrated communicating ComfortBridge™ technology, and commissioning/diagnostics via indoor board Bluetooth with the CoolCloud™ phone and tablet application.

The variable speed swing or scroll compressor with inverter technology runs at from 0% to 100% capacity, depending on cooling/heating demand. This operational flexibility provides an energy-efficient option when compared to traditional, single-stage or two-stage units. The top performance of a variable speed, electronically commutated motor (ECM) allows for operation over a range of fan speeds, from 0% to 100%, depending on airflow needs. In addition, the ComfortBridge™ Controls System enables users to remotely monitor and manage the heating and cooling system at any time, from anywhere with an internet connection.



**Goodman**, [goodmanmfg.com/products/air-conditioners/gsxv9](https://goodmanmfg.com/products/air-conditioners/gsxv9)



# NATE Connects with Stakeholders on the Road

NATE'S OUTREACH ENABLES DEALERS AND CONTRACTORS TO BETTER CONNECT WITH THE ORGANIZATION AND LEARN HOW TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION AND RE-CERTIFICATION CAN HELP THEIR BUSINESSES.



One of the ways NATE collaborates with its partners is by participating in national and regional industry events. Since the beginning of the year, NATE has attended and/or presented at multiple shows and conferences.

Why do HVACR manufacturers, distributors, contractors, and other firms want NATE to participate in industry shows? The answer is simple, says Gurminder Sidhu, NATE's senior director, business operations. "Executives at these companies see the value in NATE certification and know that their dealers and their teams also see the value. They want everyone in attendance to hear what NATE has to offer as sometimes not everyone knows about the new offerings." Sidhu adds that NATE works to reach recent recruits to the HVACR industry through these presentations: "There may be some new people entering the industry at these shows that may not know about NATE, so this is a great opportunity for them to learn about it."

Regarding its participation in trade shows around the country, NATE takes it one step at a time. First, NATE advises its industry partners that NATE is interested in attending their events as well as asking for stage time. "Our trade show strategy is simple. We work with the marketing team to make sure our presentation fits the theme of the show. We make sure the content we are presenting makes sense to those in the audience," Sidhu explains.

NATE modifies and customizes its message for every show it attends. "Some folks," says Sidhu, "want us to talk more about training and how a technician can become a certified technician, while others want us to give the overall NATE presentation."

During the past year, NATE has been working on increasing its attendance at industry events, notes Daisy Weill, NATE marketing manager. The HVACR certification group is also working to offer more face time with participants through speaking opportunities during main stage events and breakout sessions.

"NATE has introduced so many new initiatives over the past few years – the Certified HVAC Professional (CHP-5) certification pathway, Live Online Proctoring, NATE Training Academy, study guides—that it is difficult to compact all of that information into one magazine ad or social media post. So we have been

working hard to meet with people in-person to share how NATE can help technicians succeed and help support contractors," Weill explains.

Feedback is important. "The people we talk to at the shows," says Weill, "also influence our outreach strategy for the rest of the year. When we receive a lot of the same questions, it helps us know and understand what contractors are interested in and what they want to know more about.

"For example," she continues, "in the last couple months we've had a lot of one-on-one conversations with contractors about the CHP-5 certification pathway and how to become a Testing Organization so they can test their contractors in their offices." Responses from show attendees are useful, Weill adds: "It helps guide our messaging since we know there must be others across the country with the same questions."

The HVACR industry wants to hear from NATE at conferences and dealer shows, Weill says. "Manufacturers like Lennox and Carrier require contractors to certify a certain number of their technicians to obtain factory authorized dealer status."

She explains that contractors who are attending the AHR Expo are often interested in getting their technicians certified, but they aren't aware of the ways NATE has made it easier for technicians to prepare for NATE certification exams. "By inviting NATE, manufacturers give their contractors the opportunity to ask us questions and give us the opportunity to talk more in-depth about the certification process."

NATE presentations include useful information for technicians, Weill says. "Wherever we're speaking, we use the opportunity to talk about the importance of NATE certification, the ways NATE has made it easier for technicians to prepare for their NATE exams, to take their NATE exams, and

"SINCE REQUIREMENTS CHANGE FROM STATE TO STATE FOR CONTRACTORS AND TECHNICIANS, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THE HVACR INDUSTRY ADOPTS NATE AS THEY PROVIDE THIRD-PARTY VALIDATION ON THE SKILLS OF THE INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANY."

- Jose De La Portilla

once they are certified - maintain their certification."

Several different NATE initiatives are covered in these sessions, Weill explains. "The CHP-5 certification pathway is the one that seems to catch contractors' attention the most. In many ways, this makes sense since we created the CHP-5 based on feedback we received from contractors that it can be very overwhelming for someone who has just entered the industry to figure out where to start preparing for the NATE certification exams."

The CHP-5 exams are designed to mesh a new technician's on-the-job training with their certification efforts. Each exam is focused on a specific subject domain - HVAC Fundamentals, Electrical and Controls, Comfort and Airflow, Installation, and Service. This setup, Weill believes, makes it easier for contractors to help their technicians prepare for each exam. "The CHP-5 exams cover all the same material as the Traditional pathway Core and specialty exams, and the questions are just as tough, but by breaking up the material into separate exams, it's a more straightforward process of studying and preparing for each exam."

### **NATE PRESENTATIONS: A VALUE TO MANUFACTURERS**

A training executive notes that it is crucial for the HVACR industry to

connect with NATE and its technician certification programs at in-person events. Jose De La Portilla, the senior manager of education and training at Rheem, explains: "Since requirements change from state to state for contractors and technicians, it's important that the HVACR industry adopt NATE as they provide third-party validation on the skills of the individuals and company. This can speak volumes for the company, and if they leverage NATE properly it can serve as a way for them to build rapport with their customers or end-users."

Stakeholders benefit when they hear NATE offerings at HVACR industry events, De La Portilla believes. "These presentations can be critical in helping the listener learn how to communicate the benefits of NATE to the end-user. They can learn from NATE the value and benefits of certification. They can learn how to leverage these certifications when talking with end-users. They can learn about trends in the industry, changes or updates to the program and certification exams, and strategies for preparing technicians for the certification process. They can also learn best practices to help their companies develop, retain, and recruit star talent."

The Rheem training executive says the value of NATE's offerings at industry events is priceless. "It is





“THE MORE WE CAN SHARE THE NATE INFORMATION AND PARTICULARLY DETAILS ON THE CHP-5 CERTIFICATION, THE BETTER. BECAUSE OF THE TECHNICIAN SHORTAGE, HAVING TRAINING AVAILABLE IN A MORE DIGESTIBLE FORMAT IS IMPORTANT FOR A LESS EXPERIENCED TECHNICIAN.”

- Rhonda Wight



critical for NATE to conduct presentations at industry conferences and trade shows because this is their way to directly engage with the industry. They can share their success stories, what they have learned from others, and help the audience learn these best practices, as well. With these presentations, distributors, contractors, and manufacturers like our team at Rheem can improve utilization of the NATE program and learn how to leverage NATE to grow their business.”

De La Portilla has over 28 years of experience in the HVACR industry. Rheem is a U.S.-based privately held manufacturer that produces residential and commercial water heaters and boilers, as well as heating, ventilating, and air conditioning equipment.

It's important for NATE to do presentations at industry conferences and trade shows, says Rhonda Wight, president and CEO at Refrigeration Sales Corporation (RSC). The company is a wholesaler with 10 locations, mainly in northeast Ohio. The firm offers a selection of HVAC/refrigeration equipment, parts, components, and supplies.

“John Lanier, NATE president and chief operating officer of the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), presented at our Dealer Meeting two months ago, and it was very well-received,” Wight says.

She adds that several of her firm's dealers have followed up with her team and want more information. “The more we can share the NATE information and particularly details on the CHP-5 certification, the better. Because of the the technician shortage, having training available in a more digestible format is important for a less experienced technician.”

Wight says there is a lot of value in bringing together RSC dealers for an in-person meeting. At the sessions, company executives can prepare dealers for upcoming changes regarding refrigerant and electrification regulations and technology. “We can't cover this information enough. Our industry is changing at a rapid pace, and with continued changes in products and government regulations, the dealers have much work ahead of them. We want to help them and be a resource for these changes.”

Wight believes RSC benefits as a distributor when it works with dealers that employ NATE-certified technicians. “A better trained technician means better installed equipment. Fewer call backs is better for the dealer and better for our brand. Service calls that solve issues quickly are better for all of us. Time is money, and contractors want less call backs and certainly homeowners and building owners don't want the inconvenience

of scheduling service calls. They want the equipment to work, and if there's an issue they want it resolved quickly.” Wight's conclusion: “Trained technicians are the critical component. NATE-certified technicians show a commitment to being the best. They put the time in to be better, and it shows in their work.”

The importance of NATE certification goes way back, says Don Gillis, senior technical trainer at The Chemours Company. The firm is a global chemistry vendor with leading market positions in several products, including low GWP A2L refrigerants. “For years, the best technicians have strived to elevate their expertise by pursuing continuous education with NATE. For centuries education has always been valued above all else as the means to improvement of self and society. In the HVACR industry, NATE provides the foundation to ensure that technicians have access to knowledge that not only leads to stellar service but also gives them insights to new and better solutions.”

Gillis urges the industry to spread the word about the value of certification. “I encourage contractors to explain the differentiating factors of being NATE-certified and promote them as part of a solid business strategy.”

Gillis says it is important for NATE to do presentations at industry conferences and trade shows. “In my opinion, we need NATE to be present at every conference because these conferences are the hub of our industry. They are where all key players connect, learn, and share ideas that lead to both the longevity and ongoing evolution of HVACR. All of our training is NATE-certified. On a consistent basis we need to demonstrate—and celebrate—the value of technicians being NATE-certified.”

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“THE RECENT COVID PANDEMIC SHOWED THE IMPORTANCE OF HVACR TO THE MITIGATION OF AIRBORNE SPREAD OF ILLNESS. WHEN DEALING WITH MECHANISMS LIKE HVAC THAT CAN AFFECT HEALTH AND WELLBEING, ABSOLUTE EXPERTISE IS REQUIRED. NATE TECHNICIANS POSSESS THIS EXPERTISE CRITICAL TO THE INDUSTRY.”

— Tony Abate



says Tony Abate, vice president and chief technology officer at AtmosAir Solutions. The firm offers indoor air purification and monitoring technology. “The recent COVID pandemic showed the importance of HVACR to the mitigation of airborne spread of illness. When dealing with mechanisms like HVAC that can affect health and wellbeing, absolute expertise is required. NATE technicians possess this expertise critical to the industry.”

Abate believes it is crucial for NATE to do presentations at industry conferences and trade shows. “The knowledge base is always growing, and NATE is constantly updating programs and training; it’s important to communicate that to industry conferences.”

### ONLINE, VIRTUAL, AND ZOOM PRESENTATIONS

At wholesaler RSC, management found success with Zoom meetings during COVID and has continued this method for some meetings, says Wight. “A combination of in-person and virtual meetings seems to be the sweet spot for RSC and our contractor customers. The advantage of in-person is getting the undivided attention of our customers as well

as more time to catch up with folks on a personal level.” RSC believes in in-person meetings: “We hold one annual Carrier Dealer meeting and one annual Open House for all contractors,” Wight explains.

In-person presentations offer a superior experience, says Nicole Bush, press officer for AHR Expo. “Conducting a presentation online vs. in-person—they just don’t compare. At an in-person event, you are hearing someone speak; it is human-to-human interaction. Listeners are able to read nonverbal cues. Attendees are having an auditory experience. Presenters and attendees are not worried about someone’s computer glitching. You are not worried about having your own computer crash or having other computer issues. You eliminate all of those problems at an in-person event.” Bush’s conclusion: Attendees are able to focus better at an in-person event presentation. Also, those attendees can retain the information better, in real time at in-person events.

In-person is more personal, Bush adds. “Shaking a person’s hand, and being able to catch up with someone and having an opportunity to see those nonverbal cues, including

smiling at each other, or reconnect in a different way--as humans we crave that. You can’t mimic or replicate that in a Zoom or online meeting.”

Bush notes that at in-person events, visitors can get a more satisfying response to queries: “Questions can be answered in a more direct manner, and the questions can be more readily understood, just simply because you are there—you have the time and you have the focus.” What’s more, at a live, in-person event, such as the AHR Expo, products and equipment are often on display—the product is sitting right in front of you, so you can examine it before buying it, Bush explains.

Bush notes that many professionals are experiencing Zoom fatigue. “Prior to the pandemic, Zoom was something we used for an add-on or a secondary opportunity or as a convenience factor. During the pandemic, there was one Zoom session after another.”

Bush explains that for paying guests, an in-person event can be richer and more complete. “As an attendee, you may go to an in-person event to hear a specific speaker, or to hear a talk on a specific topic. In addition, you have the opportunity to meet other people who have a shared interest in the room with you. In Zoom you can’t have a conversation; you don’t have the same kind of access that you would have if you were at an in-person event.”

Bush concludes, “When there’s the opportunity to step away from remote and online events and meet face to face with your colleagues and with your peers, then attending the in-person event is the ideal option.”

The 2024 AHR Expo takes place in Chicago at McCormick Place, Jan. 22 - Jan. 24, 2024. Go here for details: <https://www.ahrexpo.com/>. ●

Michael Keating is a contributor to the *NATE Magazine*.

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# A Top-Down Approach to Holistic Air Care

ADDRESSING ISSUES IN THE ATTIC CAN HELP IMPROVE HOMEOWNERS' COMFORT AND DIFFERENTIATE A CONTRACTOR'S BUSINESS BY GOING "BEYOND THE BOX."

What happens when leading residential HVACR contractors and industry thought leaders gather in the "sunshine state" to talk about growing their businesses and caring for air in uncertain economic times? The inaugural Owens Corning AirCare® National Meeting, held Feb. 21-23 in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, illuminated a path to insulate and elevate contractors' businesses through an often-overlooked part of the home—the attic.

Following are outtakes from the national meeting, including some practical and scalable contractor strategies from the playbook of keynote speaker Josh Kelly, owner of Clover Marketing and Consulting. A former contractor in the HVACR sector and a sought-after consultant, Kelly's keynote remarks focused on helping contractors scale their business for growth by developing a step-by-step plan.

## LEANING INTO THE GAME IN '23

Many contractors are familiar with the saying, "You can't manage what you don't measure." But how frequently should measurement take place? According to Kelly, a straight-forward play that can improve any contractor's business is to track progress each day. Inbound calls, web traffic, leads

generated, and service calls should be tracked daily to assure a contractor's game plan is achieved. "A lot of businesses keep track at the end of the year, quarter, or month. You've got to track your progress daily," he advised.

Other plays Kelly shared with attendees included purposefully building a price book to ensure target margins are achieved and identifying the influencers within each organization who can secure the buy-in of team members to effectively scale a contractor's business plan.

Kelly emphasized the importance of turning best practices into behaviors throughout the business. "There is a lot of good information out there, but

it all comes down to a contractor's ability to translate that knowledge into practical behaviors and apply it," he said. Continuous improvement is more important than perfection, he said. "Don't come up with perfect systems, but scalable systems, because scalable can be surprisingly simple."

A good game plan should consider the context of the economy. Residential heating and cooling is not a demand-creation sector, it's a repair or replacement business, so contractors enjoy some buffer against economic storms. In fact, Kelly noted the family contracting business he led experienced its best year during the 2008 economic downturn. He attributed



Adequate levels of attic insulation can contribute to a more comfortable and energy-efficient home.



that growth to staying present and active in the marketplace as business shifted from new sales to repairs.

Similarly, his business experienced robust sales during the early days of the pandemic when his team sought to safely stay open while other businesses closed shop for a few months. And while no one can predict the economy's future, Kelly advised contractors to lean in, even when the economic outlook is uncertain. "When other businesses are running away from opportunity in the market, lean in. If you've built your business and cost structure right, you can really scale and grow," he told attendees.

### **THE ATTIC: DRIVING COMFORT AND SUPPORTING GROWTH**

So where should contractors look to lean in and capture growth opportunity? A good place to start is in the attic, a space where contractors can address the root cause of issues that influence homeowners' comfort, energy bills, and indoor air quality (IAQ). When used as part of a whole-house approach to caring for air within a home, adequate levels of attic insulation and properly sized and sealed ductwork can contribute to more comfortable and energy-efficient homes.

Data suggests that both insulation levels and ductwork in America's attics can be improved. A widely cited estimate is that 90% of U.S. homes are under-insulated.<sup>1</sup> The number of under-insulated homes may be even higher today, as energy codes continue to evolve.

The State of Florida provides an example of the market opportunity and revenue potential that attic insulation offers to contractors' businesses. Using the estimate that 90% of homes are under-insulated, and accounting for housing units in Florida based on typical square footage, insulating

attics to meet new energy codes could present a potential revenue opportunity of \$17 billion.

### **TAKING THE BLAME OFF EQUIPMENT**

Problems with ductwork may lead consumers to place a service call for equipment when the source of the issue is actually a problem with attic ductwork. Problems related to the size or condition of attic ducts can lead to homeowner complaints ranging from unusual smells and stuffiness to sudden spikes in energy bills. According to Energy Star, an average home loses up to 30% of air that moves through the duct system due to leaks, holes and poorly connected ductwork<sup>2</sup>.

Tom Casey, chief visionary officer, Griffin Services, Jacksonville, Florida, said getting the ductwork right can help avoid situations where properly functioning equipment is blamed for a homeowner's heating or cooling problem. "For seven out of eight people who buy a new system, it doesn't solve the problem. The product's not the problem; the system is," noted Casey, who follows a whole-house approach that emphasizes how the parts of the system, including adequate attic insulation and properly sized and sealed ducts, work together. "You can't ignore the attic or the ducts," said Casey during a contractor panel conversation at the AirCare National Meeting. "It's part of the gig – being a holistic provider. There's opportunity here; harvest it."

Mike Zeppi, president of Anthony's Cooling Heating Electrical, Palmetto, Florida, also brings a whole-house perspective to his work. "The house is an envelope, and if you're not addressing the house as a system, you're doing it a disservice," he said, advising that three steps can help support the homeowner and the contractor's business. "We do a load calc on every home. I'd say half the homes

we go to have an oversized system. You've got to look at the load calc, the insulation, and the ductwork. If you don't do those three things, you're losing revenue," he said.

### **HAVING THE ATTIC TALK WITH CUSTOMERS**

The concept of caring for a home's air is the core of The AirCare Contractor program, piloted in 2020. A pilot conducted with a cohort of contractors evaluated how resolving duct issues and under-insulated attics could help contractors' businesses – and the customers they serve. The program was rolled out to a larger group in 2022 and continues to expand in 2023.

Contractors and their teams in the AirCare program are trained on how to accurately assess current insulation levels in the attic, compare those levels to energy code recommendations, and advise the homeowner on how adding insulation issues can get their homes up to code. Contractors also receive a thermal camera to capture video that shows the air escaping from ductwork.

Those same areas in the duct that are leaking air can also be a path for contaminants from the attic to enter into the ductwork and therefore into the airstream. The IAQ message is particularly important for consumers who work at home. Just 5% of full-time professional jobs were remote in 2019 before the pandemic. While the number of remote workers is subsiding, it is expected to stabilize around 25%, a five-fold increase.<sup>3</sup>

Although many techs and contractors do not view themselves as salespeople, many AirCare contractors approach the attic conversation as an opportunity to educate homeowners. "We know that 90% of homes need insulation, and once techs get in the attic, assuring insulation is just part of the checklist," said Zeppi. "We teach techs that it's not about being

a salesperson; it's about being an educator and teaching homeowners about their home."

Helping customers understand how their home works as a system is just one more way that contractors' teams can distinguish their expertise from other businesses in the market. "Just as customers see value in a whole home approach to caring for their home's air, they see value in NATE-certified technicians who have demonstrated their knowledge by passing NATE's rigorous exams," said Zeppi.

When it comes to discussing the investment in retrofitting ductwork or insulating attic spaces to code, contractors should focus on breaking the cost down per day or per month. This incremental approach scales the investment so that homeowners can see how the improvement in their home's air relates to a very small monthly or daily investment.

## MANAGING HEADWINDS AND TAILWINDS

A business's point of differentiation is always a strength, noted Kelly, but is less important during an economic downturn. "What's more important than differentiating is showing that you're there. In our industry, there were a ton of winners during COVID, and it was because those businesses chose to lean in during the pandemic," he said. Kelly added that small changes to adapting the customer experience—such as equipping the team with high-quality masks and offering IAQ products—helped companies manage the "new normal" and grow in a challenging market. "We really pushed IAQ products during COVID," he said.

As the mid-point of 2023 approaches, Kelly is optimistic about opportunities for contractors' businesses. "Huge tailwinds are coming because of tax credits and equipment rebates



Ductwork that is properly sized and sealed helps defend against loss in the attic.

coming down the pipeline that will make selling the system easier," he said. "Also, COVID changed people's behaviors – they spend more time at home and are less price conscious."

And when it comes to tailwinds, Kelly says that access to financing is likely to be the primary concern. "Access to financing may become more difficult in the future, and contractors may need to be more creative in terms of helping their customers get approved," he said.

## DIFFERENTIATE OR LEAN IN

Caring for a home's air is a way for a contractor to stand out in the market. "Any time you can give the customer more options, you have the leg up. I look at duct retrofits and insulation as an opportunity to lean in to more than just being a differentiator in the market," Kelly said. He notes that,

unlike IAQ technologies, surprisingly few people talk about insulation. And that may be a lost opportunity.

"Insulation," he added, "is an easy sale and provides so much value to the customer. I think five years from now, it will be just like IAQ and 99% of contractors will sell it." Insulation is an easy conversation to have with the customer. There's a lot of education that has to happen with IAQ—insulation doesn't require that.

During the National AirCare meeting, participants also received an update on changes to U.S. climate zones, an update on how energy codes continue to evolve, and insights into how states may apply the Insulation Reduction Act—and what the Act may mean for contractors' businesses. ●

Amanda Winckowski is Marketing Manager, AirCare Program, Owens Corning

1 "Under-insulated" meaning when compared to the minimum prescriptive wall and ceiling insulation R-values found in the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)

2 Source: Energy Star: [https://www.energystar.gov/campaign/heating\\_cooling/duct\\_sealing](https://www.energystar.gov/campaign/heating_cooling/duct_sealing)





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# Maintaining Certification

THE PROCESS OF MAINTAINING AND RENEWING NATE CERTIFICATIONS IS EASY AND ENSURES THAT TECHNICIANS STAY ON TOP OF CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES AND PRACTICES.

The recertification (maintaining certification) of technicians benefits the HVACR industry in many ways. For one, it ensures that technicians are staying on top of changing technologies and practices and are better serving their customers. NATE promotes and facilitates the recertification of technicians. The process is the same for all technicians, regardless of their level of expertise. It's a win-win situation for all.

"Knowledge isn't something one achieves. It is a continual journey to grow in knowledge, which in turn, creates a more competent technician that is more valuable to both the customer and the employer," says Wade Mayfield, former NATE board chairman and president of Thermal Services, Omaha, Nebraska.

NATE certifications must be renewed every two years. NATE has several online training providers that automatically report hours, and technicians can submit additional hours and track their progress through their myNATE profile. "The process of maintaining and renewing NATE certifications is easy when technicians activate their myNATE accounts, track their proof of training directly to their activated myNATE accounts, and recertify by paying the required fee online or by phone," says Lana Mouneimne, recertification specialist at NATE.

Recertification offers the following benefits.

- **Links Knowledge to Skills.** Training and certification increase a technician's technical knowledge and help translate that knowledge into good diagnostics, repair and installation skills.
- **Improved Career Paths.** Well-trained and certified technicians have a much better chance of advancement as they become more of an asset to their employers.
- **Increased Income.** Certified technicians generate higher revenues and profits due to reduced call backs and better customer satisfaction, making it easier to pay them more for their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

- **Greater Job Satisfaction and Confidence.** Every good technician and installer likes to become more knowledgeable and valuable. Employees who feel challenged and appreciated tend to want to continue working and growing within the industry.
- **Happier Employees.** When technicians invest in training and certification, they tend to be happier and have greater job satisfaction.

Recertification can be completed face-to-face or online. "Both methods can be used," says Anthony Spagnoli, director of testing and education at NATE. "What's more, any technical training that is relevant to a technician's certification can be used. However, self-study or on-the-job training cannot be counted for continuing education."

Any technical training that is relevant to a technician specialty in some way can be accepted, Mouneimne adds. "Some of our online training providers automatically report the hours to NATE. Otherwise, technicians need to submit a certificate or other documentation of atten-

"RECENTLY, I'VE COME ACROSS DIFFERENT SITUATIONS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN A LOT MORE CHALLENGING TO DIAGNOSE OR TROUBLESHOOT IF IT WASN'T FOR THE TRAINING I RECEIVED FROM THE NATE RECERTIFICATION MODULES. THEY WERE EASY TO REMEMBER AND WORDED IN A WAY THAT HELPED ME RETAIN MORE INFORMATION THAN THROUGH OTHER TRAINING I'VE DONE."

- Josue Perez



dance, which can be uploaded through the technician's myNATE profile."

Mayfield says technicians at his company go through in-house (Thermal U) classes to recertify. "NATE blesses the classes and curriculum to qualify as continuing education classes. I prefer the face-to-face learning environment for many reasons, creating a culture of learning being the biggest."

### SIMPLIFYING THE PROCESS

In recent years, NATE has changed and updated the recertification process. "Several years ago, the NATE team simplified and streamlined the process," Mayfield says. "The guiding principle was, 'If it is easy, people will do it.' The process, that is, not the requirements."

NATE has partnered with several online training providers such as Interplay Learning, Lennox Learning Solutions and Johnstone University to set up an application programming interface (API) between their Learning Management System (LMS) to NATE's certification management system (CMS) to automatically track hours taken.

The recertification process has improved, thanks to such initiatives. "The updated NATE online store makes the recertification process easier," Spagnoli says. "We have added many new online training courses. If technicians are recertifying by testing, we also offer remote [Live Online Proctoring](#), which allows technicians to test from home."

"Live Online Proctored Exams allow you the convenience of taking a NATE exam from your home or office using a computer, webcam, and stable internet connection," NATE explains on its website. "A qualified proctor will monitor you remotely in real time using your webcam in order to ensure the integrity of the exam. Additionally, after the session is complete, a recording of the session is then reviewed."

As for improving the recertification process even more going forward, Spagnoli says that NATE continues to work with additional online training partners to ensure that it is easy for technicians to find the types of courses they need and to set up automatic reporting. The goal is to make the process as easy as possible for technicians.

Mouneimne says that NATE is working on adding a pop up to the Measure Learning (myNATE) website that will improve the recertification process drastically. When a technician's NATE certification is about to expire within either 120 or 30 days, they will get a notification that reminds them of their expiration date. They will merely have to click to acknowledge that they have seen the notification before proceeding to their myNATE account.

"This will ensure that technicians and contractors will be aware of their upcoming recertifications," Mouneimne

explains, "even if the contact information on their account isn't up to date or if they didn't receive the recertification reminders that we send electronically and by mail."

### A TECHNICIAN WEIGHS IN

Josue Perez, who works for Goettl Air Conditioning in San Antonio, Texas, has found the recertification process to be straightforward, streamlined, and easy to navigate. He completed Air to Air and Heat Pump Installation certifications two years ago.

"I'm going into my second year working at Goettl Air Conditioning," Perez says. "Currently I am a quality control supervisor; after every install, I perform an inspection to ensure that the quality of our work is up to par with our standards as well as code and city requirements. I've been doing HVACR for four years. My dad is in the refrigeration business, so ever since I can remember I've been around this field."

Perez says the recertification process is easy to follow and user-friendly. "There was a lot of information that was new to me but relatable enough so that I was able to understand it with the help of lots of images and different

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modules that made the process interactive and enjoyable. All this was done from the comfort of my own home since I was able to do it online.”

On many occasions, the knowledge that Perez obtained during the recertification process has helped him become a better technician during his career. “Recently,” he says, “I’ve come across different situations that could have been a lot more challenging to diagnose or troubleshoot if it wasn’t for the training I received from the NATE recertification modules. They were easy to remember and worded in a way that helped me retain more information than through other training I’ve done.”

As for suggestions on how NATE could further improve the recertification process, Perez has only one. “I think being able to sign up at the NATE website to take NATE recertification is an excellent idea and would further simplify the process.”

Overall, maintaining NATE certification and the education involved has helped Perez in many ways, which includes more opportunities in the HVACR field. “NATE certification has helped me advance in my career. It has

resulted in better pay and the knowledge to grow and help other technicians in the field. By keeping my certification up to date, I’ve been able to advance in so many ways. It has given me a leader mindset and made it easier to move up. I’ve been able to move up from installer helper to installer lead, to service tech, to field supervisor.”

Perez adds that maintaining NATE certification has better prepared him to take other field tests. For example, he was able to get his Contractors HVACR state license and eventually become the license holder for his branch. “Maintaining my certification has opened doors for me and has helped me achieve a higher leadership position as service manager. I’m really grateful for this opportunity and will continue to recertify.” ●

Neal Lorenzi is a contributor to the *NATE Magazine*.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

What common questions does NATE receive from technicians regarding recertification? Here are a few examples of questions that NATE’s customer service representatives often answer.

- **How do I find continuing education hours (CEH) courses?** Technicians can find both in-person and online training options in the Recertification section of the NATE website. All organizations listed are NATE Recognized Training Providers and their courses will provide technicians with credit hours towards maintaining their certification.
- **How do I receive credit for the course I took?** If you took a course with a NATE Recognized Training Provider, the instructor will submit an attendance record and the course will appear in your myNATE profile. Otherwise, technicians will need to upload documentation of attendance showing the course name, the number of training hours, and date of completion to their myNATE profile or email their documentation to [recertification@NATEX.org](mailto:recertification@NATEX.org).
- **My certifications have expired. What should I do?** NATE offers a 120-day grace period for technicians to complete their recertification after their certification expires. If it has been more than 120 days, technicians will need to restart the certification process.
- **What is the cost for technicians to maintain certification?** If submitting continuing education hours (CEHs) to recertify, the fee is \$25 for the first specialty, plus \$5 for each different specialty. Service specialty renewals include installation specialties at no cost. Heat Pump specialty renewals include their A/C counterparts at no cost.

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## **NEW: NATE TRAINING ACADEMY**

NATE has teamed up with Interplay Learning to create a new online platform with on-demand interactive courses that prepare technicians for the CHP-5 exams.

# Connecting Students to HVACR as a Career Choice

WHILE MANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CONSIDER COLLEGE, AN EQUAL OR GREATER NUMBER OF STUDENTS CONTEMPLATE OTHER POSSIBILITIES. TEACHING STUDENTS ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TRADES—AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NATE CERTIFICATION—IS A WAY TO PREPARE THEM FOR A LUCRATIVE CAREER.

Evergreen High School, located in Vancouver, Washington, has been in existence since 1945. Soon, the school plans to focus part of its curriculum on preparing students for the trades—including HVACR. For the coming year, Evergreen High School will implement this important new program with three two-hour block periods a week with and 40+ students attending each session.

One of the primary goals of the program is to demonstrate the direct application of mathematics in construction. In addition, the curriculum will showcase the various career paths—both with and without a college education—that will lead to financial independence for graduating students as they become part of the highly skilled HVACR workforce. In the current world, it makes good economic sense to go into the trades and not accumulate the often large college debt with which many young adults get strapped.

According to M. Chandler Eby, CCTE Skilled Trades Center coordinator and instructor, “The curriculum uses both ‘Geometry in Construction’ and HBI (nonprofit provider of trade skills training), where students receive a full geometry math credit and an additional

career and technical education (CTE) credit toward their graduation.”

## SETTING UP SHOP

The program has recently moved into a new 7,500 square-foot Skilled Trade Center space and is still in the process of setting things up and running (see Figure 1). Eby explains, “Presently, the program consists of 12 training modules for various trades in construction, where we aim to train our students in skills that can be applied toward the capstone project—a 10-ft x 30-ft Tiny home.

While currently only a one-year program, the school’s aim is to expand the program to accommodate additional years of high school training as well as additional training classes. To ensure the success of the program,

Evergreen has brought together two construction teachers and two math teachers to co-teach each session. Eby is one of the construction teachers.

Eby explains, “We are also proud to be partnered with the City of Vancouver and a non-profit named Community Roots Collaborative to connect the home we build with a local family in need. The plan for the year is to build two or three training modules to be dedicated to HVACR.”

Don Brenneman, director of Training and Development, Airefco, Tualatin, Oregon, has volunteered as a business advisor for the school (see Figure 2). “When Eby shared his background with me and discussed his plans for the school, it was an easy decision to make our company available to help in whatever way



CCTE Skilled Trades Center coordinator and instructor, M. Chandler Eby, gives a tour of the new 7,500 square-foot space Evergreen High School will be using.



Don Brenneman and M. Chandler Eby work closely together to provide the best training to students in the HVACR program.

possible. It is our desire to bring more young people into the trades through programs like the one we're working on with Evergreen High School."

Airefco has offices in Oregon, Washington, and Montana. The company is a distributor of Carrier and Bryant equipment. Airefco was recently acquired by Ferguson. Ferguson is also all-in on developing the skilled trades.

Airefco already offers training for HVACR as well as marketing and sales through Airefco University and Airefco Academy. With Airefco's help, Brenneman and Eby believe that they can create a pipeline for young people to see the trades as an excellent career choice, which will help build up the industry with adequate talent (see Figure 3). According to research done through The Motley Fool Foundation, with 10,000 baby boomers reaching retirement age daily in the U.S., entry positions for young people are readily available once they have the required training.



At a recent field trip to Airefco, students learn some of the basics of heat transfer and the HVAC industry.

## AIREFCO GETS INVOLVED

The company Brenneman works for, Airefco often hears from its contractors (customers) about how difficult it is to find skilled and knowledgeable talent for the industry. "This is one reason our company is committed to providing the necessary HVACR equipment needed for the training center and will donate the equipment for the first tiny home being built. This is how Airefco, as a company, can best participate and be a positive influence in our community," Brenneman says.

The company is also extending its reach by including additional resources from like-minded businesses and vendor partners. Through the company's Learning Management System, Blue Volt, it is looking at potential connections to tools and equipment that would benefit the Skilled Trades program (see Figure 4).

As a business partner, Brenneman will be recruiting various experienced businesspeople to guest lecture in the classroom as well. In addition, on April 20<sup>th</sup> Airefco hosted a field trip for students signed up for the program. The students had the opportunity to see all the different aspects of the HVACR distribution system: warehouse, sales, customer service, and technical support staff. Students received a hands-on look at various kinds of equipment in the company's training lab, including a gas furnace, split system/heat pump, and ductless system. Airefco also opened its learning management systems (LMS) training system for student access.

"Currently, we also have online NATE certification classes that can benefit interested students who get excited about the potential of an HVACR career. In fact, I would like to find a way to design some "Baby NATE" classes that would help entry-level students get a better



During a field trip, students visited a local trade store to learn more about the tools and equipment used in the HVACR industry.

understanding of the HVACR trade," Brenneman explains.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NATE

NATE certification is an essential part of the HVACR business world. Customers want a trustworthy technician to show up and do a high-quality job in a safe and timely manner. Having the right training—which includes NATE certification—provides this guarantee. NATE certifications can also be a critical element in a technician's future capabilities and expertise.

NATE certification allows technicians to increase their capabilities in the HVACR industries at their own pace. Certified technicians gain a formal education focusing on the mechanical codes needed to do the job. This helps to ensure that work is performed safely and in a safe environment for the technician and customer, particularly when working around hazardous situations concerning gas pipe and electrical circuits.

A number of items makes NATE an important partner in reaching out to potential technicians during and after their high school train-





Dave Kyle looks on and evaluates a student working on a piece of HVACR equipment.

ing. While HVACR is a trade with legally mandated licenses, NATE provides voluntary HVACR professional accreditation. NATE is nationally recognized, whereas different jurisdictions have varied licensing requirements. Plus, NATE requires continuing education in each area of specialty, whereas the continuing education required for trade licenses is typically related to code requirements. What's equally important is that NATE is recognized by employers and industry professionals as a sign of quality and expertise.

According to Dave Kyle, president and CEO of Trademasters®, Lorton, Virginia, and a NATE board member, “We provide NATE accreditation to our coworkers and believe that great people have their choice of where to work. While licenses, training, and accreditation are benefits to us as an employer, ultimately the technician’s qualifications stay with the individual no matter who employs them. As a nationally recognized accreditation, NATE comes with a powerful economic benefit to technicians no matter where they choose to work.”

## TRADE TRAINING

Kyle is a great role model and solid example of the importance of trade-oriented training while in school. Since

college wasn’t something Kyle planned to pursue, he was able to take HVACR classes in high school.

“The average student graduates from college with considerable debt and joins the workplace at an entry-level position, while apprentices earn a wage while on the job and get to complete their apprenticeship without incurring debt. Afterward, they are able to instantly enter the workforce at a mid-level position,” Kyle explains.

High school students benefit tremendously from knowing there are alternate paths to success and that college is not the only option. HVACR classes offer high school students the opportunity to explore their interests and find out what they are passionate about (see Figure 5). Kyle continues, “I knew I wanted to start my own business when I was in high school, and the trades gave me the entrepreneurial skills I needed, as well as a clear path to business ownership.” Trademasters is an award-winning, nationally recognized team of top-certified technicians in the commercial and residential HVACR industry.

With the present U.S. administration’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote energy efficiency and conservation, along with all the planned investments in

infrastructure, the HVACR industry has the perfect opportunity to highlight its role in meeting these goals. Any high school student today who is looking for meaningful work can find it in HVACR careers.

“I have seen first-hand how emphasizing energy efficiency and conservation attracts student interest, talent, and respect for our industry. The idea that individual tradesmen can contribute in a meaningful way to positive change on a global scale is an incredible way to connect with young people who may not have considered the HVACR industry as a career,” Kyle says.

“When I met with counselors at our local high school,” he adds, “they were so surprised to learn how much well-trained, NATE-credentialed HVACR technicians earned in our area that they invited me to speak at a county-wide counselor event. It is my opinion that contractors should develop relationships with the counselors who are advising students on their future careers. It is important that counselors have a full understanding of what an HVACR career looks like in their community.”

## THE OPPORTUNITIES ARE IN HVACR

The outlook for employment opportunities in HVACR are great, currently projected to grow much faster than average (for all occupations). HVACR workers are essential, making homes and buildings safer, healthier, and more efficient and sustainable.

Technologies related to efficiency and conservation will further drive industry growth, and HVACR jobs cannot be exported. NATE certifications present a way for technicians to maintain continual knowledge in the advancements and changes in the HVACR industry. ●

Terry Person is a contributor to the *NATE Magazine*.

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