

older homes. I appreciated him wanting to maintain the integrity of the home. The level of communication between Jon and his subcontractors was impeccable.” Maria is considering a bathroom remodel. She said, “I would love to have his crew do that undertaking.”

At the other end of the Grand Strand, Lisa Phillips wanted to create an outdoor kitchen for her Mt. Gilead home. An exterior wall needed to be added on one side (with matching stucco) so the roof could be extended over the space (with matching shingles). The design included a hibachi grill, sink, two refrigerators, lighting, and an overhead fan. Travertine was used on the floor. During the same time frame, Lisa was also redoing her pool, but the contractor left the job. Jon stepped in to oversee that project to completion. Lisa said, “Jon is a great contractor and I would highly recommend him. He did a beautiful job and fulfilled everything that was requested in a timely manner.” ■



PHOTO © CHUCK GEE



From ‘Rendering to Reality’. This rendering shows how Jon Harrah was able to show Lisa Phillips the proposed design of her new outdoor living area and how the final completed project matched the original plan. The completed addition blended in with the original design flawlessly.



Jon Harrah was asked to step in and complete the design and renovation of Lisa Phillip’s pool area. This installation included Travertine pavers on the pool deck & cultured stone around the raised Jacuzzi with waterfall.

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The Latest Trends and Products Available In The HVAC Industry

The awareness of Energy Efficiency has reached an all time high. Whether you are a new construction or remodeling building contractor wanting to offer the best options to your homeowners or a property management company in need of a reliable, reputable HVAC company that will be available when you need them; the importance of making good sound decisions when selecting the right company to do business with is of extreme importance. *Building Industry Synergy* reached out to three successful companies that offer HVAC installation and service to get their feedback on the latest products offered and trends in the industry.

A heating and air conditioning system is one of those items we don’t really think about – until we need to. When that need arises, Dependable Service Plumbing and Air is ready with thorough, experienced, and honest services and solutions.

Dependable Service Plumbing and Air services residential through light/mid-commercial markets with repairs, maintenance, whole duct

system replacements, and air quality tests. It’s expanding its presence this year on the commercial side by building accounts with property management companies, preventative maintenance for restaurants, commercial properties, and homeowners associations.

“HVAC, especially in this climate, is definitely one of the things that people take for granted at times,” said



Mike Harbula with Dependable Service Plumbing & Air.

Mike Harbula, HVAC Service Manager who’s been with the company for nine years, “but then when summer and the hot season hits, they usually cannot go without it.”

When a call comes in, Harbula and his team conduct an evaluation that includes a thorough review of the system. Then, the team member presents the customer with numerous options to allow him or her to determine the best solution.

“We go in there and inspect it, and whatever we find, we report to you,

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take pictures, videos, really thorough notes, and then we present you with options,” said Harbula. “We don’t give you one price and just say ‘Ok, this is what you need to do.’ We do our best to present you with multiple options



and talk with you about what each one means for the home and the homeowner.”

One popular service reflects a new focus on air quality, in part because of the area’s heavy pollen season, and includes duct cleaning and air purification.



“The average home actually builds up about 40 pounds of dust per year,” said Harbula, “and most of that will actually lay throughout the duct work because the air in the home is constantly being circulated. So, having air ducts cleaned every couple

years is very beneficial to the home’s air quality.”

Likewise, air purification devices have become very popular, and Dependable Service Plumbing and Air offers the top-of-the-line device that’s globally recognized.

“This product is the leader in the trade as far as their technology and their backing,” said Harbula. “They have a lot of resources and third-party studies, and they’re used in military government facilities.”

Customers have also lately become more interested in energy

efficiency, Harbula said.

“Now that the world is becoming greener, energy efficiency obviously plays a role in that. Having variable setting systems, or systems that don’t run full blast all the time, or systems that are programmed a certain way to run at certain times, have become really popular over the last couple of years.”

Finally, Harbula said customers have come to rely on Dependable Service and Air for transparency.

“We’re an honest company. We’re not going to try to sell you something you don’t need,” said Harbula. “The biggest thing I find people like about us is that we don’t try to take advantage of people.”

Carolina Cool, the company that set the standard for quality in HVAC along the Grand Strand, continues to provide state-of-the-art services in

heating, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical, solar, air quality, and preventative maintenance for residential and commercial clients as well as property management companies.

Based in Surfside, Carolina Cool employed 8 people when Verlon Wulf purchased the business, then known as Carolina Cooling and Plumbing, Inc., in 1999. Today, with more than 150 employees, Carolina Cool is still going strong and gearing up for a busy spring, though business remains solid throughout the year.

“As the hot weather starts coming on, we’ll start seeing some no-cool calls, and that’s when people will be deciding whether they need to change their systems out,” said Wulf.



“Tourists are coming to town, so a lot of the high rises and places that may have been holding back on spending money are now going to be calling, so we’re going to see a lot of projects from them. But it’s not like our winter really slowed down at all. It’s just been pretty strong all the way through.”

Wulf said technology and energy efficiency are two areas making significant strides in the HVAC world. He mentioned wi-fi thermostats and



Verlon Wulf with Carolina Cool

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home automation as two features that are becoming fairly standard, as well as new systems such as variable refrigerant flow (VRF) and variable refrigerant volume (VRV).

“Traditionally, when a system would come on, the compressor would come on full blast and refrigerant was coming into your building at a constant rate,” said Wulf. “With these new systems, let’s say you have a 9K BTU head on the wall, but it’s only calling for 6K BTU. The system will meter the refrigerant only for what the needs are. VRF is

causing air conditioner efficiency to improve quite a bit. It’s pretty cool technology.”

Water heating technology is also undergoing innovation.

“One thing we’re starting to push is thermal solar, where we actually heat water,” said Wulf. “We’ve had a couple of installations that have really knocked down the client’s utility bill. A photovoltaic system probably has a payback of seven to eight years at best, whereas solar thermal can have a payback of less than three years. So it’s really incredible, and we’re going to start seeing more of it.”

What qualities has brought Carolina Cool



such success in the past 35 years?

“It has a lot to do with just supplying consistent quality,” said Wulf. “When I first came to town, we started doing things like wearing booties, offering a 100-percent customer satisfaction guarantee, and having checklists to follow. So we brought a new standard to the industry. That’s what we still try to accomplish: a consistent, reliable quality as far as service calls, and I think we’ve done a good job with it.”

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A good way to prevent unexpected emergencies is to have maintenance completed annually. **Trusted Home Services'** General Manager Jeff House explained,



Jeff House with Trusted Home Services

“Yearly maintenance improves comfort, energy costs, and the life of the unit. I cannot stress enough the importance and value of yearly maintenance.” The team at Trusted Home Services does one of the most thorough checks on the Grand Strand. According to Mr. House, “We check the whole system: every component including the ductwork and we provide a detailed report to each customer.”

One of the trends Trusted Home Services recommends is installation of an ionization system which improves the overall quality of the air inside your home. “We install a REME HALO self-cleaning ion generator inside the air handler to clean and prevent mold, mildew, and bacteria. This is particularly important around our area with all of the recent flooding,” Jeff said. The system helps a great deal with allergies because it significantly improves the quality of air you

breathe. “The award winning REME HALO® whole home in-duct air purifier is the next generation of indoor air quality (IAQ) technology and capable of purifying every cubic inch of air that your central air conditioning system reaches. It produces Hydro-Peroxide plasma that is distributed through the air handler, through the duct system and into the conditioned living space. Designed to eliminate sick building syndrome risks by reducing odors and air pollutants, this whole home in-duct air purifier is the best solution for whole house and building air purification.”

“Wi-Fi thermostats are also very popular now and Trusted Home Services offers thermostats that are compatible with Google, Alexa, and other smartphone-controlled options. That convenience can also be extended to lighting, blinds, cameras,



and more being operated by your fingertips or voice commands. These options have been a big trend in the many new builds they’ve done around the area.

Generators and surge protection are becoming more requested, especially due to the major storms from the past. Trusted Home Services can provide surge protection for equipment only or your whole home, indoors and outdoors. They offer

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standby generators that can be retrofitted to work from propane or natural gas. They also offer a standby generator that is fully automatic. “It kicks on by itself and takes about 5 minutes for power to be restored with the standby generator,” Jeff noted.

Local homeowners and weekly vacationers need a continuous flow of cool air during those sticky summer months. When that flow becomes interrupted, it is important to have a go-to company like Trusted Home Services in Conway. They offer 24 hour emergency HVAC service to homeowners, HOAs, and Property Managers. Your call always dials into

an actual employee of the company, putting a technician at your site quickly. The company is licensed in NC and SC and serves folks from Brunswick County all the way to Georgetown. As an additional benefit to their customers, Trusted Home Services cross-trains all of their technicians in both the HVAC and electrical trades.

Overall, though, a genuine commitment to customer service is what makes Trusted Home Services stand out as a leader in the industry and a great choice for

Property Managers and others all along the coast. Every member of the company receives weekly training with the continuous goal of maintaining the highest degree of professionalism at all times. Jeff’s goal has remained the same over his 28 years in the industry, “We strive for customer satisfaction with the highest quality of work, and we stand by what we do.” Trusted Home Services is your go-to choice for HVAC and electrical maintenance and service. They now also provide lighting for most of their projects. This lighting comes in a variety of styles and colors. Just as their name implies, quality and comfort you can trust! ■



Sales Manager, Richard Bellamy (left) & Office Manager, Kendra Thornton (right) with Trusted Home Services