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Commercial Services 20 Years and Counting

As in any saga, this is one that cannot be told quickly; therefore, it will be divided into four segments over the next four quarters.

Part 1

Twenty short years ago, Ken Jason and I moved to Jacksonville to start a new business venture. We had grand ideas of making a difference in the commercial service business. Our plan was to offer quality service to businesses, in our case, the Hospitality industry. We were going to start with one service then add five or six other services to our existing clientele. We felt that once they experienced one of our services, they would buy into other service lines that we would offer. We would start in Jacksonville, move on to North Florida then gradually penetrate the remainder of Florida moving into SC and GA. We were going to be 'huge'.

Our initial offer to the businesses was going to be Pest Control with other services being Carpet Cleaning, Window Washing, Drive thru Cleaning, Parking Lot Stripping, Lawn Maintenance, Roof Repair, Painting, Bathroom Sanitation and Kitchen Equipment Repair. We felt that all of these would be reasonably simple and widely accepted. We soon found out that maybe it wouldn't be all that easy.

In February 1987, we started our Pest Control business. There we were sitting in the office, a one room rental on Atlantic Blvd. in a business park, deciding how we were going to accomplish the business plan we had mapped out. We decided that we would

hit the streets cold calling every restaurant we could find. Two, three, four weeks passed and we had accomplished very little. Many of the restaurants said come back later, we're happy now; I can't afford that service so I do it myself; or I am on a National program with Orkin or Eco Lab. All of which simply meant NO to us.

Our first break came from the Gator Bowl Inn. It was a fine establishment (since condemned) and they gave us a chance. Ken sold it and the two of us did the service. We cleaned up their bug and rodent problem; but most important we were now a thriving business. We had a customer!

With-in a year we had three routes and six employees. Our first hire was Cindy, a wonderful lady that I still keep in touch with. By 1990 we had six routes, purchased two small companies and had expanded throughout North Florida, SC and GA. We hired the Dodge brothers, who were instrumental in our development and growth. They were two great guys; honest and hard working as two people could be. Both of them stay in touch, are still in the Pest Control business and doing very well for themselves. There was also Edi and Michelle. Edi was the office manager and Michelle did all of the scheduling. They were both great. Edi was tough as nails and took care of all issues and problems with customers and

employees. She went on to work for a large local bank. Michelle developed our scheduling system; similar to what we use today. She later got married and became a stay at home mom. Two great people in the development of Commercial Services that I will never forget.

By 1991 it was time to offer a second service to our clientele. We considered all of the aforementioned businesses, dabbled in a few of them, but finally settled on Hood Cleaning. We bought a company in Daytona Beach, FL and we were off and running. Well, maybe not running. We found the Hood Cleaning business, was just that. Everyone just cleaned hoods. Very few companies had pressure washers or ladders. They just used a bucket, a rag and some chemical. We soon decided that we would have to change the image of this industry. We started by referring to it as Kitchen Exhaust System Cleaning. Needless to say, we found the fans and stacks in horrific condition. Most of them



----- Cont'd on Page 6

Commercial EMS

The inception of a new division



Commercial Services, Inc. is pleased to announce the development of its newest division – Commercial EMS. With the advent of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs), Commercial EMS was developed to extend a new level of life safety protection to nationwide Commercial customers and affiliates through AED sales and service, CPR/AED training and comprehensive AED Program Management. Commercial EMS is currently nationwide distributors for the Heartsine Samaritan PAD and Zoll Medical AED Plus; two very distinct first responder friendly units.

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), the leading cause of death in the US, is a silent killer. Unlike a heart attack, it strikes without warning. There are no telltale signs. The victim loses consciousness, drops to the floor and is not breathing. Survival rate for victims of SCA can be significantly increased when CPR and early defibrillation by an AED are administered within 3-5 minutes or sooner (recommends the American Heart Association).

Sudden cardiac arrest claims over 330,000 deaths a year; that's a life lost almost every 2 minutes. Because of this alarming number, businesses, schools, federal buildings, airports, health clubs, restaurants, retail stores and public arenas are choosing to be proactive and place AEDs in their facilities. With the recent death of news commentator, Tim Russert, AEDs are in the forefront of the public eye. Many counties and states are mandating that AEDs be placed in public areas.

CPR/AED training is essential, straightforward and accessible. It can be covered in many ways:

1. Traditional on-site 3-4 hour training classes
2. Blended on-line training with one hour instructional hands-on
3. DVD format with one hour instructional hands-on.

Even though an AED does not require much maintenance, it is advised to do standard monthly checks and more involved yearly service checks to make sure that your AED is always in optimal working condition.

Nowadays, it is common practice in business and industry to utilize the services of "management consultants" for expert assistance in dealing with specific operational functions and support. Since emergency medical care is generally not the primary function of retail, restaurant and hospitality organizations, a qualified AED/emergency care consultant should oversee and guide your emergency response protocols and maintenance service.

This is where Commercial EMS steps in. The niche is clear. Our nationwide affiliate base is servicing our nationwide customers for fire extinguishers, fire suppression, fire sprinklers, emergency lights (the list goes on and on); it makes perfect sense that we include on-site AED maintenance checks while we are on your premises.

There are many distributors selling AEDs, but how many of them can sell you the complete package with true nationwide coverage? Commercial Advantage AED Program Management does exactly this. We are the single-point business who will organize your AED program by providing:

- Medical oversight and direction
- Sales and installation of your AED and cabinet
- Notify local EMS
- Send monthly e-notices for inspections and training
- Maintain your AED units through yearly on-site inspections
- Train your first responders in CPR/AED
- Provide a written report of the cardiac event should your AED be used

Commercial is known in the industry as "The Commercial Advantage" – Have that advantage on your side!

For more information on First Responders and Sudden Cardiac Arrest, you can refer to the April and June issues of PRSM and RFB magazines where Marlene Kenney has two published articles. Contact mkenney@commercialems.com or call 1-800-359-7083 ext. 199 for more information.



THE DRIVE TO GREATNESS

Commercial Affiliates come in all types and sizes!!

Commercial Fire often uses that phrase to describe the type of affiliate partners we utilize to provide our nationwide fire protection program. We partner with affiliates that handle only one service (sprinkler or fire extinguishers) all the way up to affiliates that are capable of performing every service we offer our customers. Commercial contracts affiliates ranging in size from two employees to well over 1,000.

We would like to feature one of our affiliates who started with two employees and has grown substantially on their way to greatness.

Randy and Sharla Simmers founded Sun Devil Fire and Security in October 1986. The cornerstone they laid for the business consists of four elements: service, support, success and spirit. The business model was based upon quality and dependability for a fair market price. Today, the cornerstone and the business model remains the same.

The business started in their west Phoenix home and provided portable fire extinguisher maintenance and servicing, sprinkler system and fire alarm system services. With first-year sales of \$64,000, the company steadily grew, and the founders and five team members moved into a 900 square foot office warehouse in central Phoenix in 1989. By 1993, Sun Devil had 20 employees and 12 service vehicles. Not only did their office warehouse space double, they expanded services to include backflow prevention testing and pre-engineered restaurant hood system service.

In 1994, outgrowing the original facility, they relocated to a new 4,500 square foot office warehouse. The 29 team members also provided services to contractors through a contract sales team. In October of 1996, Restaurant Hood Cleaning was added. During 1998-1999, additional shop, warehouse, and training facilities were built. With this growth, the company now occupied 6,100 square feet.

By 2001, they expanded into Tucson, Arizona to create Wildcat Fire Protection, and expanded into Prescott serving northern Arizona in 2002. Having outgrown the 6,100 square feet of space they moved to their current 21,000 square foot facility in September 2006. As of July 2008, they have 132 employees and almost 20,000 customers. Sun Devil declares their employees to be the highest quality team members in the fire protection industry today. They have helped generate a 266% increase in revenue from 2001 to 2007.

How does Sun Devil Sustain Momentum?

The momentum we achieve through understanding what we do better than any other organization ensures our success. Our passion is building lasting internal and external relationships one at a time. We believe we are the best and we measure our success by measuring customer loyalty based on customer retention and low employee turnover. As the old saying goes, "its not big knots that make a fine garment but the little stitches." We believe our attention to small detail builds great relationships. Sun Devil team members all share our core values and comply with our team behaviors. We hire for greatness and it shows in our performance results.

Commercial Fire Partners on the Drive to Greatness!

Commercial Fire, much like Sun Devil, recognizes that success depends on great people. To take advantage of the similarities in our values, we began a partnership in 2004 and rekindled it again in 2007. In 2007, Commercial Fire added almost \$170K in revenue and YTD 2008 we stand at \$136K. Using valuable feedback from Commercial Fire, we were able to complete 100% of the workload in May and June.

Sun Devil Fire appreciates the trust that Commercial Fire has in our ability to deliver a product of high quality with dependability. We look forward to a long and prosperous mutual relationship for both of us.

Quoting Sun Devil staff:
Our journey has just begun!



2008 PRSM

Outstanding Volunteer of the Year **BRUCE FALKE**

National Account Manager
Commercial Fire, Inc.

By Liz Davidson

The PRSM 2008 National Conference was held April 13-15, 2008 in sunny Orlando, Florida. PRSM, Professional Retail Store Maintenance, is a Non-Profit organization that represents and unites vendors and retailers to advance the Industry's awareness of the Retail Facilities Maintenance Profession. There are 664 member companies making up the 1458 active members. The retail member to vendor member ratio is almost 3 to 1 enabling us to keep our name in the forefront of the ever changing facilities world.

During the Awards Ceremony at the Grand Finale Dinner, PRSM proudly recognized several people and outstanding company contributors. Our own Bruce Falke was presented with the Volunteer of the Year Award. Bruce was nominated and ultimately chosen from a group of over 100 PRSM volunteers.

Bruce has been a member of PRSM for 4 years and has served on the Education Committee for the past 3 years. In 2008 he was elected to the PRSM Board of Directors and has been appointed Board Liaison to the Education Committee.

When asked how he felt about receiving this award, Bruce stated "I was shocked and humbled. Considering the number of outstanding volunteers that contribute to the success of PRSM it was an honor just to be nominated. To be recognized for just doing what I felt was in the best interest of Commercial Services is phenomenal. Our involvement with PRSM has increased our visibility as a viable and Premier Fire Protection Company which has opened the door to new and prospective National Customers."

Commercial

Celebrates



Commercial Services, Inc. celebrated their first family fun day on July 3, 2008. Employees were encouraged to bring their children to work for the entire day. With this in mind, the planning committee had a lot to do.

Once everyone arrived, the children were separated by age groups and the fun began. The smaller kids enjoyed arts & crafts, and games; while the older boys and girls were literally put to work!

Joe Kenney (CEO) and Mike Qualls (COO) fashioned their own "Apprentice Program". They began by teaching the participants about business; how to write a business plan, how to form a company and what it takes to make it successful.

They were divided into teams, chose their team leader and were assigned the task of creating their own lemonade stands. Most of the hard construction was completed earlier by Commercial employees but the children were left with naming their team, designing and decorating their stand, pricing and selling tickets to employees and their families for the purchase of lemonade. The competition was on... fierce and competitive but most importantly – FUN. Pricing was recommended to start at 25 cents a glass – but in reality, the kids were selling tickets anywhere from the suggested retail price to \$6.00 a glass. Talk about entrepreneurs!

The winning team was

awarded \$20 each and their parents received specially designed T-shirts proudly stating their child was on the winning team. Proceeds collected were matched by Joe and Mike and a contribution of \$500.00 was made to a charitable organization called "Alex's Lemonade Stand" (please see the story of this charity on the next page).

Everyone delighted in visits from the Jacksonville Fire Department, Jacksonville Sheriff Department, McGruff (the Crime Dog) and Ollie Koala (the Koala Bear from Ollie Koala Pizza). BBQ was served up by Joe and Mike while a local DJ spun tunes for our listening and, "yes", dancing pleasure. Games were played

and prizes were awarded. Grand prizes for raffles were 2 tickets to Universal Studios won by Mary in KEC and a Nintendo Wii won by Tara in Fire.

Many, many thanks to everyone who volunteered to help make this event a great success. Fun was certainly had by all!

First Family



F u n Day



by Christy Galagarza

About Alex's Lemonade Stand...



In 2000, a 4 year old cancer patient named Alexandra "Alex" Scott announced a seemingly simple idea -she was holding a lemonade stand to raise money to help "her doctors" find a cure for kids

with cancer. The idea was put into action by Alex and her older brother, Patrick, when they set up the first "Alex's Lemonade Stand for Childhood Cancer" on their front lawn in July of 2000.

For the next four years, despite her deteriorating health, Alex held an annual lemonade stand to raise money for childhood cancer research. Following her inspirational example, thousands of lemonade stands and other fundraising events have been held across the country by children, schools, businesses, and organizations, all to benefit Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for childhood cancer. On August 1st, 2004, Alex died peacefully at the age of 8 -- she had raised over \$1 million for childhood cancer research in her short lifetime.

Alex's spirited determination to raise awareness and money for all childhood cancer while

she bravely fought her own deadly battle with cancer has inspired thousands of people, from all walks of life to raise money and give to her cause. Alex's family and supporters are committed to continuing her inspiring legacy through Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a registered 501c3 charity. As of July 2008, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation has raised over \$20 million for childhood cancer research. The result -- Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation has given millions of dollars for childhood cancer research across the country!

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 had never been cleaned. Our work was cut out for us. We had to convince the customers that they were currently paying for a service which just wiped down their hood. They could have their dishwasher perform this service for far less money. To say that this was not an up hill battle would be far from the truth. In reality it took us three years to understand this industry and develop a pressure washing and cleaning method that was affordable to us, but also gave the customer what they wanted, which was a clean exhaust system.

During those three years, Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning grew, but very marginally. In 1994 it took off. We grew from five routes to ten. We bought three small companies and expanded throughout FL, GA, SC, NC and AL. Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning was on the rise and we knew it. We felt so good about the future of this industry that we started to look at a wider birth. We had some fabulous employees that worked harder than I dare tell you about. There was Frank! Who could ever forget Frank? At times it looked like he slept in the grease and muck that we cleaned. He is still in the industry and went out on his own many years ago, doing very well. There are Alexis, Calvin, Josh and Walter; all of which are still with us. They have been here from six to eleven years. They have helped build Commercial to what it is today. The two key personnel that I truly owe more to than I can ever repay are Danny and Steve. They exemplify what Commercial is. I will tell you more about them later on. Over the years our office staff has included some wonderful people. There was Tina, who was with us for nearly ten years. She started as a receptionist and moved up to office manager. She developed most of our Affiliates and structures that are still in place. She is now living her dream, owning her own restaurant. One can never miss what Pam has and continues to do for us. She has been with us eight years and sparkles at her job. Mike has done all but the same. He has worked for four years and has handled too many office positions to name. He has done all of them with flare and special care for our customers. Then there is Christy and Noele. They have become a great tandem. Noele has taken over our Affiliate program and taken it to new heights. Christy is in charge of our National Accounts and truly is remarkable in her handling of delicate

issues and problems that arise. She handles it with care and never shows the stress that comes from it.

At the same time in 1994, the Pest Control business hit a hard change in the industry. Although, we felt we were the premier company in the Southeast, we began to receive letters from regional and national customers saying that they loved our service, but they had to go on the National program that corporate had just put together. It was probably the most disheartening time of my business career. We were being told that we were a great company, but we just couldn't cover their needs on a large enough scale. We realized at that point it was time to make a structural business change. It was time to sell the Pest Control business and put that money towards the Kitchen Exhaust business and become the company that we were receiving letters about. We needed to be the National entity that was handling all of the locations for the given Corporation.

This process took us two years to develop. By 1996 we had grown to eighteen routes and covered the entire southeast. It was time to take on a National Account. Our plan was to only service the southeast in-house and use Affiliated-subcontractors to cover the rest of the country. As I searched the country for quality Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning companies, I found some very interesting things. For instance, there were a handful of companies around the country that were trying to make a difference in the industry. They too were tired of being labeled a hood cleaner. They wanted to do the entire service and do it correctly. Needless to say, we hit it off very well from the beginning. I must say, it was a delight, and somewhat of a surprise to find that there really were other professional Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning companies throughout the country. The surprising part was that they knew each other; they just didn't know Commercial Services or me. I started with Jay in Idaho. Why Idaho? Well, I had heard of him and his company and how he had covered the whole Northwestern US. He was a great help to me. He introduced me to Mark in OH, Don in AZ and Butch in TX; both of which we are still doing business with today. I must say that Butch was instrumental in my personal growth and well being. If I ever had such a thing as a mentor, it would be Butch. I will be forever in his debt. There are long standing

relationships with Jim in NM, Mike in CA, Armondo in IL, Randy in WI, Ian in VA, Alvin in AR, Rick in OH, Rod in IL and of course Jan and Rick in PA. All of these companies have been with us from nearly the beginning. They are all leaders in their community in both business and personal measures. I take my hat off to each and every one of them. I will always have a special admiration for Rod, Jan and Rick as they have supported our efforts from the beginning. They have and continue to be very close friends of mine and Commercial. *(Part II winter quarter)*

Joe Kenney

Notes From the Fleet



By Dave Rossi

High gas prices make spending a few dollars on service and parts a good investment. When was the last time you changed the air filter in your car? A new filter is a gas SAVER. Another way to conserve gas is checking and maintaining the correct air pressure in your tires.

Most new cars (2000 and later) have fuel injectors which require periodic cleaning. The owner's manual should have a recommended interval and service should be performed by a professional technician. If it isn't stated, 30,000 to 50,000 miles is a good point to start.

Clean fuel injectors are a gas saver, but the BIGGEST gas saver, is the way you drive your car. To save gas, press on the gas pedal slow and easy – as if there was a raw egg between your foot and the gas pedal. Plan ahead when stopping; get off the gas early and coast to slow the car down; then apply the brake safely.

All of these ideas will help save gas and some cash!

COMMERCIAL PRESENTS AT NAFED 2008

by Ed Hugill

Commercial Fire is a strong supporter of the National Fire Equipment Distributors (NAFED) and greatly benefits from attending all three regional NAFED meetings. The three meetings this year held in Las Vegas, Atlantic City and Cleveland gave us a chance to meet with distributors from all across the country. We attend the meetings and sponsor a booth to get the maximum exposure for Commercial during the annual two-day event.

The vendor booth show is open to the distributors during a daytime session and also again at night. The show gives Commercial a perfect venue to meet with other vendors and manufacturers in the Fire Protection industry. The two sessions allow existing Commercial Fire Affiliate partners (FED's) to talk with us about a variety of topics. Two topics of interest always expressed by our affiliates seem to be expanding their geographical service area or adding new services. The booth show format is very important in creating a casual atmosphere for us to answer questions for distributors currently not doing work for Commercial Fire. We view the three regional NAFED meetings as our annual recruiting trips to attract and sign new distributors into our affiliate network.

Commercial Fire was given a great opportunity at the NAFED meetings this year to take recruiting to a new level. In past years at NAFED our recruiting time was limited to the booth shows. This year I was given the opportunity to do a joint presentation on "Understanding National Account Companies". NAFED had the vision to allow us (Commercial and another national company) to present a break out session on this timely and important topic for all NAFED members. We structured the presentation to be informative and thought provoking for all distributors. Our goal was to spark an interest with distributors currently doing little or no service work for national account management companies. We also wanted to re-energize existing national account service distributors to appreciate the business and want more.

The first part of the NAFED presentation was to discuss the industry trends creating the need for strong national account companies like Commercial. We talked about mergers and acquisitions taking place in all industries creating more regional and national customers. We addressed the four leading reasons that drive customers to a "true" national program. The first two topics discussed pertained to the pressures to downsize facility departments and/or the trend of outsourcing some of those responsibilities. Consistent pricing and consistent quality of service is virtually impossible for national customers without a national program. The last reason stems from the liability concerns of trying to manage numerous small fire protection companies as an alternative to a national program.

NAFED members attending our breakout session were then given the "Top 10 Reasons Fire Equipment Distributors should work with National Account Companies."

1. Consolidation of companies and services will continue to grow.
2. FED's cannot pick up National Account customers on a local level.
3. National & Large Regional Companies are replacing local businesses in many industries.
4. Local service company tags & stickers on national customers offer great exposure to the local market.
5. Minimal upfront acquisition cost to gain a new account.
6. No bad debt exposure.
7. National Account business helps build routes, hire new (additional) techs and covers overhead costs.
8. Single point of contact for multiple work orders.
9. Opportunity to consistently gain new customers.
10. National Accounts customers requiring multiple services allows distributor to add new services.

The opportunity to make this presentation helped make NAFED 2008 meeting the best we have ever experienced! Our goal is to continue to build the strongest nationwide network of affiliate partners in the fire protection industry. New customers drive commercials' strength and growth but we recognize the backbone of our program is our Affiliate partners.

NAFED 2008 was a huge success in continuing our goal to be the best national fire protection company!

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Feet in the Street

Commercial Fire and KEC welcome 19 new customers who have joined the Commercial family since January 2007.

3 Day Blinds, Inc.
Abercrombie & Fitch Co.
Apple, Inc.
Applebee's (all of NC – KEC)
Bare Escentuals, Inc.
Best Buy Purchasing, LLC
Central Transport (Fire)
Commerce Bancorp, Inc.
Container Store, The
Costco (KEC only)
Everything But Water, LLC
Mattress Giant Corp.
Restoration Hardware, Inc.
Sleepy's, Inc.
Talbot's, Inc., The
Teavana Corp.
TravelCenters of America (KEC & Fire)
True Religion Apparel, Inc.
Wal-Mart Florida (225 in Florida - KEC)

Letter From The Editor

Back by popular demand, Commercial Services, Inc. is pleased to once again bring you their quarterly newsletters. Our previous Editor-in-Chief, Caitlin Kenney, graduated from college this past spring and is now employed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., a publishing company in NYC.

Caitlin has done a wonderful job over the past several years with Commercial's three newsletters; The Commercial Corner an in-house publication for employees, The Commercial Advantage produced for Commercial customers, and The Commercial Network written for Commercial affiliates.

These are rather large shoes to step into, but we are giving it "the old college try". Look for our quarterly newsletters every spring, summer, fall and winter. With our last newsletter published in the summer of 2007, there's plenty to catch up on.

We want to thank our customers and affiliates for their continued support and our ever expanding working relationships. After all, we wouldn't be here without YOU!

Special acknowledgement to Robert for his technical expertise, skill and patience. Thanks to Nancy and Jeimy for their proofreading and editing.

Marlene A. Kenney *Editor-in-Chief*