

# APS Heating and Cooling recognized as Business of the Month

March 29, 2010

[By FRED POLLARD](#)

The Telegraph

COTTAGE HILLS - APS Heating and Cooling has been awarded the River Bend Growth Association Business of the Month for March.

"I appreciate being involved with the (RBGA)," company owner Dennis Krause said. "It has definitely helped the company. The monthly activities and networking with other businesses has been an asset to our business."

For more than 20 years, APS Heating and Cooling has provided installation, service repair and sales on parts for a wide selection of heating and cooling units.

Krause started his business in 1988, opening at 2406 Belle St. in Alton.

"I was in the agricultural market," he said. "Farmers started filing bankruptcy, and agriculture went downhill fast. My father-in-law was in heating and cooling, so I got involved. I didn't know anything about heating and cooling, so I did both (jobs) for a while before choosing heating and cooling. I like doing things for people, and it is cleaner work. A combine is one of the dirtiest things compared to an oil furnace."

Quickly outgrowing his location, Krause soon moved to his current store at 326 W. MacArthur.

"I started out with no borrowing power, no advertisement, no inventory, and started my own company rather than take over an existing one," Krause said. "I had no lines of credit, and it was very hard. Instead of writing a company one check at the end of the month for the 50 air conditioners you bought, we had to write 50 checks because we were on C.O.D."

Krause said Barb Maher was with him from the beginning, helping with every aspect of the business until retiring in 2007.

"We would not be where we are if it wasn't for Barb, and even today she helps us out whenever we need her," he said. "I talked about giving it all up at one point, and she is the one who talked me out of it. She was so dedicated, you would have thought she had more stock in this company than I did. She is a once-in-a-lifetime employee."

"Dennis loves the business he is in," Maher said. "When we started it was just Dennis and I. I worked for Jim at Yaeger and Son, and he decided he did not want to be in the business anymore, and rented his space to Dennis."

"At the time, my desk was right by the front door. I started a new job without moving my desk or even cleaning it out."

APS focuses on residential work and features a showroom display of more than 20 units.

"We have a unique situation," Krause said. "We have designed special do-it-yourself kits for people who want to install units themselves. It can save them a lot of money, and there is no reason a customer should not be able to do as much as they can legally."

The established company offers used units, as well.

"We have a large used inventory," Krause said. "We have three categories in the used market. Choice number one puts out cold air or hot air, but you won't like the looks of it. Category two will have the same efficiency you would find in a new unit. Category three will offer a new heat exchanger or a new compressor. Used models also offer a warranty. If a homeowner is not satisfied, they can bring that unit back and exchange it or apply the money they spent toward the cost of a new one.

"I really don't recommend a used unit because it will not be the best for your utility bill, but if you are going to buy used, then buy it here."

Another source of pride for Krause is his extensive variety of brands available for installation.

"We like to design special packages to give the homeowner the most for their warranty," he said. "Often, one brand has a better furnace, while another brand has better air. Why not give them the best of both worlds, I always say."

APS Heating and Cooling services the entire Metro East and St. Louis areas and is open 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. on Saturday. For information call (618) 259-6699, (618) 325-2566 or visit the Web site at [www.aps-heatingcooling.com](http://www.aps-heatingcooling.com).

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