

# COOL CUSTOMERS

## Family-owned business has deep roots in Alton



The Telegraph/MARGIE M. BARNES

### **Barrett Heating and Cooling Inc.**

Mike Barrett, left, and Ed Barrett repair a blower motor in the back shop of Barrett Heating and Cooling Inc. at 500 Belle St. in Alton. Five siblings and four sons and daughters run the family-owned business, which was founded in 1896.

### **Barrett Heating and Cooling Inc.**

500 Belle St.  
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[www.barretttheating.com](http://www.barretttheating.com)

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**By JESS CHARLTON**  
**For The Telegraph**

ALTON - Barrett Heating and Cooling Inc., 500 Belle St., has been named this month's RiverBend Growth Association small business of the month.

"It's pretty nice that we won," owner Jay Barrett said. "We are very proud of that."

But the business is no stranger to this award. Barrett said in 1996 during the 100-year celebration, they were awarded the Small Business of the Year.

Barrett Heating and Cooling started off as a copper, tin sheet and metal shop that his great-grandfather started in April 1896.

"My great-grandfather worked for another sheet metal shop as a tin smith for 15-plus years before he decided to begin his own company," Barrett said.

In 1954, after their great-grandfather passed away, their father purchased the family business from their remaining aunt and uncle.

"My dad ran the shop by himself until 1980 when Mike and Joe started to work for him. I came in after leaving the Air Force in 1981, and over the next four years me and my siblings began to do more and more operations," he said.

Barrett said once their dad began to slow down and retire from the business, he and his two brothers, Joseph and Michael Barrett, and his sister, Christine Walters, took over in 1986 and became full owners in 1995. Barrett said four of the five children went into the family business.

Barrett said Mike does a lot of the service work, Joe does a lot of the sheet metal installations, Chris runs the office with the help of their other sister, Theresa Kates, and he does a lot of the sales. Although Barrett Heating and Cooling has moved away from the copper and tin sheet business, Barrett said they do primary function residential replacement.

"We work on air conditioners and furnaces," he said. "We also still work on oil furnaces, boilers and some geothermal work and ductwork - really anything that's involved in residential heating and cooling."

Barrett said their most popular line of furnaces is Lennox, who they have been in business with since 1967.

"We sell a lot of Honeywell thermostats and our humidifiers are from Aprilaire," he said. "For our hot water boiler systems we use primarily Lochinvar and our geothermal systems are from Geocomfort."

In addition, Barrett said there are many different accessories to improve indoor air quality including UV lights to help control some of the contaminants in the air at home.

"Besides the normal filters that come with the furnace, we can add other filtrations that take out other particles in the air to help with those who have allergies," he said. "The filtration you put on will work year round. The ultra-V lights help kill or neutralize orders, bacteria and mold."

Barrett Heating and Cooling serves the greater Alton area.

"A lot of customers are mostly of Madison County and Jersey-Calhoun. Macoupin County is probably the farthest we will go," he said. "We try to stay on the Illinois side and stay within 50 miles of our location."

Barrett said he believes focusing and giving the best possible service and quality of work to each of their customers is most successful for their business.

Barrett Heating and Cooling is open from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8 a.m. until noon Saturday. They also offer after-hour services for emergencies.

For information, visit their website at [www.barretttheating.com](http://www.barretttheating.com) or call (618) 465-3731.