

KINGS OF COMFORT

Local heating and cooling enterprise recognized as Business of the Month



The Telegraph/FRED POLLARD

King Air Conditioning and Heating and Bush Refrigeration

Mike and Karen Edwards, owners of King Air Conditioning and Heating and Bush Refrigeration, stand outside their King office in Godfrey. The business has been recognized as the RiverBend Growth Association Business of the Month for November.

King Air Conditioning and Heating
401 Pearl St., Godfrey
(618) 465-5633
www.kingaircondheating.com

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By FRED POLLARD
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GODFREY - Mike and Karen Edwards, owners of King Air Conditioning and Heating, were excited to learn they were the RiverBend Growth Association's Business of the Month, but still managed to keep their cool.

"We were honored and surprised to find out we were picked," Karen Edwards said. "We have tried to become more involved in the RBGA this year; I think networking is very important."

The past couple of years have been eventful for the couple, who also own Bush Refrigeration.

"I really want to thank our customers," Karen said. "We have such a wonderful and loyal customer base and their business has made us what we are."

Multiple service and standard awards adorn the walls of the office at 401 Pearl St., a business that dates back nearly 40 years.

Jerry King started King Air Conditioning and Heating in 1974. For years, the company was known for its work on new construction. When Mike and Karen Edwards purchased the business in September 1991, the focus shifted to include residential business and a local business landmark was born.

"I went to Ranken with plans to go into sheet metal and this opportunity came up," Mike Edwards said. "We were young and just decided to jump right into it. When you own your business, you get to do things they way you think they should be done. You can set your own standard."

"When we started there was not much of a customer base left," Karen added. "We had to rebuild from square one, and it took some time to build our base up again. One thing that worked in our favor was that Jerry did a really good job with his installations and it helped to have those King stickers in homes in the area."

Currently, King Air Conditioning and Heating regularly places in the top 10 Bryant dealers in the Southern Illinois/Central Missouri regions, and is a "gold club" award winner with its geothermal equipment.

Mike said regular checkups can save customers both headaches and deep hits to their purse strings.

"If you haven't had your furnace checked out yet this year, you need to before the weather turns really cold," he said. "When it runs a lot is when you will find out about maintenance issues."

In 2009, the owners of King Air Conditioning and Heating in Godfrey acquired Bush Refrigeration in Alton. Previous Bush Refrigeration owner JoEllen Bush continues to operate the business as office manager.

"We were actually considering expansion into refrigeration at King," Mike said. "Everything (with Bush) just kind of fell into place."

"Our area needs something like this. We are also big on purchasing from the area and promoting where we live. That is how you build your town up."

Karen agrees that supporting the local community and economy is vital for local business.

"As a small business owner, I know how important it is to buy here and keep our dollars in the area," she said.

The King enterprise is a family affair, as well. The couples' oldest son, Bret, graduates from Ranken next month and works for Bush Refrigeration. Their daughter, Kylie, helps with Internet and advertising.

Office employee Leanna Akers, who is "like family," is celebrating 15 years at King.

Bush Refrigeration provides sales, service and installation on all makes and models of walk-in coolers and freezers, ice machines, restaurant equipment and beverage coolers as well as heating and air-conditioning service. King Air Conditioning and Heating provides complete installation and service on air conditioners, furnaces, heat pumps, generators, boilers, and indoor air quality and geothermal equipment. Both companies offer maintenance agreements and regular maintenance programs.

"We charge by the job, not the hour," Karen said. "That's where customer service comes in. We make sure the customer gets what they pay for, and we are very careful not to overcharge.

"We really appreciate the confidence our customers have in us. They are loyal and we hope to continue serving them for years to come."

Ameren is offering special 4.99 percent financing on all ActOnEnergy qualifying equipment. King Air can provide more information.

For information on King Air Conditioning and Heating, call (618) 465-5633 or visit the website at www.kingaircondheating.com. For more information on Bush Refrigeration call (618) 467-0177 or visit the website at www.bush-refrigeration.com.