

#### FEATURING:

# Q&A with Bill Gibb

#### **ALSO IN THIS ISSU**

- HIGHLIGHTS-SALES
- THIS EDITION'S TOPIC
- FIRELINE WINS SMART CEO'S CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

Fireline

eline

President's Pen-Managing Growth

#### By Anna Gavin

We are busy. Really busy.

As our company grows we have more customers, more paperwork, more challenges. "That is a good problem to have," people say to me. And in many ways, this is true. But when you are in the middle of the growth, it is hard to see the forest through the trees.

Some of this stems from changes we have made internally. Most of it though, comes from the increasing number of opportunities out there. The economy is coming out of a long slumber and businesses are growing, just like ours. We want to take advantage of those opportunities while they are there. Yet we also need to be able to keep up with the work. That is the real challenge.

**The good news is – we are not alone.** Many others in the fire protection industry and similar trades are having the same challenges. This is how our conversations go:

Me: "How's business?"

Them: "Busy. We can't hire people fast enough."

This is nearly everyone I talk to. The workflow is a challenge for us all. In fact, between now and 2022 the construction industry will need more than \$1.6 million skilled workers. That does not even include service related tradesmen. So what do we do? We step back, adjust our strategy, use this influx of work to our advantage and we do whatever it takes to keep on track. We take a long look at our sales and adjust the plan. Who do we sell to? What do we do best? Where are the best customers? We take time to answer these questions and then sell accordingly. **Go after customers that are a better fit for Fireline** and spend less time selling to those who are not.

We also continue our efforts to hire. Recruiting, advertising, word of mouth – you name it. And if we find people, we hire the right people. People who will be part of our Fireline family. People who bring quality workmanship and positive attitudes. This takes time and patience, and frankly, a little bit of luck. Some of these people we are training ourselves, others we hire fully trained. Both are an important part of our future success and both have equal value. Finding good people is the hardest task we face as an organization, and yet it is one of the most important.

Meanwhile, we continue to drive forward. To work hard. I am continually impressed by our dedication and ability to overcome challenges. I want you all to know that there are plans to get through this growth and manage it in the future. Everyone should be proud of where we are and where we are going.

#### **NEW TO FIRELINE?**

Join our private Facebook Group. Search for "Fireline Employees" and request to be added.





# DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA?

Fireline is always looking for ways to improve how we work and do business. We value your thoughts and perspective, so please submit your suggestions on the homepage of Firenet.

# **TOPIC** Department Updates



#### KAREN COBB SYSTEMS SERVICE

The System Service Department has had a very busy first quarter for 2017.

We have started a "helper" program and brought in four gentlemen to grow

with the company and learn what we do. So far this has proven to be well worth taking the time to "grow our own". We have also added Fred Anders as a third Field Supervisor to the team to assist with the management of our field techs. This has enabled the team to do more with site visits, QAQC's and in general just reaching out to the techs to see how things are going.

Amanda has been promoted to the Admin Supervisor and oversees the admin staff in the department. This has opened the door to have Samantha take the role of Lead Dispatcher. Dispatch is an ever-changing area in our department and we are currently in the development stage to hire a Technical Coordinator/Scheduler to assist with handling trouble calls and technical assistance for customers calling in.

We have also streamlined the repair quote process and Danica is doing a great job learning the process and has really stood up to the task. It has been a group effort by everyone while she learns her job and adjustments were made.

We have stepped up the communication in the department by holding bi-weekly conference calls – the Field Supervisors are conducting the calls keeping the technicians informed of changes and any issues we are coming across. We feel that this is extremely important given the fact that we are paperless and less time is being spent by the techs stopping in the office.

I look forward to what the rest of the year holds and to see continued growth within our TEAM!



#### AL RIEFFLIN SPECIAL HAZARDS

After months of red tape we are finally ramping up on our Water Mist installation at the Walters. Water Mist is the latest invovation in fire suppression technology which has been used in the marine industry for years, now its finding its way to land based applications. Joe Murry is the lead on this project, planning and getting the techs up to speed on installation techniques. This is a very promising market for Fireline.

We are looking for your help! The nature of our work means we only have large jobs that take months of planning. Sometimes this causes us to have down time, most of it unexpected as clients and end users may not be prepared or there may be last minute cancellations. When that happens, we have to make some last minute adjustments and find work in other departments. As a result we are implementing a task board. If you have a task or project that needs to be done, big our small please contact us and let us get it on the Task Board.



#### TED REITTERER SPRINKLER INSTALL

Department 290 is working closely with the service department to take on the larger repair work, this has been helping to keep the field busy when we are between jobs.

We have reached out to one of the local technical high schools that offers trades to their students and have hired a helper from the plumbing program. Dante Cromwell has been working part time with us since January and is doing well and learning the trade, we look forward to bringing him on fulltime after graduation. I would encourage the other managers to look into trade schools if there is a need for helpers. The school does a nice job of preparing the students to work in the real world as well as monitoring the students' progress. If there is any interest please call me and I can put you in touch with the right person.

Kevin Young is splitting his time between the office and the field and has been helping with estimates and project management.

The hunt for a qualified sprinkler designer continues. We have been using sub design labor for too long so if anyone knows of an experienced designer looking for a change please have them contact me. I'm sure Anna will make it worth your while!

# THIS EDITION'S TOPIC continued



#### TJ SMALLWOOD PRE ENGINEERED

**Restaurant Service & Install:** During the end of 2016 and beginning two quarters of 2017, the Restaurant team in Baltimore is working on reorganizing processes and job duties. We added an additional

technician (Joseph Parmer) late 2016 and an administrative person (Victoria Wertz) early 2017. This will allow the restaurant departments to get caught up on the backlog of service and focus the attention needed on the new volume of install jobs.

**Vehicle Systems:** The vehicle systems longest tenured and most experienced technician, has been out on disability, with no outlook on returning to the field. Dan's absence has been felt. Even with this set back the remaining technicians have yet again stepped up to carry the workload. So again 2017 will be a building year, trying to get fully staffed. We have already hired one technician (Antonio Scott), and will have another starting in May.



#### MIKE LEVASSEUR PORTABLES

In 2017 the portables department is working on being a fully caught up department. We are hiring more shop employees to help with the constant work flow of extinguishers that come in for

hydrotest or 6 year service. This will keep the drivers stocked and ready to hit the road. By doing this we are hoping that by the end of the second quarter we will be able to grow the department effectively by using the right resources. I believe this is a very exciting time for the portables department. We will soon be looking at how we are going to grow instead of only focusing on catching up with past work.



#### GUY HORNIG FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

The first quarter of 2017 has been a continued effort and investment of product and technical training for the fire alarm department. As we grow in sales and opportunities we must also

grow internally in order to keep up with the demands of support and workload. Our design department has been holding regular classes for streamlining processes and uniform design methods and understanding to increase production. As a result, project backlog has been reducing to a more acceptable load. In addition, we've also had additional manufacturer's technical training here at Fireline for our field personnel to ensure that all individuals working on systems are properly informed and can execute their tasks more efficiently thus reducing time needed to complete the projects. It goes without saying by providing your team with the tools and education they need to do their job that not only with you notice an improvement in their performance, but also their demeanor and self-worth as a contributing team member.



#### JUSTIN FISHBACK BRANCH OFFICE

Leesburg has been very busy, and as a result we are making lots of changes to meet the needs of our customers. If you have visited our office you would know that we have very limited space in the

shop, and the storage area that we do have is filled to capacity with fire extinguishers. We are about to undertake a project to open up the shop to give us more room to work and operate the forklift. We have also brought in a sea container to use for permanent storage on site.

Additionally, our staffing needs have changed in response to the added business. We have decided to add another admin position to work alongside Jackie in the portable and hood service division to ensure the needs of our customers are being met in a timely manner. We have recently hired a new shop technician, a position that has been vacant since October. Mark Trent will join the team just in time to help us reorganize the new shop space. We are also looking to fill two positions for install technicians, and Jared has decided to pursue a career as a fire inspector with Loudon County. Good luck in your future endeavors Jared!



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Everyone here knows Bill. He's tough on safety. He is particular on oil changes. He likes to play by the rules. But what many may not know is quite how many aspects of our operations Bill handles.

In maintaining the fleet, the property, our tools, and our safety Bill is in charge of a great deal of our company costs. In fact, he is responsible for managing over \$1.7 million dollars worth of costs within Fireline. Whether it is keeping our gas bill in check or making sure our workers comp insurance does not spike from safety incidents, Bill is our guy. Anna Gavin asks Bill a few questions to better understand his view on Materials Resource Management.

**AG:** Obviously you weren't reading OSHA manuals as a teenager. What was your career journey to get here?

**BG:** Back in the early 70's before cell phones and video games we had to find something to do to stay out of trouble. I joined the Maryland Civil Defense as Volunteer Communications operators. I was able to join the Volunteer Fire department in 1974 at the age of 19.

I joined the Army in 1976 to receive electronics training. I spent three years in West Germany during the Cold War era. After the military a friend introduced me to world of Fire Protection through Pyron. I spent 6 years learning Fire Protection and Halon 1301 systems. I also attended night school during the Pyron years and in 1984, I received a Associates degree from CCBC in Fire Protection.

### On the Cover continued

I moved over to Simplex in 1988 to further my education with a Fire Protection manufacturer. I joined Fire Protection Today to learn sprinkler inspections and Fire Pump testing and in 1996 I ran into Frank Chenoweth at a Fire Pump Class. He convinced me to come over to Fireline where I worked as a systems service technician prior to taking on my current role in 2011.

- **AG:** In the six years that you have had this position, the average vehicle maintenance costs per vehicle have decreased over 32%. What do you attribute to this successful trend?
- **BG:** It is a combination of factors. Negotiating lower maintenance prices than Jiffy Lube at the dealerships so we could get better value and quality our of our vehicle service was a big part. Also by doing 5000 mile tire rotations this cut the frequency of replacing tires. But the big change was putting our fleet on a five year turnaround program. Before we would drive vehicles for 8-10 years and the cost to maintain them was high, not to mention the downtime. By selling and buying new vehicles every 5 or so years we are preventing major maintenance costs from happening.
- **AG:** You are the master at negotiating with vendors. Whether it is the HVAC in the office, a dealership, an auto mechanic or a tool wholesaler. How do you define a good vendor?

- **BG:** The good vendors want some of the pie and are willing to work with us to achieve a common goal, good service at reasonable costs. Communication and honesty is also important.
- **AG:** Let's get it out there– You have a reputation for being the tough "Safety Guy". Where do you see we have made the most improvement and why? Where would you like to see us improve in the future?
- **BG:** Lately the lack of OSHA recordable has been the most improved. Last year we only had two, a considerable improvement from years past. Now we need to work on drivers attitudes to driving safely. With 130 vehicles, there is a constant stream of incidents. Whether a fender bender or worse.

#### MRM By the Numbers:

# of Vehicles Managed:	130
# of Vendors Fireline uses (for Fleet, Property and Tools):	48
# of Square feet of Buildings:28	863
# of Square Feet of Total Properties:135	292
# of Employees to Keep Safe:	196
# of Times Bill's Phone Rings a Day44	0-60

# **SNAPSHOTS**

Best Run Book Launch



Managers Meeting

#### Steve Hale on Jobsite



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#### **Customer Service Staples**

#### By Dave Taylor

To understand what good customer service is (and isn't), I try and recall when I've been on the receiving end of a good (or bad) customer service experience and apply the good experiences to customer service challenges I face. Here are some of the factors that can impact good customer service.

**Tone** - The tone of your voice can immediately diffuse a difficult situation. Recently, I had a significant problem with my internet and telephone provider at my home. I left two messages before someone called me back. By the time they did, I had become very frustrated. Immediately, when I answered the call back and before I could explain the problem, the woman who called was so nice and pleasant that I was completely disarmed. I was so taken back by the pleasant tone of her voice that my first impression was this person wants to take care of my problem. The tone of her voice completely erased my frustration over being inconvenienced. It's that important.

**Empathy** - Sometimes the most important thing to do is apologize to the customer for the problem, whatever it might be. This lets the customer know that you have empathy with their issue and helps convey that you're sincere about helping to solve the problem.

**Don't Improvise Answers** - If you don't know the answer, just say so. But immediately follow up that you are going to find out and get back in touch in a reasonable amount of time (24 hours or the next business day is a good guide). Trying to improvise an answer when you really don't know is very transparent and insincere. It's more respectful to be honest and let them know you are going to the expert for a

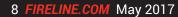


resolution he/she can rely on. This will help to build future trust in both you and Fireline.

**Own Up to Mistakes** - If we have made a mistake, own up to it, let the customer know and immediately begin to search for a resolution acceptable to the customer. Customers understand we aren't perfect and appreciate the acknowledgment.

**Don't Air Dirty Laundry** - Please don't air any internal "dirty laundry" such as blaming others for the problem the customer is facing. First of all, it may not be true. Second, it puts the customer in an awkward and uncomfortable position.

**Offer an Accommodation** - If there is some type of a problem and the customer is not happy, offer some type of accommodation to the customer for his/her trouble. This



## **GENERAL AIR / VIKING SPRINKLER TRAINING**

General Air Products recently hosted Fireline for a private training class in their Pennsylvania facility. The training involved 10 Installation techs and 4 service department technicians on their air compressor products as well as nitrogen generation. Ray Freemont Jr. from General Air Products also arranged for Viking Sprinkler Company to provide a special training class during the visit. It was a long day, but all attending had opportunities for hands on experience with General and Viking's products. General also provided a tour of the factory including their test labs.



Highlights-Sale continued

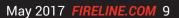
can be in the form of a refund or discount. A few years ago, I had a problem with Direct TV at home. Not only did they fix the problem rather quickly, they offered me two months of the NHL Ticket at no charge. I've never forgotten this and try to apply it to my customer relations.

Search for a "Win-Win" Solution – This is a concept from Dr. Stephen R. Covey's book "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People". Dr. Covey wrote: "Win-win sees life as a cooperative arena, not a competitive one. Win-win is a frame of mind and heart that constantly seeks mutual benefit in all human interactions. Win-win means agreements or solutions are mutually beneficial and satisfying".

# FROM THE FIELD **OUTTAKES**



*New Hire Bob Nicewander Excited to Get Started* 



Happy Birthday!

#### MAY

Matt Meyers	1
Brian Bartholme	3
Rich Sigethy	8
Bill Bonney	9
Kyle Dean	9
Dan Kiser1	5
Steve Twain1	5
Tyler Smith1	7
Gary Cox, Jr1	8
Victoria Wertz1	8
Greg Smith2	0
Charlie Harris3	1
John Pierce3	1

#### JUNE

Marvin Clark2
Kandyce Ward3
Kelly Coon9
Bill Gibb12

Ike Austin	12
Tim Goodman	15
Tony Cadogan	15
Chris Troutman	24
Bill Donohue	25
Ted Richter	25
Adam Prager	28
Robin Busch	29

#### JULY

Elizabeth Zeledon1
Shaun Austin1
Mike Bryant3
Jay Proctor4
Jessica Ganzermiller4
Antonio Scott7
Billy Carter7
Greg Diaz8
Alan Holmes11
Mike Debelius11
Mark Rufus15
Gary Hoddinott17
Collin Creighton18
Mike Ramiro19
Nick Cavey19
Ron Eure21
Samantha Sauer24
Glenn Jaeger26
Jimmy Keedy26
Charlie Moore27

Dante Cromwell	27
Kevin Federline	28
Jason Litten	29
Steve Sensibaugh	29
John Mosley	30

#### AUGUST

Anna Gavin1
Kirsten Chandler1
Deshawn Brown3
Jason Swieczkowski5
Joe Mooney, Jr5
Billy Ramsey6
Steve Clarke14
Ras Wisidagama18
Samuel Jean18
Marvin Nagel22
Nick Copsey22
Shane Nagel22
Shannon Adkins22
Todd Everitt28
Tom Cavin28
Charlie Miskimon29
Todd Bates29

#### FIRELINE WINS SMART CEO'S CIRCLE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR LARGE CONSTRUCTION

Fireline was honored to win the Large Construction Category of the Baltimore Circle of Excellence Awards. "The award celebrates our accomplishments as a leader in Baltimore construction. While I feel there is still so much we want to do, it is good to know we are growing from an already successful place in our market" says Fireline President Anna Gavin. The Circle of Excellence Award recognizes 250 CEO's in the Baltimore area. Winners are selected as leaders who impact and inspire others in their market.





Jolene Lutz, (443) 278-9188 jolene@smartceo.com Marissa Fegeley, (443) 278-9443 marissa@smartceo.com Jessica Desvarro, (443) 278-9234 idesvarro@smartceo.com

#### Baltimore SmartCEO Celebrated 30 Industry Leade at the 2016 Circle of Excellence Awards, Nov, 15

More than 250 CEOs and decision-makers joined SmartCEO in honoring the 2016 Circle of Excellence finalists and winners at a high-energy celebration

Baltimore, MD (Nov. 16, 2010) — Baltimore SameCED orelevated the area's most compatibated business leader for their hardwards program data and leadershap at the 2016 Circle of Excellence Awards, which took place on Nov. 15, 2016 at the R&O Railmod Museum. This appear is fandistant and winners collectively generate northy 806 million in annual revenues and employ 2.277 individuals in Greater Baltimore. Their impring stories of achievement were published in the November/December issue of Baltimore ZhumeZCD magazine.

Please see below for a complete list of finalists and winners. For more information on this year's Circle of Excellence winners, visit smartceo.com/baltimore-circle-excellence to read their inspring stories.

"The Circle of Excellence finalists are happing the future of Baltimore's business community and ensuring the asstainability, safety and efficiency of our community for years to come," says laime Netpor-Zawmon, President of SmartCBO. "We provide recognize their successes and contributions, and we believe that their impact will make a difference for customers and clients across the nation."

More than 290 executives and decision makers attended the high-energy excloration to boor the 2016 Critice of Exclored availability and a sub-inners and their achievements. The versing kicked off with a cocktail and attenvising reception, followed by the announcement of Rachel Caftors Monson, provided and CCD of the Harry and Raenath Weinherg Foundation, as a commensate Granter Ballmore's top companies in Construction, Government Contracting, Munificating, Portfessional Services and Technology.



#### "NOTI-FIER'S COMING, TO TOWN"

In a recent group of training classes, Fireline hosted Notifier factory training classes in-house. An unprecedented 14 Fireline technicians from 3 different departments attended Notifier Basic Training; all passing the final exams. The second week of classes yielded an additional 6 technicians from 2 departments in the advanced programming class. All participants in the Advanced class passed as well. This investment helps to secure Fireline as one of the leaders in Notifier certified techs.



# **Computer Problems?**











Ross Dyott Babies Baby A: Wilson "Finnick" Dyott 7lb 4oz • 19.75"

Baby B: Wilbur "Fisher" Dyott 6lb 6oz • 19.25"



**Cindy Rueppel** Everly Rueppel 1st Grand baby born on 1/22/17 5.10 lbs.



**Jimmy Keedy** Natalie born on 12/19/2016 7.5 lbs.



Justin Fishback Edward Tyler Fishback (Teddy) born January 31, 2017 7lbs 9oz.

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#### **JANET GRIFFIN**

#### From a customer

"Gordon, my contact at [customer site], and I spoke and during the conversation he mentioned what a great job Janet Griffin has done and is doing. She has made Gordon's life easier. I called Janet directly and let her know how much she is appreciated by Gordon and by me."

#### THE FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS TEAM

#### From the contractor

"Fireline is to be commended for cooperation and supervision of the project. I know Condo President was especially grateful for minimal disruption of the residents normal living patterns. The new system will help enhance life and property safety for all involved."

.....



#### **MARK RUFUS**

*From a customer* Bopat electric called today and complimented you on the work you did for them yesterday. They like it so much that they requested you to complete the other locations as well. Keep up the good work!!

.....



#### **JASON LITTEN**

#### From a customer

"Joe's Steakhouse called today and wanted me to let you know that the tech who serviced their hood system did a great job. He even found a FX in the basement that was missed for years."



#### **AMBER TOPI**

#### From a customer

"Just to let you know my contact called and wanted me to know that Amber was so helpful. She was very pleased with Amber's help with all her concerns. Great Job!"



#### **DWON BESS**

#### From a customer

Dwon always calls a day in advance to advise "Hey Ken we good for tomorrow and what time do you want to meet me"?. Great communication from him."

## KUDOS continued



#### **KELLY COON AND STEVE TWAIN**

#### From a co-worker

"Thanks for all of your help working with all the contractors and our staff. The extra effort has been amazing, especially on the short to no notice that you get. This has been a big help, thanks again."



#### STEVE HALE AND JAY PROCTOR

#### From a customer

"The techs that were here yesterday (for guys that have never been here) were great. We completed all inspections in a day. All went well."



#### **MARK VESTAL & STEVE SENSIBAUGH**

#### From a customer

"I do want to say that Sunday morning both Mark (alarms) & Steve (sprinkler) came out to my community to repair the pipe leak and figure out what was going on in the pump room. They were both sooooo knowledgeable and their customer service was great! My tech and I were able to ask questions and they answered with such precision and knowledge! Please pass that on to their boss for me!!!!"

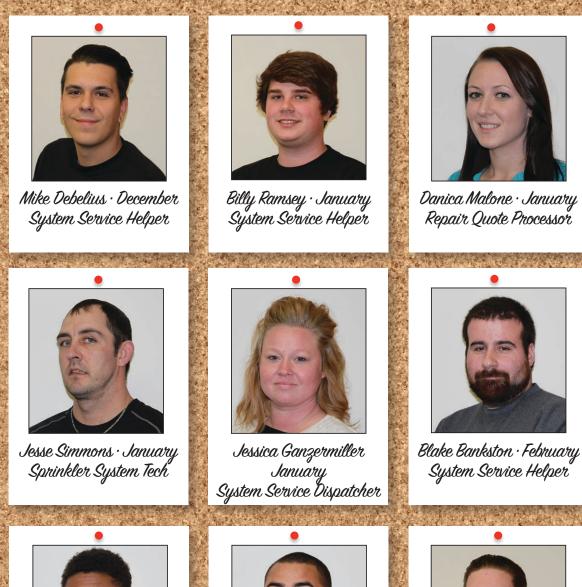


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## New to the Team

Join us in welcoming these new Fireline employees. Lots of new faces to learn so take note!





Dante Cromwell · February Sprinkler System Tech



Devin Adams · February System Service Helper

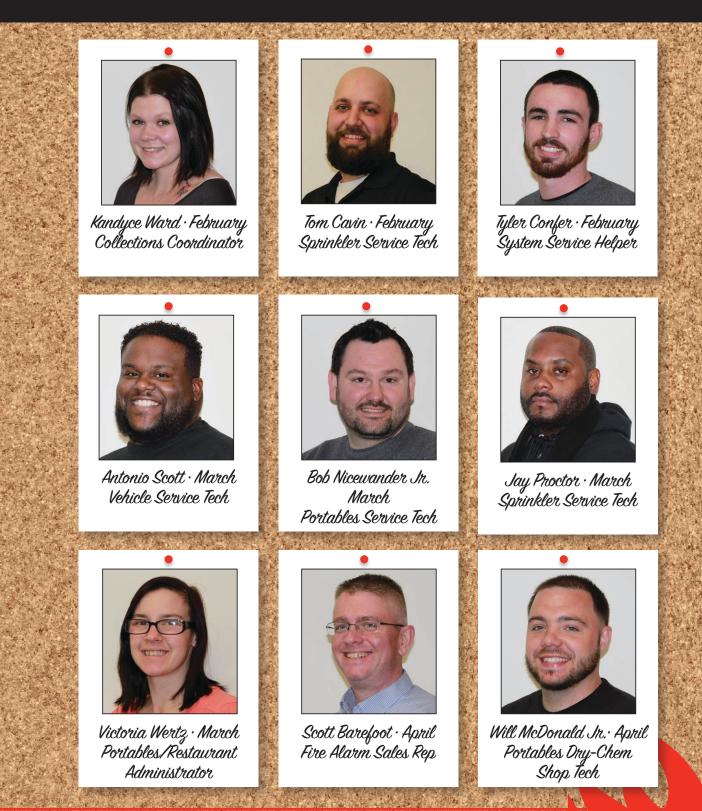


John Robinson · February Sprinkler Service Tech

#### **NEW TO FIRELINE?**

Join our private Facebook Group. Search for "Fireline Employees" and request to be added.





Make it to Happy Hour on Time

#### **PROVIDE CUSTOMERS...**

- Fast Response.
- Efficient sales and service.
- Quality installations, inspections, and repairs.





# **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARD**



4TH QUARTER - TED RICHTER Fire Alarm Systems



4TH QUARTER - NICK COPSEY Sprinkler Service



4TH QUARTER - STEVE SENSIBAUGH SPRINKLER SERVICE



4TH QUARTER - MATT MEYERS Training coordinator



1ST QUARTER - ROBIN BUSCH Service Sales



1ST QUARTER - KEITH CHAFFMAN Portables service



1ST QUARTER - KYLE DEAN System service



1ST QUARTER - DWON BESS Fire Alarm Systems





JASON LITTEN • DECEMBER



**KYLE MILLER • JANUARY** 



**DENNIS TETSO • FEBRUARY** 



KEN RADKE • MARCH



27 Years

17 Years

16 Years

11 Years

9 Years

8 Years

7 Years 2 Years

1 Year

15 Years 13 Years 8 Years 3 Years 3 Years 2 Years 2 Years 1 Year 1 Year 1 Year

#### MAY

Marty Ibbott	
Al Reifflin	
James Porter	
Janet Werner	
Eric Robertson	
Rupert Mangal	
Craig Steinbock	
Ricky Gardner, Jr.	
Amber Topi	

#### JUNE

#### JULY

Steve Imhoff	43 Years
Fawn Dyson	19 Years
Glenn Jaeger	15 Years
George Armstrong	12 Years
Frank Bernadzikowski	11 Years
Ken Barnhart	8 Years
Edwin Montano	3 Years
John Mosley	3 Years
Mike Maloy	3 Years

Alberto Armesto
Nick Copsey
Ted Richter
Troy Moseley
Adam Prager
Francisco Martinez
Joe Murry
Kyle Miller

#### AUGUST

Steve Clarke	40 Years	
Reggie Burton	23 Years	
Jim Handy	18 Years	
Daryl Blow	17 Years	
Greg Diaz	13 Years	
Linda Abdow	13 Years	_
Rich Sigethy	13 Years	-
Tony Cadogan	13 Years	
Shaun Austin	11 Years	-
Dwon Bess	10 Years	
Dave Taylor	9 Years	
Debbie Lanham	8 Years	J.
Dustin Breeden	6 Years	
Ross Dyott	6 Years	1
Dave Krenzer	5 Years	
Marvin Nagel	5 Years	
Rick Kavlich	5 Years	
Corey Marriott	2 Years	
Greg Smith	2 Years	K
Nicole Manzanera-Davi	s 2 Years	
Sean Parsons	2 Years	
Bladimir Ventura	1 Year	
	· · ·	

#### 2 Years 2 Years 2 Years 1 Year 1 Year 1 Year 1 Year

2 Years

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