

WHOLESALE

News of Plumbing • Heating • Cooling • Industrial Piping Distribution



Recent boiler replacement project at Shoreline Community College, near Seattle, Wash., saw manufacturers' representative Columbia Hydronics of Vancouver, Wash., work closely with mechanical contractor McKinstry Co. in engineering and supplying the job with two fan-assisted, sealed combustion boilers from Laars Heating Systems. Here Columbia technician Mike Petterson verifies gas line pressure during startup.

ARI, Carrier quit suit for lower SEERS

WASHINGTON — A legal challenge by hvac manufacturers to a federal appellate court's ruling in January that restored a higher-than-desired hvac energy efficiency standard appears to be losing steam with last month's withdrawal of two key plaintiffs.

Both Carrier Corp., reputedly the world's largest hvac/r manufacturer, and the Air-Conditioning & Refrigeration Institute, the manufacturers' trade association, filed suit in January. (Turn to Carrier drops... page 27.)

Epa frees HFC refrigerants from Clean Air rules

WASHINGTON — In significant, unexpected new refrigerant regulations published last month the federal EPA decided to not extend to HFC refrigerants and blends the leak-rate prohibitions, record-keeping requirements and sales restrictions that currently apply to HCFC and CFC refrigerants.

EPA had been suggesting to supermarkets and other users that it would be. (Turn to Ozone-safe... page 27.)

Traditional domestic sources to the rescue

Price/supply squeeze in commodities stifling industry's economic recovery



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Contributing editor

The plumbing/heating/air conditioning/piping industry is experiencing one of its worst crises in decades, and it's not the result of recession or military strife.

Rather it's rooted in a looming shortage of raw materials, commodities and scrap that are indispensable for the production of the thousands of products comprising our industry's lifeblood.

Shortages have been compounded by skyrocketing costs. Prices of scrap metals critical to the manufacture of iron, steel and bronze products have risen well above 50 percent, the most meteoric jump since 1972-73. Copper, important to most phcp products, also has risen phenomenally.

This time around there are no alternative reserves that can be drawn on to replenish manufactured goods not available domestically. In fact, imports and the increasing number of businesses that have grown depen-

dent on them are in worse shape than domestic producers.

With steel, iron and bronze scrap practically unavailable at any price in the U.S. today, only companies that have ongoing scrap supply connections are able make deliveries as promised to customers.

Although there are several countries (Brazil, India, Ukraine) responsible for the disproportionate sopping up of global commodities, it is China that stands head and shoulders above. (Turn to Global shortages... page 40.)