

Highlights

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>NH Gas Project</i>	1
<i>Hydraulic Workshop</i>	1
<i>Kaizen Korner</i>	2
<i>Caption Contest</i>	2
<i>Employee News</i>	3
<i>Hydraulic Plumbing</i>	3
<i>NH Gas Continued</i>	4
<i>Carey's Corner</i>	4

PARKER STORE LOCATIONS

- Bangor ME
- Portland ME
- Manchester NH
- Fitchburg MA
- Cranston RI

HEADQUARTERS LOCATION

- Northboro MA

EMERGENCY SERVICE PHONE

- 978-345-2200

WEB SITES

www.thehopegroup.com

www.hopeair.com

www.sorensensystems.com

NH Gas Solves Upgrade Problem With Help From The Hope Group

Keene, NH – The New Hampshire Gas Co., headquartered in Keene, NH, recently finalized the installation and startup of its new custom blower control system for its municipal propane gas distribution system. David Jacques, Assistant General Manager and David Grande, Manager of Operations for NH Gas were on hand to oversee the inspection and to evaluate the initial startup activities.

Marc LeBaron, Project Manager for Sorensen Systems and John Moore, Key Account Manager for Hope Air Systems in NH, inspected the final installation and startup at the NH Gas



The installation conducted by Hope Air Systems at NH Gas, included two Kaeser Model EB 420C 50 HP blower units and two Kaeser Model BB 88C 10 HP blower units integrated with a pressure and flow controller package designed by Sorensen Systems.

operations center. The custom blower system engineered by Sorensen Systems was designed to provide a stabilized pressure source for the propane gas distribution throughout the Keene, NH community. Using essentially ambient air, the existing process was determined to be inadequate in dealing with the increasing demand for

commercial propane customers. NH Gas is a subsidiary of Berkshire Gas Company, based in Pittsfield, MA.

For this application, four Kaeser rotary-lobe blowers were linked together to provide the required controlled pressure and internal backup and redundancy

(continued on back page)

Hydraulic Workshops Attract Record Attendance

Northboro MA - The recent series of hydraulic plumbing workshops presented by The Hope Group, for its customers, attracted a record breaking number of attendees according to Tony Cantone, President of The Hope Group. "The presenters from Parker who participated in



Over 160 customers attended the three training sessions and the Mini-Tradeshow

the workshops told us that the Portland and Northboro training sessions were the two largest they had ever seen," said Tony. The "hands-on" training was designed for assemblers, maintenance personnel, designers, engineers, and technicians to learn

(continued on page 3)

Kaizen Korner

Is There An RIE In Your Future?

By Jon Mitton

We are happy to welcome Fritz Zuegg as a new member of the Kaizen Core Team. He has jumped right in and is working closely with several teams that have open projects.

It's been gratifying to see the continuing participation of our employees. Over the past 24 months we have logged in over 200 events, including HELP, RIE and VSM activities. This is strongly indicative of our company-wide commitment to using the Kaizen process to improve the way we get things done at The Hope Group.

There are currently several interesting events underway including a **Consolidated Distribution Center RIE** (rapid improvement event). The



goal of this project is to assess the current process and see how to best unburden the five Parker Stores from the complicated shipping requirements. A centralized approach will provide many benefits including improvements in how we serve our retail customers.

An important RIE getting underway, which will probably evolve into a full VSM (value stream mapping), is the **Hydraulic Field Service** event. It is important for our future that we have a strong process in place as we attempt to expand our field service capabilities. The Kaizen approach assures us that we will

have the best pre-planning possible to get things done right.

Another project to help provide for improved customer service is the **Credit Card Security** event. This RIE will address how to improve service, while maintaining the strictest privacy as it relates to customer credit card transactions. There are lots of things to consider and an RIE means that all aspects of the issue will be addressed.

Even eBay has become a topic for an RIE. There is a strong potential to use eBay as a powerful mechanism for us to **Disperse Excess Inventory**. Any excess inventory that we can move as a result of understanding and utilizing eBay would be much welcomed.

The *Highlights* newsletter is published monthly by THG Corporation for its employees and customers.

The Hope Group
70 Bearfoot Road
P.O. Box 840
Northboro, MA 01532
508-393-7660



Writer Of Winning Photo Caption Revealed



"Uhh, maybe we did take this downsizing idea a bit too far."

We have a winner.

Congratulations to our photo caption winner, Steve Kelley, who earned a \$25 gift certificate for the effort. And thank you to our fearless leader for his tolerance and good humor. First runners-up were Michelle Oswald, Jo-Ellen

Dominguez, Donna LaFleur, Preston Sturdevant and Dennis Boragine. Their runner-up captions are posted with the winning caption in the office reception area. Thank you to everyone who participated. Do you think we can do it again next year?

Hope Group Employee News

Employee Awareness Committee Makes Changes

The employee Awareness Committee held its regular meeting recently and has a lot of news to share with everyone.

Top News Item

First, and most important, the Ice Cream truck has been scheduled to start on May 24. This news comes as a great relief to Paulette (and a few other die-hard ice cream fanatics.) Look for the truck on Wednesdays this year, instead of the traditional Friday visit.

Blood Drive News

The next blood drive is set for Monday, May 8. Other dates will be August 21 and November 27. Mark your calendars.

Thank Q Ending

Sadly, the Awareness Committee this week recommended that the

Thank Q program be dropped effective Sept 30, 2006. Although over the past years it has been a fun and effective program to encourage quality, safety and cooperation among our employees, it no longer has enough participants to keep it viable. Anyone who has Q cards to redeem must submit them to Donna Warren no later than September 30, 2006. After that, the program will be officially suspended.

Cash Gifts Ending

It has also reluctantly been recommended that the cash gifts given to acknowledge weddings and births be suspended effective immediately as a result of the reduced revenues received from our fund raising projects. It is planned that the birthday card and scratch cards will continue as usual.

50/50 Raffle

The committee plans to continue holding the popular 50/50 raffles to help raise money for its programs.

Happy Birthday!

Birthdays in **April** include Stephen St.Peter, David Esposito, Michael Vezina, Michelle Oswald, Neil Berry, Allen Bradford and Ron Cook.

For **May**, our birthday celebrants include Chester Rudzinski, Bob Brigham, Peter Mitton, Angel Rolon, Christopher Morin, Lorie Brigham, Elizabeth C Fournier and Elizabeth A Fournier, Richard Wright, Brian Sanborn, Bruce Hundley, Steve Korandanis, Peter Ferguson, Donna Tibbetts and Paulette Montville.

Hydraulic Plumbing Highlights Training Sessions

(continued from front page)

about a wide variety of topics including:

- Hydraulic Hose Plumbing
- Metric Fitting Identification
- Dry Technology
- Hydraulic Tube Bending

The workshops provided participants with instruction on how to select, assemble and route the proper hydraulic hose and fitting combination for maximum safety, service life and with zero leakage. They learned how to identify the port and tube end of any metric tube fitting or adapter using simple gauges and calipers and how to select the right metric fittings. They also learned



how to select, assemble and install hydraulic tubing, tube fittings and adapters with a focus on achieving optimum plumbing design. Finally, the participants learned from factory experts how to accurately bend hydraulic tubing for optimum efficiency, leak proofing and aesthetics.

NH Gas Helped By The Hope Group

(continued from front page)

capability. Design engineers at Sorensen Systems developed a pressure and flow controller package to integrate the existing digital controls for the system. A new pressure sensor was mounted on the existing line, which mixes the propane, to provide the correct ratios and proportioning to meet varying demands.

Chuck Keyes, Systems Engineer, for Sorensen Systems, handled the software programming that permits the four blowers to operate in sequence to meet various load levels and to serve as internal backups during maintenance shutdowns. The challenge was to integrate the new blower system with the non-automated pre-existing system, which relied on a series of solenoids actuated by a binary timer package.

According to Marc LeBaron, of Sorensen Systems, the propane pipeline system provided by NH Gas is highly unusual. "Keene is the only city in the country that has a centralized, underground propane distribution network to provide gas at a required pressure and ratio to an entire community," said LeBaron.



Marc LeBaron, Project Manager for Sorensen Systems, inspects one of the four Kaeser Omega Blowers installed as part of the propane gas control system developed for NH Gas in Keene, NH.

"The system is not automated. It is operated through an ingenious system utilizing digital monitors and recorders to monitor gas ratios and controls," he added.

The original inquiry from NH Gas, which was handled by John Moore, from Hope Air Systems, was based on a requirement for air compressors to supply a solution to their problem.

However, upon evaluation by Hope Air System's engineers and consultation with the specialists at Sorensen Systems, it was agreed that a more efficient, reliable and cost-effective solution would be derived from the Kaeser Omega blower package. The need for large volume, low pressure air, instead of high pressure air from a compressor, was the deciding factor.

The Kaeser Omega Blower units were a "tri-lobe" design, which offer high efficiency and reduced noise and pulsation according to Joe Dias, District Manager for Kaeser Omega Blowers. The Kaeser blower units require a minimum of floor space, which was an important consideration given the somewhat cramped operations area. All of the service access points are located on the front of the units while all process and utility connections are located on the back. "This greatly improves routine maintenance and operational requirements," said Dias.

Carey's Corner

Showroom and Training Center Help Us Project Our Image

The new showroom and training center on the lower level of the Northboro office is another step recently taken to enhance our ability to project a positive marketing image for our customers. It has always been our policy to project a professional image as a way to reflect the professional approach we take to how we do our jobs. There is more than some truth that a good first impression goes a long way to persuading a customer that we take pride in our selves, our products, and how we take care of our customers.

By dedicating a combined display area and training facility over 3,000 square feet, The Hope Group, Hope Air Systems and Sorensen Systems are making a visible commitment to being professional organizations with pride in their people and products. Today, we can bring customers into our facility to see a fully functioning compressed air system, including refrigerated dryer, air receivers and filtration systems in operation. The newly installed system is not just for show. It is the actual system used by our fabrication area during normal shop activities.

Congratulations to Jim Levesque, Hope Air Systems Service Manager, for his suggestion that we commit ourselves to this system and product display area. The space looks great and I know it will help our sales and marketing efforts in the months and years ahead.

- Carey Rhoten