Undeniable passion of our members

I attended my first RSES Conference as the editor of RSES Journal in the beginning of October. (I’ve attended RSES Conferences before but that was a long time ago.) I was gratified at how passionate our members are about the Society. Our core group of members is outstanding and there are a number of them (I’m thinking of Texas and Rochester, NY) that we can put to work right away.

The technical seminars were challenging. Art Miller, CMS, RCT, from KAM Associates LLC, taught attendees the fundamentals of analyzing schematics. I looked around the room at folks that had to have 30-35 years of experience in the field and Art was really holding their feet to the fire. Brynn Cooksey Sr., CEM, CMS, RCT, CESP, had attendees filling out a worksheet to calculate combustion air for fuel burning appliances. We were given the operating parameters—Btuh of all appliances with the assumption that they would all be firing at once, cubic volume of the space and tightness of the space in air changes per hour — and we had to calculate if and how much additional combustion air would be needed. International Vice President Mike Ralston, CM, put on a sobering seminar on arc flash awareness and safety that was highlighted by a demonstration of arc flash personal protective equipment by International Secretary/Treasurer Ray Clary, CMS. Joseph Baldwin, Wagner-Meinert LLC, put on an equally sobering session on confined space entry awareness and the protective measures, such as ventilation, needed to minimize hazards.

The following week our Marketing & Communications Manager Steve Vaughan and I attended the 110th National Conference of the Refrigerating Engineers & Technicians Association in Las Vegas. We regard RETA as a sister organization and we have to thank new RETA President Vern Sanderson, Wagner-Meinert LLC, Ft. Wayne, IN, for his tremendous hospitality. Steve and I could not have asked for a better host.

I was told more than once that the industrial ammonia refrigeration community is a small group. The RETA folks have a culture of volunteerism that is unsurpassed. One attendee described it to me as being “voluntold,” as in his boss, a past national officer in RETA, made it clear that he was expected to participate. They are also bound together with a safety-first attitude that comes from the inherent danger to an operator standing next to an ammonia plant. That’s why their operator certifications, CARO and CIRO, are ANSI-certified. The result is a vibrant organization.

In that spirit of volunteerism, I’m going to issue a challenge to every RSES member: volunteer to serve your local chapter today. Don’t have a local chapter? Start one. You’re not the only HVACR contractor or technician in town. So go find them and recruit them to be members in RSES, face-to-face, belly-to-belly. Everybody in this industry needs ongoing technical training. Don’t go on Facebook and complain about untrained technicians and their shoddy work. Do something about it personally. This is your association.

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