



Kevin Kelly, Owner

# First Call Heating & Cooling



February 2001

## Facts About Heating Oil Prices

### Heating Oil Supply More Than Sufficient

**O**n behalf of First Call Heating & Cooling, I want to say "thank you" for your continued business and support. I want to also reassure you that there is **NO NEED TO WORRY** about your heating oil supply for this winter season! Our suppliers have reassured us that there is more than enough supply to keep you and your family comfortable all winter long! And we are excited to see oil prices dropping; \$.30 a gallon since the beginning of this season.

This is our first newsletter in a while. We plan on providing this to you quarterly and hope you find it informative and helpful.

If we can assist you with your heating or cooling needs, please give us a call.

Warmly,

Kevin Kelly, Owner

**W**hen energy prices rise, every one of us has reason for concern. It's hard for us to remember that with heating oil, unlike other energy sources, the price is very likely to go down again. In fact, heating oil prices today are lower than they were in the 1980's. As a local heating oil dealer, we cannot control world energy prices, but we would like to help you make sense of how oil pricing works.

**\$ How are oil prices set?** Heating oil is traded on the commodities market just like natural gas and electricity. This means costs are subject to normal ups and downs, just like the stock market. However, the biggest influence on the cost of

wholesale heating oil is the price of its original raw material, crude oil. As a heating oil dealer, we have no idea what will happen to wholesale prices from week to week.

**\$ What causes price changes?** Any situation that could affect supply or demand can cause price changes. This includes unexpectedly cold or warm weather, supply interruptions and excess production. On such occasions, the wholesale price is affected, so dealers pay more for the oil that they deliver to your home.

**\$ Do local dealers make more profit during sudden price increases?** No. When world oil prices rise, we must pay more for wholesale heating oil and those increases are passed on to the customer. Our

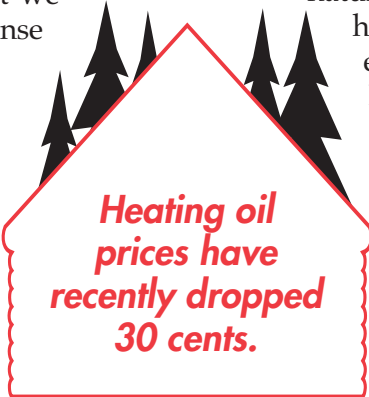
profit margins remain the same. Not only that, it is to our benefit to always price our products competitively. If we didn't, we would risk losing our valued customers.

**\$ Is heating oil more expensive than other energy sources?**

No. In fact oil is often a better value than natural gas and electricity. Because heating fuels are measured differently (in gallons, therms and kilowatt hours) the only way to compare prices is to look at how much it costs each fuel to produce the same amount of heat. This is measured in dollars per million btus. Heating oil often is the clear winner. And when adjusted for inflation, heating oil is actually cheaper now than it was before the

first embargo in 1973. Plus, heating oil prices fluctuate. While they may be higher now, they are likely to go down soon. Electricity and natural gas rates continue to rise and rarely, if ever, go down to previous levels.

If you have any questions regarding supply or price this heating season, please call us and we'll be happy to answer your questions.



This newsletter is published by

**First Call Heating & Cooling**



If you have any questions about the information presented here, please call us at (503) 231-3311.

## Budget Payments Make It Easy

For many of us, paying for a heating oil delivery in one lump sum can stress our budget. But it doesn't have to be that way. With our Budget Payment Plan, we'll spread the estimated cost of your annual heating oil bill over 12 months, just like your other utilities. This special service is available to any customer who is on our free Automatic Fill program. Call us today to see what your monthly payment will be.

## Save on Heating Bills: Weatherize

- Keep your heating system in peak condition by having it serviced regularly.
- Consider a programmable thermostat. It will quickly pay for itself in fuel savings.
- Insulate any areas that aren't already insulated.
- Shut the heat registers to any unused rooms.
- Consider storm windows and doors if yours are older doors and windows.
- Caulk and seal around windows, doors, foundations, faucets - any place air can leak out.

## Our Comfort Plus Agreement Gives Peace of Mind



If your heating system were a car, it would have logged over 45,000 miles at the end of a normal winter. And, like a car, if it isn't properly serviced, it will run inefficiently and could potentially break down, leaving you in the cold. With our *Comfort Plus Agreement* for heating and cooling equipment, you'll get through season after season with no worries! The Agreement includes:

- ✓ 24-hour emergency service. That means if you're out of heat or your air conditioner doesn't work, we'll be there to repair it anytime, day or night.
- ✓ Receive a 15% discount on repairs.
- ✓ You won't be charged overtime rates, even for calls outside business hours.
- ✓ **PLUS...**we'll provide an annual tune-up to extend the life of your heating and/or cooling equipment.



## Can Heating Oil Freeze?

Heating oil can't freeze, but it can thicken, especially in above ground tanks. To avoid thickening, apply insulating tape to outside fuel lines. As an added measure, First Call always includes an additive, similar to antifreeze, in above-ground tanks at no charge.

## When the Furnace Won't Start

Before calling for service, try the following steps:

**FIRST**, raise your thermostat five degrees or so above room temperature; the furnace should kick on momentarily.

**SECOND**, make sure the power switch at the furnace is on.

**THIRD**, push the reset button **ONCE**. The button is located on the burner or smoke pipe control.

**FOURTH**, check your fuse or breaker at the electrical box to make sure the circuit is functioning.

**FINALLY**, measure the oil in your oil tank. If out, call us for a delivery.

If the furnace still won't fire, or does so only briefly, call First Call for service. That's what we're here for!

## RECIPE BOX: New England Clam Chowder

*This rich recipe is a favorite of First Call employee J.J. Thomas. Enjoy!*

3 8 oz. bottles clam juice	2 garlic cloves, chopped
1lb. Russet potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/2" pieces	1 bay leaf
2 T. (1/4 stick) butter	1/4 cup all purpose flour
3 slices bacon, finely chopped	6 6-1/2 oz. cans chopped clams, drained, <b>juices reserved</b>
2 cups chopped onions	1-1/4 cup half and half
1-1/4 cup chopped celery with leaves	1 tsp. hot pepper sauce

Bring bottled clam juice and potatoes to boil in heavy saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to med.-low, cover and simmer until potatoes are tender (about 10 min.). Remove from heat. Melt butter in heavy large pot over med. heat. Add bacon and cook until bacon begins to brown (about 8 minutes). Add onions, celery, garlic and bay leaf and sauté until vegetables soften (about 6 minutes). Stir in flour and cook 2 minutes (do not allow flour to brown). Gradually whisk in reserved juices from clams. Add potato mixture, clams, half and half and hot pepper sauce. Simmer chowder 5 minutes to blend flavors, stirring frequently. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Makes 8 first-course or 4 main servings**



## With A New Oil-Fired Water Heater, You'll Never Worry About Running Out of Hot Water Again

With an Aero oil-fired water heater, you can do the dishes and the laundry without worrying about having enough water. And you and other family members can shower for as long as you want. This is all possible because an oil fired water heater heats more hot water hourly--100 gallons per hour compared to 35 gallons for gas and 50 gallons for an electric water heater.

Call to learn more about our easy conversion process and 12 months same as cash financing (OAC)!

Portland (503) 231-3311 Vancouver (360) 693-3311



## Revised Oil Tank Service Program

The Oregon Dept. of Consumer Affairs and the State of Oregon have dictated some changes in the Tank Warranty Program. It is now referred to as the **Heating Oil Tank Service Contract**. The major change eliminates the two levels of coverage; i.e., one for tank replacement and one for cleanup. The revision simply states, "total payment under this contract will not exceed \$5,000 after your payment of a \$250 deductible."

This revised contract still provides "peace of mind" in the unlikely event that the tank does not perform as intended and there is reason to believe there is a tank leak (per the stipulations of the new contract).

This coverage is available to **Automatic Fill customers** whose tank has been in use and good working condition for the last 12 months. It is available for a low annual investment of only \$84 or \$8 per month.

If you were participating in the old Warranty program, a new contract will be mailed soon. If you are not currently enrolled, call today to start enjoying the benefits!

## Two Employees Log Over 30 Years With First Call Heating & Cooling

It's much less common these days for employees to stay with a company for decades, but luckily for First Call, two employees have done just that.

Jim Baisden joined First Call (then McCall Oil Company) in 1967 as an oil truck driver. After eleven years, he became the Driver Dispatch Supervisor and has been in



Jim Baisden

this position ever since. He makes sure heating oil gets delivered on time and that the trucks are maintained and ready to go. Jim has seen many changes in oil delivery over the years. When he first started, trucks were sent out for deliveries by radio. Now, every driver also has a cell phone and pager. Plus, modern oil trucks can carry twice as much heating oil as in the early days.

Jim enjoys working with the truck drivers and people in the office. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing locally, in Alaska, or on the Snake River.

Doris Dorr joined First Call in 1968. Since that time she has been the Oil Delivery Coordinator, monitoring and preparing all the Automatic Fill accounts so customers get their oil when needed.



Doris Dorr

She also works with customers to reassess and adjust their usage patterns if their heating needs change. When she started thirty-three years ago, all oil usage was calculated by hand. Now, a computer helps to track important information. Doris enjoys talking to and helping customers. "I appreciate all the long-time customers and their loyalty," she says. "I enjoy new customers too, and hope we can always give them excellent service and respond to their questions."

Outside of work, Doris enjoys crossword puzzles, sewing, cooking and gardening.

First Call salutes Jim and Doris for their hard work and excellent customer service over the years.

# It's More Than Just Oil...It's First Call

**W**e'd like to thank you for being a customer of First Call Heating & Cooling. Our goal is to provide you with superior customer service. That means timely response to your service needs, quality new equipment to keep you comfortable year-round, and prompt, courteous, and friendly delivery of your heating oil. Because we're a locally owned company rather than a big impersonal utility, we're able to provide this kind of service day in and day out - just as we have since our beginnings in 1939.

## The Full-Service Advantage

Unlike some oil companies, we provide the full-service advantage. That means we offer special programs that

make heating and cooling your home easy on you and your budget. So, if you haven't already taken advantage of all we offer, call for more information to see if some of the following services can make your heating season hassle-free.

- Automatic Fill Program
- Interest-free budget payment plans
- Tank Warranty Program
- Service Agreements for heating/cooling equipment
- Duct cleaning and sanitizing
- Installation of new high-efficiency oil, gas, and electric furnaces, heat pumps, air conditioners, and air cleaners
- Installation of oil fired stoves and fireplace inserts

## First Call Heating & Cooling



1650 NE Lombard  
Portland, OR 97211

## Curl up in Comfort with a new Oil furnace and high high-efficiency Water heater

Install a new ThermoPride High-Efficiency Oil Furnace by **March 31**, and convert your old electric water heater to a new high-recovery oil-fired water heater *at the same time* and receive:

- 10,000 Alaska Air Miles
- 10-year parts and labor warranty
- 100 FREE gallons of oil!

**Call us today and ask about  
24-month interest-free financing (OAC)!**

**ThermoPride**



## PGE's GenerLink Offers Easy Hook-up for Portable Generators

PGE's new GenerLink transfer makes your switch to generator power easy and safe. It attaches to your existing electric meter and you control what circuits you power up through your existing service panel. It can be leased for \$9.50 per month plus a one-time \$50 hook-up fee. Call PGE at (503)612-4677 if you want to have the comfort of a back-up generator this winter.