

TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION FOR THE HVACR INDUSTRY | NOVEMBER 2023

# NATE

M A G A Z I N E



## Diversity In the HVACR Industry

MINORITY CONTRACTORS  
AND NATE CERTIFICATION

WOMEN IN HVACR  
MENTORING PROGRAM

PROFILES IN  
SUCCESS

SPANISH LANGUAGE  
INITIATIVE

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# Creating Opportunities for a Diverse Range of Technicians



**D**iversity is at the heart of progress and innovation in the HVACR industry. That's why NATE is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for technicians. One of the goals with our latest initiatives—including our new certification pathway, the Certified HVAC Professional (CHP-5); our online training platform, NATE Training Academy; and our remote Live Online Proctoring—is to broaden the accessibility of NATE, ensuring that technicians from diverse backgrounds have equal opportunities to engage and thrive within our HVACR community.

As we dive into this latest issue of NATE Magazine, we want to put the spotlight on the crucial role of diversity in our field and the steps we're taking to support and promote it. As with any other industry, our workforce thrives when it welcomes a diverse range of voices, experiences, and backgrounds. In our feature article this issue, we're excited to share stories of minority contractors who own their own businesses. These entrepreneurs not only bring their unique perspectives but also their experiences, challenges, and triumphs that speak to the potential that diversity unlocks in our industry.

In this issue, you'll also find an article about the Women in HVACR's (WHVACR) mentoring program, an initiative dedicated to supporting and empowering women. We spoke with Lori Tschohl, vice president of WHVACR, about how mentoring is key to growth and how the mentorship program exemplifies our industry's commitment to ensuring that women have equal opportunities to succeed. We also spoke with three women from across the industry—Lanessa Bannister, Cristi Pedotto, and Candice Vincent—about their professional journey and how they have leveraged their backgrounds and skills to cultivate successful careers.

You can also discover more about NATE's ongoing commitment to support Spanish-speaking technicians in our interview with Anthony Spagnoli, NATE's director of testing and education. NATE has been offering Spanish-language study guides and exams for several years and is now expanding its reach into Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. In this issue, you can learn more about NATE's Spanish offerings as well as our recent work with the Academia de Fundamentos Técnicos (AFT) to promote NATE certification in Latin America. By breaking down language barriers, NATE is opening doors to a wider range of technicians, ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all who seek them.

By making technician training and certification more accessible, we can create more opportunities for a diverse range of technicians to master the HVACR trade and earn certification. We believe that the more diverse our HVACR community becomes, the better equipped we are to meet the evolving needs and challenges of our ever-changing industry. I hope you will join us in our journey to develop and recognize the diverse and talented professionals at the core of our industry ●



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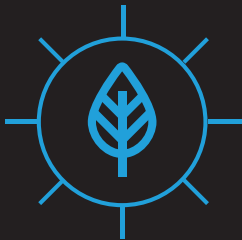
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# You Asked, We Answered

QUESTIONS ASKED BY NATE-CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS, ANSWERED BY THE NATE TEAM AND SHARED WITH YOU.

Have a question for NATE? Please email us at [asknate@natex.org!](mailto:asknate@natex.org)

**I'D LIKE TO PROMOTE NATE ON MY COMPANY'S WEBSITE. WHERE CAN I FIND A COPY OF NATE'S LOGO?**



The NATE logo is a visual representation of our brand, and as a certification organization, proper usage is key to increasing awareness for what we do: Certifying the finest in HVACR. NATE encourages contractors that employ NATE-certified technicians to use the NATE logo on their website, social media, and other promotional materials. We have Contractor Partner logos available in .eps (print), .png (web), and .jpg (web) formats. You can find a logo usage request form on our website, on our Contractors - Get Advertising Resources page.

If you have any questions about using the NATE logo, please contact the NATE marketing manager, Daisy Weill, at [dweill@natex.org](mailto:dweill@natex.org), or call us at 877-420-NATE.

**MY NATE CERTIFICATION IS ABOUT TO EXPIRE, AND I HAVEN'T COMPLETED 16 HOURS OF CONTINUING EDUCATION. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**

If you are coming up on your expiration date and have not fulfilled the 16 hours of training, you have a grace period of 120 days (4 months) before the certification officially lapses. During the time, you are expected to submit their remaining credit hours or re-take your Specialty exam. If a technician fails to recertify by the end of the grace period, the technician will have to re-take both CORE and Specialty exams or all five Certified HVAC Professional (CHP-5) exams to become certified again. You are not considered NATE-certified if all your certifications are in their grace periods.

## Word Search

1. Wiring	V K F R A L P P P L I O C E Y
2. Global	W U F Z O F L A P C J V D T E
3. Pathway	B I E Z B N T A H R L O I C H
4. Flow	K G R D M H U T T E C C D S P
5. Install	H L T I W A N W N S A Q E V H
6. Training	V O R A N W X K M P N W C B D
7. Capacity	G B Y F G G F E A Q Z I I Y I
8. Comfort	B A W O L F G C T X X U V W V
9. Change	C L B B E X N C O M F O R T E
10. Diverse	L H T S P L I T F H F C E O R
11. Testing	V R A P Z E N O Q V F S S P S
12. Coil	R X V N C Q I D C C T P Z L E
13. Exam	C F V S G W A H N I K X Z I O
14. Service	N F C S Q E R O N U U A T U U
15. Code	C E V K E Q T G M N F J D E W
16. Split	

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# NATE News

## SERVICE TITAN HVAC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP CROWNS NATE-CERTIFIED CHAMPIONS

The Service Titan HVAC National Championship finals took place on October 28, 2023, in Tampa, Florida. The event brought together top HVACR professionals and apprentices from across the nation, who competed for a total of over \$100,000 in cash and prizes.

NATE is proud and excited to announce that the first-place winners in both the apprentice and professional divisions, Patrick Boldt and Craig Childress, respectively, are NATE-certified technicians, exemplifying the expertise and dedication that NATE certification represents. In the Professional division, all technicians who secured top positions are NATE-certified, with Dagner Espinosa claiming second place and Lee Morris Jr. taking home third-place honors. The accomplishments of these talented professionals are a testament to their commitment to excellence and their dedication to providing top-tier HVACR services.

NATE couldn't be more thrilled and proud of all the incredible achievements at this year's competition. The event not only celebrated the HVACR industry's best but also underscored the importance of NATE certification as a symbol of technical expertise and professionalism.



Photo: courtesy of Service Titan HVAC National Championship

## NATE HOSTING EDUCATIONAL SESSION AT 2024 AHREXPO IN CHICAGO

NATE President John Lanier will host an informative discussion on the imminent transition to low-GWP (Global Warming Potential) refrigerants and discover how NATE's certification exams can empower HVACR technicians to navigate this transformative phase with confidence. We'll delve into the critical role NATE's Low-GWP Refrigerants Certification Exam can play in equipping your technicians with the essential knowledge and skills required to excel in the field during these changes. Don't miss this opportunity to stay ahead of the curve of these regulatory changes that set to begin taking effect next year.

Additionally, a NATE representative will be at the AHRI booth in the expo hall to share NATE information and giveaways. For more information about the expo and NATE's educational session, contact NATE at [askNATE@natex.org](mailto:askNATE@natex.org).

## PHCC APPRENTICE CONTEST TESTS HVACR COMPETITORS

NATE was proud to sponsor Javier Guzman at the PHCC Educational Foundation's National Plumbing and HVAC Apprentice Contest. His exciting competition unfolded during the PHCCConnect 2023 event, held from Oct. 25-27 in Cleveland, Ohio.

Plumbing and HVACR apprentices from across the country took part in the contests. The HVACR competitors were put to the test, facing a series of rigorous technical assessments that challenged their proficiency in technical skills, adherence to safety protocols, and mastery of proper techniques. Learn more about the PHCCConnect show and the apprentice contest at [www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org).

# Industry News

## 2024 AHR EXPO SET FOR CHICAGO

OEMs, engineers, contractors, facility architects, educators, and other professionals, take note: The 2024 AHR Expo will be held in Chicago, Jan. 22-24. The event is co-sponsored by ASHRAE and AHRI and is held concurrently with the ASHRAE Winter Conference.

More than 1,600 exhibitors, 50,000 attendees, and 370 speakers are expected to pack McCormick Place. Organizers say the event provides a venue for attendees to stay current on issues including AI and controls, decarbonization, plumbing and hydronics, heat pumps, refrigerants, and workforce development, among others.

AHR Expo offers free industry seminars, new product theaters, panel series, and education sessions in addition to podcast pavilions and innovation awards.

A highlight of the panel series is the HVACR State of the Industry Leadership Discussion, which will explore today's market, challenges, opportunities, and what's ahead. Panel members include Talbot Gee, HARDI; Dominick Guarino, National Comfort Institute, Inc.; Ginger Scoggins, president, ASHRAE; principal, Greg Walker, ASHB; Steve Yurek, AHRI; and Bryan Orr, HVAC School & Kalos Services. This discussion is free for show attendees.

NATE is among the organizations endorsing the AHR Expo. Stop by the AHRI booth and the Endeavor Business Media booth to pick up a copy of the NATE Magazine.

To register for the 2024 AHR Expo, visit [www.ahrexpo.com](http://www.ahrexpo.com). Registration is free through January 20, 2024.



## INVENTING THE FUTURE OF HVACR

Each year, the AHR Expo recognizes and honors manufacturers that are driving innovation in the industry via a competition co-sponsored by the AHR Expo, ASHRAE, and AHRI. Companies compete in 10 categories. A panel of third-party ASHRAE member judges evaluate all award entries based on innovative design, creativity, application, value, and market impact. One of the category winners is selected as the prestigious Product of the Year winner, which is announced during the show.

The 2024 winning products, listed in the categories below, will be on display at the show.

- **Building Automation:** 75F/75F HyperStat Split
- **Cooling:** Danfoss/DSG Compressor
- **Heating:** Ephoca/Nextac—The Next Generation of PTAC
- **Indoor Air Quality:** WellStat/WellStat Software Platform
- **Plumbing:** Rheem Water Heating/Triton® Light Duty Commercial Gas Water Heater
- **Refrigeration:** AirGreen/AirGreen-BMIL Brine-Based DX Cold Room Heat Pump
- **Software:** Interplay Learning/AI-Based Skill Advisor and Mentor (SAM)
- **Sustainable Solutions:** Midea Residential Air Conditioning/Midea Packaged Window Heat Pump
- **Tools & Instruments:** INFICON/ FLUE-Mate™ Combustion Analyzer
- **Ventilation:** HVAC Manufacturing and Technology Inc./ SAV® - Smart Air Valve



# Minority Contractors Embrace the Value of NATE Certification Programs



THEY PROUDLY  
PROCLAIM THEIR  
TEAM'S NATE  
CREDENTIALS  
EVERYWHERE  
THEY CAN.

Minority-owned HVACR contractors, such as Christopher Muhammad, loyally support NATE and its certification programs. Muhammad founded Going Green Home Solutions in 2018; the firm, a full-line residential/light commercial HVACR contractor, serves customers throughout the Chicago area. Muhammad has about 25 years of experience in the industry, specializing in duct design and retrofitting older homes with steam and hot water boilers. His background includes teaching in the Chicago Public Schools for several years.

How it all began: Muhammad says a friend of his who had just started in the plumbing and heating trade had encouraged him to check out the trade





“AS A BUSINESS OWNER, NATE CERTIFICATION HELPS ME GIVE STRUCTURE TO THE LEARNING OF OUR INSTALLERS AND TECHNICIANS. IT HELPS ME ASSESS THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THE THEORY OF THE TRADE, WHICH I AM A FIRM BELIEVER IN.”

— Christopher Muhammad

school he was enrolling in, Northwestern Tech in Southfield, Michigan. “I attended an open house and loved what I saw. We both enrolled, and the rest is history.”

The Going Green Home Solutions owner says the Great Recession of 2008 and other economic downturns have taught him valuable lessons. “The recession forced me to seek to become as well-rounded as possible in the trade as a way to weather the storms that come when certain sectors may slow down (residential vs. commercial, service vs. installation). It also taught me to pursue excellence, because if you are the best at your craft especially an essential craft like HVACR, it increases

your chances of always finding work and gaining new clients.”

Muhammad, who holds several NATE certifications, shows his NATE support in several ways. “I employ NATE-certified technicians and implement NATE certifications as benchmarks for our apprentices as they progress as technicians and installers.” He also publicizes the fact that his firm’s technicians are NATE-certified: “Absolutely! It is not only posted on our website but also on our company vans.

“As a business owner,” he continues, “NATE certification helps me give structure to the learning of our installers and technicians. It helps me assess their knowledge of the theory of the trade, which I am a firm believer in.” Muhammad adds that he believes that “book” learning is critical in 2023—even in the trades. He notes that there are many mediums and sourc-

es out there where technicians can obtain needed technical knowledge. Muhammad’s firm is on the forefront: “We use Interplay Learning with our apprentices and structure their learning in those online modules based around specific NATE certifications.”

In fact, Interplay Learning and NATE partnered to create NATE Training Academy to provide technicians with immersive and interactive content to prepare them for NATE exams. The platform contains modules that prepare technicians for NATE’s Certified HVAC Professional (CHP-5) exams and the Traditional Pathway Core exam, as well as NATE’s entry-level certificates and Low-GWP Refrigerants Certification exam.

Muhammad believes his firm’s customers have more confidence knowing the technicians showing up on their premises are NATE-certified. “I believe that for customers familiar with NATE, they appreciate having NATE-certified technicians in their homes or businesses.”

## NATE’S REACH IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY

NATE, the nation’s largest nonprofit certification organization for heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) technicians, offers tools to underserved and minority communities. NATE, for instance, offers some of its certification exams in Spanish in addition to Spanish study guides for its entry-level exams (see the article on page 24). Technicians should also consult HVACRedu.net, which has a NATE Certification Prep course in Spanish. You can learn more about that here: [www.hvacredu.net/spanish-nate-core-program](http://www.hvacredu.net/spanish-nate-core-program).





“WHEN OUR CUSTOMERS UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR TECHS TO BE NATE-CERTIFIED, THEY BECOME COMFORTABLE KNOWING WE TOOK THE TIME TO BECOME CERTIFIED.”

– Marc Primus

No question, buyers in the marketplace are savvy, Muhammad maintains: “Consumers in general are more comfortable with any service if they know that the person offering that service is certified according to industry standards. The more they understand what NATE certifications are, they appreciate it when they know that those working in their homes carry that designation.”

### PRIMUS HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING, LLC

Marc Primus had some challenges when he started Primus Heating & Air Conditioning, LLC. The firm specializes in commercial and residential heating and cooling services. It serves Greenville, South Carolina, and six other South Carolina cities and surrounding areas.

“I got involved in the industry after the birth of my second child. My job at that time was good but it wasn’t paying that well. So, I enrolled at Greenville Technical College in Greenville, South Carolina. Upon enrollment, my instructors were very helpful with me learning the trade,” Primus explains.

Primus faced some financial challenges at the start. He also had to work hard to acquire more profitable leads and customers. “Financially, it was

very hard to obtain financing through traditional means. I tried several institutions for financing—without any luck. Many times, I had to rely on high-interest loans from finance companies.” But in the end, things have worked out well for Primus and his company. “In May of 2024 we will be celebrating our 20th year in operation, and we are looking for great things.”

Primus supports NATE and his firm by publicizing the fact that his company’s technicians are NATE-certified on the company website. He believes the NATE credential adds value: “When our customers understand the need for techs to be NATE-certified, they become comfortable knowing we took the time to become certified.” He points to the following as a bonus: “I believe having our techs listed on the nationwide NATE website for certification is a benefit within itself.”

### NICE HEATING & AIR

“We’ve been in business for 12 years now, and we pride ourselves on being a minority-owned, locally-operated enterprise,” says Craig Elliott, founder of Nice Heating & Air, Lorton, Virginia. The firm’s service areas include Arlington, Fairfax, and a total of 11 surrounding communities.

## BY THE NUMBERS

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has a breakdown of heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers by gender, race and Hispanic or Latino ethnicity via the Labor Force Statistics section from the “Current Population Survey,” dated January 25, 2023. There are a total of 472,000 employed heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration mechanics and installers 16 years or older in the U.S. The percentage breakouts for this job category for selected races and ethnicities include:

BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN

10.2%

HISPANIC OR LATINO

22.4%

ASIAN

1.6%

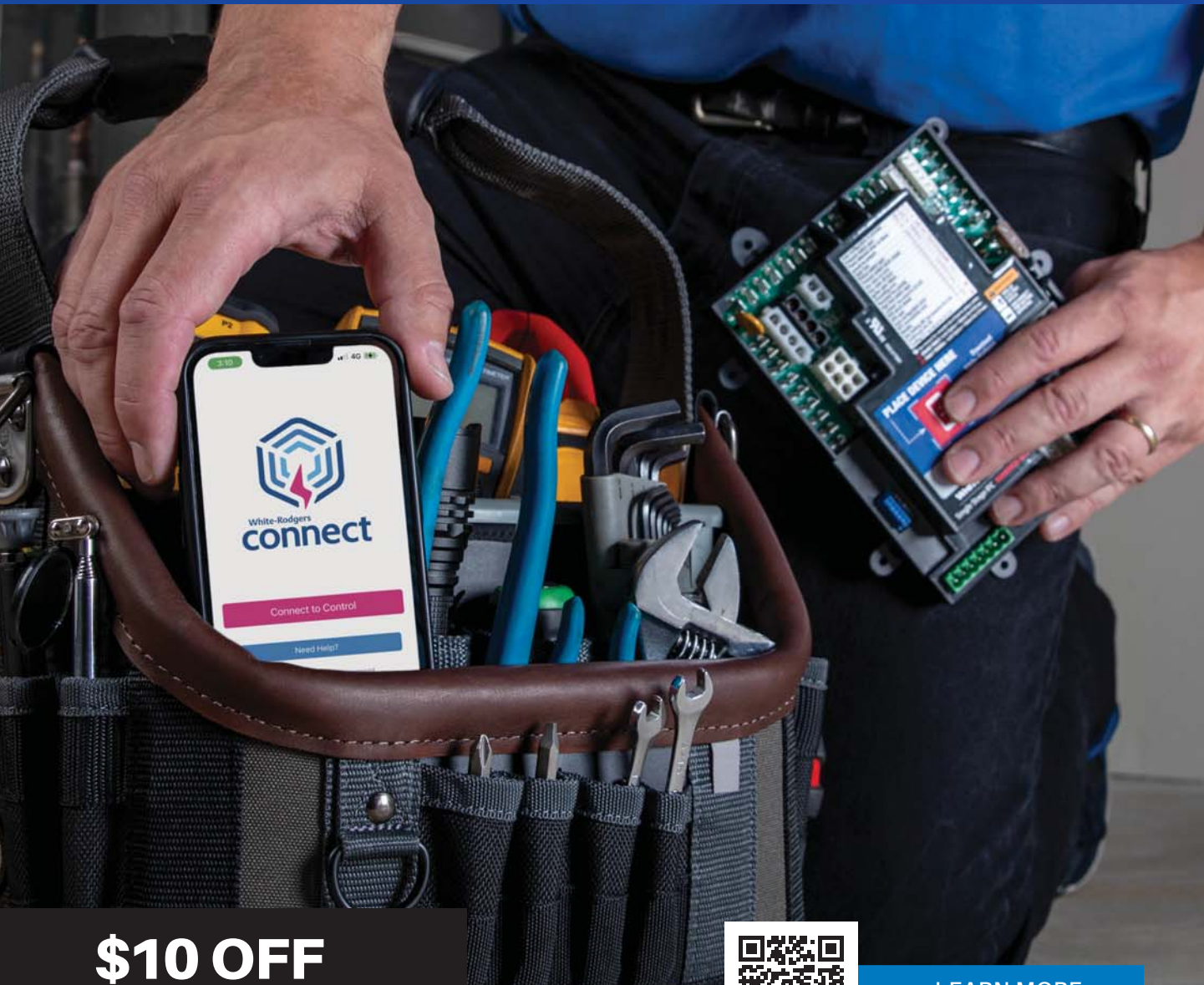
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“BESIDES CUSTOMER TRUST, ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT BENEFIT IS THE INTERNAL PEACE OF MIND I FEEL, KNOWING THAT I’M SENDING WELL-PREPARED TECHNICIANS INTO OUR NEIGHBORS’ HOMES.”

– Craig Elliott

“I founded Nice Heating & Air in 2011 after serving the Northern Virginia community for over 15 years as a technician. I was also honored as a NATE Top Tech at the 2011 Comfort-Tech Competition, something I’m incredibly proud of. Over the years, I’ve learned the ins and outs of the industry, driven by my passion for helping people and ensuring their homes feel nice. We’ve been in business for 12 years now,” Elliott says.

He explains his journey into HVACR began when a young HVACR tech visited his family’s home for a service call. “My mother instantly recognized that this was the field for me, and I never looked back. The challenges I faced were manifold—gaining customer trust, learning the ropes, and adapting to technology.”

Elliott notes his firm is proud to publicize the fact that its technicians are NATE-certified. “It’s a benchmark that aligns with our core values and commitment to excellence.” He adds

that his firm’s clients and customers have more confidence in his company’s services, knowing the firm has NATE-certified technicians. “Besides customer trust, another significant benefit is the internal peace of mind I feel, knowing that I’m sending well-prepared technicians into our neighbors’ homes.”

Elliott says Nice Heating & Air’s mission and calling have persevered: “While the spotlight on minority business ownership may have dimmed in the media, the ethos and hard work that characterize our businesses remain as strong as ever.”

### HVAC CARE PLUS INC.

Michael Barrant, CEO of HVAC Care Plus Inc., New Rochelle, New York, holds several NATE certifications. His firm, which is Black-owned and certified as a Minority/Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE), provides HVACR service and installation on all brands of equipment in the Westchester and Yonkers areas and the five boroughs of New York City. The CEO was a trained HVACR technician before he decided to establish his own operation. “I’ve been up and running the company independently since 2015,” he says.

HVAC Care Plus does both residential and light commercial service and installation projects. The four-person

firm has two technicians, an office staffer, and Barrant as CEO. The company’s website explains the certifications that its technicians hold; the site also displays the NATE seal.

Barrant predicts his firm’s 2023-2024 revenues will grow because his team has been getting an abundance of sales leads from the New York State Clean Heat program (<https://clean-heat.ny.gov/>), which offers rebates and financing options for customers who purchase and install a heat pump.

“The program encourages customers to install new green technology—there has been a moratorium on installation of natural gas heat systems. This is why we are installing electric heat pumps. This is all new for a lot of customers in New York, but that is what we are focusing on right now,” Barrant explains.

Other HVACR contractors say 2023-2024 will see a spike in revenues. Going Green Home Solutions’ Muhammad says sales so far are higher than last year and projected to increase 30-40 percent. “The heat pump market,” he explains, “has been up this year, due in part to the current rebate incentives being offered by many utility companies. I think this is a good thing. Heat pumps are being introduced to northern climates as a viable heating option. I expect and hope that demand for them will continue into the New Year and beyond.”

Elliott says his company experienced a robust 40 percent year-over-

year growth in 2022. “This year has been about maintaining and adjusting to that expansion—developing our team and fine-tuning our processes to ensure we continue to deliver on our brand promises.”

Primus also offers a positive view: “Our revenues are on pace to be about 6 percent better than last year.”

## ADVICE FOR ASPIRING CONTRACTORS

Say you know someone who wants to start an HVACR contracting business. What advice would you give them? Primus says, “Have faith and pray. And if all else fails, pray again. But make sure you have your finances in order. In addition, keep personal debt low and have some savings in the bank.”

On the business side, Primus urges wanna-be contractors to never stop learning and stick with one or maybe two brands of equipment. “Lastly, my best advice is all distributors don’t have your best interest at heart. Find a good distributor and keep them.”

HVAC Care Plus Inc.’s Barrant says book-learning can’t hurt for someone wanting to set up a contracting oper-

ation. “At technical colleges we take classes and are trained as service technicians and installers—that means we learn mechanical skills. Try to enroll in and take some business classes, and get some experience and background before you start a new business.”

“For anyone passionate about this field, I’d recommend reading extensively and learning the business side of things,” says Elliott. “Surround yourself with a team whose strengths complement yours; it’s the key to growth. This industry is filled with incredible people who enjoy helping others, so find a good mentor to guide you.”

Muhammad adds the times are ripe with possibility: “Due to the great need for residential and commercial development in Black and Brown communities, there is a tremendous opportunity for training a new generation of HVACR technicians and installers within these communities. NATE can play a role by continuing to push technician excellence in the HVACR industry.” ●

Michael Keating is a contributor to the *NATE Magazine*.

## CERTIFICATIONS

The professionals featured in this article share the NATE certifications they have earned:

### Michael Barrant:

*I AM NATE-CERTIFIED IN AIR-CONDITIONING, AND HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION AND SERVICE.*

### Craig Elliott:

*I AM NATE-CERTIFIED IN GAS FURNACE, HEAT PUMP, OIL, AND AIR DISTRIBUTION. ADDITIONALLY, WE’RE A NATE TESTING ORGANIZATION, AND OUR TECHNICIANS ARE NATE-CERTIFIED. WE INCLUDE NATE EXAMS AS PART OF OUR DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY FOR TECHNICIANS.*

### Christopher Muhammad:

*I AM NATE-CERTIFIED IN GAS HEATING (SERVICE & INSTALLATION), HYDRONICS (SERVICE & INSTALLATION), HEAT PUMPS (SERVICE & INSTALLATION), AIR CONDITIONING (SERVICE & INSTALLATION), AIR DISTRIBUTION (SERVICE & INSTALLATION), AND I HAVE THE SENIOR LEVEL EFFICIENCY ANALYST CERTIFICATION. I WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THE OIL BUT ONLY OCCASIONALLY WORKED ON THESE SYSTEMS IN DETROIT, OR CURRENTLY IN CHICAGO.*

### Marc Primus:

*I AM CERTIFIED IN AIR CONDITIONING INSTALLATION AND SERVICE. ALSO: AIR-TO-AIR HEAT PUMP INSTALLATION AND SERVICE.*



# Mentoring the Next Generation of Women in HVACR

MENTORING HAS LONG BEEN A KEY TO GROWTH IN MANY INDUSTRIES. PROGRAMS AIMED SPECIFICALLY AT WOMEN HELP TO BREAK DOWN GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND BROADEN THE OPPORTUNITIES OF A HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE.



Photo 279021689 © Auremar | Dreamstime.com

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women working in the HVACR field as mechanics and installers make up only about 1.5 percent of employees. Yet, the industry is growing by over 2 percent per year. As this need for technical experts in the industry grows, there are greater opportunities for employment—including for women.

Luckily, programs have been developed to help women find their way into the HVACR industry. According to Lori Tschohl, vice president of Women in HVACR (WHVACR) and president of Eagle Pipe Heating & Air, she looks at the HVACR field as “a dynamic and fulfilling role that demands a holistic approach to business management, from envisioning the future of the company to ensuring



the highest standards of service delivery.”

Tschohl takes pride in leading her team of dedicated professionals who are willing to share their commitment to excellence. She currently has the privilege of setting the strategic direction, vision, and growth strategies for Eagle Pipe Heating & Air, a company that specializes in HVACR and plumbing services. The company's core emphasis is on serving residential and light commercial clients, specializing in delivering comprehensive solutions to a wide range of valued customers.

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Tschohl has been involved with WHVACR since 2018. “The organization deeply resonated with my aspirations,” she says, “which made me eager to connect with like-minded professionals and empower women in the industry.”

During her first conference, Tschohl met a group of pioneering women who had blazed trails in HVACR. Their dedication, expertise, and passion for the industry left a profound impression on her, leading her to get more involved. “The journey has been incredibly fulfilling, allowing me to contribute to the growth and empowerment of women in HVACR while forging meaningful connections with fellow professionals who share the same commitment,” she explains.

Gurminder Sidhu, business manager and senior director of operations for NATE, joined the NATE team in 2014 and works with all of the various departments in the organization to make sure each team has the tools necessary to succeed. Within the WHVACR mentoring program, she works closely with women, including Tschohl, to help assure that strategic goals are aligned with where the industry is headed.

### EDUCATING NEXT GENERATION TEAMS

The WHVACR mentoring program provides mentees a platform to learn from industry leaders as well as provide additional opportunities to contribute to the advancement of women in the field. “It's been an inspiring and rewarding journey,” Tschohl says, “and I'm excited to see how the group continues to make a positive impact on the HVACR industry in general. The program itself is a structured initiative aimed at fostering mentorship



relationships that will last.”

According to Sidhu, “The primary goal of the program is to help members of the group get guidance from someone who has been in that position, to learn from their mistakes, and to allow the flexibility for mentees to make their own decision on how to proceed.” Overall, the relationship must be built on trust and accountability, where participants are committed to nurturing their talent and providing a mutually supportive environment.

Mentors help mentees define goals, understand job roles, navigate challenges, expand networks, and foster both professional and personal growth. Matching mentors with mentees is a thoughtful and strategic process that involves a thorough analysis of the skills, expertise, and goals of both parties. It starts with a dedicated two-person committee that takes a meticulous approach to ensure successful mentor-mentee pairings, carefully considering factors such as industry niches, goals alignment, and experience levels.

Matching individuals within a similar industry niche allows the group to maximize the relevance and effectiveness of the mentorship, which assures that mentors have a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the mentees' focus. This helps to ensure that mentors have the experience level commiserate with the mentees' requirements to enable them to excel in their chosen direction. Tschohl says, “A well-matched mentorship program not only enhances the professional development of members but

also fosters a supportive community within the HVACR industry.”

The nature of the relationship between a mentor and mentee can vary depending on the specific pairing and their unique preferences and goals, of course. A one-size-fits-all approach is seldom suitable. Flexibility is encouraged. When a mentor and mentee are initially matched, they are encouraged to outline their unique preferences and expectations so that they can get the maximum value from their partnership.

For example, the frequency and intensity of interaction between mentors and mentees are only contingent upon the preferences and goals of the pairing. Some pairs may choose to engage in regular and frequent communication, meeting weekly, and maintaining ongoing contact between meetings, while other pairings might opt for a more relaxed communication cadence, meeting on a monthly basis and conducting overall monthly check-ins. Autonomy of each mentor-mentee partnership is highly recommended and honored.

Sidhu explains, “This personalized approach allows the program to cater to the diverse needs of our members and fosters a mentorship experience that is both meaningful and effective. Often, the mentor and mentee become lifelong friends and will often meet up at the annual conference if schedules allow.”



The Midwest Regional event brings women together to discuss goals and growth potential in the HVACR industry.

### SUCCESSFUL MENTORING

To measure the success of the WHVACR mentoring program, key performance indicators are tracked in the mentees’ personal development, including factors such as health, wealth, and overall happiness and feelings of well-being with their lives. After that, career milestones are used as checkpoints along the way, including organizational progress, knowledge acquisition, and the implementation of their training. This helps the group to gauge the impact of the program over time.

The mentoring program is designed to address challenges as well. As with other industries, there can be barriers to women entering the HVACR industry. The first is managing the traditionally male-dominated industry. Sidhu says, “People often have set expectations in their minds concerning what they think a particular woman can or cannot do.” This is why career advancement opportunities often seem limited for women. WHVACR mentors are available to provide valuable advice on setting and achieving career goals, pursuing leadership positions, and demonstrating competence and expertise in the field.

To do this, the WHVACR program provides mentors with a range of resources and tools through its website, including mentorship starter kits, discussion topics, success trackers, and actionable items.



“A WELL-MATCHED MENTORSHIP PROGRAM NOT ONLY ENHANCES THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS BUT ALSO FOSTERS A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY WITHIN THE HVACR INDUSTRY.”

Lori Tsochoglou felt that the WHVACR mentoring program resonated with her aspirations, which made her eager to connect with other professionals and empower women in the industry.

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Resources are designed to equip mentors with the knowledge and guidance needed to effectively support their mentees in their career journeys. In addition, every Friday, webinars allow different presenters to discuss an important topic relevant to the program. This allows members of the group to gain facetime with other members and ask questions that they may not feel comfortable asking at the annual conference.

Key capabilities and insights are available to help members build confidence, become effective communicators, and learn how to advocate for themselves. The program helps mentees establish a solid supportive network within the industry, allowing them to connect with other women in the field and build relationships that can foster career growth.

Ultimately, balancing work with personal life can often be the most challenging part. The mentoring program addresses this often-difficult task by offering guidance on time management, stress management, and strategies for maintaining a healthy balance. The growth and achievements of mentees serve as tangible indicators of

the program's effectiveness, demonstrating the group's commitment to fostering a supportive and empowering environment for women in HVACR industries.

**POSITIVE RESULTS**

The results of the WHVACR program are tremendous. Through the mentorship program, women in the industry have gained a deeper understanding of working alongside other professional women in a traditionally male-dominated field. This fosters a sense of camaraderie as well as promotes diversity and inclusion.

Women who have received mentorship through the program often become more active participants in industry meetings, conferences, and development initiatives. They bring a newfound knowledge and confidence to the table, contributing valuable insights and perspectives from the field. Mentoring opens doors to expanded professional networks, which is invaluable for career opportunities, knowledge-sharing, and collaborative endeavors.

Women in the program have not only experienced the personal benefits of mentorships but also have become actively engaged in supporting and mentoring new members—further strengthening the community of professional women. By empowering women with knowledge, confidence, and strong professional relationships, the program not only enhances individual careers but also contributes to the overall growth and diversity of the HVACR industry.

The future of the WHVACR mentoring program is promising, with several exciting initiatives and expansions on the horizon. For example, WHVACR is forging a significant partnership with the International Network of Women in Cooling (INWIC). This collaboration will extend the program's national efforts to a global scale, enabling the group to reach and support women in HVACR across international borders.

To improve the efficiency and precision of the mentor-mentee pairings, the group is also exploring a partnership with Mentor City—a specialized mentoring software. The platform is expected to leverage advanced algorithms to match mentors and mentees based on their backgrounds, goals, and aspirations. This innovation will allow WHVACR to effectively serve an even greater number of women in the industry. Such strategic initiatives reflect the group's commitment to advancing women's careers in HVACR. ●

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# Career Opportunities Abound in the HVACR Industry

WOMEN HARNESS THEIR SKILLS TO CREATE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS. NATE CERTIFICATION IS IMPORTANT FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL IN THE INDUSTRY.

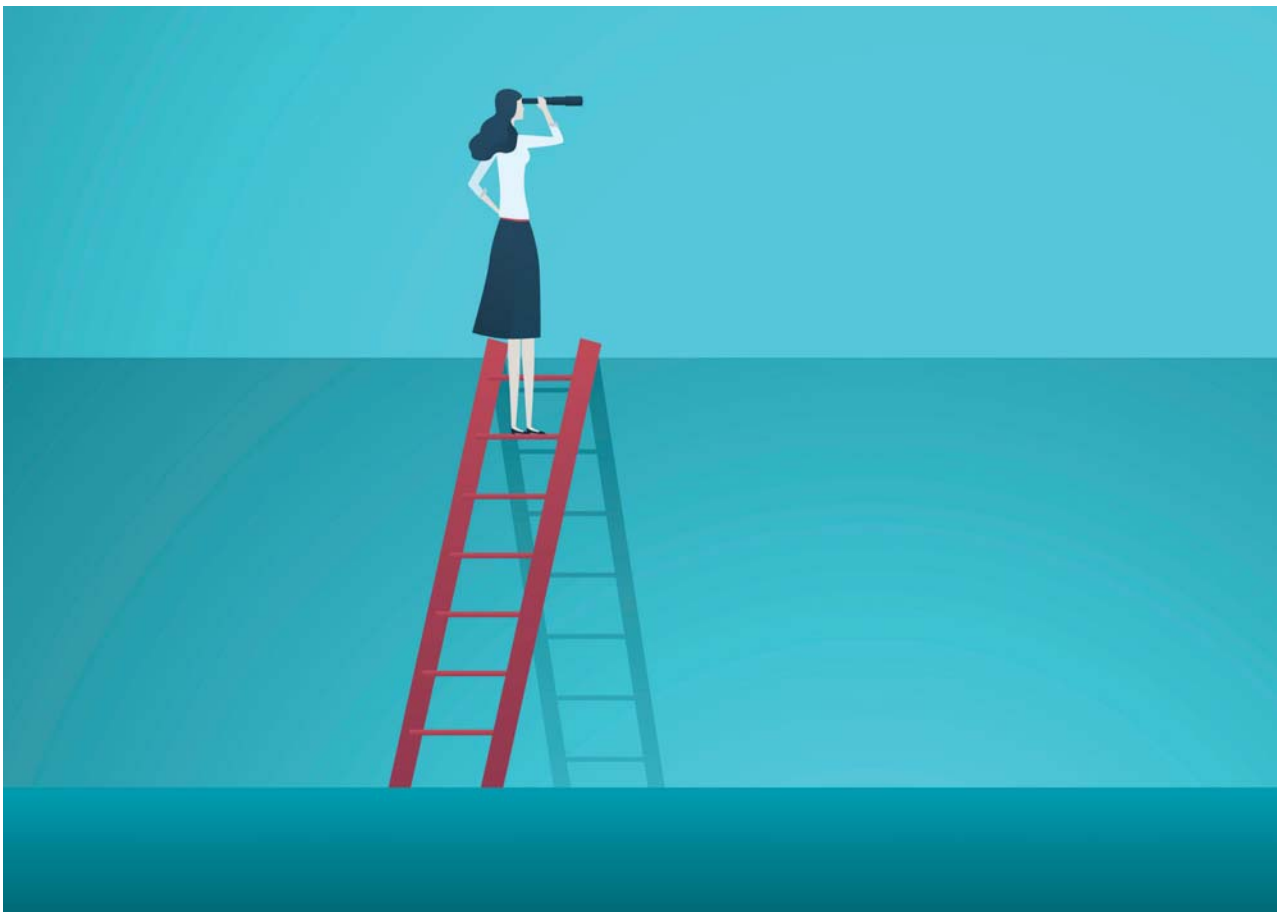


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The HVACR industry offers a range of employment opportunities, from working for contractors to distributors to manufacturers. Over time, the employment landscape has become more diverse, according to industry observers.

In this article, the *NATE Magazine* explores the professional journeys of three women— Lanessa Bannister, Cristi Pedotto, and Candice Vincent—who have leveraged their backgrounds and skills to cultivate successful careers in

the HVACR industry. They share what inspired them to pursue their careers, how the industry has evolved in terms of gender diversity, how others can create their success in the industry, and more.

## HVACR CALLING

Bannister is vice president of sales and stores for the Lennox Residential Business. She leads the company’s sales and stores organization with a focus on driving



sales performance and operational efficiency. However, she didn't start out in sales. Bannister is a mechanical engineer who found her classes related to HVACR to be the most interesting and challenging, and this led her to a role as a design engineer for HVAC and chilled water in the ship-building industry. "This is where my love for HVACR began," she says.

Pedotto is portfolio leader for Trane, American Standard, RunTru by Trane and Ameristar by American Standard ducted outdoor products, including split air conditioners and heat pumps as well as packaged products.

"I started my career in HVACR after completing my engineering degree," she says. "I have a love for design and seeing how things come together—it's what first attracted me to engineering. I was excited to begin my career designing HVACR products in an industry where there was clear career growth opportunity that would allow me to continue to draw from my education."

Vincent is a profit center manager at Hajoca D.B.A. Hughes Supply in Tupelo, Mississippi, and manages the facility and team of the HVACR distribution center. She is responsible for every aspect of the business, both tactical and strategic.

"I was looking for a new field to enter after being in waste disposal and manufacturing," says Vincent. "I found a job posting for an operations manager position... and the description listed many topics that were in my field of expertise. I was hesitant to apply because I didn't know much about HVACR, but it kept pulling me back in. I knew I could make a difference at Hajoca, and I very quickly enjoyed the hands-on atmosphere and customer relationships."

### A CONSTANT STATE OF EVOLUTION

During their careers, Pedotto, Vincent, and Bannister all have seen shifts in the makeup of the industry and how women are creating impactful change along the way.

"I have seen the diversity of my teams continue to evolve including more and more women in technical and leadership roles," Pedotto says. "When I began in the industry, I would estimate there was maybe 10 percent of technical and leadership roles filled by women. Fast forwarding to just last month, I joined a call of six women leaders at Trane Technologies to discuss a technical business challenge.



"I'M NOT SURE I SAW THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN AS A CHALLENGE TO ME, PERSONALLY; I DIDN'T NEED TO SEE SOMEONE WHO LOOKS OR ACTS LIKE ME IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE TO SEE MYSELF THERE,"

— Cristy Pedotto

We have come a long way and continue to go further in creating teams diverse in more ways."

According to Vincent, there definitely has been an increase in female-owned and female-led HVACR businesses. "Many women I know started out in the office answering phones, but after learning on the job, they quickly became an indispensable part of the sales or operations teams," she says. "There are occasionally some people that are surprised when a woman answers the phone, and they ask for the sales desk. It usually only takes one positive interaction to build the customer's confidence."

In addition, while the actual numbers of women in the industry have not exploded, recruiters are actively searching out women for roles in HVACR, whether on the service side or sales side, and the local high school's trades' program has several female students, Vincent says.

Bannister notes, "We do see the entrance of female technicians and comfort advisers on the dealer side, as well as territory managers, sales leaders, and executives on the manufacturer side of the business. More than 50 percent of HVACR purchase decisions are now made by females, so that will likely continue to shift the dealer diversity."

In their own careers, the lack of women before them has not held them back from blazing their own paths in HVACR.

"I'm not sure I saw the representation of women as a challenge to me, personally; I didn't need to see someone who looks or acts like me in a leadership role to see myself there," Pedotto says. "What I wanted to see are those who were demonstrating capability be recognized and promoted

for their work. Seeing that helped me know it was an opportunity for me, as well.”

Bannister agrees that she never considered gender diversity a challenge. “I faced the industry head on and pushed through any obstacles by learning and engaging, not thinking of it as being a challenge,” she says. “For females aspiring to be successful in this industry, I would tell them to never doubt that they belong here... Go after your aspirations with confidence!”

According to Vincent, she also did not focus on gender; instead, she was confident in her abilities, not as an HVACR expert, but as a person that enjoys both her job and finding solutions.

“Those skills translate to success no matter what gender you identify with,” she says. “Be your authentic self, because most people just want to interact with someone who treats others with respect and acts with integrity. It’s a great industry that is full of awesome people, and there is always room for more!”

“SOMEONE WHO  
INSPIRES YOU TO  
HAVE THE COURAGE  
TO KEEP MOVING  
FORWARD CAN BE  
HALF THE BATTLE  
TO ACCOMPLISHING  
YOUR GOALS.”

– Candice Vincent



**PATHS TO SUCCESS**

Success in the HVACR industry depends on a number of factors, and employers have a very important role to play in making the industry a welcoming one for all.

“It starts by fostering a culture where everyone’s voice is encouraged and heard at all levels of the organization,” Vincent says. “Also, intentionally hiring people who think differently than you do, while still being a good fit with the culture, brings balance and energy to a team.”

It’s vital that these efforts go beyond just new hires, according to Bannister. “Employers can help by highlighting females, for example, at all points in their career journey,” she says. “They can also encourage diverse individuals in the organization to network and serve as mentors, either formally or informally.”

Pedotto points out that extending this thinking beyond just women translates to even greater success. “I think a great step to further diversity is to recognize and promote those who demonstrate skill and leadership, regardless of what diversity group they may identify with,” she says. Pedotto adds that it’s important to recognize that everyone has their own style, and the way they lead may look different than your own.

Mentorship and networking are additional ways to help women remain engaged and growing in their careers.

“I think the most important role mentors and networks play is being a resource that enables you to grow your career in this industry—encouraging you to take on new and difficult challenges because even if your confidence is wavering, they trust in your capabilities,” Pedotto says.

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“I am incredibly grateful,” she continues, “to have been surrounded by some amazing mentors and advocates throughout my career. I would not have the success I have enjoyed without them: the experienced designers who took me in and taught me about HVACR products, the engineers that taught me how to test to the extremes, the operations leaders who helped me understand all the steps that bring products together, the managers who talked to me about my career and encouraged me take on new opportunities, and the leaders who took the time to thank me for my contributions.”

It always helps to be able to lean on someone that has already shared the same experience, according to Vincent. “Many times, mentoring conversations are more about lifting each other up and inspiring you to continue,” she says. “Someone who inspires you to have the courage to keep moving forward can be half the battle to accomplishing your goals.”

Bannister says that mentorship can give females the confidence to engage in their network and see that the industry is diversifying and can be very rewarding and satisfying: “My best mentors/role models have been my customers. Over the years, I have learned more from dealers and contractors than I have anywhere else.”

Her advice is to: “Network with industry groups, understand the career paths that we can move through, and ensure that you openly discuss opportunities with both

dealers/contractors and manufacturers/distributors. The most important thing is networking with people (both male and female) in the industry.”

### NATE'S KEY ROLE IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY

NATE—and its mission of technician certification and education—is an important element for the advancement of all in the industry, according to these three women.

“For dealers and contractors, NATE is critical to identify and develop solid, competent technicians. On the manufacturer/distributor side, participation is critical to help with content development, training, and expanded industry knowledge,” Bannister says. “In an ever-changing regulatory environment, it is critical that technicians continue their education. The NATE certification process allows consumers to easily identify who has completed the training and can be a trusted partner in their purchase/install.”

Pedotto agrees we will continue to see change in our industry as HVACR products become more effective and efficient. “We will continue to see technology being integrated in our home comfort solutions,” she says. “In order to keep these systems operating at their best, it becomes more and more critical that the equipment is applied, installed, and maintained correctly.

“We are challenging ourselves,” she points out, “to innovate more sustainable and effective solutions. I believe that continuing to learn and staying up to date with industry technology trends is key to continuing to grow your career.”

Vincent says that when contractors become NATE-certified, they are making a declaration that their business has the knowledge and expertise to install and service that equipment. Consumers also see NATE as a certification that they can trust and rely on for a good customer experience.

“If you aren’t willing to continuously learn and adapt to the new technologies, you may want to find another industry to be in,” Vincent says. “When you put the time, effort, and money into getting yourself and your team certified with NATE and/or your state, you are proving that your business is here for the long term and can be counted on to complete a job, give honest information, and be relied on for future maintenance.” ●



“MY BEST MENTORS/ROLE MODELS HAVE BEEN MY CUSTOMERS. OVER THE YEARS, I HAVE LEARNED MORE FROM DEALERS AND CONTRACTORS THAN I HAVE ANYWHERE ELSE.”

– Lanessa Bannister

Elaine Yetzer Simon is a contributor to the *NATE Magazine*.



# Spanish Language Initiative

NATE STRIVES TO BRING SPANISH-LANGUAGE STUDY GUIDES AND EXAMS TO LATIN AMERICA.



During the NATE certification event held in late October, attendees participate in an online competition for a chance to win a full certification sponsored by NATE and La Academia AFT.

**N**ATE has been offering Spanish-language study guides and exams for several years and is now expanding its reach into Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America. This outreach may end up encompassing Central and South America and the Caribbean.

NATE offers the Ready to Work and HVAC Support Technician study guides in Spanish. In addition, the Ready-to-Work, HVAC Support, Core, AC Service, Heat Pump Service, and Gas Heating Service exams are all available in Spanish. NATE also offers

the EPA 608 exams in Spanish.

“We translated our most popular and entry-level certificate exams in response to requests from the industry,” says Anthony Spagnoli, director, testing and education, NATE. “In particular, we are working with some organizations in countries where Spanish is the primary language, such as HARDI Mexico and Academia de Fundamentos Tecnicos (AFT) in Colombia.

“We are collaborating with AFT,” he continues, “to offer the NATE certification exams as a capstone to

their training program. NATE benefits from having our exams offered in new markets, and AFT benefits from providing an independent validation of their training program through technician certification.”

NATE began this Spanish-language initiative by translating its four most popular exams—Core, AC Service, Heat Pump Service, and Gas Heating Service—into Spanish. “In 2011, we were provided with a donation from Emerson, one of our manufacturer partners, to get that work started,” Spagnoli explains. “The latest exams

are the EPA 608; that question bank is controlled by the EPA and they recently provided a Spanish translation.

“NATE began working with HARDI Mexico in early 2020,” says Spagnoli, “but that initiative was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we recently started testing with AFT and are excited about this new opportunity.”

## CERTIFICATION IN LATIN AMERICA

AFT Ingenieros Consultores, Medellín, Colombia, was founded eight years ago. “During the pandemic, we received many requests from our students, clients, manufacturers and distributors for more training opportunities. So, we opened the AFT Academy in Medellín at the beginning of 2021 to provide online training and educational materials to technicians,” says Andrés Felipe Trujillo, who works as an HVACR designer and consultant at the company.

Trujillo is a mechanical engineer with 20 years of experience in the air conditioning industry. He also is a professor at two universities in Colombia and president of ASHRAE Chapter Colombia. “Our holding company is AFT Integral Consulting based in Florida, where we partnered with Miguel Hurtado to expand our academy in Latin America through the NATE certification.”

Miguel Hurtado has 25 years of experience in the appliances and HVACR industry, specializing in the Latin American region. He is founder of All J Consulting, a Miami-based manufacturer representative and consulting firm for companies in the U.S., Europe, and Asia to service the U.S. and Latin American markets.

“During my involvement with NATE, I fell in love with their certification program and presented Andrés with a strategy,” Hurtado says. “He saw the potential, and we

quickly formed a strong partnership. Together, we implemented the program in Colombia, and we are currently working on bringing it to other countries.”

Both men agree that HVACR certification is important for technicians in Latin America. “Today, almost anything you want to learn can be found online, but at the same time, too much information is overwhelming for people who want to enter the trade or want to improve their skills,” Trujillo says.

He adds, “In Latin America, there are no international certifications. Each school develops its own training programs based on local material produced by manufacturers, faculties, and HVACR engineers. The governments have no requirement for technicians to be certified, and some of the local ordinances are focused on fundamentals, rather than hands-on experience. Technicians may know everything on paper, but when they enter the field, they struggle with problem solving.

“Our clients increasingly request that their work be carried out by qualified personnel, and we are sure that the NATE certification in Latin America will soon become a signal of good quality and technical preparation among technicians.”

Hurtado says that NATE certifications are crucial to validating competency and providing continuing education to technicians. “Not only are they increasing their level of knowledge and experience through certification but also constantly practicing to become better in the industry. Certification also is a tool for employment and economic growth, so technicians can improve their earning potential and expand their network.”

## CHALLENGES

However, technicians do face challenges to pursuing certification in Lat-

in America. “Financially, technicians may not have the money for certification due to currency devaluations, the high cost of goods, social status, and income limitations as professionals. Also, they tend to work long hours in the field and simply may not have the time,” Trujillo says. Therefore, certification is certainly an investment for technicians and apprentices, and the long-term benefits can propel them forward in their careers.

The HVACR certification landscape in Latin America is different from that in the U.S., both men agree. “In Latin America, technicians can attend private technical schools or receive university diplomas in the HVACR field,” Hurtado says. “However, there are only a few technical certifications for the industry that are recognized by the governments and engineers. Technicians in Latin America may lose promotions, improvements, and better opportunities because they do not have a recognized certification with a verifiable track record like NATE.”

In contrast, certifications in the U.S. are much more embedded in the industry. Universities, technical schools, large firms, and online platforms offer certifications, and technicians are able to get financial support through grants and government aid.

Both the U.S. and Latin America share the same problems of not having enough qualified personnel to work in the trades and having to train them from the ground up, Hurtado adds. “The lack of knowledge drives up warranty costs and creates a bad reputation for the profession. Also, in both landscapes, there is a lack of available training materials in Spanish with comprehensive formats and flexibility to study.”

Since this initiative began, NATE exams have influenced the development of AFT’s courses, according to Trujillo. “When Miguel introduced us

“OUR GOAL IN THE FUTURE IS TO TEACH CONSUMERS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROGRAM AND WORK WITH THE GOVERNMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO ADOPT THE CERTIFICATION AS AN INDUSTRY STANDARD AT DIFFERENT LEVELS.”

-Andrés Felipe Trujillo



Andrés Felipe Trujillo, president of ASHRAE Chapter Colombia, presents a CORE book to a participant who won a raffle during the event.

to NATE, it gave us the opportunity to expand the AFT Academy and integrate a certification into our courses. It provided us with a structure and guidelines, so we could develop educational materials focused on real-life field experience for technicians.

“We are now able to leverage our Spanish educational materials to support Latin American technicians during the NATE certification renewal process, so they can continue honing their skills. It gives us the foundation to spearhead a certification program in Latin America. Unlike the U.S., many countries in Latin America do not require a license to operate.”

Another important factor of this initiative: HVACR certifications represent a seal of quality that is supported by industry leaders. “In Latin America, customers always prefer a technician with an American certification over a local one with an

educational diploma,” Trujillo says. “Certifications also are traceable, allowing contracting firms, customers, and companies to verify their license.

“Our goal in the future is to teach consumers about the importance of the program and work with the governments and educational institutions to adopt the certification as an industry standard at different levels.” Trujillo predicts that having NATE-certified technicians with badges and licenses will elevate and positively impact the air conditioning industry in Central, South America and The Caribbean.

**EDUCATION IS THE KEY**

Educating people about NATE is the key to promoting HVACR technician certification in Latin American countries, according to Hurtado. “We must explain what the NATE certification is, its benefits, and why it is needed.

“We want to show how the AFT Academy and its collaborators aim to reshape the technical training landscape in Latin America not only in air conditioning and refrigeration but also in other technical disciplines required by our affiliates.”

Trujillo says that, at a regional level, his group continues to translate training materials in order to facilitate learning, and create micro training sections to help students access the material after hours and answer any questions. “We’re also reaching out to a network of industry leaders to get feedback on how to improve the quality of work in the field, minimize warranty claims and avoid product failure that 90% of the time is caused by bad installations.

“In late October, we officially launched the NATE certification in Medellin, Colombia, where we invited business owners, manufacturing representatives and professionals to participate in-person and online.”

Looking ahead, Hurtado says: “In the U.S., NATE has become a trusted organization for technicians, and we expect the same response as we venture into new regions. The NATE certification will be a distinctive educational program in Latin American countries for well-qualified technicians with best installation, service and maintenance practices. We envision that employers will give better opportunities and salaries to certified professionals, investing more resources into the HVACR industry.”

Judging by the results so far, does NATE plan to expand the Spanish Language Exam initiative in the near future? Anthony Spagnoli, director, testing and education at NATE, says that, based on industry demand, NATE could very well translate additional exams moving forward while expanding on this initiative. ●

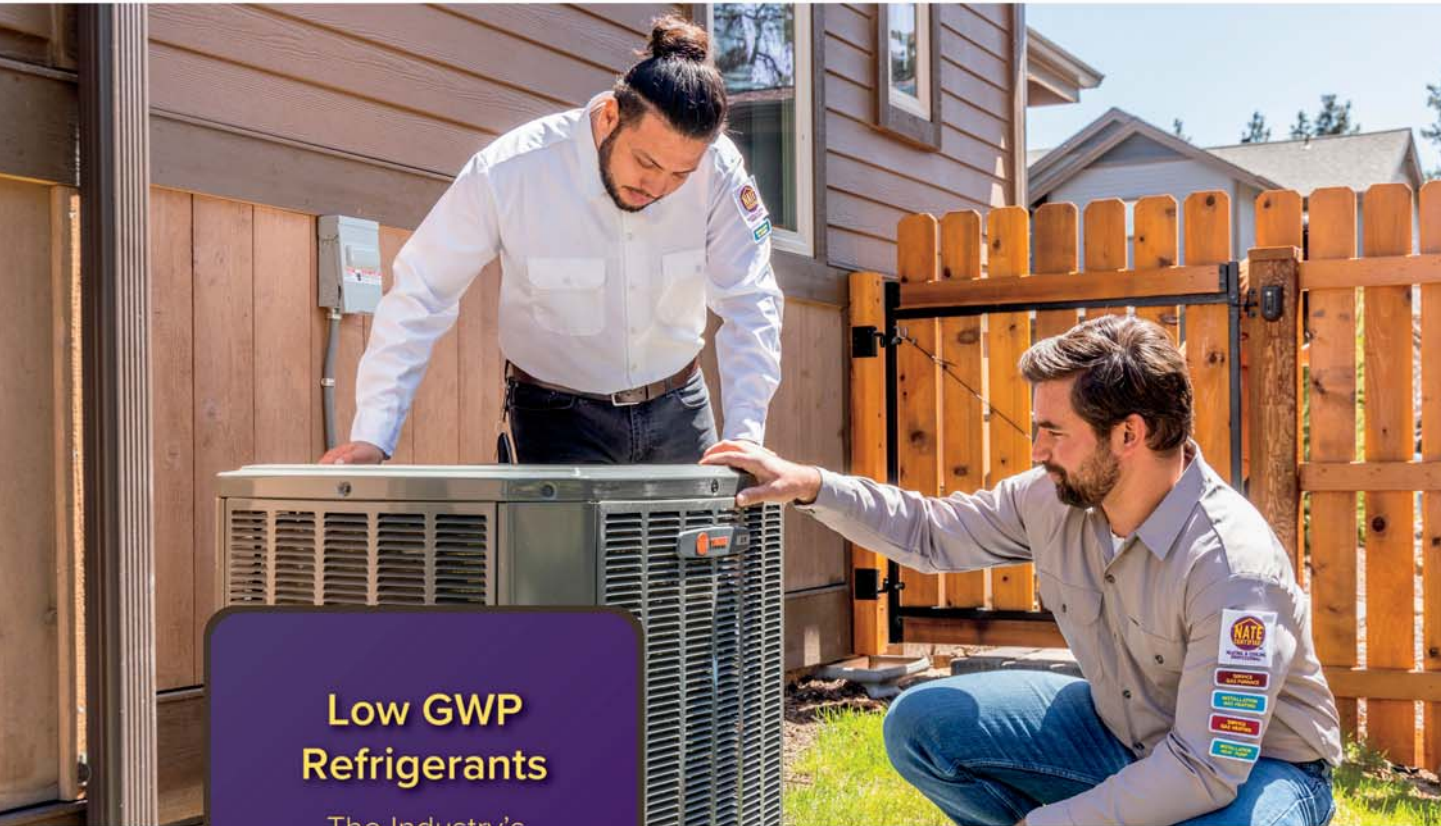
Neal Lorenzi is a contributor to *the NATE Magazine*.





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# Spotlight On NATE Technicians

There are many traits that describe great leaders. A great leader is ambitious, has vision, and is resourceful. Great leaders are well-educated and know that in order to be successful in a career, the learning process never ends. In the HVACR industry, technicians continue the education process by gaining NATE certifications. The *NATE Magazine* would like to put the spotlight on the following NATE-certified technicians who are leaders in the HVACR industry.



## BEN TORRES

**1. TITLE/EMPLOYER:** I own and operate Subcool Heating and Air Conditioning. We are a full service residential and light commercial HVACR business, serving Houston and the surrounding areas. Subcool has been in business a little more than three years.

**2. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY OVERALL?** I have been in the HVACR industry since 2001.

**3. WHAT DO YOU DO (AS A TECHNICIAN) ON A DAILY BASIS?** My duties include doing service, maintenance, and field

proposals. I coordinate with install crews on upcoming jobs. Also, I order equipment and parts as well as delegate other duties to my helpers.

**4. WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER IN HVACR?** I moved to Texas from California in 1999. I was working as a building maintenance technician in Sugarland. This was the first job where I had to learn how to use different tools. Every day was a challenge, and I found it interesting. At the time, there was a shortage of HVACR technicians, so I enrolled in a local college and took classes at night. As soon as I felt ready, I took the EPA exam and passed. Soon after, I started looking for my first HVACR job. The rest is history.

**5. WHAT NATE CERTIFICATIONS DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE? WHEN DID YOU GET THOSE CERTIFICATIONS?** I have the Heat Pump Installation and Service Certification. I became NATE-certified 10 years ago.

**6. WHAT VALUE DO YOU FEEL THAT NATE CERTIFICATIONS HAVE ON YOUR CAREER IN HVACR? HOW HAVE NATE CERTIFICATIONS BENEFITED YOU AND YOUR COMPANY OVER THE YEARS?** With NATE certification, I was able to add value to myself. This helped me move up in the company and get pay increases. Customers called to make appointments and requested NATE-certified technicians. At the time, not many technicians had the certification, so it set me apart.

**7. HOW DO NATE'S LATEST OFFERINGS (CHP-5, LIVE ONLINE PROGRAMING, STUDY GUIDES) SPEAK TO NATE'S ABILITY TO ADAPT TO THE INDUSTRY'S CHANGING NEEDS?** They are great. They offer a unique opportunity for other people to get into the industry. It makes it much easier now than before.

**8. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEWCOMER LOOKING TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY?** In order to be successful, there are a number of things one should do. Learning new things, hard work, dedication, and persistence are important. This is a rewarding career if you want it to be.



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## SHAUN MARTIN

**1. TITLE/EMPLOYER:** HVAC service technician. I'm employed with Air Synergy, located in Pittsburg, California. I've been with the company for three years.

**2. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY OVERALL?** I've been in the HVACR industry since May of 2018.

**3. WHAT DO YOU DO (AS A TECHNICIAN) ON A DAILY BASIS?** I perform maintenance on residential and light commercial systems, provide quotes, and do repairs. I educate customers about their systems. I also help with installs when needed.

**4. WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER IN HVACR?** I was working for a local retail franchise, selling products that help with back pain. Two years later, I decided it was time to find a different career and learn a trade. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I was willing to learn. While doing a search during my lunch break, I came across "HVAC

"MY ADVICE TO A NEWCOMER IS TO SHOW UP EVERY DAY WITH THE MISSION TO LEARN. IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE, BUT IT IS A BIG TRADE FILLED WITH TINY DETAILS. THERE'S A LOT TO LEARN, BUT IT'S NOTHING YOU CAN'T HANDLE IF YOU REALLY APPLY YOURSELF."

Technician." I met with a temp agency and told them that I was looking for work in the HVACR trade. They told me they had a company that was willing to try me out. That's how I broke into the industry.

**5. WHAT NATE CERTIFICATES DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE? WHEN DID YOU GET THOSE CERTIFICATES?** I currently have the HVAC Support Technician certificate, which I received on March 12, 2020. I also have the Ready-to-Work certificate, which I received on February 20, 2022.

**6. WHAT VALUE DO YOU FEEL THAT NATE CERTIFICATES HAVE ON YOUR CAREER IN HVACR? HOW HAVE NATE CERTIFICATES BENEFITED YOU AND YOUR COMPANY OVER THE YEARS?** NATE certificates bring value to my career by showing my employer that I'm interested in furthering my knowledge in the HVACR trade. These certificates have benefited me and my company because it tells our customers that we are knowledgeable in our field. It builds trust with customers when I educate them on their current system and their options for new ones.

**7. HOW DO NATE'S LATEST OFFERINGS (CHP-5, LIVE ONLINE PROGRAMING, STUDY GUIDES) SPEAK TO NATE'S ABILITY TO ADAPT TO THE INDUSTRY'S CHANGING NEEDS?** They speak volumes for the NATE organization. They make it easier for technicians to pursue certifications. You can study for the exams with test-like questions from the study guide. If you can't travel to a proctored exam, you can take the test at home. NATE is adapting to technicians' needs by creating easy access to in-person classes, exams, webinars, and videos.

**8. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEWCOMER LOOKING TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY?** My advice to a newcomer is to show up every day with the mission to learn. It's not rocket science, but it is a big trade filled with tiny details. There's a lot to learn, but it's nothing you can't handle if you really apply yourself.



# CHP-5 CERTIFICATION

Technicians can now earn their NATE Certification with five thirty-question exams designed to mirror the ways they learn and grow in the field.

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## **NEW: NATE TRAINING ACADEMY**

NATE has teamed up with Interplay Learning to create a new online platform with on-demand interactive courses that prepare technicians for the CHP-5 exams.



## MURAD SALEH

**1. TITLE/EMPLOYER:** Field supervisor and senior technician for Home Service Corp., Melvindale, Michigan. I began working there in 2015.

**2. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY?** I have been in the HVACR industry for nine years.

**3. WHAT DO YOU DO (AS A TECHNICIAN) ON A DAILY BASIS?** I do service calls on furnaces, air conditioners, boilers and heat pumps; train new technicians; and inspect final install in some cases.

“BEING NATE-CERTIFIED HELPS YOU ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND GIVES YOU CONFIDENCE IN YOUR WORK. IT ALSO MAKES A DIFFERENCE WITH CUSTOMERS WHO OFTEN ASK FOR NATE-CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS. THEY KNOW THAT WE ARE WELL TRAINED AND QUALIFIED TO DO THE WORK THE RIGHT WAY.”

**4. WHAT LED YOU TO A CAREER IN HVACR?** After high school graduation, I got an associate degree in accounting and worked in convenience store management. In 2014, I began thinking about a career change. I did an online search and found Dorsey College in Wayne, Michigan. I attended Dorsey College and completed its HVAC Systems Technician training program. I was then hired as a service technician and have improved my skill levels ever since—starting with basic heating and cooling to boilers, rooftop, heat pumps, geothermal, mini split, and combination tank-less.

**5. WHAT NATE CERTIFICATIONS DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE? WHEN DID YOU GET THOSE CERTIFICATIONS?** I received the NATE Core and Heating certification in 2018. I became certified with the Gas Heating specialty the same year.

**6. WHAT VALUE DO YOU FEEL THAT NATE CERTIFICATIONS HAVE ON YOUR CAREER IN HVACR? HOW HAVE NATE CERTIFICATIONS BENEFITTED YOU AND YOUR COMPANY OVER THE YEARS?** Being NATE-certified helps you achieve excellence and gives you confidence in your work. It also makes a difference with customers who often ask for NATE-certified technicians. They know that we are well trained and qualified to do the work the right way.

**7. HOW DO NATE'S LATEST OFFERINGS (CHP-5, LIVE ONLINE PROGRAMING, STUDY GUIDES) SPEAK TO NATE'S ABILITY TO ADAPT TO THE INDUSTRY'S CHANGING NEEDS?** NATE continues to adapt to the needs of technicians. These new offerings will help bring more talented people to the HVACR field.

**8. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A NEWCOMER LOOKING TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THE HVACR INDUSTRY?** My advice is to get NATE-certified. It helps you be a better technician for your company and to keep your skills up to date.



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