

HISTORY MONTH

This year for history month the ASHRAE Iowa chapter wanted to take time to recognize a person who has spent over 40 years working in the engineering and sheet metal contracting industry.

Einar Dahl Jr. became a licensed professional mechanical engineer, owned and operated three thriving sheet metal businesses and also found time to become involved in professional organizations. These organizations included the ASHRAE Iowa Chapter (President 1968), Sheet Metal Contractors of Iowa (President 1976 thru 78), and Associated Builders and Contractors (President 1990). He also took the time to be a mentor and leader to so many different individuals in the heating ventilation and air conditioning industry.



Einar graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1960 at the age of 28 with a bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering. This was the era of "Sputnik" and the United States was in a technological race to beat the Russians to the moon. With the government funding for math and science in full swing, engineering and science education was a primary focus.

Following his college career, Einar decided to investigate opportunities at an interesting company called Johnson Controls. Johnson Controls at the time was hiring for their California offices. Einar and his wife, Avonne, were thinking of a warm place to live and work after a lifetime of North Dakota winters; however, the first stop on the way to California was an interview in Des Moines, Iowa, where he met with a man named Charlie Wheeler. By 1960, Charlie Wheeler had been a sales engineer and regional manager for Johnson Controls for over two decades. Charlie quickly

recognized the potential in this young man and was able to convince him, with a good sales pitch, to stay at the Des Moines office and work with him.

Einar spent the next five years at Johnson Controls working to develop control designs for HVAC systems. He spent much of his time going out on the jobsite helping get HVAC systems up and running. By the mid 1960s he had helped create what we would nowadays be considered a Test and Balance department while at Johnson Controls.

Foreseeing the need for a good sheet metal contractor, Dahl Air Conditioning and Heating was created and incorporated in 1965. Like many new business entrepreneurs there were a lot of tasks to be completed to keep the company moving forward. He would estimate jobs and run the company during the day, and continue into the evening hours working to fabricate sheet metal to keep the crew going the next day. The jobs started small and gradually progressed until his first big job in 1966, the Nevada County Courthouse with Dale Lint, who was the Mechanical Contractor. Dale Lint took a chance when the General Contractor was hesitant in utilizing such a new and unfamiliar sheet metal contractor.

In 1967, Einar formed a new company, Systems Management and Balancing, which later was purchased by a well-known member of the local HVAC industry, Odean Jukam.

By 1970, Dahl Air Conditioning and Heating Company grew into a full scale commercial and industrial sheet metal contracting company and when the opportunity to buy a building in Van Meter, Iowa came up, the company relocated and remains there to this day.



Einar later purchased Christians Corporation, a sheet metal contractor, in Spencer, Iowa in 1972. In 1978, Dallas Construction Corporation, an architectural and specialty sheet metal company, was formed and operates out of the same building in Van Meter, Iowa.

Throughout his engineering and contracting career, Einar has been a member of ASHRAE and involved at the local chapter level. In 1968, he was elected president of the Iowa Chapter. Einar believes the most important benefit of ASHRAE is the long lasting and important relationships with others involved in the HVAC industry. Einar has been involved in ASHRAE over 40 years and was awarded a Life membership in recognition for this commitment.

Einar now enjoys a much more relaxed lifestyle as a semi-retired contractor and engineer. He and wife Avonne spend the winters in Arizona and he stops in time to time during the summer, at his office at Dahl Air Conditioning and Heating, to see what the gang is up to.