

# Island Heating & Air

By Peggy McGuinness

Island Heating & Air Conditioning (IHAC) was founded by long-time Jacksonville area resident Billy Noe back in 2008. Formerly located in Atlantic Beach, Billy recently moved the company to Neptune Beach, where he and his family have lived for four years. He says that although IHAC relies entirely on word-of-mouth advertising, "the phone never stops ringing here." During the first week of January alone, when Jacksonville area beaches experienced frigid temperatures, ICA received approximately 150 calls from concerned residents. Billy says many of the calls were from people whose "units were freezing over" and, in many cases, he was able to "talk them through" what to do over the phone. His customers appreciate the fact that Billy will take this approach rather than automatically send someone out on a service call.

When IHAC relocated, Billy and his staff discovered their new shop "came with about 50 cats that hang around outside." Being animal lovers, they often feed the cats and now have been adopted "full-time" by one of them. "Jimmy" the cat often stays inside the office at night when it's raining or cold and, whether inside or outside, is usually the first to greet Billy and his workers when their vehicles pull into the parking lot. Billy's love of animals is evident; he previously rescued "Charlie," now the Noe family's chocolate lab, from under a house. "Charlie," along with Boston Terriers "Princess" and "Auggie," and "Fefe" the cat all happily coexist in the Noe home.

IHAC services approximately 2,500 residents, mostly at the beach, Billy says. His favorite part of the job is "helping people," especially on the island where the Jacksonville area beaches are located. IHAC's customers

are mainly residential, with a minimal volume of commercial accounts. Billy appreciates those in the area who "buy local" and encourages everyone to do so. At IHAC, Billy runs the sales and service operation and employs two installers. In the summer, he says, Billy works "a hundred hours a week" and does some of the installing himself. IHAC services "all brands" and sells products by manufacturers Bryant, Amana, Trane and Bosch Geothermal.

When Billy was a teenager, he got a job with a friend of his father's "sweeping up" in the shop at a heating and cooling contractor. This basic work turned out to be the first step on a path that ultimately led to Billy starting his own business in that industry. Over the years, Billy tells me, many people he once worked with have since worked for him. Billy's business philosophy is simple but effective; his approach is to "be honest and give people options." By options, he means his practice is to offer alternatives whenever possible and "not just to sell."

Billy and his wife Erica live with their 6-year-old son Bentley and 9-year-old Katie, Erica's daughter, and Billy's step-daughter. Both children attend Neptune Beach Elementary. Erica is a stay-at-home mom who helps Billy out in the office when needed. When Billy is not working or spending time with his family, he likes to spend time working on automotive vehicles, building 4-wheel drive vehicles and riding in All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Parks. Lucky for him, Billy's new IHAC facility was once an auto body shop which allows him to indulge his "tinkering" tendencies -- complete with extra space and car lifts.

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