The 2020 AHR Expo Delivers Innovation and the Next Revolution of HVACR

*Industry advancement was on display from exhibitor booths to new Show features including the first-ever Podcast Pavilion and trend discussions led by AHR Expo Expert Council members*

**WESTPORT, Conn., February 14, 2020** – Professionals from across HVACR descended upon the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida, February 3-5 for the 2020 AHR Expo. Attendees and exhibitors engaged in three full days of innovation and learning and took an exciting look into the future of HVACR. Spread across 506,090 sq. ft., exhibitors on the Show floor delivered new and never-before-seen products and tech, live demonstrations, networking opportunities and a revitalized energy for the future of the industry. In every education session, council talk, podcast broadcast, exhibitor event and long walk across the Show floor, one thing was abundantly clear — the HVACR revolution has arrived in full force.

“The energy on the Show floor this year was hard to miss. From corner to corner, in every booth, education session, event program, everywhere, it’s clear that this industry is alive and thriving,” said Mark Stevens, Show Manager. “Leading in to this Show we knew there were some big changes happening across the industry and we saw that reflected in Orlando. It is truly an exciting time to be a part of the HVACR community and, if 2020 is any indication, it is just getting started.”

The 2020 Show welcomed over 50,000 attendees, 1,900+ exhibiting companies —577 of which were international as well as 295 who were first time exhibitors.

Victor Grasso (@apprenticegrasso19 on Instagram), an HVAC Service Technician from New Jersey says of his first AHR Expo, “The videos of this Show online don’t do it justice. When you’re here you get to pick up the tool and feel how it actually works. It really assures me that if I purchase the tool in the future, I’ll know that I’m getting the right tool for the job. For a young person like me who is new to the trade, the Show introduced me to a whole other aspect of the industry. I found so many products and companies I would have never known existed. This definitely won’t be my last Show — I’ll be here for Chicago, Vegas, I’ll be here for life.”

“We have received incredible traffic at the Show this year. We’re excited to be here!” said Joe Oberle, Vice President of Corporate Development for Delta Electronics. “Our booth this year included fully integrated and automated products from our subsidiaries Delta Controls, LOYTEC, VIVOTEK and
Amerlux, as well as Delta Electronics’ Industrial Automation and Fan business groups, under the theme ‘Smarter Buildings, Smarter Cities.’”

The 2020 Education Program
The 2020 Show featured more than 200 sessions in the Education Program. This year featured new sessions inspired by trends happening currently across HVACR, as well as those forecasted for the near future. Below is a summary of some of the topics discussed throughout the Show:

Private Equity 101: What HVACR Founders Need to Know
This session provided insight into private equity at a basic level understanding. Private equity is currently investing millions into small-to-medium sized founder-led HVAC companies. A panel of investors discussed the varying types of investor opportunities, how a company is valued and how the partnership process typically works. Attendees were left with an understanding of the options available through partnership in order to make decisions that best fit their business.

Skilled Labor! Overcome the Shortage to Protect Your Business
This session discussed the current state of the industry and the skilled labor shortage. Eighty-two percent (82%) of CEOs report that the skilled labor shortage is a significant business issue. Melissa Boutwell, President at Automation Strategy and Performance, presented attendees with a discussion of why this is happening, how we can prepare as an industry and what some organizations are currently doing to secure current and future market positions.

Building for a Climate Emergency
Ken Sinclair of AutomationBuildings.com led a discussion titled Building for a Climate Emergency. In it, he discussed the declaration of a “Climate Emergency” by over 400 global cities and how it relates to an enormous opportunity for the automation industry as local governments gear up to tackle this challenge. With recent legislation from municipal governments targeting residential and commercial buildings, both new and existing, with aggressive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets, the widespread deployment of state-of-the-art controls systems will be essential to achieving these targets.

“This is my first time attending the show and I’ve found the educational sessions to be extremely beneficial for my professional growth,” said Aaron Byers, Product Engineer. “As a young engineer just starting out in the industry, it’s an outstanding place for me to build my professional network, gain input on what’s going on in the industry, and learn from specialists in my field. I’ll definitely be attending Chicago in 2021!”

Council Talks
2020 was the first year the Show hosted education sessions led by members of the AHR Expo Expert Council. The Council is a collaboration of HVACR experts and thought leaders launched by the AHR Expo in 2019 to educate and stimulate discussion concerning the biggest issues impacting the industry. Their
sessions covered a wide range of industry topics addressing what’s next for HVACR professionals in the coming year. Highlights included:

**Obstacles and Opportunities for HVACR in the Next Decade**
Panel speakers in this session took an in-depth look at what obstacles and opportunities lie ahead for the next decade of HVACR. Speakers shared different perspectives on speeding up time to value creation, increased focus on well-being and productivity, and the skill-shortage gap in the industry. Panel moderator Nicolas Waern, the Nordic “Building Whisperer,” also provided insight on HVACR in Europe, specifically the Nordics and Sweden.

**2020 - Pivoting Towards a Post Carbon World and Impacts to the HVAC Industry**
This session covered the pivotal effects mitigating climate change has made to the industry and how the 2020 roadmap will look going forward. As more progressive cities and outspoken younger generations across the world continue to focus on climate change, HVACR is adapting for a 2050 carbon neutral world that’s 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than pre-industrial times, and outlined how 2020 marks a significant year in this adaptation. This session was led by Luke Leung, PE, LEED Fellow and Director of Sustainable Engineering at Skidmore, Owings and Merrill LLP.

**Update on Refrigerants: Past, Present and Future**
This session, led by Eckhard Groll, William E. and Florence E. Perry Head of Mechanical Engineering and Reilly Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Purdue College of Engineering, provided a detailed review of current and past refrigeration technology and how it can inform refrigerant technologies of the future. Due to the phase-out of ozone-depleting CFC and HCFC refrigerants, refrigeration and air conditioning sciences have been in a state of flux, and environmental concerns have sparked industry-wide interest in using substances that are naturally occurring in the biosphere as refrigerants. Many of these natural working fluids were commonly used in refrigeration technology in the late 1800’s, and this session emphasized that when looking at the refrigerants of the future, it is essential to understand which substances have been used in the past.

**Applying Emotional Intelligence (EQ) to Strengthen Your Business Model and Customer Relationships**
Karine Leblanc led a discussion of emotional intelligence and how it has emerged as a key aspect of business management and employee relations. This session explained the importance of EQ, covering key concepts such as connecting with others by discovering common ground, using simple communication, capturing interests, inspiring others and staying authentic in relationships. Attendees left this session with an understanding of how EQ can affect relationships across company, distribution and sales channels.

“It’s all about connection and being in the room. If you don’t show up, you will not meet people, you will not learn and you cannot exchange expertise with people that are working in either the same or different role as you,” said Karine Leblanc, Sales Engineer with US Air Conditioning Distributors and founding member of the AHR Expo Expert Council.
Awards Ceremony
The 2020 Product of the Year honor went to Danfoss for the Danfoss CO2 Adaptive Liquid Management Solution. Danfoss was also recognized as an Innovation Awards winner for the Cooling, Green Building and Refrigeration categories. Winners were selected in a total of 10 industry categories along with an overall Product of the Year winner and honored in a ceremony hosted during the AHR Expo.

“It was an honor to win Product of the Year for our Danfoss CO2 Adaptive Liquid Management (CALM) at the AHR Expo in Orlando considering all of the other category winners,” said Peter Dee, Sales Director Food Retail, North America at Danfoss. “It exemplifies the Danfoss culture, people, and commitment to innovation. We continue to strive through innovation to help our customers and the industry meet their sustainability requirements and it is an honor to be recognized by the industry for these achievements.”

The Innovation Awards received the most entries ever this year since the program began 17 years ago. What’s more, the innovation featured by the winners, finalists and entrants is a true indication that the industry is in a season of change.

“The Innovation Awards is always an exciting time for us at the Show because we get to pause and give recognition to those in the industry who are challenging themselves to make HVACR better,” said Stevens. “This year really delivered, not only in the awards ceremony but also out on the Show floor. We congratulate all our winners — and Danfoss for developing a phenomenal Product of the Year with the CO2 Adaptive Liquid Management Solution— and challenge everyone in the industry to keep innovating, taking risks and working to better the industry.”

“Additionally, the Innovation Awards gives us the opportunity to leave a mark on the communities we visit through the donation of entry fees,” continued Stevens. “This year we were fortunate to give back the largest donation ever —$26,300 — to the Orange County Police Athletic League (P.A.L.) serving the Orlando/Apopka area. We are delighted to be able to support the strong youth program they have developed.”

First Ever Podcast Pavilion
For the first time ever, the AHR Expo introduced the Podcast Pavilion, hosting some of the industry’s most prominent podcasters*. This year Bryan Orr of HVAC School (@hvacschool on Instagram); The HVAC Jerks (@thehvacjerks on Instagram); Tersh Blissett with Service Business Mastery (@tershblissett on Instagram); Mike Mayberry, the HVAC Refer Guy (@hvac_refer_guy on Instagram); Matt Nelson with HVAC 360 (@hvac360 on Instagram); and Gil Cavey of HVAC Uncensored (@hvacuncensored on Instagram) welcomed guests in two podcast stations all three days of the Show. As a pilot year for the AHR Expo, the Podcast Pavilion quickly became an attendee favorite. Guests included representatives from endorsing organizations, such as Danielle Putnam and Colleen Keyworth from Women in HVACR and Stephen Yurek, AHRI President, as well as industry experts and personalities like HVAC YouTuber AK Greaves (@akhvac on Instagram) and Richard Trethewey, from the PBS show This Old House.
“When I heard that AHR Expo was going to include us in a podcast pavilion at the 2020 Show I was really excited. The reality far exceeded all of my expectations,” said Bryan Orr of HVAC School. “The space was a great way for us to share and connect and it shows a real commitment by AHR to staying involved and relevant in the new media age. Well done!”

The HVAC Jerks added, “The Podcast Pavilion that AHR Expo created this year was a huge success! We had such a positive response from our existing fans that came out to see us, and so many new ones who found us at the Show. The HVAC Jerks would like to thank the AHR Expo for their drive to stay on the cutting edge of the HVAC industry. See you in Chicago!”

*Brent Ridley with Tool Pros Podcast (@toolprospodcast on Instagram) was also slated to participate but was unable to attend due to injury.

**Product and Technology Presentations**

The 2020 Show also featured more 100 Product and Technology presentations given by exhibitors. The twenty-minute presentations were spread out over the three days and drew crowds into three theaters just off the exhibitor floor. Much like the Innovation Awards program, the products and technologies featured showcased real progress in HVACR and gave a preview to some exciting things ahead for HVACR.

Between the exhibitor booths, education sessions and product and technology presentations, this year presented a number of changes and immense growth within the HVACR industry. The trends exhibited at this year’s Show point towards an equally successful year for the 2021 AHR Expo.

“If the 2020 AHR Expo is any indication of where HVACR is headed, this industry is on the path to exciting things,” concluded Stevens. “We look forward to following along as we head into the 2021 Show in Chicago!”

Follow ahrexpo.com for updates regarding the 2021 AHR Expo, to be held January 25-27 at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago.

**About AHR Expo**

The AHR Expo is the world’s largest HVACR event, attracting the most comprehensive gathering of industry professionals from around the globe each year. The Show provides a unique forum where manufacturers of all sizes and specialties, whether a major industry brand or innovative start-up, can come together to share ideas and showcase the future of HVACR technology under one roof. Since 1930, AHR Expo has remained the industry’s best place for OEMs, engineers, contractors, facility operators, architects, educators and other industry professionals to explore the latest trends and applications and to cultivate mutually beneficial business relationships. The next Show, co-sponsored by ASHRAE and AHRI, will be held Jan. 25-27, 2021 in Chicago, and is held concurrently with ASHRAE’s Winter Conference.

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