



**Bradley Mechanical**  
**We'll Get You Outta The Fix You're In**

## **Bradley Mechanical Is 'Doing It Right' Through Quality and Customer Service**

*By Daphne Butas*

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## BRADLEY MECHANICAL

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This year marks the 40th anniversary for Bradley Mechanical. Founded in 1969 Bradley Mechanical began as a mostly commercial outfit but converted to mostly residential work in 2000. They specialize in heating, air conditioning, HVAC, plumbing, duct cleaning, indoor air quality control and providing allergy solutions. Bradley Mechanical's corporate identity is all about doing it right and offering the highest level of customer service available; that is what dis-

tinguishes them from the competition and that has kept this family run business serving families throughout Central Virginia for the past four decades. As Brad Bradley says, "We are one of the few companies left that does duct work properly, which is one of the most important things when it comes to air systems and monitoring air quality." The goal of Bradley Mechanical is to get people's systems back to functioning at a rate of 100 percent. This is harder to do because newer construction buildings suffer if the job was done improperly the first time around.

That is when Bradley Mechanical comes in to fix other people's mistakes and get the systems back to 100 percent. "It costs more money upfront, but it reduces your bills over time." Bradley Mechanical does almost all of their work in the residential sector so they cater to the affluent American. Many of their projects are done in high-end homes that range in price from \$600,000-\$750,000 and up. Another thing that distinguishes Bradley Mechanical and one thing that they have come to be known for is their work with boilers. Very few companies do boiler work anymore because the systems are so complicated, but it is an efficient way to heat homes and offices because it is easier to control the temperature zones in a building with a boiler than it is to do so with other systems. With a new 8,000 square foot office facility in Chesterfield Airpark, Bradley Mechanical has a fulltime staff of 28 people and they complete over 1,000 projects per year. To assure that everything is done to the highest standards

and done right, Bradley Mechanical does not subcontract out any of their work. That way they are able to offer exceptional customer service, which is what they are known for. "We don't subcontract out anything, everything is done and controlled in-house. You get what you pay for with us."

Bradley Mechanical is a strong company because they are focused on customer service and they want their customers to be 100 percent happy, 100 percent of the time. To ensure that their customer service is top notch, Bradley Mechanical conducts surveys of all of their customers and "Our satisfaction rating has been 98 percent for the past five years. That lets them know they are doing it right. Another way in which Bradley Mechanical pays special attention to their customers and makes sure that their needs are being met is with their phone calling system. Two to three days after an onsite service call, Bradley Mechanical will make a phone call to that customer and make sure that he was 100

percent happy with the service he received. Because most of their business is referral based, Bradley Mechanical takes the extra steps necessary to ensure that they are providing the best service they can at all times. To demonstrate their strengths and skills to the public so that they can business as a result of them, Bradley Mechanical has a special way of assessing the efficiency of a building's system. The first step is to do a heat to load calculation onsite to make sure that the current equipment is sized correctly for the job. The second step is to do a computerized duct design (manual D) of the duct system. Once it is decided what the most efficient use of a system is, Bradley Mechanical tests the system to ensure that their calculations were correct and to see if the system is functioning at 100 percent efficiency. "If it is done right, it is rocket science. Our work is critical to a building or home. We can achieve efficiency levels that other people can't." Because the average building in America has a 40 percent duct

leak, Bradley Mechanical uses this system of checks and balances on each and every job to make sure that they are doing everything right, to make sure that the system's efficiency is maximized, and to make sure that the customers are happy with the work. Bradley Mechanical requires all their installers and service technicians to be North American Technician Excellence (NATE) certified, which is further proof of this company's commitment to doing it right the first time around and evidence of their ability to stand out as exceptional on the customer service front. Less than one percent of all technicians in North America are NATE certified. To gain business Bradley Mechanical does radio and print advertising but finds that because of their commitment to customer service, word of mouth has helped them out the most over the years. Bradley Mechanical has been a family owned and operated business for so long that keeping it in the family helps them control the quality

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over the growth. According to Brad Bradley, "We don't want to sacrifice quality for quantity." Over the past 20 years there has been a decline in the quality of workmanship in the business because many of the standards in place are becoming more relaxed and the quality craftsmen who are knowledgeable about very specific systems or parts of the industry are becoming harder and harder to find. To make sure that Bradley Mechanical does not fall into the trap of rapid growth that makes their quality suffer, Brad Bradley has started taking graduates right out of technical schools because he finds it is easier to mold someone and teach them the ropes than it is to try to retrain someone who has been doing it wrong for so long. "We insist on doing it right the first time, so I would rather teach someone the ropes the right way than deal with someone who makes mistakes

and would not be able to meet our customer service requirements."

Bradley Mechanical has a proven track record of success and big plans for the future. Brad Bradley's plans for the company include: doubling in size over the next 3-4 years, both in terms of geographical expansion as well as volume of projects. There are already plans in the works to ensure that education and training remain another priority for Bradley Mechanical even as they grow. They invest \$80,000 per year into training to make sure that their staff is producing high quality work and to ensure that they are getting the certifications that they need. Bradley Mechanical also plans to continue its rigorous quality control programs. For example, "We have training meetings every Tuesday morning and we talk about new jobs and potential projects, work to focus on, and areas where we could improve. It's just another way we work towards quality improvement at all times." To remain competitive and unique,

Bradley Mechanical is working on growing the commercial side of their business, with special attention to design-build work and not bidder work. "We want people to still care about the quality of the work," says Bradley. Bradley Mechanical is also always up to date on the newest systems and equipment. For example, they do work with Bederus boilers which are highly efficient German boilers only recently introduced into mainstream use in the U.S. in the past few years. As Bradley Mechanical continues to improve and further hone their effective systems, customer service and doing it right are always the keys to success for this family company. Forty years experience has reassured Bradley Mechanical that their focus is effective and what keeps people coming back year after year. Longevity and reputation are what keep businesses successful and Bradley Mechanical has proven that they have all the key elements necessary to go the distance for another 40 years.



### Virginia Construction Journal

**3602 John Simmons Ct.**

**Frederick, MD 21704**

**877-874-4324 (phone)**

**877-874-4325 (fax)**

**Chris Chapin**

**President**

**Daphne Butas**

**Editor**

**Joe Wallace**

**Manager, Design and Graphics**

**For further information, please email us at**

**[vaconstructionjournal@yahoo.com](mailto:vaconstructionjournal@yahoo.com)**