PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Is Annual Preventive Maintenance of A Heating System Really Necessary?

LOGO BY: MOE WASSILIE

It is safe to say that most heating systems are not operating at peak efficiency. That is not too surprising when you realize that in rural Alaska, a heating system runs about 1850 hours per year.

To put this "run time' in perspective, a snow machine or 4 wheeler driven for 1850 hours at 55 miles per hour would travel over 101,750 miles. Not many snow machines or 4 wheelers put 101,750 miles on the odometer in a single year.

Even so, no one would consider such a journey without arranging for oil changes, lubrication, and routine maintenance to assure the efficiency, safety, and reliability of the vehicles.

Simply put, a heating system serves many more hours each year than a vehicle and like any vehicle needs routine maintenance to operate efficiently, safely, and reliably throughout its design life.

Long before a heating system breaks down, it silently and unavoidably loses efficiency requiring more energy and more money to keep occupants comfortable.

Some of the possible reasons contributing to inefficiency are:

- Soot, Slag and Scale
- Improper burner adjustment.
- Old, inefficient equipment.
- Improperly sized equipment.
- Improper combustion air
- The list goes on and on.

OIL BURNER COMBUSTION TEST KIT

The Best way to keep heating equipment operating at peak efficiency is with a regular program of expert cleaning, serving and burner tune-up. This must be done at least once a year, preferably well before the heating season arrives, and it must be done properly. It is not a half hour job. Boiler manufactures, instructors who train service persons, and this author agree that a proper cleaning and tune-up cannot be done in less than two hours, but often, it takes longer. A boiler depending on size may take as long as a full day.