



## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Workforce, insurance hinder industry, Finley says

BY ROBERT P. MADER Of CONTRACTOR's staff

NEW ORLEANS — Lack of new young people coming into the industry and the high cost of insurance are the two biggest impediments hindering the industry, said Jim Finley, incoming president of the Plumbing- Heating-Cooling Contractors – National Association.

Finley, president of C.N. Finley Inc. here, takes over as president of the association at its Network '07 Convention in Anaheim, Calif., at the end of this month.

“Both at the state and national level, the biggest problem we face is the lack of manpower coming into the trades,” Finley said. “The next greatest problem faced by the industry is the high cost of both medical and general insurance.”

There is no quick-fix solution to these problems, Finley noted.

“PHCC-NA is working to see the revamp of secondary education programs to include not only college prep, but a return to training for career opportunities in the trades,” he said. “This is a focus of our legislative efforts, in addition to those for Small Business Health Plans and tort reform.”

Finley runs a long-established and esteemed firm that his father, Carl N. Finley, started in 1934. Its motto is, “Let Finley Keep You in Hot Water.”

In 1935, Carl Finley moved the company to its present location on Adams St. Over the years, the company has been the training ground for many companies now providing plumbing services to the community, including Louis A. Bienvenu Sr., the founder of what is today Bienvenu Brothers, Metairie, La., CONTRACTOR magazine's latest Contractor of the Year. Carl turned the management of the company over to Jim in 1968, but stayed on as an adviser until his death in 1977.

Carl was president of PHCC-NA in 1960.

Carl's primary message was that the plumber protects the health of the nation, a message that Jim carries on.

“The greatest challenge and my primary objective is to bring recognition to the industry for the contribution that it makes in protecting the health, safety and comfort of our society,” Finley said.

After completing an engineering degree at Louisiana Tech and seven years in

the Air Force, Finley took over the management of the company. He actually expected that he would make the Air Force a career until his father's health required him to take over the firm.

As a young man, he began working as a helper during summers and holidays until he went off to college. During college, he worked summers as a journeyman and later as estimator until he graduated and was commissioned as an officer in the Air Force.

Finley said that over the years he has learned that he's not on an island by himself, that there are other contractors facing the same issues and that we can learn from each other.

Finley has continued the leadership role that his father established, serving on the Louisiana State Plumbing Board and its Advisory Board since 1970, including six years as vice chairman and 14 years as chairman. He serves as the PHCC representative on the International Plumbing Code Committee and the Professional Engineering representative on the American Society of Sanitary Engineers Seal Committee.