

By Kate Cline

Top of the World

Colorado dealership finds success in Rocky Mountain tourist community

Living in the Rocky Mountains certainly has its benefits—and they are not limited to the majestic views and quick access to the ski slopes.

As Steve Silagy, owner and service manager of AquaLogic in Gypsum, Colo., points out, it also has water quality benefits. “We are pretty lucky in the fact that we are literally at the top of the food chain here—we really live at the top of the water source,” he said. “Nobody uses it above us.”

Because of this, AquaLogic’s customer base does not face many water quality issues. According to Silagy, the primary problem in the area is hardness in some of the local cities’ water. High iron in well water in some areas also causes issues at times, he added.

Journey to Water Treatment

Now certified by the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) as a CI and CWS-VI, Silagy was not always interested in the water quality industry—he worked in the bicycle industry for 15 years before deciding it was time for a career change, he said, because he was “getting tired of not making much money at it.”

Chance intervened when the owner of a local water treatment franchise walked into Silagy’s shop and said, “The guy next door told me you might be looking for a career change.” Although Silagy explained that he had no prior experience in plumbing or water treatment, the owner assured him that “if you are mechanical, I can teach you.”

“The rest is history,” Silagy said. Within six months he was doing service on his own, and within a year he was doing most of the dealership’s installations and service.

Silagy was inspired to strike out on his own about five years later, a few years after the original owner had sold the dealership to a new owner. “It became apparent to me that the company’s biggest commodities were my present business partner, Peter Davis, selling equipment and



AquaLogic’s service area includes tourist communities in the Rocky Mountains, where water quality is generally good.

[me] installing and servicing it,” he said. The pair launched AquaLogic in January 2006.

Tourism on Top

Located in a tourist community, AquaLogic serves a customer base that is mostly residential. “We don’t have any industry to support,” Silagy said. The service area covers Summit, Eagle, Garfield, Pitkin and Mesa counties in western Colorado.

The dealership currently has three employees, but Silagy said he is looking to find a “helper,” noting that the questions of when and how to hire someone new are currently his biggest challenges. “There are so many new pieces to tackle when hiring employees, not to mention the liability risks involved,” he said. “I thought I was ready to do this right before the economy crashed, but then it became apparent that it was more important to stay in business and take care of my family first.”

Now that the economy has improved, however, Silagy wants to hire someone who he will be able to train and eventually trust to go on service calls on his or her own.

AquaLogic is an independent dealership, a characteristic that Silagy believes gives the company an edge, because “we can pick from many different lines of equipment to serve the customer best.” The company offers a variety of treatment technologies, including softeners, reverse osmosis (RO) systems, whole-house conditioning/dechlorination systems, bottle-less coolers, ultraviolet treatment and emergency water shutoff systems.

Despite this, Silagy noted that competition from big-box stores and

“These people want the best and are willing to pay for it.”

cheap Internet prices has become increasingly challenging. He credits living in a tourist community—where many customers are in higher income brackets and may be maintaining second homes—with helping offset the difficulties. “These people want the best and are willing to pay for it,” he said.

Positive Future

Silagy has found membership in WQA to be beneficial—he said that earning his certifications “has helped me deal with water situations” and that, in general, he has learned more about water treatment through the association. Davis also is certified, as a CWS-II. Together, Silagy and Davis have 12 years of combined experience in the water industry.

Like many dealers, Silagy finds word of mouth to be the most effective marketing method, but knows that having a good website also is of utmost importance. “In our society these days, everything can be done on the Web. Having a good website is a must,” he said, adding that AquaLogic is in the process of building a new website. The website



Having a Web presence is important to Silagy, and the company is currently undergoing a website revamp.

currently offers a variety of features useful to customers, including the ability to request service calls via a Web form and the chance to fill out a survey on water use habits to be entered for a chance to win an RO system.

Also helping maintain the company’s good image is its community involvement. Silagy is a cycling enthusiast, so the dealership has sponsored cycling teams associated with local businesses. The dealership also has participated in events such as the Healthy Homes Expo, where it worked to introduce homeowners to environmentally friendly water treatment technologies.

As for the future of the water quality industry, Silagy sees nothing but positivity: “People always need water, and having

high-quality working water along with high-quality drinking water will always be in style.” **WQP**

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