

# Broadview Heights Historical Business Spotlight: Broadview Heating & Cooling



**Broadview  
Heating &  
Cooling**



As we continue to honor the oldest businesses in Broadview Heights in our 90<sup>th</sup> year, we look at Broadview Heating & Cooling, the oldest business in Broadview Heights! Economic Development Director Kristina Sorensen sat down with brothers Tim & Tom Olecki to talk more about the iconic business and its ties to the community.

**Q:** How long has Broadview Heating & Cooling been around and how did it get started?



**A:** Well, for those who don't know, Broadview Heating & Cooling is a family business, although it didn't necessarily start that way. The business has always been in Broadview Heights. It was started in 1947 by Stan Dostal, Tom Born and George Paryzek. George Paryzek owned Broadview-Sprague Hardware (now Kredo Hardware) and Broadview Heating & Cooling was running out of the rear of the store when it was purchased by Frank Resnick. Our father, Carl Olecki, purchased the business from Frank Resnick in 1960.

*From left to right: Tom Olecki & Tim Olecki*

Our father had worked for Hallendale Heating in Bedford early on in his career as a service man, and that is where he learned the trade. Our parents lived in Broadview Heights. Our father was motivated to be his own boss, so when Broadview Heating & Cooling went up for sale, he jumped on it. He knew quite a bit about the industry, but I don't know that he knew how to run a business – that's where our mother came in and helped. When our mother died, we found the original ledger of the business that she kept, from Day 1 of when the business started. We have check No. 1 from Broadview Heating & Cooling, which is hanging on our wall in our lobby!

The business came with one employee, Frank Burtscher, who was also a local to Broadview Heights. Frank was only going to stay on temporarily, but he ended up being an employee that helped the business grow, staying on until 1980. Also, our grandfather, Joe, got involved answering phones and stocking parts in his retirement years, until he passed away in 1972. They all worked together, helping the business become established.



**Q:** So, Tim and Tom, how did you both get involved in the business?

**A:** **Tim:** For me it was an eventual transition. I taught school for a while and school teachers need something to do in the summer. I would help out on all of my summer and seasonal breaks. Then I began to take courses in the industry and before I knew it, in 1976, I quit teaching and started as a full time employee for Broadview Heating & Cooling.

*Carl Olecki, who soon became motivated to own his own business, began learning about his trade through local training courses*

**A:** **Tom:** I started working here at the age of 13. In the summer of 1973, I helped moved Broadview Heating & Cooling from the original location on Broadview & Sprague to our second location of 8051 Broadview Road, since we needed more space. I got involved in the business that summer and after that I never left!

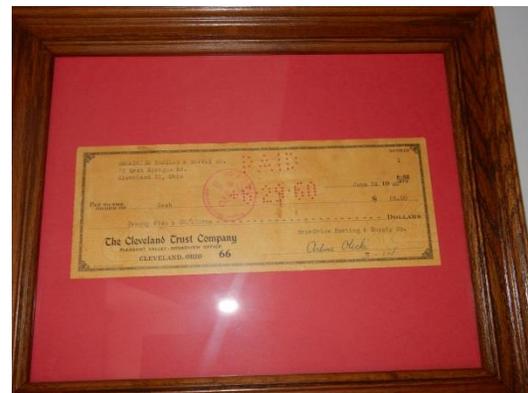
**Q:** Broadview Heating & Cooling has expanded a number of times, right?

**A:** Yes, we have expanded 3 times. First, we were on the corner of Broadview & Sprague. Then we moved to the 8051 Broadview Road location. We were in that location until 1985, and then we built the building on the Northwest corner of Broadview and Route 82. We were there until recently, when we again expanded, now moving our business to its current location of 4111 East Royalton Road.

**Q:** Will you continue to be a family business?

**A:** **Tom:** Yes. My two older sons are here. They are our main installers. Kevin, my oldest son, has been here about 12 years now full-time. Mark came in about 6 years ago. My son Kyle is also here while he's in college, automating our inventory.

**Q:** What has kept your business in Broadview Heights?



*Broadview Heating & Cooling's first check proudly hangs in their main lobby.*

**A:** The name. We really wish we were still on Broadview Road, but we couldn't find a place that worked for us at the time we need it. We liked being Broadview Heating & Cooling on Broadview Road in Broadview Heights! It was great!

**Q:** How's it going in your newest location of 4111 East Royalton?

**A:** We love it! We get great exposure here. The traffic is awesome.



*A vintage 1954 Broadview Heating & Cooling calendar that the Oleckis were given by a long time customer.*

**Q:** How do you find your clients and has that changed over time?

**A:** The majority of our work comes from referrals. People in town and in neighboring communities know who we are, and we have worked hard to build a good reputation of performing quality work. Most of our customers are repeat customers and those are the best customers. We find that by making the transaction of working with your customers a pleasant experience that you will both retain your current base and organically grow if over time from the referrals from that customer base.

**Q:** How have you seen Broadview Heights change over the years?

**A:** When our father started the company Broadview Road was a brick road. There was no place to shop. There were only 3 or 4 police officers. The city has really grown and evolved in our eyes. Of course, now in front of our new building, things are really taking off.

**Q:** What's the one thing that your business is known for, over your competitors?

**A:** We have a couple of things that set us apart from the usual HVAC crowd. First, we do have a one year "test drive" on systems. If a customer buys a new system from us, we guarantee you will be happy with the installation and product. This includes the sizing of the system being correct for the home, for maximum efficiency and comfort. We guarantee the quality of craftsmanship. We also guarantee the performance of the system. If a customer is not happy with any of that and we can't fix it, we'll take it out and give you your money back. This takes all of the risk of buying off of the customer.

Second, we have a great showroom in our lobby where customers can stop in to check out our products hands-on. We also sell quality generators that are available in the lobby, as well as overhead garage heaters. That's something new which seems to be garnering a favorable response from customers.

Also, we also pride ourselves on having a huge inventory of parts. Chances are if we get called out on a service call and you need a part, even if it's not a Rheem, we are going to be able to get that part to you quickly. It might not be on the truck, but, we likely have it here in our warehouse.

**Q:** I always notice in your marketing that you advertise being part of the “Rheem Team”. For people not in your industry, what does that mean and why did you chose to align with that product?

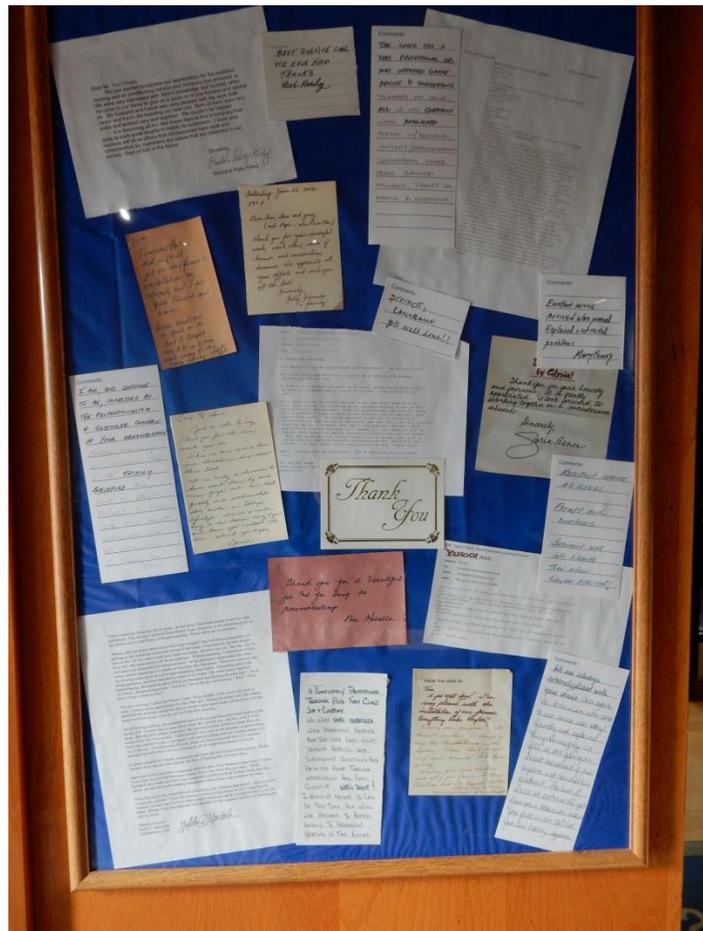
**A:** We are very unusual from any other heating company in that we only offer one line of products to work with, that being Rheem. We have really been happy with the Rheem brand and have used it exclusively since 1981. We like the Rheem innovations, we like the Rheem company which is very strong, and if there is an issue across the board with any product, they will fix it for our customers. They really stand behind their product and their business philosophy aligns with ours in that way, so we are proud to be part of the Rheem Team!

**Q:** Tell me about your biggest achievement as business owners.

**A:** It's very simple. The most important thing to us is to be able to run our business while providing a service to our community and to do it while maintaining our integrity. We are very proud to be the oldest company in Broadview Heights, something that attests to the longevity of our practice. We are also proud of the comments that we get from customers. After each service call we leave a comment form and ask for feedback. We have received tens of thousands of comment cards, and that's how we measure our results.

**Q:** Tell me about your biggest risk you have ever taken as a business owner.

**A:** We took a big risk in buying and moving to our newest building at 4111 East Royalton. Our dad built the last property specifically for the business's needs.



*Customer feedback is a priority for Broadview Heating & Cooling*

It must have been scary for him at the time when he expanded the business in that way and we really came to understand that when we purchased our new property. When we first moved into that location at Broadview & Route 82 we really thought the space was huge, but then we ended up outgrowing it!

**Q:** Does Broadview Heating & Cooling have a business philosophy?

**A:** We focus on the customer having a positive experience. We believe that if you focus on treating your customers right, success will follow. The customer is always first. We believe that this approach makes us stand out, especially amongst mechanical trades. We make sure that all of our new employees are trained on both customer service and technical training. We will never leave a customer unhappy. If they are unhappy, we will give them their money back.

**Q:** What is the best piece of advice you would share with executives of other small businesses?

**A:** We learned by example from our father that in business you just need to give people what they want and treat them right. It's that simple.

**Q:** How have you learned to run a small business?

**A:** We spend a lot of time networking with other dealers in our industry. We attend a lot of National Conventions to gather ideas, trends, and learn from our industry peers.

**Q:** What does 2017 look like for Broadview Heating & Cooling?

**A:** It looks good! We just did the NARI Show at the IX Center for Home Improvement and we got a great response! There was a lot more activity than we had seen in prior years at that show. We made a lot of great connections and interest in our products was up. It really seems like the economy is coming around.



**You can find Broadview Heating & Cooling at:**

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<http://www.broadviewheating.com>