



# Versatility

## Makes Future Techs Pure Water and Conditioning a Survivor

**C**arla Berg, spokesperson and the leader of Future Techs Pure Water and Conditioning, has faced the economic downturn on two fronts: real estate and water treatment. But that hasn't stopped her from being positive about the future. "Even though the economy has tanked, we've managed to buy different dealers' businesses," she said.

In 1991, Carla's husband Delbert (Del) joined the water treatment industry as a salesman. He was one of many knocking on doors and making cold calls throughout Treasure Valley, ID. Berg stayed with it only a short time, as the income was not enough to support a family, but he kept in touch with his former co-workers. When the company owners decided to sell the business in 1995, Carla and Del jumped in with both feet. In January 1998, Del suffered a heart attack, forcing Carla to take over the business, with sons DuWayne, Jeff, Troy, Bruno, Joe and grandsons Eugene and Mike helping. "Del still puts in his two cents, but I have to do all the books," she said.

Based on Del's earlier experience with water treatment, the Bergs already knew the region needed treatment options due to high concentrations of nitrates, nitrites, arsenic, iron and other quality problems. The company serves customers within an approximately 150-mile radius. In addition, they exhibit at local spring and fall home and garden shows. "We have units in place for hardness over 110 gpg, and one up to 225 gpg next to the Snake River," said Carla. "Although we are a Hague dealer, we have not limited ourselves with just one product to service. We are the service company for RainSoft, North Star, Clack, Fleck, Hydrotech and Omnipure, plus generics found in the big-box stores.

By Denise M. Roberts



### Future Techs Pure Water and Conditioning

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Employees: Nine

Vehicles: Five

"We decided when we purchased the business that it would be a service company instead of just a sales company because we bought about 1,500 customers at that time. We have added to it by about 3,000 customers. I'm a real estate broker, which is another niche that contributes to the customer base. I also carry a general contractors license and am licensed to take water samples for well-water homes needing certification for loan closures.

"The biggest difference between us and the other dealers, or even the big-box stores, is our customer service. We don't carry any product we wouldn't use in our own homes. Also, we do our best to give the customer as much information and education as possible on how the equipment works. This includes the information to help them get the best life span and performance from their equipment."

When asked what makes the difference in the best sales, the salesperson or the customer's level of understanding of water treatment, Berg said, "I believe it takes a combination of both: a salesperson who knows how his equipment works and performs so he may help the customer be better educated on what product they need for their home, and customers who realize the need for treatment. We offer free water testing and always make sure customers are well informed on what product will work best for their water, whether they purchase the product from us or another company. We have always believed in treating customers like family."

Staying abreast of industry changes has made a big difference in the technical reputation of the company. "We receive training from our equipment suppliers and most have tech support lines to walk us through a problem when we are in the field," said

Berg. "I believe a lot of companies don't take advantage of their supplier's knowledge. It's a great way to educate employees; who would know the equipment better than the people who engineer and build it? A good service tech will always seek more knowledge from their supplier."

Berg hopes to add to the company's technical expertise with WQA training in the future. "With a small staff, it's difficult to get away for even a couple of days of training," she said. "I also believe proper training by WQA would be a good idea, when the tech can be spared for two or three days, because keeping employees educated and properly trained saves the company time and money by being able to diagnose the problem much

faster. For the time being, we make sure our in-state certifications are up to date, which are ever more important with regulations changing so frequently. We manage to keep up with those changes by being able to access US EPA and other agencies' information on the Internet. It's a good tool that has given us very good opportunities to enhance our technical expertise."

Not everything in the Berg's world is dominated by business, however. They also make time for involvement with the Make A Wish Foundation and Special Olympics. There is much to be said for the collaborative efforts of the entire family, a close-knit group that succeeds by being faithful to their customers and to their community. ♦