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LAARS
Heating Systems Company

LAARS Celebrating 75 Years of Success

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Made in America

LAARS:

Celebrating 75 Years of Success

by Lynne Brandon

An interesting bit of history that many don't know is how Laars got its name. The founder, Avy Miller, had three daughters and to honor them he derived the name, Laars using the first initial of each of their names, including himself and wife, Roberta: Lindsey, Andrea, Avy, Roberta, and Stephanie.

Avy was an entrepreneur ahead of his time. He was a risk taker and put all of his savings into the company. It was 1948 and Laars was born.

Fast-forward to 2023 and Laars is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. It is a true success story worthy of a yearlong celebration of a rich history of American manufacturing.

From Pools to Water Heaters

Founder, Avy Miller, was an engineer in North Hollywood, California. Miller noted that heated pools were increasing in popularity after WWII. He started looking at the functionality and how to improve the experience in heated pools. His original concept was to heat small amounts of water rapidly and efficiently through finned copper tubing. Miller applied the design to pool heaters to meet market demand.

In just a few years, 1965 to be exact, Miller was able to expand into Oakville, ON, Canada, to support a growing Canadian business. Laars began manufacturing commercial boilers and volume water heaters, after being a leader in the pool heating industry.

A big change came for the company in 1989 when Laars opened the New Hampshire manufacturing location to better serve the northeast space heating boiler market, and built the heating equipment onsite. "By this time Laars had a large base of customers on the east coast which was a key

driver for the decision to open the new facility," said Chuck O'Donnell, Director of Marketing, Laars Heating Systems.

He continued, "Our core philosophy has been and continues to be customer oriented. Contractors and engineers are the voice of our feedback and help shape our approach to product development and training. We are a solution-based company – our focus is finding solutions for our customers, not just selling products."

Products

Laars has a full-line portfolio of residential water heaters and boilers, commercial boilers, commercial water heaters, and commercial pool heaters to encompass space heating and water heating. Accompanying indirect water heaters, large volume storage tanks, and buffer tanks complement the space and water heating line.

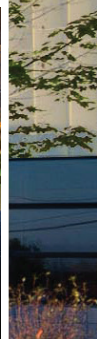
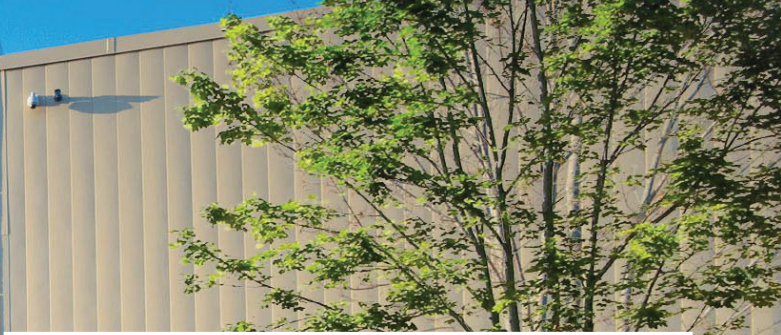
Products are primarily designed, tested, and manufactured at the Rochester, New Hampshire facility from components sourced from around the world. Every heater manufactured in Rochester is live-fired to confirm safety and functional operation. "We offer a reliable, quality product with exceptional training for customers across North America," said O'Donnell.

Innovative Products

Laars' advanced manufacturing equipment such as robotic welding, laser cutting, automated sheet metal punch and forming equipment highlights the company's innovation and cutting edge technology.

The company's extensive residential and commercial lines (see "Products" above) include supporting parts and accessories. Laars also makes sheet metal components in-





house and cuts their own stainless steel tubing that is used in their larger condensing boilers and water heaters.

To ensure the highest quality Laars built an R&D lab with 7,000 square feet of space for design and testing purposes. The lab includes 15 indoor test stations, 2 outdoor test stations and an environmental chamber for accurate efficiency testing (up to 30 million BTU/hr. for testing), all tied together with latest data acquisition equipment.

The lab is used for development and verification testing of gas fired boilers, water heaters, and pool heaters as well as electric boilers, water heaters, and heat pump systems.

"We historically had been more concentrated on the commercial side of the heating market but our residential portfolio has expanded into a robust offering with new condensing wall-hung and floor standing boilers," explained O'Donnell. "We constantly seek feedback from our contractors by asking what they want and need to make their installations easier, and from that we build in contractor-friendly features and components, reducing the amount of field sourced components for example. We also get a lot of feedback from our Laars Pro Residential contractor program, guiding what Laars produces."

The Laars tankless water heater portfolio includes the LT Series Tankless Water Heater in natural and propane gas-fired units for residential and commercial use, as well as electric commercial and industrial tankless water heaters available in a variety of sizes and options.

MightyTherm® 2 water heater –The heritage line still uses copper finned tube that is widely accepted in the industry. This unit has basic controls and offers easy replacement and installation for older boilers. The MightyTherm 2 is built to meet various needs and to handle the challenges of heating water in large volumes from hotels and hospitals, to process plants. It is also offered as a space-heating boiler.



Top: Laars headquarters in Rochester NH.
Right: Laars NeoTherm and MagnaTherm installations.

Made in America

LAARS: Celebrating 75 Years of Success

The Pennant® boiler and water heater – Laars Pennant copper finned tube commercial units are similar to the MightyTherm 2, but now have the more advanced Laars Linc touchscreen controls that can tie into building automation systems.

MagnaTherm® - The line of commercial condensing water heaters includes models that have oxygen control sensors to ensure peak performance for use in hotels, universities, and schools. The MagnaTherm is also offered as a space heating boiler.

High-Efficiency Residential Condensing products include components such as 3-in-1 adaptors (for mounting PRV, LWCO, and air eliminator), thermostatic mixing valves, heating loop pump, etc. "We can package residential products with added components for easier contractor installation," said O'Donnell.

Custom storage tanks pair well with products and can be sourced from Laars along with the boiler or water heater the customer is purchasing.

Future Endeavors

Heat Pump Water Heaters

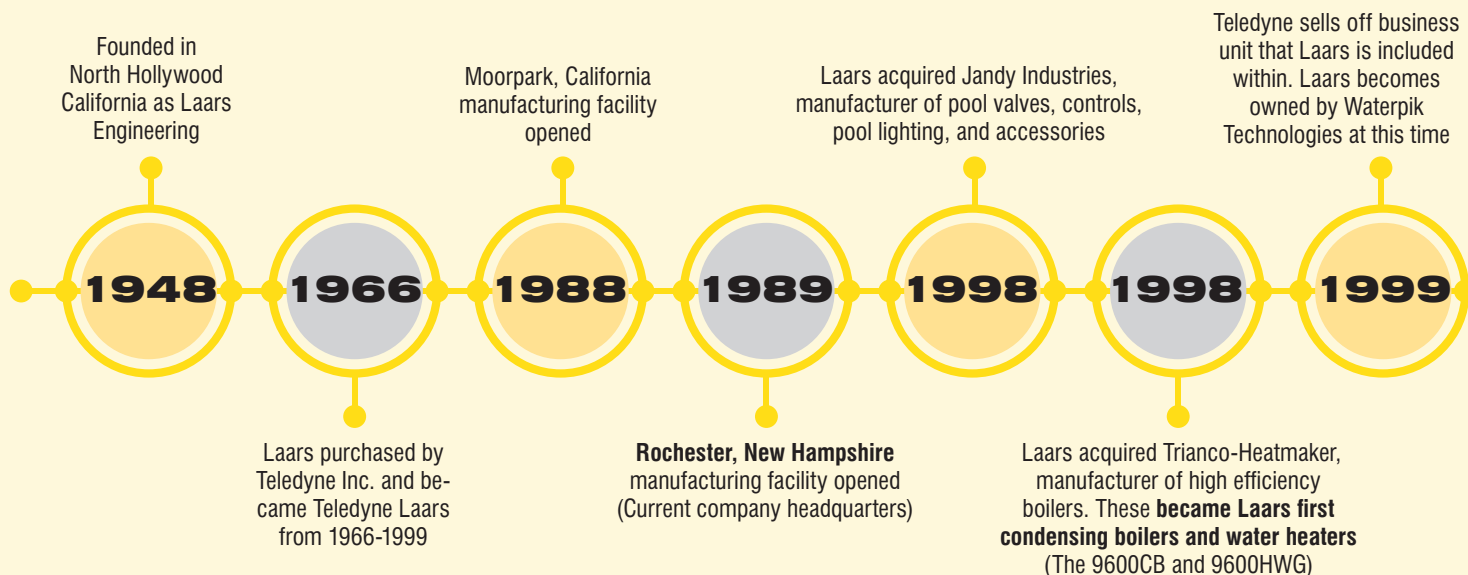
A commercial heat pump water heater for use in large DHW applications that uses a natural refrigerant (CO₂) is in the Laars pipeline. This product line will have features that allow it to perform well in colder climates as well as usage in high water temperature (180°F) applications.



Laars commercial tankless electric water heater.

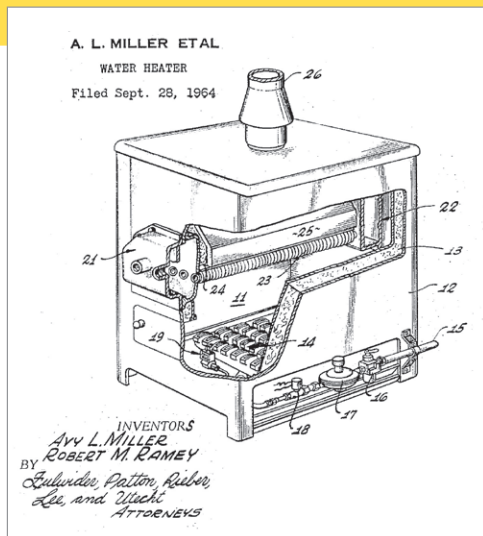
In keeping with the electrification trend, Laars plans to expand its products in the commercial electric category with heat pump technology, the first of which is the commercial heat pump water heater. This will join the company's full line of commercial electric boilers, electric tank style water heaters and commercial electric tankless water heaters.

LAARS HISTORY Celebrating 75 Years

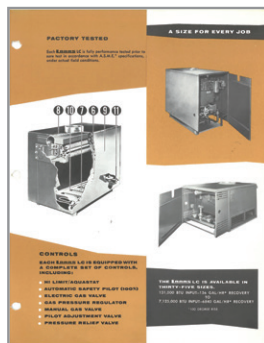


LAARS

Past & Present



Early Laars water heater patent and promotional materials, circa 1960's.



Laars heat exchangers being welded at Rochester, NH manufacturing facility.

Laars Rochester facility is expanded to include larger warehouse and manufacturing space

Laars Customer Center opened for hands on equipment training

Laars opened a new 33,000 sq ft warehouse and distribution center on the Laars Campus in Rochester, NH to better manage inventory and open up manufacturing space

2005

2007

2008

2011

2014

2017

2023

Laars acquired by Bradford White Corporation. **Laars retains all boiler, water heating, and commercial pool heating product lines**

All manufacturing moved to Laars Rochester, NH location

Laars opens new R&D lab to accelerate product development

Celebrating 75 Years in Business

Made in America

LAARS: Celebrating 75 Years of Success



Hands on controls training by Steve Moruzzi, Laars National Training Manager, at the Laars Customer Center.

Laars Education & Training

Education and training is valued at Laars from hands-on training, mobile training (reps take training on the road to various customer sites) and online.

“As part of our commitment to industry education, we built a 70-seat Customer Center in 2011,” said O'Donnell. “Our main focus with education is hands-on training. We use units that are connected and live-fire, and troubleshooting sessions are done in real time. Classroom sessions are conducted with contractors and engineers to learn equipment features and operation.”

He continued, “The space allows live-fired equipment to be operated in the front of the room. Hands-on training courses are held year-round for contractors, engineers, and others from the heating community. We have set training curriculum as well as customized course materials. This type of training is extremely important due to the complexity of the latest high efficiency equipment.”

Like many companies in 2020, live sessions moved online during Covid, and online learning took off for Laars. Online classes taught contractors how to set combustion, controls, how to service equipment and other topics. “Conversations that come from talking to contractors is invaluable,” said O'Donnell.

Contractors participate in residential product training at the Laars Customer Center in Rochester, NH.

Laars Academy Offerings

- Factory training – pre-structured training course or individual topics can be chosen.
- Online Laars Academy sessions – online courses offer training as needed.
- Regional Training – sales representatives teach classes around the country in partnership with distributors and dealers.
- Mobile Training - To make training available to everyone, Laars makes it possible to schedule one of their mobile demonstrations upon request.

Challenges

“We have a good team and cross train employees across product lines, but finding people to work with certain skill sets remains a challenge,” said O'Donnell. “The supply chain has stabilized from recent years but can occasionally still be bumpy. We try to use U.S. suppliers as much as possible – we have good relations with all our vendors and that has made a difference during times of volatility with supply chain issues.”

What's Next?

Growth is on the horizon for Laars and the future looks bright. Future plans include expanding product lines to include domestic heat pump water heaters and building their electric portfolio product offerings. Expansion is planned with development next to the current headquarters in New Hampshire.



About Laars:

Laars products are widely used in space heating, radiant floor heating, volume water heating and industrial process markets covering a range of 50,000 to 5,000,000 BTU/hr., utilizing either natural gas, liquid propane, or electricity. Laars meets the needs of today's more demanding heating systems applications with more than 20 different heating products, supporting accessories and controls for home, business or commercial heating needs.

U.S. Headquarters: Rochester, NH • Canada: Halton Hills, Ontario, Canada