



Fall

HOME



CASTLE®

2007

Dear Valued Customer:

These are trying days for all of us, especially with oil selling above \$80 a barrel. In this issue, you'll meet Jay Meiners, our Senior Vice President for Operations. Who better to explain how "Customers Rule" at Castle.

There's no magic for reducing heating oil prices this season. Our best advice is to be vigilant about keeping your heating equipment running efficiently and looking for ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home. Be aware that what appears at first glance to be a bargain may not turn out that way. Extremely low pricing usually means that you don't end up getting everything you are paying for. Some oil companies keep their overhead low by not having enough employees to service you when you really need them. We see this every season when customers return to Castle after being promised what they thought was a "great deal" and then realizing that their new oil company couldn't back up their promises. At Castle, we take our reputation very seriously. I thought I'd share a letter we received late last winter that underscores what we can do for our customers, even if we can't change the oil markets.

Sincerely,

Carla Romita
Senior Vice President

Fr: Ms. Johnnie Suitanik
Box XXX
Millwood, NY 10546
914-XXX-XXXX work telephone

Date: March 7, 2007

Re: New Account at XXXXX Street Ossining

First of all I want to extend my gratitude to you and your service technicians and Castle Oil for saving me and my tenants on February 14th. We had 6-8 inches of snow freshly fallen on top of a sheet of ice that day. Your team of professionals was willing and able to rescue my building and 8 tenants from very cold prospects. We had no heating oil in the building's tanks (our former service company had been bought out by another company and the new oil company was not making regular delivery calls). Not only were you able to open a NEW ACCOUNT for me that morning, but then you delivered oil to the building's tanks in a few short hours.

Again, let me thank you and your team of service professionals for your incredibly fantastic work whether in the office or the field.

I am attaching a copy of my oil delivery history for the building at XXXXX Street in Ossining.

Please contact me for XXXXX Street at the number (XXX-XXXX) indicated and the address cited above.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Additionally, I would like to schedule an inspection and cleaning of the oil tanks when the weather becomes milder. The tanks have never been cleaned or inspected.

Castle Cares – Third Party Notification

Customer service is our main focus, so we are especially concerned about customers who are elderly, handicapped, or living alone. If this applies to you, we invite you to participate in our Third Party Notification Program. When you are enrolled, we notify a person you choose if your energy bill is overdue. This third party then contacts you to arrange payment, avoiding an interruption in your heating service. The person you choose (who is not financially obligated) may be a relative, friend, neighbor, church or civic group, or social services agency.

Please contact us if you or someone you know would like to join the program.

Call: (914)333-2400 Fax: (914)333-2401

Thirty years at Castle, Senior Vice President – Operations, Jay Meiners understands what makes Castle tick.



Jay Meiners

“I started cleaning boilers, then got into general maintenance—Castle’s office buildings, equipment in the truck yard like lighting; then I was involved with the installation of computers and computer wiring, the phone system and telecommunications. I learned how to drive a truck and service oil burners much later in my career,” notes Jay. “I now have over 100 people reporting to me, mostly union employees from Teamsters Locals 456 and 553 and SEIU Local 32BJ.” Sounds like Jay has seen it all and done it all, so he’s as good an authority as anyone on the state of the fuel oil business in 2007 and its stresses. Jay is especially sensitive, as Castle employees are trained to be, to the financial pressures facing homeowners.

When asked if there was a special time to buy oil to save money as a residential customer, he commented: “The past couple of years have been volatile in terms of pricing all during the year—even the summer. Prices are high. This is a very burdensome time for all home energy consumption. Castle offers budget plans for fuel purchase and financing options for furnace replacement to assist homeowners in managing the pile of bills they face.” Jay’s recommendations to fight the skyrocketing price of energy and heating a home begin with weatherproofing the home fully—thermal windows should be used exclusively, but for fixed-income older homeowners, he believes the plastic film that can prevent drafts is a good alternative. The boiler must be maintained regularly with cleanings, and an adjustable setback thermostat is a must. It all begins with a service

contract that gets a Castle troubleshooter to assist with some preventative measures. Now is a good time if someone is contemplating replacing a heating system to do so. With current fuel prices, costs of upgrades versus fuel oil savings can be recouped quickly.

“What sets Castle apart is that we’re always on call, 24x7. Even if there is two feet of snow on the ground and someone’s oil company won’t make a delivery, Castle will respond within two hours to that individual—past customer or not—and get them the oil they need. We get a lot of new customers this way. Driving a 9,000 gallon oil truck, or even a smaller 3,000 gallon residential truck on icy roads is a challenge. We won’t put our drivers in harm’s way, but we know the area very well and know how to make a delivery when no one else will. Climbing a fence to get the hose to the tank, making one more delivery at the end of a long, long day—these are the lengths our drivers go to. We ALWAYS have vehicles on the road for emergencies. I am personally available during the heating season 24x7. Our servicemen are trained incredibly well. More technically focused are their managers. They’re the ones who understand why a relatively new tank can have water in it and maybe cause problems. And if the service managers can’t satisfy a customer’s concern, I will personally visit the customer whether it is a 400-unit apartment house or a private home with a 275 gallon tank.”

With three decades of service, Jay understands the concern of Castle’s owners—The Romita Family—with 100% customer satisfaction and the “whatever it takes” approach to achieving it. “That’s the real difference between us and other oil companies. We have 45 drivers who are Castle employees. From October through May they are the frontline for us. They are professional, courteous, and well-managed. If things don’t go right, our owners are very upset.”

When asked about product quality—if there’s a difference in the oil Castle delivers, Jay bluntly states: “If the price is too good to be true, something is wrong. There are suppliers out there who are not reputable or who don’t have their own terminals. Every day we check our oil before it is filled into trucks. We have tremendous storage capacity. We can furnish—even to residential homeowners—the lab report for the oil that was delivered to their home that day. If they think something is wrong with the delivery—it’s almost always water in the tank. We send out a crew—at no charge to the customer—test the tank, and remove the water. We stand behind our product.”

And proudly, for three decades, Castle stands behind Jay Meiners. He makes a difference.