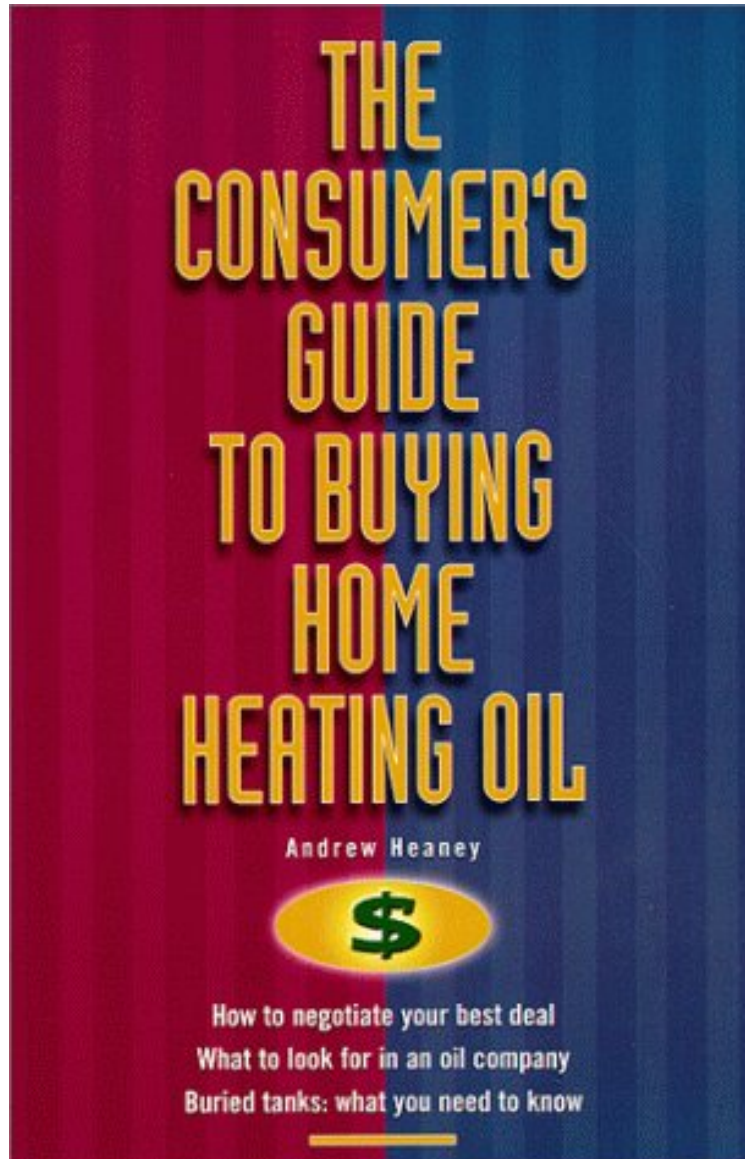


(Library ebook) The Consumer's Guide To Buying Home Heating Oil

The Consumer's Guide To Buying Home Heating Oil

Andrew Heaney

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Andrew Heaney : The Consumer's Guide To Buying Home Heating Oil before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Consumer's Guide To Buying Home Heating Oil:

The Consumer's Guide To Buying Home Heating Oil is the only guide of its kind, providing oil consumers with critical information about everything from how to negotiate their best deal to what they need to know about buried oil

tanks. This book will guide everyone from the new homeowner to the veteran negotiator through the buying process, making the process easier and more profitable. It is an indispensable resource written by a heating oil industry insider and expert.

From the Author A few months before I began working on this book, I did a search for 'heating oil' on .com. I came up with no listings. This was at odds with what I knew about the oil business. While the majority of the country uses gas and electricity to heat their homes, some 15 million homeowners use heating oil. Not one book on the subject? Absurd! My family has been working in the heating oil industry for three generations, and since I am the first generation to have Microsoft Word and a Dell laptop computer, I decided it was my responsibility to write this book. My career has been dedicated to helping heating oil users get the most for their money. I've also worked hard to make their voices heard in Washington D.C. Just as heating oil users have been forgotten by the book world, we are all too often ignored by our local representatives. While some people would love to see heating oil disappear, it never will because Americans have always and will always demand choice. I believe it is vitally important for the oil industry to survive and thrive, so that homeowners will be able to make their own decisions about how they heat their homes. In order to have a strong industry it is necessary to have informed and empowered customers. Unfortunately, as my searches at online bookstores revealed, there is a tremendous need for accessible information about heating oil. My hope is that this book will begin to address this need.

From the Back Cover All proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to The Aubrey Fund for pediatric cancer research at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Excerpt: From Chapter 3 : Whether you're a new homeowner looking for your first oil company or a dissatisfied customer looking to switch, it is difficult to figure out which oil companies to talk to. Most of us either ask a friend which oil company they use or we look in the yellow pages. Unfortunately, this method doesn't necessarily help you find the oil company you want or need. Just as you can shop at Tiffany's or Wal-Mart, the oil industry offers a wide variety of options. Asking the right questions will help you find the right match for you and your family. How long have they been in business? While there are plenty of young companies who do a great job and some older ones that don't, for the most part longevity is a positive. It usually means that the company has strong customer service values, and understands the connection between keeping customers happy and staying in business. What are their service hours? This may be very helpful in deciding on who you use. 24-hour service really is the best, but it's only as reliable as the last service call. This should be an important consideration, but not the only one. How many oil trucks do they have? If size matters to you, this is the best way to figure out how big they are. Any company with over 10 oil trucks is pretty large. Do they belong to any industry associations like the Better Business Bureau? While not a guarantee of quality, memberships in associations, especially the Better Business Bureau indicate that the company is willing to expose itself to scrutiny. Something I've found to be true: schlock companies don't join the BBB. Also make sure to ask if they belong to any industry associations like ESPA in New York, the PPA in Pennsylvania, or NEFI in New England. Once again, membership in these organizations is not cheap and indicates that the company is a solid member of their industry. Are they active in their communities? Again, not a guarantee of quality but definitely an indication of what type of people you're dealing with. Someone who gives money to a little league team or a charity is more likely to have a long-term vision of their relationship with the community, and that includes you! In my experience there is a very direct connection between community involvement and the quality of an oil company's service. Do they carry the right insurance? This is critical. In order to run an oil company safely, it is vital to have proper insurance. Otherwise the company's employees and its customers are at risk. For example, suppose you get an oil delivery during an ice storm in January, and the driver falls and breaks his leg on your driveway. Who pays for his hospitalization? Who is going to compensate him for lost work? A terrible scenario, but it can happen. You want to make sure you're dealing with a company that's got you covered on all levels. Are they ready for Y2k? This doesn't just apply to January 1, 2000. Remember, the year 2000 is a leap year. Other risky dates include February 29, 2000, March 1, 2000 as well as January 1, 2001. These are all bad dates for your oil company to be out of business, so make sure to ask if their computers are up to speed. How do they answer the phone? Do they pick up after 8 rings and growl? Or did they pick up quickly and identify the company professionally? You can hear a lot in the voices of a company's employees. If they sound unhappy, look out! Are there any penalties to leave if you're unhappy? If there are, this shows that the company would prefer to penalize you for leaving rather than convince you to stay with good service. I don't recommend any company with such policies. Do they perform their own deliveries and service? Most oil companies farm out a certain number of oil deliveries during a busy season, but for the most part you want to make sure that the truck that shows up in front of your house is from your oil company. Don't use a company that doesn't do their own work. Are their drivers and servicemen uniformed? This is an important personal safety issue. You should never let anyone into your house without seeing proper identification first. Uniforms are a must. And please remember that if you're not expecting someone from your oil company, and a serviceman shows up without any warning, call their office first before you let them in. Do they have licensed plumbers and electricians on staff? Not many companies have this, but it's a nice bonus if they do. Your boiler needs electricity to run. If you have a power problem in your house you won't have any heat. The same thing goes for your plumbing. While it is an important part of your heating

system, it generally isn't part of the heating plant that your oil technician is qualified to service. An oil company with licensed plumbers and electricians ensures you won't need to go find your own contractor to get your boiler working. Don't be afraid to ask When you're deciding which oil company to use, don't be afraid to ask them these questions or any others you may have. If they seem unwilling to share information, no problem! There are plenty of companies who will!

About the Author Andrew Heaney is the President of HEAT USA, the largest fuel buying cooperative in the country. He is also the CEO and founder of FuelBuyer.com, the internet-based heating oil shopping service. He is the third generation of his family to work in the heating oil industry. He is a vocal spokesman for the oil consumer, and has been quoted as such by The New York Times, and USA TODAY. He has also been featured in Crain's New York Business, and has appeared on Earth Matters on CNN, and the Cavuto Business Report on the Fox News Channel. Mr. Heaney lives in New York City.