

## LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: Air Free Duct Cleaning



Tom Wengert owns the Grimes business Air Free Duct Cleaning. SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Grimes business clears the air for customers

By Kristin Danley-Grainer  
community@dmreg.com

Montezuma native Tom Wengert has spent decades in the air duct cleaning business, but it wasn't until he returned to his Iowa roots in the 1990s and settled in Grimes that he opened his own business.

Air Free Duct Cleaning focuses on residential and commercial air duct cleaning, ventilation/exhaust system cleaning and dryer vent cleaning.

His staff of one part-time and four full-time employees boasts a combined 50 years of experience in the industry, Wengert said.

The Grimes-based business primarily services the Des Moines area, but employees will travel statewide to tackle special projects.

Its success as a growing business and its benefit to the area was recognized locally last year.

"We were very proud to be named 2011 business of the year by the Grimes Chamber and Economic Development group," Wengert said.

Wengert talked with the Register about his business.

**Q: Are there other companies in the state similar to Air Free Duct Cleaning?**

We are one of only six nationally certified air duct cleaning companies in Iowa. Companies are certified through the National Air Duct Cleaners Association.

I am the only person in the state to have achieved all three levels of designation. ASCS-air system cleaning specialist, VSMR-ventilation system mold remediation and CVI-certified ventilation inspector.

We also are the only company within the state to

employ a female ASCS, Laurie Meyer. We are a state-registered contractor, fully insured and A+ rated by the Better Business Bureau. We have an in-house safety program and have recently completed 10 hours of OSHA and confined-space training.

**Q: How are ducts cleaned?**

Air duct cleaning is accomplished by putting the ductwork under negative pressure with high velocity vacuums, sealing off of all duct openings and then cleaning the interior of the duct with any of a variety of high pressure air lines, air tools and brushes.

The vacuum system constantly draws the debris out, thus keeping the indoor environment clean, while the tools do the cleaning.

Typically, supply ductwork is cleaned first, then the return ductwork is cleaned. Cleaning of the heating and cooling equipment is also a critical step in a successful project. Blowers, coils, heat exchangers and other interior surfaces must be cleaned along with the air ducts.

Some of the equipment that we use in the cleaning process is made by industry specific manufacturers, while some specialized equipment is made in-house and is very much proprietary.

**Q: Why do people seek you out?**

Our residential customers usually call because they have someone in the home who has allergies, asthma or some other breathing-related sensitivity and they are looking to clean the air in their home, or they have new construction or remodeling dust that is blowing through

their home and they want to dust less often. Or they realize that a clean system will cost them less in utilities to heat and cool their homes than a dirty system.

Commercial customers tend to call when there is an indoor air quality complaint, poor air flow, ceiling tiles that are showing signs of dirt blowing out of the diffusers or it is part of their normal ongoing preventive maintenance practices.

**Q: What is the recommended frequency of cleaning ducts?**

Most air duct cleaning firms recommend cleaning air ducts every three to five years.

We suggest inspecting commercial systems yearly, residential systems every two years and then cleaning on an as-needed basis. This assumes cleaning is done after construction to remove the dirt and debris from that process.

We are often asked to decontaminate systems in mold remediation projects either by the homeowner, who has seen or smelled mold, or by a qualified disaster restoration contractor.

**Q: Why did you select Grimes for your business?**

We have been in our Grimes facility for approximately 10 years and have had the same phone number 17 years.

Grimes is a perfect location for our business based on the ease of access to the interstate, the resources available from the Grimes Chamber and Economic Development group and the "small town" feel that allows us to attract and keep good staff.

Grimes is a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to do business.

## AIR FREE DUCT CLEANING

**FIND IT AT:** 303 S.E. Third St., Grimes

**HOURS:** Phones are answered from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays. Residential projects are scheduled on weekdays; commercial and industrial projects are handled on weekends.

**OWNER:** Tom Wengert

**BUSINESS HISTORY:** Air Free Duct Cleaning was opened in Grimes in 1995 by owner and president Tom Wengert, who co-owned a similar business in Kansas City for eight years.

**CONTACT THEM:** 986-3424, www.airfreeductcleaning.com, tom@airfreeductcleaning.com