



BRAMAC

PLUMBING &
HEATING LTD

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Since founding in Yarmouth in 2013, Bramac Plumbing & Heating has built its reputation across three Nova Scotia counties on service ahead of scale, and its founder is now spinning off a patent-pending well-water storage system as drought becomes a recurring feature of the Southwest Nova summer.

Bramac Plumbing & Heating has spent thirteen years building a reputation across Yarmouth, Digby, and Shelburne Counties on service ahead of scale, growing from a single Red Seal plumber into a full trades operation covering plumbing, electrical, gasfitting, and propane. That growth followed a formula the company has stuck to since its founding: filling a service gap larger competitors had abandoned. Its newest venture follows a different logic, turning a homegrown response to drought conditions into a standalone company built to outgrow the shop that invented it.



A SECOND TRADE COMPANY, BUILT FROM THE FIRST ONE'S COLLAPSE

Bramac was founded in Yarmouth in 2013 by Curt Goudey, who had spent decades in the trades before starting the company. Goudey says the business he was previously part owner of, Germane Mechanical Electrical, closed after three different trade unions organized its electrical, plumbing, and ventilation divisions in successive years, leaving three unions inside one company pulling in different directions. He says Germane's had operated for roughly sixty years before it shut down.

The closure did not happen all at once. As Germane's wound down, Goudey was asked by a community college to cover a three-week teaching gap in its plumbing program. He says those three weeks became nine and a half years, during which he split his time between teaching in Shelburne during the day and running Bramac's early jobs on evenings and weekends. Tim Atkinson, who had worked with Goudey in Germane's plumbing division, joined Bramac at the outset and stayed. Atkinson is now the company's vice president.

Goudey moved into the office full time after the college's pipe trades program in Shelburne was discontinued, a shift he places at around 2019, shortly before the pandemic. The company has since grown beyond plumbing into electrical work, gasfitting, propane, and hot tub sales.

BUILT THE BUSINESS AROUND THE CALL NOBODY ELSE WOULD ANSWER

Bramac serves residential, commercial, and institutional clients across Yarmouth, Digby, and Shelburne Counties. Goudey says the company's service-first model was a direct reaction to what he saw at Germane's, where a roughly 120-person operation kept only one plumber assigned to service work while commercial jobs took priority. That imbalance became the reasoning behind Bramac's 24/7 on-call commitment from day one.

Within its first two years, a competing company closed and Bramac bought its customer list. Its main local rival, Graves, was started around the same time by former Germane's owners who moved into commercial electrical work. By building around service instead, Goudey says Bramac became the largest service plumbing outfit in Yarmouth and its surrounding communities, a claim based on his own read of the regional market rather than independent data. He places larger operations in Bridgewater, Halifax, and Kentville, where competitors lean toward commercial and institutional new construction rather than service calls.





THE CLARK'S HARBOUR JOB THAT PROVED THE MODEL

Bramac's largest project to date, according to Goudey, was an addition to a lobster processing plant in Clark's Harbour, roughly forty-five minutes from Yarmouth, valued in the range of \$1.1 to \$1.3 million. The company had been doing service work for the client beforehand, and the plumbing contract for the addition followed from that relationship rather than a competitive bid. The company has also completed commercial work farther afield, including three Tim Hortons locations in Newfoundland around 2015 or 2016.

Most of Bramac's commercial work, Goudey says, runs on a shorter cycle than large institutional builds: restaurants, small gas stations, and similar fit-out jobs that wrap in five to six months rather than large multi-year contracts. The most technically demanding work now sits on the service side, where oil furnaces and boilers are increasingly being replaced with propane systems built around computerized circulating pumps and control panels, a shift from the largely analog systems Goudey trained on decades earlier.

CARRYING APPRENTICES THROUGH TO RED SEAL

Bramac's licensed technicians are Red Seal certified across plumbing, electrical, and gasfitting. Goudey says the company is not formally affiliated with trade associations, but works closely with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency on hiring, tracking apprentices' logbooks and pushing them toward technical training on schedule rather than leaving it to individual initiative.

"With more knowledge you can tackle more issues, bounce them off each other and you're learning every day."

Goudey describes the relationship between veteran and newer staff as running in both directions: apprentices bring current, technology-driven knowledge that he says he is still absorbing after more than three decades in the trade, while longtime staff bring field experience apprentices are still building toward their own Red Seal designations.





BUSINESS OF THE YEAR, AND A WEEKEND OF FREE WATER

Bramac received a Business of the Year award in 2017, according to Goudey; the awarding body and exact date could not be independently confirmed and are worth checking before publication. Beyond formal recognition, Goudey points to the company's water-bottling side business, filling three- and five-gallon jugs at its Starrs Road shop, as a source of goodwill in the community that is separate from its plumbing trade entirely.

During recent drought years, Bramac has hosted free water giveaway weekends, drawing residents who fill containers directly at the shop. Goudey says many of these customers do not realize the business also does plumbing work, and that the visibility from the water program has helped the company grow, though that impact is his own assessment rather than a measured figure.

FROM ANALOG BOILERS TO SYSTEMS YOU RUN FROM A PHONE

Bramac's team includes a Level I thermographer, a certification Goudey says his daughter completed roughly three years ago before the company's growing

hot tub business shifted her focus. Mackenzie Goudey now leads propane sales and marketing for Bramac. The company also offers in-house financing through Financeit, though Goudey says that program has been used almost exclusively for hot tub purchases rather than plumbing or heating installations to date.

WHY BRAMAC PAYS MORE FOR A GOULDS PUMP

Bramac's plumbing division centers its pump business around Goulds Pumps, a relationship Goudey traces back nearly forty years to his time at Germane's. The company's own materials describe Goulds as a brand with more than 170 years in residential pumping solutions. Goudey says the higher upfront cost, roughly \$1,000 for a Goulds jet pump against about \$400 for a comparable retail unit, is offset by fewer callbacks, easier field installation, and stronger manufacturer support when something goes wrong.

HIRING FOR PERSONALITY, KEEPING PEOPLE FOR YEARS

Bramac's team runs to roughly eighteen people, according to Goudey, spread across plumbing, electrical, propane, and office roles, with some staff splitting time between estimating and fieldwork. Asked what he looks for in new hires, Goudey was direct about priorities.



"Personality first. Actually can't teach that. You can teach the trade to pretty much anybody if they're interested."

Goudey says that approach has produced strong retention: across the company's history, he counts only two employees who have left, one of whom preferred commercial work to Bramac's service-oriented model. He credits the retention record to a culture built around treating customers, in his words, no differently than the crew would treat their own parents.

EFFICIENCY CONVERSATIONS DEPEND ON WHO'S CALLING

Energy efficiency is not a fixed pitch Bramac applies uniformly, Goudey says. Clients who arrive already familiar with heating options tend to ask more detailed, efficiency-focused questions, while others simply want a working system restored with as little disruption as possible. Rather than leading every call with a sustainability message, Bramac's team adjusts to what each customer is already asking for.





WHAT SETS BRAMAC APART IN A SMALL MARKET

Beyond round-the-clock service, Goudey points to a set of company values developed through a Housecall Pro training course, now printed on every quotation and intended eventually for display at the shop. He describes after-hours calls being monitored voluntarily by senior staff, including Atkinson, even when no one is required to do so.

"They don't mind paying a little more knowing that when they call, someone's going to be there."

That line, Goudey says, sums up how he built the business in a market too small to compete on price alone: not by being the cheapest option in Yarmouth, Digby, or Shelburne, but by being the one that reliably shows up.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Bramac began installing rainwater harvesting systems in 2021, collecting rooftop runoff into above-ground tanks that can also be topped up by licensed water haulers during dry periods. Goudey trained with CleanFlow, a company he describes as based in British Columbia, and says Bramac is currently the only outfit doing this work at scale in Nova Scotia, taking on jobs as far away as Cape Breton, an eight-hour drive from Yarmouth. The company has installed around a dozen systems to date, with several more scheduled in the weeks following this interview.

"We're the only ones in the province at this point doing it, we've got time to get good."

Bramac's newer invention addresses a different part of the same problem. FlowLock is a patent-pending liner installed inside an existing dug well to create a protected water reservoir, while the well continues collecting groundwater exactly as it did before. The same pump or foot valve simply relocates from the open well into the liner.

"Every bit of water that you buy from that truck will be retained by the liner. It won't go back into the aquifer."

Where homeowners refilling a dry well directly, or storing water in open totes through the summer, routinely lose water back into the ground or to freezing over winter, Goudey says FlowLock's sealed reservoir holds every gallon added to it year-round. The system is still in its early stages: Bramac's own materials describe it as patent-pending with one installed unit currently in operation, and introductory pricing that depends on securing a minimum number of committed customers.

Goudey has structured FlowLock as a company separate from Bramac. Bramac will handle installation, while FlowLock will handle sales, a split he expects will let the invention grow on its own rather than as a side offering of an established plumbing shop. Where Bramac's growth over the past thirteen years has followed the demands of Southwest Nova's service market, Goudey is now betting that FlowLock's growth will follow the province's drought line outward from Yarmouth.





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