

# Alton Refrigeration expanding service department

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**ALTON** - Alton Refrigeration, located at 2996 Homer Adams Parkway, has been in business since 1931, with the fourth generation of the family starting to become incorporated into the business.

During this time, John Crane, who represents the third generation, said Alton Refrigeration has acted as an "in-house" service provider for items purchased at the

independent business. In early March 2017, however, Crane said the business hired Kyle Kennedy, a 22-year veteran of Sears. He said Kennedy was hired so Alton Refrigeration could expand its ability to provide service from items purchased through them to any product purchased from any location, including big box stores, assuming said product was not still under a manufacturer's warranty.

"For a long time, for many years, we've been doing service work," Crane said. "Since we opened in 1931, and my family bought the business in the late 1940s, my grandfather has brought service. We have always been a service-oriented company. Up to now, we've been a self-servicing dealer. Anything we sell, we service. Up until now, we have not been able to have the resources to service what is bought elsewhere."

With Kennedy joining the service team, Crane said his service team now has nearly a century of servicing experience. The team is managed by Mike Youngberg, who has worked there for 41 years, and also includes full-time technician, Josh Droste, who has worked there for 17 years and Clint Pearman, who has worked at Alton Refrigeration for a decade.

Crane said this service expansion means people who may have bought a product from a big box retailer can now bring that product to Alton Refrigeration for service - again, assuming it is no longer covered by the manufacturer's warranty. Crane said, while warranty work may take place in the future, at the moment, the service technicians are unable to handle it.

"Formerly, if someone brought us a Whirlpool or Samsung product they bought from Lowe's, we would not have been able to fix it," Crane said. "The big boxsters, they don't want to help you. They're happy to take your money, but when something goes wrong, and it's not covered under warranty, they turn you over to the manufacturer."

Customers may have to wait several weeks for the manufacturer to service a product, Crane said. His technicians could not only do it in less time, but handle to work locally and be easier for communication as well.

"We want to win them over and show them," Crane said. "Despite being an independent local business, we are still competitive. A lot of time, we can match prices with our competitors, but sometimes we cannot."

In the instances in which they cannot, Crane said he hoped people would come to Alton Refrigeration to get their product purchased elsewhere properly serviced. He said such an experience may cause a customer of a big box store to consider purchasing their next

appliance or electronic from a small independent business like Alton Refrigeration, due to its ability to help people. Crane said expanding the service ability will give people more confidence in Alton Refrigeration to help them.

"It's about changing people's minds about how they shop, taking them from the box stores to the independents," he said. "If there's a problem, one of the owners of the business is always here, and we have a reputation of doing the right thing for people, and we guarantee that we will provide a better solution than the box store."