

Enthusiastic Howe Takes NEFI Post; Will Expand, Emphasize Training

Given the hard facts that the market is shrinking and membership is declining, New Hampshire marketer John Howe might logically be expected to be anything but enthusiastic about his role as chairman of New England Fuel Institute, a chore he'll have for the next two years.

Not so, however. The ebullient and aggressive Howe has his mind set on expanding NEFI's overall activities, especially those in the education and technical training fields. And, of course, he wants the day-to-day operations of the Institute, which are so ably administrated by veteran Charles Burkhardt, to continue on the same up-scale that has marked the latter's tenure as president.

Howe, who owns City Fuel Co., Manchester, N.H., succeeds Robert Wesson, of W.E. Wesson Co., Waterbury, Conn., as the board chairman. Not a newcomer to trade association activities, he has been a regional vice president of NEFI and a member of the board since 1976.

He also has been active in the New Hampshire Better Heat Council, and served one term as treasurer and two as president. With both the Council and the Institute, he has participated in a number of legislative lobbying campaigns in New England and Washington.

He was elected to the NEFI chairmanship not too long before the Institute and the industry celebrated the 100th anniversary of oil heat with the most spectacular meetings and trade show in NEFI's history. From day one on, his role has been a busy one.

He's not the least bit disheartened about the toughness of the marketplace and the various programs that NEFI has underway to cope with the problems.

"What I really want to see is more emphasis on and expansion of the educational and technical training programs," he said. "Down the road they're going to mean an awful lot more to our industry and our people. NEFI's had these educational and technical facilities for years now under Charlie Burkhardt, and they unquestionably are among the real gems of our affairs in New England."

NEFI's headquarters in Watertown, on the outskirts of Boston, houses the school and its programs, which have been churning out graduates for the past several years. The school part of it is licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and is believed to be the only oil heat training program so recognized.

Howe is a young man still on the com-



John Howe

fortable side of 40. He has been in the fuel oil business since 1968, shortly after his graduation from St. Anselm College in Manchester. His first job was with City Fuel, which then was owned by George Looney, whose father had founded it in 1936.

"I did the usual things," Howe recalled. "I started out as a salesman and gradually worked my way up the line to general manager. After George Looney died, I had an opportunity to buy the firm from the family and this I did in 1973."

In the 12 years since then, Howe has increased the size of the little firm almost ten-fold.

"City Fuel had about 700 accounts when I bought the firm," he said. "Today we have more than 6,000—all within 15 to 20 miles of Manchester. We're moving more than 7-million gal./year now of heating oil and we have maybe 16 or 17 full-time employees."

Most of the ten-fold growth came from the purchase of eight or nine smaller jobberships in the Manchester area, Howe said. It can almost be assumed that with that kind of a dynamic record so far, City Fuel will grow to be an even larger jobbership in the future.

Howe and his wife, Susan, have two sons, Benjamin, 12, and Timothy, 9. If the boys take after their father, it's a pretty good bet that somewhere short of the year 2000, the fuel oil industry will be hearing about them too.

NEFI

John Howe is Officer of the New England Fuel Institute



John Howe, President of the City Fuel Company, Manchester, New Hampshire, was elected to the New England Fuel Institute.

Howe was elected to a three year term on the Board of Directors of this association.

The New England Fuel Institute is an association of 1,264 independent fuel oil distributing companies operating at the wholesale and retail level. The association's members distribute 86% of all the heating oil in New England, entailing over 22,000,000 heating oil deliveries a year. Oil heats 70% of all the buildings in New England, residential and commercial and heats 74% of New England's population.

Mr. Howe is also President and Proprietor of City Fuel, one of the fastest growing independent distributor organizations in New England. He is also on the Better Home Heat Council of New Hampshire and serves on several of the industry's more important committees.

In addition, Howe is a Vice President of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Small Business Council of the New Chamber, Past President and Director of the Cathedral Parish Credit Union, a member of the Manchester Planning Board, member of the New Hampshire Vocational Technical College Advisory Committee, and worked in many community projects and activities.