

## SMALL BUSINESS CORNER

# All systems serviced with 1 call



Photo provided

**Mike Wolking (left)** and Karen and Marvin Wischer are co-owners of KW Mechanical Inc. The company that started in the Wischers' basement now operates out of a large building in Covington.

**By Jeff McKinney**

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**COVINGTON** – After being hit hard by the recession, KW Mechanical Inc. had to find a way to attract new customers and spark sales.

A solution for the contractor of electrical, heating and air-conditioning and plumbing services was KW Is The One, a one-stop promotion that allows customers to order all of the firm's services with one call.

"A customer is only charged one trip even if they request multiple services," says Marvin Wischer, co-owner of KW Mechanical.

The business hopes the promotion is a big hit with customers as they will only have to deal with one contractor instead of three for their mechanical services, says Jim Eggemeister, the firm's service manager.

The campaign has helped the company land new customers and boosted sales 20 percent since it started in March 2009, Wischer says.

The promotion is helping revive KW Mechanical's sales. It expects revenue to be flat again this year similar to 2009. But up from 2008, when sales fell 30 percent from 2007 because of the bad economy and the housing bust. The company would

not disclose actual dollar revenue.

Since Wischer and his wife started KW Mechanical in 1987, they have used expansions, acquisitions and their faith in God to grow the business.

They started the company as an electrical contractor in the basement of their Fort Mitchell home. It was a balancing act, but the couple managed. "You'd be on a business call and the kids were asking for lunch money," says Karen Wischer, Marvin's wife and the firm's co-owner.

In November 1999, the company expanded with a heating and air division run by Mike Wolking, who had worked with Marvin on projects. Wolking bought stock in the business and became a co-owner.

In mid-2000, Rich MacKnight, a business acquaintance of Wolking, joined KW Mechanical to start its plumbing business. In 2004 it acquired Satellite Plumbing of Erlanger and in 2006 acquired Dave Knochelmann Plumbing of Ludlow.

The firm added service units to its three business divisions in 2000.

Marvin Wischer, 56, says the expansions and acquisitions helped triple sales. It also expanded into its current 10,000-square-foot building on East 32nd Street in 2000.

### KW Mechanical Inc.

■ **Owners:** Marvin and Karen Wischer and Mike Wolking

■ **Started:** 1987

■ **Address:** 25 E. 32nd St., Covington

■ **Employees:** 52

■ **More information:** 859-261-1100 or [www.kwmechanical.com](http://www.kwmechanical.com)

**Grateful:** It's not uncommon for KW Mechanical to do good for others. A few days before Christmas last year, Marvin Wischer says his firm sent employees to install a free water heater for an elderly paraplegic Covington woman who could not afford it. "We give back to the community because of all that Christ has done for us."

Wolking, 61, was the architect behind KW Mechanical starting up the service departments. The firm now has 35 trucks and its clients range from homeowners to businesses and major retailers.

"Our service functions are critical because they help us retain customers, generate new leads and maintain customer relationships," Wolking says.