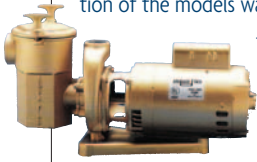


Aqua-Flo Discontinues Bronze Pumps

Pool pump manufacturer Aqua-Flo, LLC, has discontinued its Bronze Series line of A and AC Series pumps. The decision to halt production of the models was based on the shift in industry demand to plastic pool pumps. Thirty-four years ago, the bronze line helped launched Aqua-Flo, which announced that it now plans to focus on its spa, jetted bath and pond products. The company noted that parts for the old pumps will be available for at least seven years. Aqua-Flo is based in Chino, Calif.



Paragon Pools Aids Homeless Students

Pool builder Paragon Pools recently held a grand opening at its new corporate offices in Las Vegas in conjunction with a fund-raiser to benefit the Clark County School District's



homeless student program. The non-profit Title 1 HOPE Program provides assistance to 3,000 homeless students registered in CCSD. The fund-raiser is held each year by Paragon President Joe Vassallo and includes a raffle and silent auction, with the proceeds going to purchase school supplies, bus passes, personal hygiene items, shoes and food vouchers for the underprivileged students. Shown: Vassallo (holding checks) delivers supplies and donations to the staff at the Title 1 office.

First Pool Builder is ISO-Certified

By Rebecca Robledo Master Pools by Gib-San Pools in Toronto has become the first known pool builder to be certified by the International Organization for Standardization.

The rating indicates that each pool will be made or serviced according to certain parameters. The Geneva, Switzer-

structuring, and documented every stage of construction, type of pool service, customer service and employee training. Changes have been made through every facet of the company, Gibbs said.

Four people were hired in the corporate office as a result, including a human resources position and an administrative

the business improve its service and efficiency.

To allow the flexibility needed in the field, Gibbs and Senior Vice President Peter Friis set up a system of communication that must take place before any construction variations are allowed.

Every construction stage, customer transaction or service call



GIB-SAN POOLS

land-based organization's logo then can be used in Gib-San's marketing to assure customers that each product meets these standards.

ISO standards are more well-known for dictating specific ways that products must be made in factories. Under ISO 9001:2000, however, smaller companies such as Gib-San can create their own protocols regarding production methods, business practices and training.

It took Gib-San Pools approximately three years to gain certification, said Ed Gibbs, company president. The process started when a consultant audited the firm. After determining the work that was needed, the company underwent re-



International nod: Ed Gibbs (left) led Toronto-based Gib-San Pools to earn the first known ISO certification among pool builders. The company's handiwork (above).

manager. "All these areas are overhead costs, but you have to chalk up part of it to the cost of sales, assisting and helping your own employees, and simply having a better-run company," Gibbs said.

Gib-San Pools generates \$11 million to \$12 million annually and employs 120. "We spent hundreds of thousands of dollars doing this, but a smaller company can do it on a much smaller scale," Gibbs said. The costs have come not only in personnel, but in additional equipment to help

is documented, to ensure that all operations fall within the firm's parameters. Six employees act as internal auditors, checking departments, job sites and records at random. A third-party company audits Gib-San Pools annually. Every three years, the builder must apply to renew the certification.

Gibbs hopes more industry firms head in this direction. "I see this as a really great opportunity to change the pool industry forever from the grassroots level," he said. ■