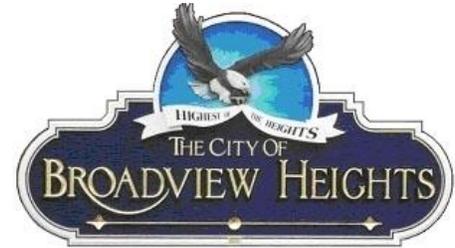


## Broadview Heights Business Spotlight: Claad Mechanical, LLC

The logo for Claad Mechanical LLC features the company name in a red, serif font with a thin red underline. The letters "LLC" are in a smaller, black, sans-serif font to the right.

This month the Broadview Heights Business Spotlight looks at local business **CLAAD MECHANICAL, LLC** & Owner Tom Steiger! Steiger, himself a Broadview Heights resident, explains how he turned the dream of owning his own business into a reality and discusses many of the concepts he stands by when doing business.

**Q: Tell me how your business got started. How long has Claad Mechanical LLC been around?**



*Tom Steiger, Founder & CEO at Claad Mechanical, LLC*

**A:** While I have worked in the industry for over 40 years, I began Claad Mechanical, LLC almost 7 years ago and soon after began hiring staff. I'm proud to say today we have about 10 employees and are growing! I do business with lots of clients who I have retained throughout my 40 years of service in the industry. We have stuck together and helped each other. That has afforded me the opportunity to always be presented by my customers with a consistent flow of work. I've made it a point to hire a good, strong support staff and reliable employees that have a sense of ownership in our business, which presents itself in the form of customer service.

**Q: Can you tell me a little bit about Claad Mechanical LLC's business?**

**A:** We are a commercial heating and cooling service company that can handle many heating, ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems like Liebert equipment, built-up systems, reciprocating chillers, split systems, roof-top packaging equipment and refrigeration equipment. We consider ourselves HVAC forensic experts, using our industry expertise to take an out-of-the box approach that helps us find creative solutions to system failures and retro-fits.

The clients we serve have buildings ranging in age from brand new to one-hundred plus years old. Our focus is in service office buildings, churches, nursing centers and other commercial facilities that require specialty knowledge of commercial HVAC systems. Most of our clients have worked with either me or my staff for many years. We are very blessed to have earned our clients business, in that they both

know and trust us to help in the decision making process when they have either installing or service needs. We are very relationship-driven and believe in providing top-notch customer service.



*A Claad Mechanical LLC's service truck*

**Q: Why did you choose to locate your business in Broadview Heights?**

**A:** The location is a huge plus for our line of business. Being in the service sector, our clients are all over the Greater Cleveland region. Being centrally located helps us with our business reach. The City services (police, fire, and service) are among the best in the nation, which also gives a peace of mind to a small business.

**Q: What is Claad Mechanical LLC's business philosophy?**

**A:** Our motto is "service first, sales when needed". We are here to assist building owners and management teams in making educated decisions about how to best to spend their money in regards to HVAC systems. We believe in sharing information with our clients to help them make the best decisions they can about their system needs.



*The gantry slides into place to lift the old unit as a rooftop package unit is replaced*

We are big on educating our clients and explaining both cause and effect about the system to clients. For instance, we have explained to them the "tipping point" that is reached when a system replacement is called for instead of repair. Whatever our client wants to do, we will help them through the process.

My staff is here to help our clients and is not paid on commission basis; staff is encouraged to serve the needs of the client and allow the needs to guide the service plan.

**Q: What is the one quality that your business is known for over your competitors?**

**A:** Our forte is making things function properly that haven't for years. Taming an unruly HVAC system is the headache of most building managers but that is exactly what we have consistently been able to achieve. A long-standing client once told us "you make me look good". We like to work hard for our clients and help them resolve those long standing issues.

**Q: Tell me about the biggest risk you have ever taken as a business owner.**

**A:** The biggest risk I took was just stepping out on my own. I was working in a job that did not align with my values of treating the customer fairly and doing what was right. My wife was very worried and that made me most concerned of all. I did a ton of soul searching and performed a great deal of prayer. I looked at my finances and realized I could use my trusty old pickup truck to help me step off a limb and work for myself.



*The Claad Mechanical, LLC offices in Broadview Heights*

I risked everything to step into another world, the world of ownership, which was the biggest risk I had ever taken. It has also yielded to me the greatest reward of doing work that I am proud of, and enabled us to live by the values I believe in, while providing care for my many long standing clients.

**Q: As your business has grown what tricks have you learned to help you manage it?**

**A:** We have partnered with several really good companies that have helped us and we, in turn, have helped them. Two of note are GMS (Group Management Services) and Broadview Heating & Cooling.

GMS, based in Richfield, has helped us outsource our HR and payroll functions and provided support we otherwise would have to specialize in. We partnered with the Olecki brothers of Broadview Heating & Cooling back in January of this year as they focus most on the residential market and we focus on the commercial and industrial market. They have an excellent reputation in the residential field, so we are comfortable referring any new clients to them.

**Q: What are your top priorities that you focus on as a business owner?**

**A:** Great question! The answer always begins with customer service, and this is something that is a value we look for in hiring our employees. We firmly believe in and practice hands-on customer service. For example, we don't have an answering service. Our staff handles the calls personally and takes the "on call" rotation very seriously. We have had people call on a cold Saturday winter night and be surprised that a live company voice answered! In one particular case, we were given the opportunity to serve several small company stores for many years because of that experience. We treat our customers only the way we would want to be treated.

**Q: Tell me about your biggest achievement as a business owner.**

**A:** My biggest achievement has been a change in mindset on hiring and managing. I had to learn that it is difficult to find and hire people who have the same passion and attitude for service. It's something I am still working on, and I'm still looking for more employees who have those values!

**Q: Do you have any other piece of advice you would share with executives of other small businesses?**

**A:** Yes, support those who support you! And also, to follow your passion. Following ones passion in life is what we were created for.

## **You can find Claad Mechanical, LLC at:**

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