RADIANT PROFESSIONALS ALLIANCE

18927 Hickory Creek Drive, Suite 140
Mokena, Illinois 60448

Ph: (877) 427-6601, Ext. 3001
www.radiantprofessionalsalliance.org

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Contact: Sean Cleary
(909) 996-5336
sean.cleary@iapmo.org

Updated Building Efficiency System Tool™ (BEST 6.1) Now Available for Download

Ontario, Calif. (Feb. 6, 2023) — A significant upgrade to the Hydronic Industry Alliance-Commercial's (HIA-C) Building Efficiency System Tool™ (BEST), the interactive commercial building HVAC system efficiency comparison application, is now available for download at https://forms.iapmo.org/hiac/software_register.aspx. BEST 6.1 adds groundbreaking new features that address emerging needs within the industry.

While previous versions of BEST calculated maximum electrical demand for HVAC systems based on ASHRAE design weather conditions, at certain temperatures those systems lose efficiency and may even switch to back-up sources for protection; if those sources are electric, this creates an immediate surge in demand.

BEST 6.1 factors in this surge at peak heating and cooling temperatures and displays the maximum electrical demand each system would incur on a Demand Energy Efficiency Ratio (DEER) screen.

"It shows developers exactly how many kilowatts of instantaneous demand they would need coming into their building," while also offering insight into the amount of power required for the neighborhood around it, according to Greg Cunniff, head of Application Engineering for HIA-C.

The update also enables the calculation of heat recovery or "netting" the energy in a building. Although waste heat produced by the cooling system has typically been thrown away through chillers or cooling towers, it's more often been recovered and used to preheat domestic water. BEST 6.0 provided the ability to determine domestic water heating costs — version 6.1 adds heat recovery to the equation.

"The difference in cost is particularly significant when you compare hydroponic heat exchangers with air-based systems," Cunniff said, "because it's much easier to convert waste heat from water to water than it is to convert it from air to water."

Other notable upgrades include:

- Update of (construction) first costs to include current rates of inflation for 2022 and estimated for 2023
- Update of energy costs for 2022 using the DOE EIA (Energy Information Administration) data for each state
- Inclusion of a digital certificate to avoid the problems with installation of the program from anti-virus software

"Most of the improvements we've made have come from the industry, and when we do training, we ask people what they would like to see on our 'to do' list for adding to the next version of BEST," Cunniff said.

Upon its introduction in 2016, BEST solved a long-standing industry issue of being able to accurately compare different styles of HVAC systems, which are all tested to different standards, with various efficiency ratings (EER, IEER, SEER, COP, HSPF), as they are applied in an actual building.

The HIA-C is a committee of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials' (IAPMO) Radiant Professionals Alliance (RPA). To learn more about the HIA-C and the Radiant Professionals Alliance, or to join this important efficiency advocacy effort, visit www.HIA-C.org and www.radiantpros.org.

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Since 1994, the Radiant Professionals Alliance, formerly the Radiant Panel Association, has been promoting radiant heating as comfortable, efficient, and healthy on behalf of its network of dedicated members, who share the desire to advance the understanding and acceptance of radiant and hydronic technology.