



Sixty-Two Years

The 2017, Region VIII, Chapters Regional Conference (CRC), hosted by the Central Oklahoma Chapter, is finally upon us! The CRC is set to take place April 27-29, 2017 at the historic Skirvin hotel in downtown OKC. Region VIII is comprised of Chapters across four states and the country of Mexico. The last time our Chapter hosted the CRC was in 2007. All 14 ASHRAE Regions, covering the entire globe, hold CRC's once a year, some in the Spring and some in the Fall. Society didn't always have CRC's, however. The history of how ASHRAE got started holding annual regional conferences dates back to the early 1950's with members of the Central Oklahoma Chapter being instrumental in making it happen. In fact, the very first CRC, a "trial-balloon" as some called it, was held at the Skirvin hotel on April 14-16, 1955. Sixty-two years ago.

A lot of things have changed since 1955, but amazingly, the CRC they conducted at the Skirvin back then is basically the same format we still use today. In 1955, at the heart of the event was business meetings and technical sessions, but they also had social events, tours of local attractions, and spouses activities. They had two dinner events; the first included entertainment and dancing, and the second was headlined by a nationally known motivational speaker.

With the 1955 event being the first CRC in Society, the invitation to attend was not sent out to just our Region, but was actually sent out to every Region in Society so that all Regions could learn, firsthand, how to conduct the event. They ended up having attendees from approximately half of the Chapters in Society covering 18 States, the District of Columbia, and Canada! The 1955 CRC had a total of 223 in attendance. As I write this, a little over four weeks out from the 2017 Region VIII CRC, we have just under 150 registered, but that number is expected to increase as the event draws closer. A scan of the May, 1955 Sou'Wester newsletter that recapped that CRC is posted on our website under "About Us", "History."

The part that surprised me the most about the 1955 event was the financial accounting versus what we expect at our CRC this month. In 1955, they had the following final tallies:

\$2,716.32 in total expenses for the 3 day conference

- \$2,349 in revenue from ticket sales (collected for lunch and dinner events)
- \$300 contributed by Society
- \$0 contributed by the Region
- \$0 contributed by companies and vendors
- \$67.32 contributed by the OKC Chapter (which ended up being reimbursed by Society)

The first incredible thing I learned is that at the 1955 event, there was no charge to anyone for attending the conference meetings, seminars or training, and the hotel didn't charge anything for the use of their meeting rooms. A member and spouse only had to pay for lunch and dinner events (and golf if they played). The other interesting thing I discovered is that, according to the operational guidelines for this conference, they were discouraged from accepting contributions from companies, vendors, or manufacturers and weren't allowed to display manufacturer's names or advertising.

In stark contrast, our 2017 CRC event will have total expenses right at \$80,000! Approximately half of that is expected to be covered by registration fees paid in advance and the rest will come from companies, vendors, and manufacturers' sponsorships, plus Chapter savings. Our event will also include printed name recognition of all the companies that provide sponsorships.



Times have certainly changed in sixty-two years, but the purpose of the event, from 1955 to the present day, remains the same: A forum for HVAC&R education, information, regional business, awards, and comradery.

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