

Ready to provide a lift

In-home elevator sales growing

BY ELIZABETH GRAHAM | Graham@PBN.com

WHEN HOME HEALTHSMITH LLC UNVEILS its remodeled showroom later this year, the space will include a working residential elevator. That's because demand for in-home elevators has seen such a rise that the Portsmouth company wants its customers to get a look at what has become their most in-demand service.

"The last three years have been the busiest in residential elevator demand that I've ever experienced," said CEO Bill Bohmbach, who owns the company along with his wife, Linda Bohmbach, its vice president.

Cheaper prices, easier installation and a growing number of older homeowners in Rhode Island are pushing an in-home elevator to the top of many to-do lists, Bill Bohmbach said.

"Ten or 15 years ago, a residential elevator was viewed like a luxury item," he said. "That has changed in the last five years or so as the industry has adapted to the demand. When you look at the demographics of our clients, it's all aging baby boomers. It's getting to be like the new must-have appliance."

Founded in 2012 by Bill Bohmbach after he sold his previous company, Accurate Elevator & Lift Co., Home Healthsmith offers a range of home improvement products and services for people who are aging or living with disabilities. In addition to elevators, the business installs stairlifts, ramps, nonslip floors, grab bars and other modifications in new or existing homes.

"We've been in these situations that our clients are going through, and we really feel the importance in terms of

being able to feel safe in your home," said Linda Bohmbach.

The company was part of a team that won a 2019 Silver Prism Award from the Builders and Remodelers Association of Greater Boston for designing and installing a glass elevator in a three-story condo on the edge of Boston Harbor. The nearly yearlong project was commissioned by a forward-thinking, middle-aged couple who wants to stay in their home long term, despite three sets of stairs.

The custom work is typical of many projects the company takes on in South County, where residents in multistory homes are eager to stay well into old age.

"Everything is in a [Federal Emergency Management Agency] flood zone; the houses tend to be upside-down houses where the kitchen is up on the third floor," Bill Bohmbach said. "We do an enormous amount of work there."

A surge in renovations in Boston's Back Bay and Beacon Hill is also resulting in high demand in Massachusetts.

This year, Linda Bohmbach anticipates up to 50 elevator projects ordered by homeowners, who typically pay \$30,000 or more for them.

The demand is driving up sales, which have increased by about 10% over last year, she added.

The Bohmbachs headed to Las Vegas to accept an award at the International Builders Show, held Jan. 21-23, for their performance as one of the top 10 dealers for the Inclinator Co. of America, of Harrisburg, Pa., which the Bohmbachs purchase elevators from. Home Healthsmith won the same award in 2017 as well. ■



IN DEMAND: Bill and Linda Bohmbach, owners of Home Healthsmith in Portsmouth, stand in front of a demo residential elevator holding the Prism award they received in 2019 for "Most Creative/Unique Use of Space" for their residential glass elevator in Boston.

PBN PHOTO/KATE WHITNEY LUCEY

OWNERS: Bill and Linda Bohmbach

TYPE OF BUSINESS: Accessibility contractors

LOCATION: 207 High Point Ave., Portsmouth

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 16

YEAR ESTABLISHED: 2012

ANNUAL SALES: WND