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Today's News Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Water cooling business heats up

Companies that inspect, test and treat water cooling systems have seen a spike in business. Some building owners are looking for a quick and cheap way to comply with city and state mandates, while others are open to improving long-term building maintenance, said a spokesman for Clarity Water Technologies, based in Rockland County. The company's business has doubled since Aug. 6, when the city mandated cooling tower inspections in response to the Legionnaires' outbreak. The spokesman said some competitors were charging as much as \$1,500 for tests that typically cost between \$200 and \$300. Clarity raised its prices "only slightly," he said. "We want new customers to come back to us." Highmark NY, a Manhattan company that does maintenance but focuses on reducing buildings' energy and water usage, has had a 10% jump in business in recent weeks. "The guy that wants to just dump some chemicals in—we're not going to get that job," said Richard Gerbe, Highmark's co-founder. But he said some building owners are signing on for his long-term services, which include real-time monitoring of water quality and run about \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year per building.



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