



FOR ALL YOUR  
REFRIGERANT NEEDS

## The Refron Reporter<sup>sm</sup>

September 25, 1997

An insider's view on the refrigerants industry

### REFRON CONFIRMS HIGHEST PRICES OFFERED FOR USED CFCs

As you know, prices paid by various reclaimer companies in the market for used or recovered CFCs fluctuate regularly. For years, Refron has been telling you that we offer the highest "buyback" prices in the industry, and our customers have confirmed this through more than a thousand used refrigerant returns each year! Used CFC buyback prices have softened somewhat in recent months, and some reclaimers have even experienced acute cash flow problems. However, as a Refron customer you are still in good shape. A recent informal survey of industry "buyback" price sheets confirms once again that Refron's buyback prices are still the best in the industry. So, if you have recovered or used R-12, R-11, R-502 or other CFCs to dispose of, don't leave money on the table. Call us today.

### SUMMER RECAP - CFCs, ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE WHERE NEEDED

The unusually cool weather experienced during the early summer months this year seems to have had a moderate negative impact on the HVAC industry in general. For refrigerants in particular, demand for CFCs was somewhat lower than last year. The Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute (ARI) continues to predict that CFC demand is on target to exceed supply in the near future, however for the summer of 1997 Refron was able to keep all of its customers supplied with the CFCs they needed, including special orders for R-13, R-13B1 and R-114. Demand for alternatives and blends has continued to grow steadily, and we have increased our stocking levels for most blends and alternatives across the country. In most cases, you can continue to expect from us next day delivery as usual, and faster in emergencies.

### NEW PUBLICATION NAMES NAMES ON CFC SMUGGLING OPERATIONS WORLDWIDE

Reading like an exciting bestseller espionage thriller, a new publication by the London-based Environmental Investigation Agency exposes the various faces of CFC smuggling operations around the world, with a focus on Western Europe. Replete with names, copies of documents, photos of people and places, and descriptions of how the various scams work, the report also outlines the results of a sting operation set up by EIA involving a dummy corporation called Trans-Cool Trading. The authors conclude that drastic steps must still be taken to address the smuggling issue. To obtain a copy of this highly informative and entertaining 13-page booklet titled "Chilling Facts About a Burning Issue - CFC Smuggling in the European Union", contact EIA in London at 0171-490-7040, or by e-mail at [eiak@gn.apc.org](mailto:eiak@gn.apc.org). The cost is \$10 per copy.

### DUPONT TO ADD R-507 TO PRODUCT LIST

You will recall that our February 1997 newsletter cited the growing market success of R-507 as an R-502 replacement product, and of R-409A as an R-12 replacement. In apparent capitulation to market forces, Dupont announced that as of July 1, 1997 it will be adding R-507 to its product list. R-507 was invented and patented by Allied-Signal, and is the preferred R-502 retrofit replacement for contractors seeking a true azeotropic blend to work with. While R-404A is also a popular replacement option, it is not an azeotrope. For more information on either of these products, please contact your salesperson, or call our *Refron Retriever<sup>sm</sup>* automated faxback technical database at 718-392-0097 (for R-507 select documents 7308 & 7317, for R-404A select documents 7301 & 7315).

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### **PRODUCT SAFETY QUESTIONS RAISED AND REBUTTED, FOR R-123, R-134a**

Two recent events have unexpectedly raised certain health and safety issues for R-123 and R-134a, although the significance of the events is being downplayed and discounted by some in industry. In the first event, an article in the August issue of The Lancet, a British medical journal, described cases of acute liver damage in 9 persons who were unknowingly exposed to very high levels of R-123 and R-124 daily for a period of 1-2 months. It should be noted that these exposure conditions are many times greater than those which one would encounter in a typical R-123 chiller situation. The second event is the finding in a recently published study that human subjects exposed to 4,000 ppm of R-134a showed variations in blood pressure and pulse. However, industry sources point out that these results may not be valid, since the study was not designed to produce accurate human clinical data. In addition, industry sources point out that the many thousands of hours of intensive toxicology testing done by the internationally sponsored PAFT (Programme for Alternative Fluorocarbon Toxicity Testing) has firmly established the safety of both R-123 and R-134a when used and handled properly, and EPA continues to support R-123 and R-134a as safe and viable alternative refrigerants. Whether the new data represents merely a public relations problem or an actual health and safety problem is not yet known for sure, however we will keep you apprised of any new developments.

### **U.S. SPRINT FINED \$21,600 FOR USE OF UNAPPROVED HYDROCARBON BLEND IN CARS**

If you perform automotive A/C service work and you are charging systems with refrigerants other than R-12 and R-134a, take the time to check with EPA beforehand, to make sure the refrigerant you are using is approved by EPA for your intended purpose. U.S. Sprint apparently overlooked this step, and has been fined \$21,600 by EPA for using an unapproved blend, "HC-12a", as a replacement for R-12 in its car fleet in Las Vegas. HC-12a is a hydrocarbon blend that is considered flammable by the EPA, and its use is prohibited in cars and buses. Various state and local governments also have their own independent regulations prohibiting the use of flammable hydrocarbon-based refrigerant blends in cars, so do your research carefully if you are going to experiment. *Note that as of this date, the only refrigerants recommended by the major U.S. car manufacturers, and approved for use in their warranted A/C systems remain R-12 and R-134a.*

### **MONTREAL PROTOCOL MEETING ENDS WITH NO CHANGES IN HCFC PHASEOUT**

The Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol ended on September 17<sup>th</sup> in Montreal. Among the major issues under discussion at this international meeting was a proposal by the European Community to accelerate the phaseout dates for HCFC's (R-22, R-123, and components in various blends). This proposal was strongly opposed by the U.S. and most developing countries. Since no agreement was reached, the current phaseout schedule is still in place for now, which includes a production cap through the year 2003, and a 35% reduction beginning in 2004, with further reductions in later years. In other actions, the Parties approved a licensing system for the import and export of CFC's and HCFC's, effective January 1, 1999.

### **NEW EDI CAPABILITIES, VIDEOCONFERENCING, EXPAND REFRON'S COMMUNICATIONS OPTIONS**

The digital revolution marches on at Refron. In addition to reaching us via nationwide toll-free numbers, via fax, via e-mail (custserv@refron.com) or via our web page (www.refron.com), we have added two new modalities. If your company is EDI-capable and wishes to transmit orders via EDI, please contact Phil or Anthony in our Contracts department and we will be happy to establish a trading partner relationship with you. In addition, we have just completed installing state-of-the-art videoconferencing capabilities in both our New York and California offices. The systems are compliant with ANSI Standard H.320, so if your company similarly has H.320 compliant equipment (ISDN-based dial-up, not Internet-based), we would be happy to have you "visit" with us electronically. Contact your salesperson to schedule a "meeting".

**For More Information, Call your Salesperson Directly, or Call 1-800-4-REFRON  
(1-800-473-3766)**