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PRO

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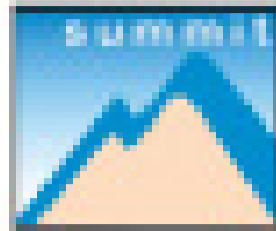











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Turning the Pages

Scour the pages of PRO™ for the following entertaining and informative features that will help boost the bottom line for your portable sanitation business:

Back at the Office deals with a difficult topic in any workplace: firing an employee. Competent employees are a key to success in any business. The reverse is also true. An incompetent or dishonest employee can harm a business, not just by his or her own actions, but by bringing other employees down, too. If you've got a bad apple, the best course of action is to remove it before it spoils the whole bunch. But proceed with caution. If you are careful in the hiring process and provide every employee with a clear job description, firing should not be a common occurrence. But despite a manager's best efforts sometimes an employee just doesn't work out.

PROfile drops by the offices of Allied Recycling Inc. in Fort Myers, Fla., to learn how Brown Thompson has integrated portable restroom service into his metal recycling and construction site services business. While servicing cleanup roll-off and hauling contracts, Thompson noted a sharp upsurge in requests for related services such as portable restrooms. Thompson quickly learned the portable sanitation business would only be as good as the restrooms it offered and the vehicles that serviced them, so he began immediately building the fleet and the inventory. "We'll just keep winning customer loyalty by delivering what they need and making it easy and convenient to work with us," Thompson says.

Truck Corner takes the lid off the topic of manways in vacuum tanks. Bob Carlson and Jerry Kirkpatrick explain the three reasons why a restroom contractor would choose to include optional manways on a vacuum tank. The truck builders know that nobody wants to hear about one of the reasons: Easier access to get inside the tank if maintenance is necessary. "Nobody wants to, but there are times that repairs must be made from the inside," the *Truck Corner* guys say. "If there are no manways in the tank and the tank needs repair, you will soon be paying for a manway because the only way to get inside the tank is to cut a hole and put a manway in the place of the cut."

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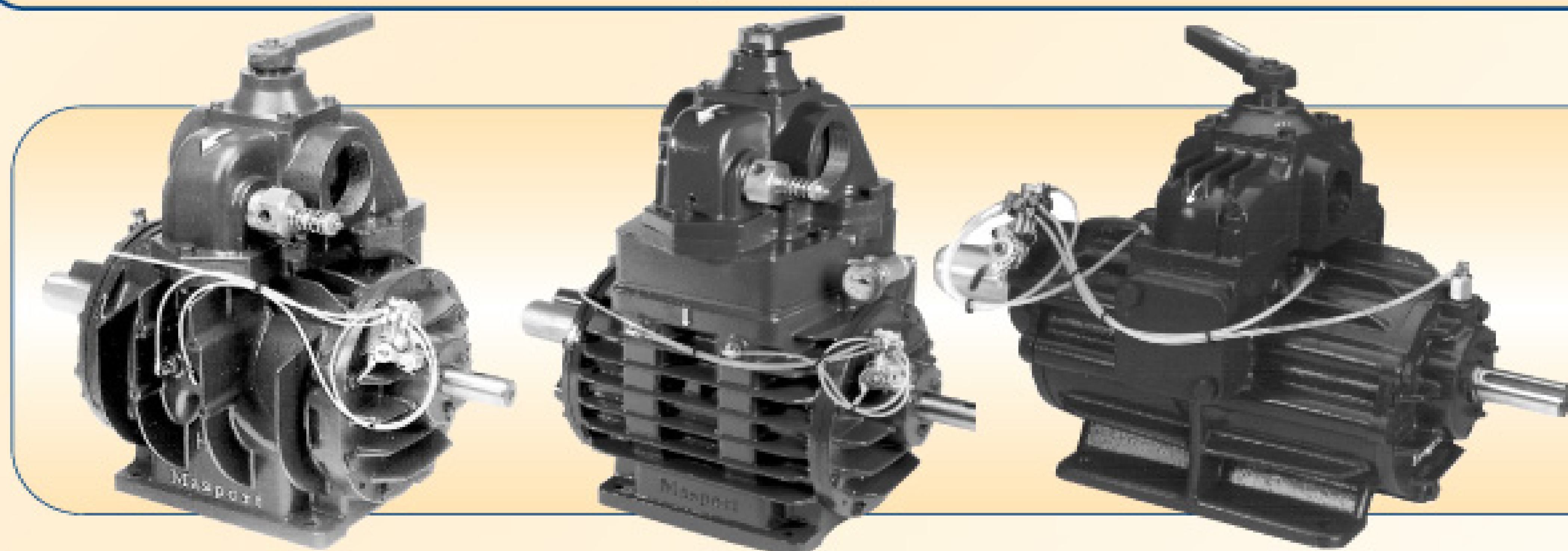


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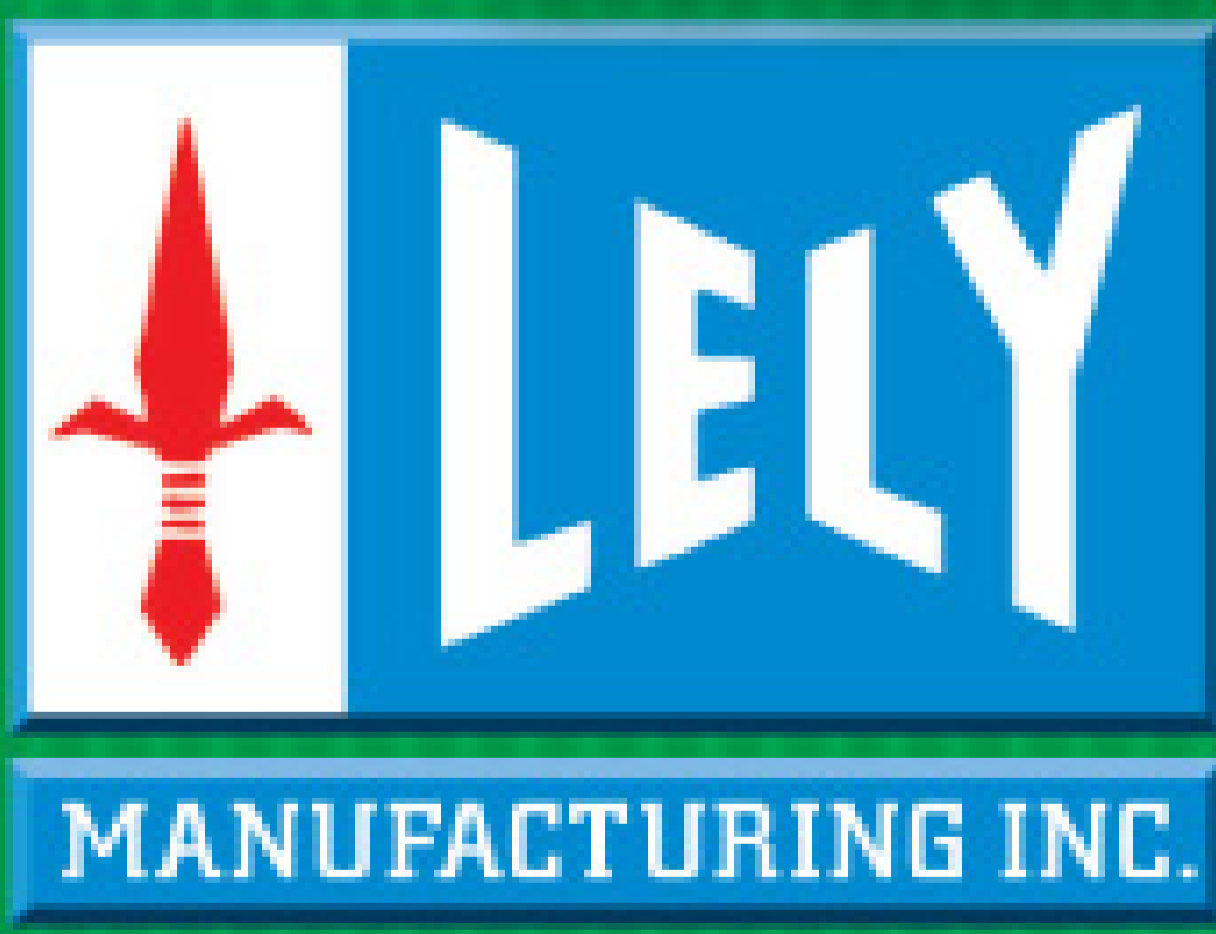


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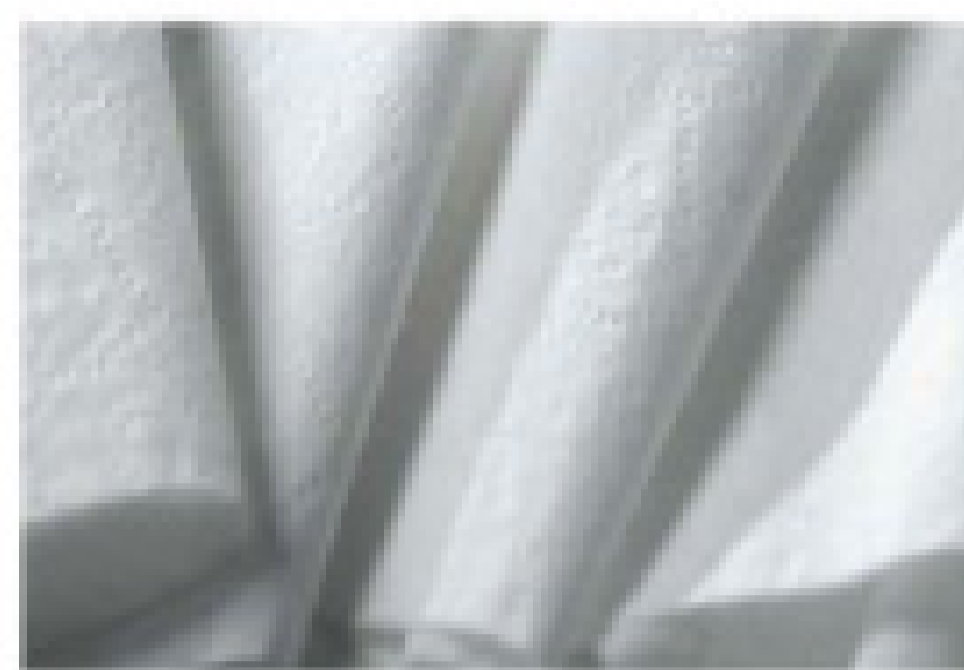
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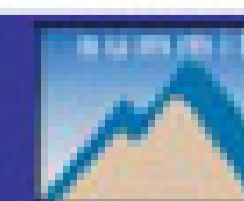
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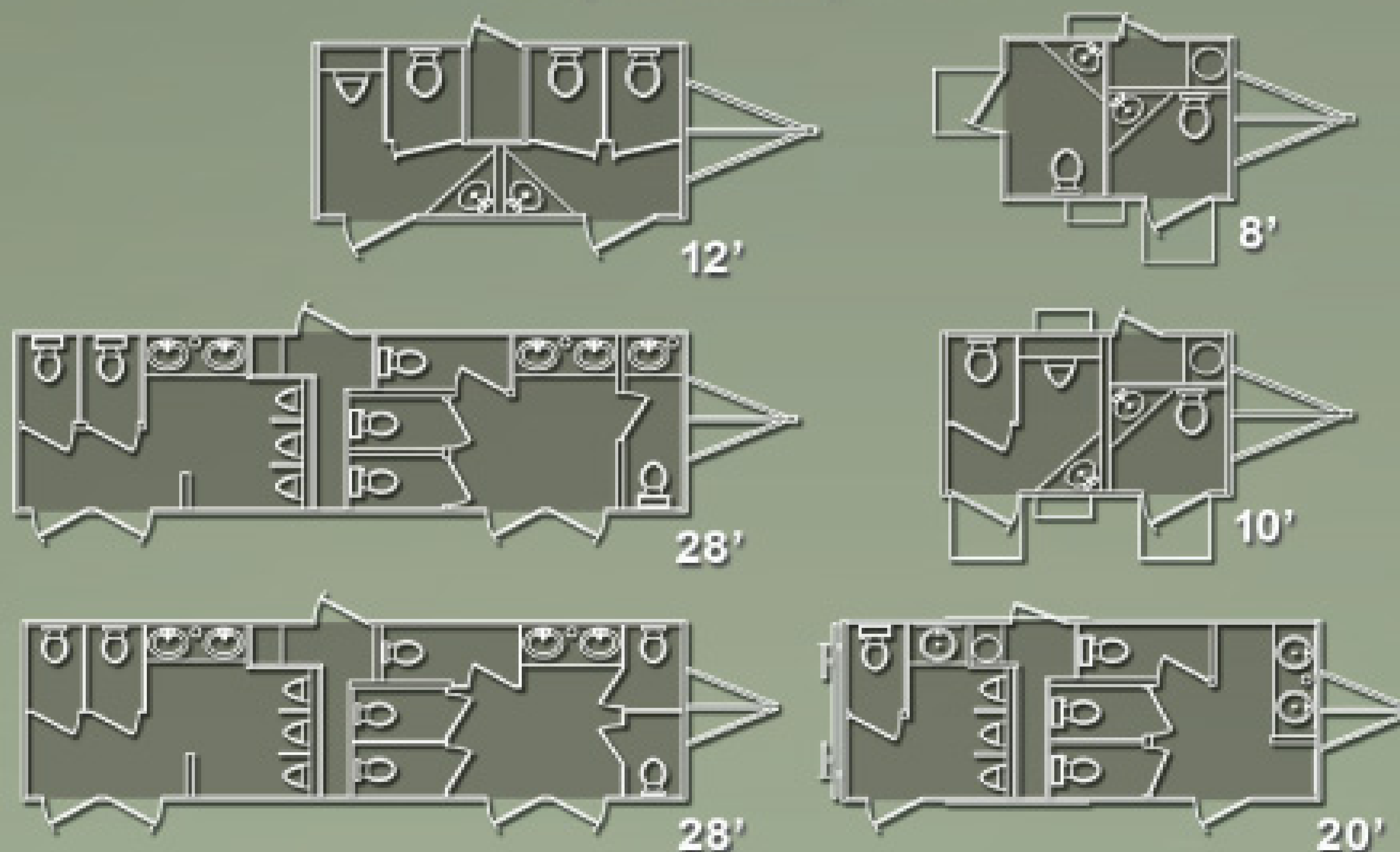
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Exploring the 'D' Word

Sharing your ideas for new revenue streams may help a struggling PRO halfway across the country weather the storm of economic uncertainty

By Jim Kneiszel

As you ramp up for the busy season, I'd like to hear what diversification efforts you've made. Send me the details of your new services and I'll share them in an upcoming issue. Send your responses to editor@promonthly.com.

What does diversification mean in your business? Over the past few years, I've seen diversification take on numerous forms for restroom contractors. I recall one portable sanitation contractor who bought a rolling rib smoker and started providing barbecue for summer parties. Another contractor — set to be featured later this year in *PRO*TM — will soon open his third restaurant, where he is transferring employees during a lull in the construction sector.

With a drop in construction accounts in parts of the country, I'm hearing the "D" word more often. In an effort to curb employee layoffs or boost profits in new ways, clever PROs are looking for new products and new markets to explore.

Perhaps some of you were on the lookout for new revenue ideas at the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo, which wrapped up a month ago in Louisville. Maybe you looked for the latest restroom trailer to park at outdoor weddings or other high-end parties. Maybe you considered site services beyond portable sanitation for special events and construction sites.

Some predictable offshoots from portable sanitation, like fencing, power washing services or party supplies, might work in your region. If you already experience intense competition for that business, you might turn to something more unorthodox, like opening a restaurant or preparing a big ol' mess of ribs on your rolling smoker.

As you ramp up for the busy season, I'd like to hear what diversification efforts you've made. Sharing your ideas might just help a struggling PRO halfway across the country weather the storm of economic uncertainty prompted by a flat residential construction market.

There are a few ways to communicate with the PRO community. First, you can send me an e-mail with your diversification story. I will compile the ideas I receive in a future column. If you want to speak directly to others in the portable sanitation community, go to our Web site, www.promonthly.com, and click on *PRO Online Discussion Forum*.

A new version of the *PRO Forum* is conveniently split into several topic areas: General Discussion, Business, Chemicals & Deodorizers, Parts & Accessories, Portable Restrooms, Portable Restroom Trailers, Portable Restroom Service and Trucks. Simply register with a user name and password to start the discussion. Selected posts from the reader forum are compiled and published in this magazine.

OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

While I'm giving one pitch for reader participation, I'm going to throw out a few more pleas.

A trend I'm hearing from readers is that special event coverage will continue to play a greater role in their businesses this year.

Landing an account for a county fair, rodeo or music festival this summer can go a long way toward offsetting construction losses. That being the case, I'd like to hear about new and interesting special event work you'll be doing this summer for our *On Location* feature. The monthly profile examines how a PRO meets special event challenges, and gives the events a shot in the arm at the same time.

My experience is that event organizers enjoy seeing their festival featured on the cover or an inside photo layout in a national magazine. We realize that hitting the cover of *PRO*TM doesn't necessarily draw bigger crowds to their event, but being featured in a glossy publication — with a layout that can be framed and put on the wall — is a pat on the back all the same.

Let me know about the event you're covering and we can schedule an interview and arrange for photos to run with a story.

PRIDE IN YOUR RIDE

I'd love to have more new, shiny portable sanitation trucks to show off in our *PRO Rides* feature. If you're thrilled with the look of a new or restored service truck — and want to give a shout out to the company that built it or provided accessories — e-mail me a digital photo of you or one of your crew members and the truck. We'll give you a call and compile all the facts and figures concerning your favorite rig.

WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

I enjoy working on our occasional *Take 5* features, where we introduce a creative or influential businessperson in the world of portable sanitation. It's rewarding to get the word out about a contractor who's contributing to an important industry initiative or whose high degree of professionalism raises the bar for the rest of us. I relish the chance to talk to the pioneers of the industry, those entrepreneurs who started building restrooms out of plywood and 55-gallon drums. The feature provides a great opportunity to learn the customer service secrets from successful PROs.

If you know someone who fits any of those descriptions and deserves recognition for their industry contributions or professionalism, I want to hear from you.

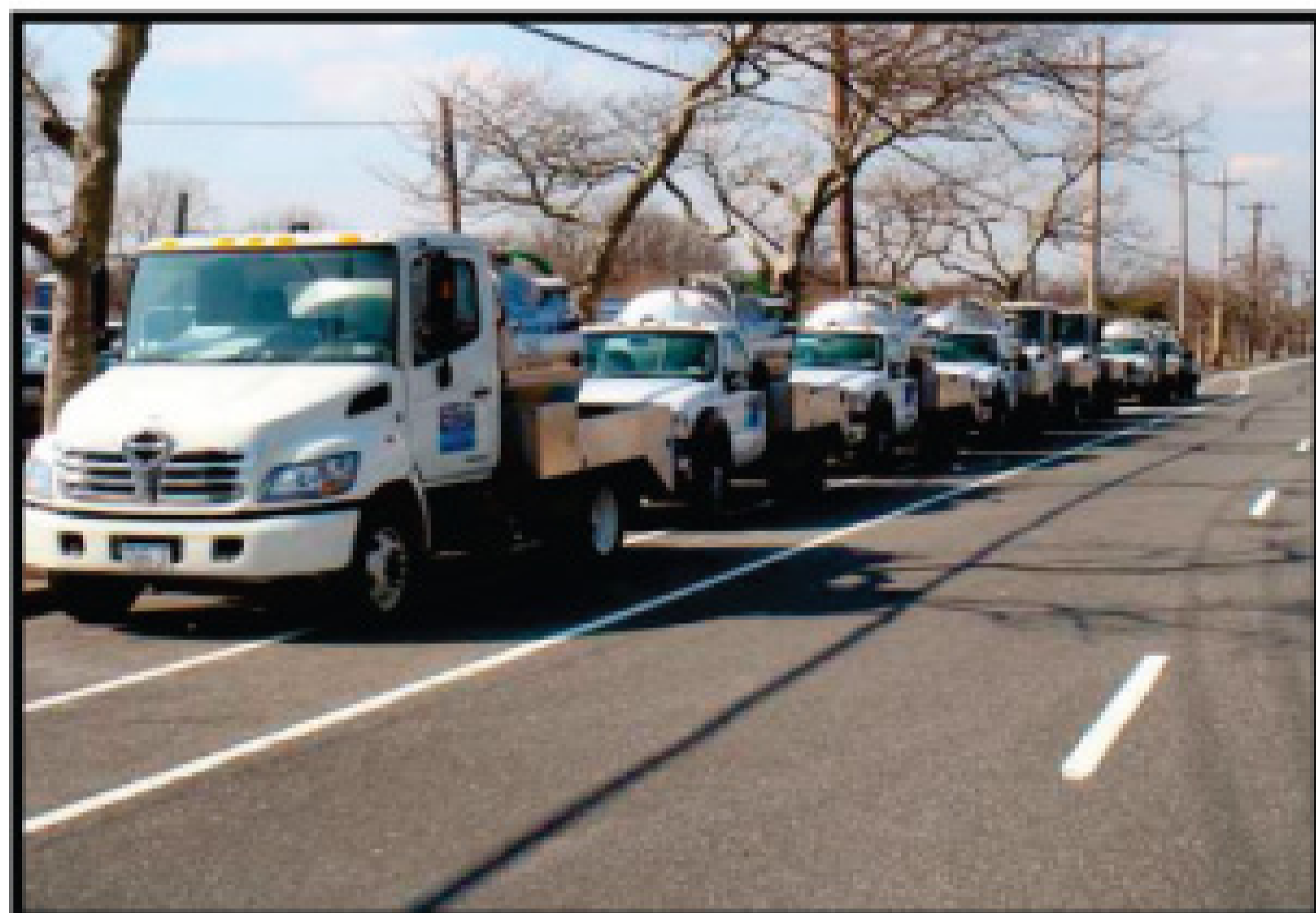
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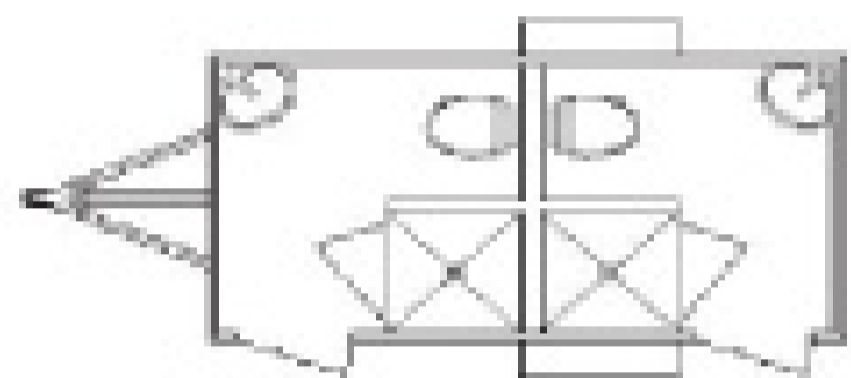
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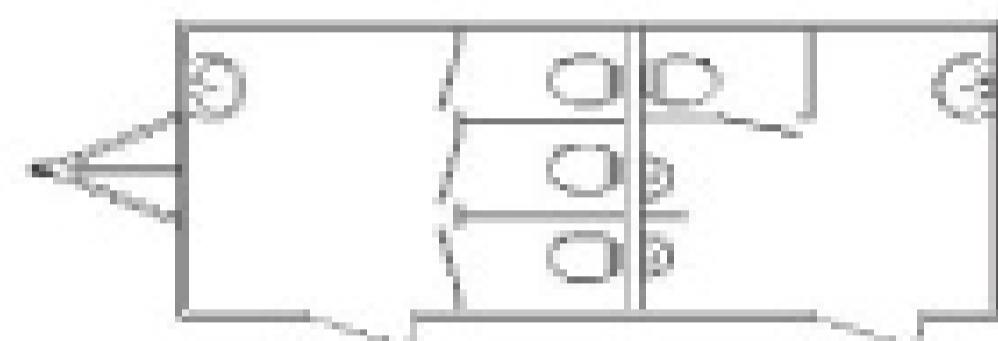
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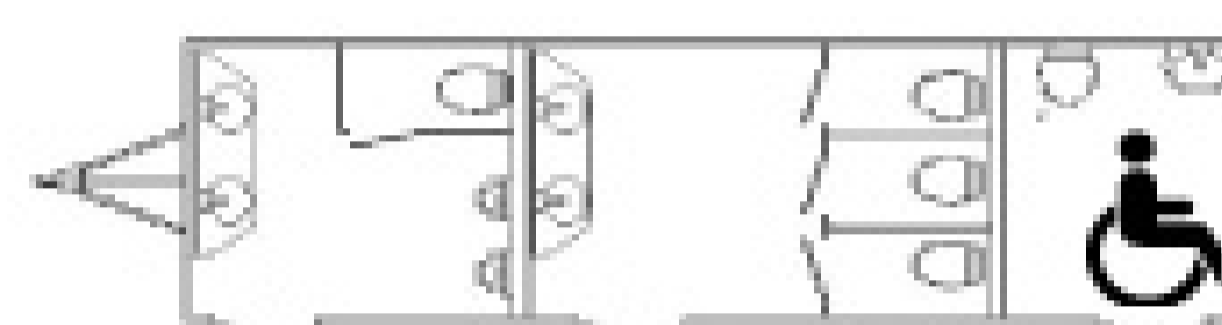
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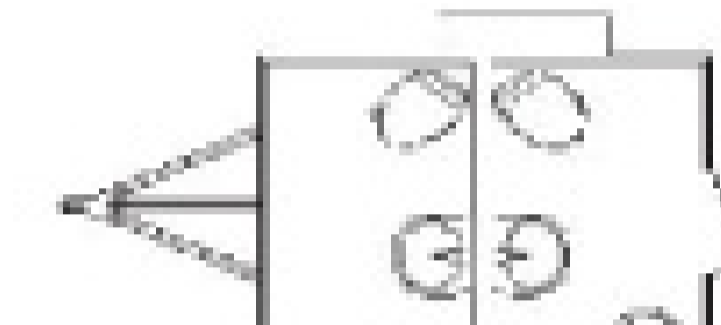
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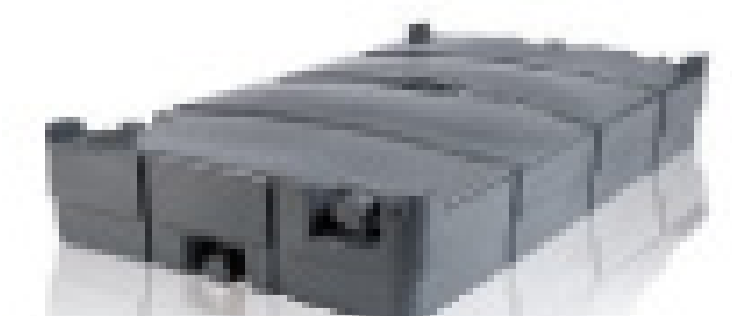
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Writer Judy Kneiszel has operated her own small business for a decade and is familiar with the many rewards and challenges of business ownership. Write to her with questions, comments or topic suggestions at thewordhouse@ameritech.net.

You're Fired!

Donald Trump makes it look easy on TV, but in real life firing someone is one of the hardest business tasks you'll ever perform

By Judy Kneiszel



Competent employees are a key to success in any business. The reverse is also true. An incompetent or dishonest employee can harm a business, not only by his or her own actions, but by bringing other employees down, too. If you've got a bad apple, the best course of action is to remove it before it spoils the whole bunch. But proceed with caution. Firing someone can be sticky business.

If you are careful in the hiring process and provide every employee with a clear job description, firing should not be a common occurrence. But despite a manager's best efforts, sometimes an employee just doesn't work out. Reasons an employee may be asked to leave include:

- Not performing up to expectations
- Theft from the company
- Irresolvable personality conflicts with other employees
- The company can no longer afford to pay the employee

If you are leery of firing even after an employee's conduct clearly warrants it, keep in mind that failing to fire someone who

poses a danger to co-workers, customers or others can lead to a lawsuit. But don't base a firing on rumor, unsubstantiated claims or personal issues. And don't make a rash decision to fire someone. Before you terminate an employee, make sure your reasons are legitimate and documented. Time cards can be used to prove absenteeism and tardiness, for example. Past performance reviews can

If you have a long-standing history of treating all employees fairly and have consistently enforced company policies on job performance, tardiness and absenteeism, you shouldn't have any legal problems with regards to firing an employee.

also show a pattern of poor work performance.

In some cases, especially if the poor performance is a recent development, you may want to give the employee a warning. Meet with him or her privately, explain specifically why you are unsatisfied and give them 30 days to do better. Make it clear that without improvement, termination becomes necessary. Document what was said in this meeting.

THE RIGHT WAY TO FIRE

How you fire someone is important. Here are some tips:

- Meet with the person privately, but have a witness present during the meeting if you anticipate the employee will become argumentative or aggressive.
- Keep it short and simple. Tell them they are being terminated and when they are expected to be gone. Briefly state the documented causes but do not get pulled into a debate.
- Explain any severance package, payment for unused vacation days and provisions for continuation of health benefits. A company is not required to provide severance packages for fired employees, but if you signed a contract with an employee agreeing to provide a severance package, you must honor that contract.
- Make it a clean break. Having the fired employee around for several more days wouldn't be pleasant for anybody. Have the employee leave immediately after you collect any keys, equipment, I.D.s or any other company related materials from them. Make sure, when applicable, you know the employee's computer password.
- Do not talk about a termination with anyone in the company except the employee and their immediate supervisor. Announce to the staff that the person is no longer with the company and quickly reassign duties.
- Do not say anything to the employee that could be interpreted as defamatory.

TREAD LIGHTLY

In some cases you have to be extra cautious about firing an employee. Law prohibits firing a worker because of their age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion or disability. It is also illegal to fire a worker because he or she took family leave or complained of illegal company activity. Here are some scenarios vulnerable to litigation and should be especially well documented:

- 1. The employee is 40 or older.** The Age Discrimination in Employment Act protects workers from being replaced for no reason other than a company wanting cheaper employees.
- 2. The employee has complained about workplace harassment or illegal activity.** Such a termination can be seen as wrongful retaliation.
- 3. The employee has a contract or was made promises about job security.** Employees can claim they were promised a long tenure in wrongful termination lawsuits.

4. More than one person is being let go. Firing five of 20 employees looks suspiciously like age discrimination if they are all over 40 and the remaining employees are 20-somethings.

In especially sensitive cases, it may be wise to consult an employment attorney. If you have a long-standing history of treating all employees fairly and have consistently enforced company policies on job performance, tardiness and absenteeism, you shouldn't have any legal problems with regards to firing an employee. Expect a hearing, however, if you deny a fired worker's claim for unemployment benefits, and be careful what you say in such a hearing, because it will all be recorded by the court and can be used in a wrongful termination lawsuit.

OVER AND OUT

Firings aren't always ugly experiences. Sometimes a person just doesn't fit a particular company or job. They know it, their co-workers know it and their employer knows it. That doesn't mean they won't be a good fit somewhere else, and you may find yourself willing to provide a positive reference for a person you've fired. If you are not willing to recommend a former employee, however, limit comments to prospective employers who call to dates of employment and job responsibilities. Don't bad-mouth the fired employee or you could find yourself slapped with a defamation suit.

Firing people is never easy, and hopefully it won't be a skill you get to practice a lot, but if it's necessary and justified, make it like ripping off a Band-Aid: quick and clean. The whole company will heal a lot quicker that way. ■



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The LATEST in Louisville!

It's new portable sanitation products galore for attendees at the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International at the Kentucky Exposition Center

By Ed Wodalski and Jim Kneiszel

The newest portable sanitation-related products were on display at the 28th Annual Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International in Louisville, Ky., Feb. 28 to March 1.

The event, held at the Kentucky Exposition Center, attracted

11,415 attendees representing 4,688 companies and municipal agencies. The record total of 562 exhibitors included producers of portable restrooms, upscale restroom trailers vacuum trucks and every conceivable accessory for PROs. Here is a sampling of products to hit the Expo show floor for the first time:



DUAL HEIGHT HAND SANITIZER

Filling a need for convenient hand sanitizers for children and the disabled, **PolyJohn Enterprises Corp.** introduces a dual-height **SaniStand**. The two-up, two-down system with off-set foam sanitizer dispensers conveniently serves two adults and two children or disabled individuals. The unit uses drop-in bags of non-alcohol hand sanitizer from PolyJohn's Rid-It line of products. **800/292-1305; www.polyjohn.com.**



FAMILY FRIENDLY RESTROOM

The **Family Room** enhanced access unit from **PolyPortables Inc.** features a wall-mounted, reinforced Koala baby changing station, extra hooks, trash can, a corner-mounted toilet with 40-gallon tank (60-gallon tank optional), motion-activated lights (soon to be converted to LED technology), hand sanitizer and a recessed mirror. **800/241-7951; www.polyportables.com.**

RACE TEAM UNIT

Ameri-Can Engineering has added several upgrades to existing lines and has produced a **specialty unit to be used by the Geico Racing Team**. The race unit is fitted with a 20,000 kw generator to power the team's 11 trailers and showers in both men's and women's sides for convenience. All Ameri-Can trailers are outfitted with oak woodwork, skirting for a sleeker look, and upgraded electrical and light packages. Optional slide-out units have redesigned hydraulic systems. **574/892-5151; www.ameri-can.com.**



ALPINE RESTROOM

Five Peaks Technologies introduced the **Alpine**, a basic restroom with straight lines that contrasts with the angular look of the company's established Five Peaks Aspen and K2 models. The unit features a standard 60-gallon rotomolded drop tank and skid, an ergonomic grab handle, single integrated door return spring and single-wall construction with twin sheet construction in the door and jamb. **231/830-8099; www.fivepeaks.net.**



SCENTED RESTROOM

The **Armal Scent Box** comes in five scents and colors, with the scent embedded into the plastic during the manufacturing process. Based on the new Top Line restroom, the units are Strawberry Field, Apple Blossom, Pinewood Trail, Rose Sensation and Vanilla Bean. The scent is designed to last 3-5 years and can be recharged. Each Scent Box has its distinct color and a new embedded graphics product, called Mybox, allows restroom contractors to personalize units with their own logos or a variety of pre-designed graphics. The Top Line units have new beefier hinges, ergonomic door latch and other upgrades. **770/491-9458; www.armal.biz.**

ODOR NEUTRALIZER

Environmentally friendly, water-based **Odor-Solv**, distributed by **Jack Doherty Supplies Inc.**, is designed to kill mold and bacteria-causing odor, rather than masking the smell. The light-blue formula has virtually no odor of its own and can be diluted for use in restrooms, sinks, showers, and other sanitary applications. **248/349-5048; www.odorsolv.com.**





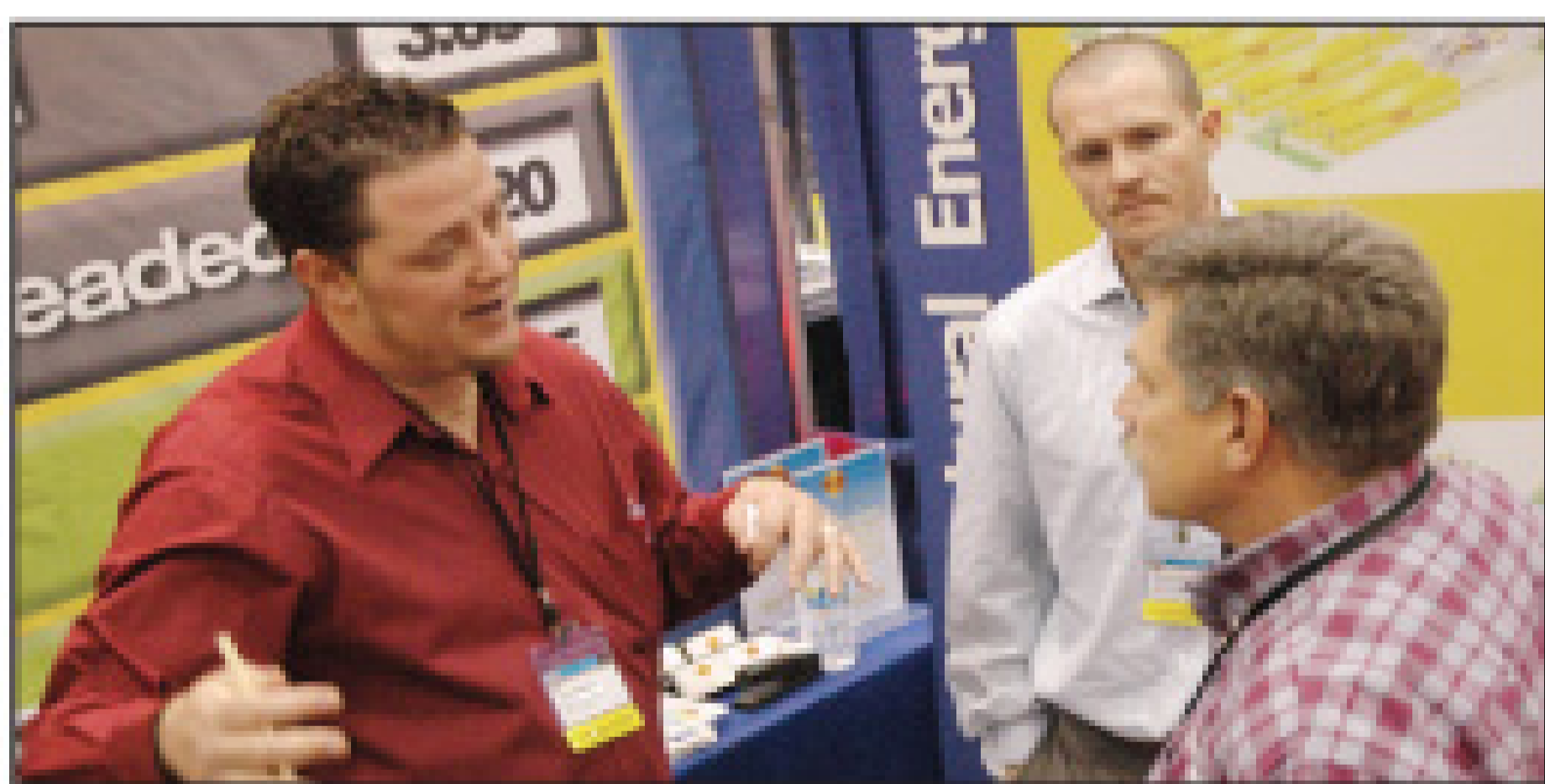
TRIO OF EVENT RESTROOMS

Three new variations of the **Hampel 1.5 portable restroom** add a splash of color to satisfy discerning special event customers. The **Taj** is white with gray interior accents designed for wedding usage. The **Oro Rojo** is a gold and red unit with color-coordinated interior colors. The **Grandeur** is produced in a classy two-tone gray color to provide a neutral backdrop for any event. The special units feature a StyleLight single station sink with towel holder and soap dispenser, an oversized mirror and a recirculating flush system. **800/549-1558; www.hampelcorp.com.**



INDUSTRIAL TRAILER

The new **Industrial Unit** from **Jag Mobile Solutions** is built to perform in the most adverse conditions, such as in fire response, oil field service, industrial and construction sites. The unit features floor and walls sprayed with heavy-duty truck bedliner protector, diamond-plate cover panels, brushed aluminum trim, one-piece floor, super heavy-duty hinges and stainless steel sinks. **800/815-2557; www.jagmobilesolutions.com.**



BIODIESEL FACTORY

Bio-Box from **Pacific Natural** provides the means to convert waste vegetable oil into biodiesel fuel. Available in standard cargo shipping containers, the processing system performs the conversion, while providing storage for methanol, waste vegetable oil and the refined biodiesel. The factory requires approximately 10,000 square feet of land to operate. **818/760-2823; www.stopxon.com.**



ALPHA MOBILE TRAILERS

The new **Century Series** and **Denali** restroom trailers manufactured for **Alpha Mobile Solutions** by Forest River were introduced in 2007, offering several configurations with a sanitary white interior featuring solid surface countertops, one-piece non-skid rubber flooring and china toilets for durability. The units have folding aluminum steps, crank-down stabilizing jacks and several sizes to serve any special event customer. **877/789-1213; www.alphamobilesolutions.com.**

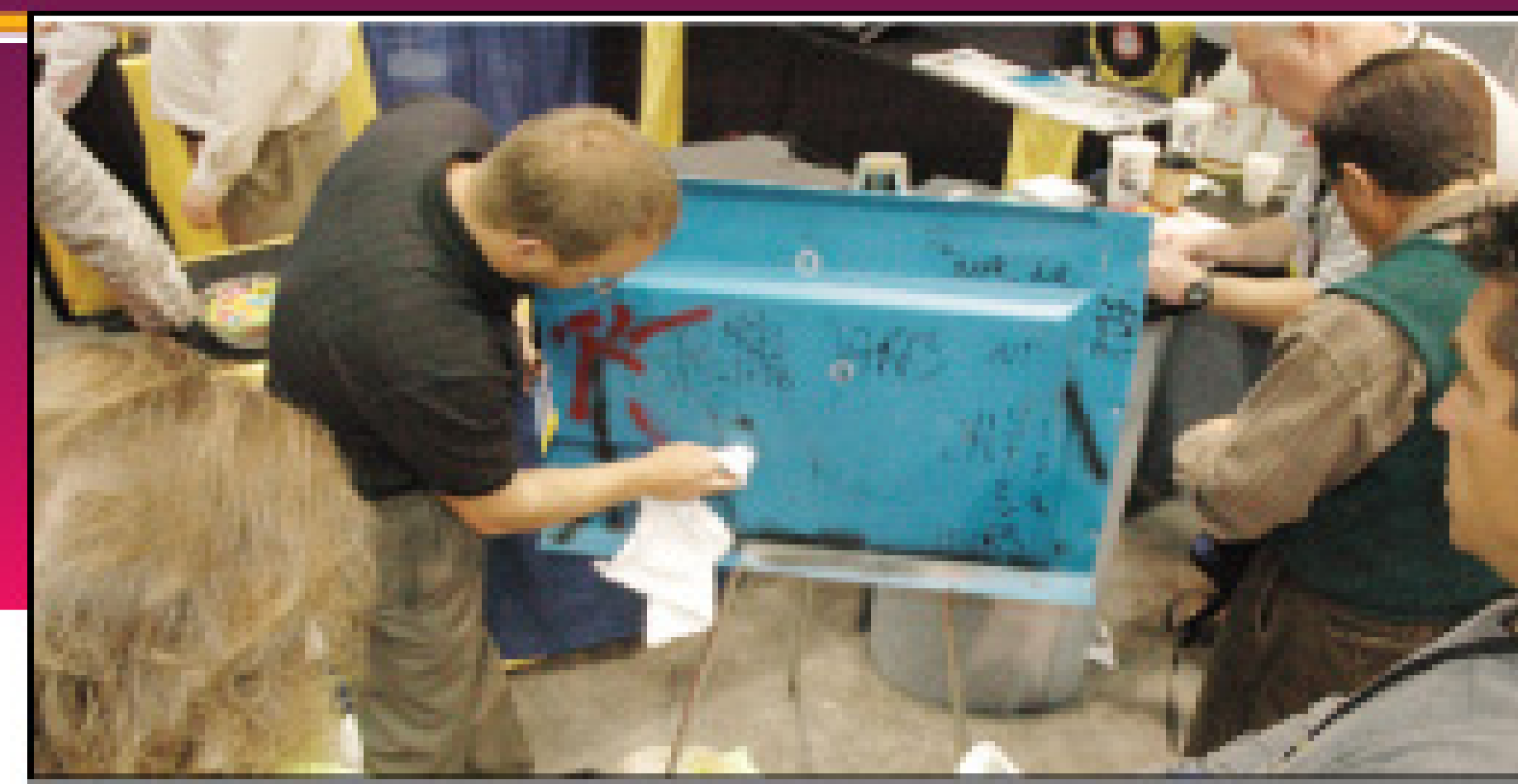


WELLS CARGO PLATINUM

A contemporary European look is the hallmark of the new **Platinum Series Comfort Elite** restroom trailer from **Wells Cargo COG**. Standard features include Corian countertops, floating cabinets, vessel sinks, in-counter soap dispensers, backlit shatterproof mirrors, decorative lighting, china toilets, two 19-inch LCD televisions and CD/DVD player with AM/FM stereo. **888/574-4222; www.wellscargocog.com.**

COMPACT RESTROOM TRAILER

Black Tie Manufacturing has downsized its **Optimum Series trailers**. The smaller **8c** and **10c** models are unisex on both sides, run on basic 20-amp electrical service and can be appointed with a large array of options and features. The single-axle models can be pulled with a pickup truck or vacuum truck. The diminutive 8c weighs 4,000 pounds and has an overall length of 12 feet. **877/253-3533; www.blacktiemanufacturing.com.**



GRAFFITI REMOVER

Wipe Off graffiti remover from **Sunrise Environmental Scientific** is formulated to remove spray paint, crayon, ball-point pen, fingerprints, marker pen, pencil marks, tape residue, lip-stick and more from Formica tops, washroom walls, concrete, brick, chrome and certain synthetics or plastics. It also can remove decals from vehicles and other metal surfaces. **800/648-1153; www.sunriseenv.com.**



MINI CONTAINER/ RESTROOM COMBO

Restroom operators who want to test the waters with trash containers can start with the **RedBox+ Mini**, a 10-foot container manufactured by Wastequip, that also hauls two portable restrooms. The unit is transported and placed with a hydraulic lift trailer controlled by a 9-hp Honda engine. The tandem axle trailer and combo unit can be pulled with a half-ton pickup truck and is designed for use at weddings, racetracks and small remodeling construction jobs. The units are made at 27 locations. **877/611-8069; www.redboxplus.com.**



RUNNING WATER RESTROOM

Designed for construction jobsites and special events, **Sanitation Station** from **DropBox Inc.** offers running water restrooms with full-height stalls and from one to three urinals and utility sinks. Made of a corrugated steel shell, the 20-foot unit includes heating and air conditioning, heavy-duty rubberized floors and dual-locking access doors. A larger self-contained unit and auxiliary water and waste tanks are available. **888/388-7738; www.dropboxinc.com.**

TENTED PORTABLE RESTROOM

Portable restroom operators who want a product to sell as an option for customers who won't lease a unit may consider the **Dometic Comfort Station**, a tented portable restroom utilizing the new Dometic 970 Series portable toilet. The lightweight unit may be placed in remote locations that can't be reached by a service truck and offers PROs a retail product line for campers, tailgaters or other users who would not rent a larger unit. The new tent unit comes with multiple pouches for restroom supplies and a waterproof rain flap. **800/321-9886; www.sealandtechnology.com.**



STACKABLE SINK

The foldable, stackable **Handy Sink** from **Poly-Klyn** is designed for special events, campsites, emergency services, concerts, sporting events and wherever a portable wash station is needed. Made of UV-protected polyethylene, the sinks feature eight taps with press-timing device, two water exits and wastepipe for hose. Measuring approximately 77 inches by 35 inches by 7 inches folded and 77 by 35 by 45 unfolded, the sinks take approximately 30 seconds to set up. An optional mirror kit with eight floating mirrors is available. **(00 34) 902-105-345; www.poly-klyn.com.** ■



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A Mighty Wind

Portable restroom driver Steve Demay of Allied Recycling Inc. services units at a construction site in Fort Myers, Fla. (Photos by Tami Addison)



Despite numerous hurricanes and a construction industry downdraft, Allied Portables blows into the portable sanitation business

By Mary Shafer

Ask Brown Thompson if there's really a silver lining in every cloud, and the sales and marketing manager for Allied Recycling Inc. will tell you he's a believer. In fact, he says, where it concerns the Fort Myers, Fla., metal recycling company, the bigger the cloud, the larger the lining.

Those clouds rolled across southwest Florida in waves of devastating hurricanes from 2004-06. More dark clouds loomed

on the horizon in the collapse in early 2007 of the most robust building boom in the country. But far from hunkering down in endurance mode, Thompson read the market and trusted his gut. Turning tragedy and adversity into opportunity, Thompson helped Allied expand its business by launching a new division that included portable restroom rentals.

Allied is using relationships with established accounts as an entry point to

introduce new services. From there, the company leverages satisfied customer referrals to expand into areas competitors have held a lock on for years. It's a "layered" approach to business that builds on a strong and clear business philosophy.

CHANGE BLOWS IN

Allied has two scrap metal recycling yards in Fort Myers, and another about 20 miles north in Punta Gorda. The businesses and their service areas on the southwest coast suffered greatly from a sustained, direct hit from 2004's Hurricane Charley. The subsequent cleanup of destroyed areas resulted in an explosion of business for the metal recycling, hauling and roll-off container portions of Allied's business. "We were open 24/7 for about three months straight after Hurricane Charley," Thompson remembers. "We still have containers out for cleanup on some of those islands." Hurricane Jeanne barreled into them again a month later, with an intermediate buffeting from Hurricane Frances. The area also felt glancing blows in 2005 from Tropical Storm Arlene and hurricanes Dennis and Rita. It took direct hits from monster hurricanes Katrina and Wilma.

Allied's services were needed in Mississippi after the multiple-storm devastation. The company established a satellite office in Moss Point, Miss., settling in for the long haul.

Allied Portables, a division of Allied Recycling Inc. Fort Myers, Fla.

Owner: Chester Adamson

Years in business: 15

Employees: 100 (6 for portable sanitation)

Specialties: Metal recycling, roll-off containers, portable restrooms

Service area: Lee, Charlotte, Collier and Hendry counties

Affiliations: Portable Sanitation Association International; Construction Materials Recycling Association; county building associations

Web site: www.alliedsiteservices.com



Office personnel Donna Borghi (from left), Linn Beauregarde and Linda Isley handle requests for portable restrooms, roll-off containers and metal recycling.



"We're dedicated to solving their problems, so we don't nickel-and-dime them for every little thing. We don't market ourselves as cheap, though. We emphasize good value for our cost, and our units are brand new with excellent service."

Brown Thompson

Another direct hit was scored on southwest Florida by 2006's Hurricane Ernesto, and in 2007, Tropical Storm Barry took a swipe as well.

While servicing roll-off and hauling contracts, Thompson noted a sharp upsurge in requests for related services such as portable restrooms. Harried site managers, under the gun to finish quickly so government aid could begin flowing in, looked for the easiest path to completion. Multiple services from a single provider seemed an ideal solution. Unfortunately, Allied wasn't structured to provide that need.

Thompson, trying to provide the best service, helped customers find portable sanitation contractors. He also noted the potential profits Allied was leaving on the table. "If we'd have had the services to offer, that money would have walked right in the door with no effort on our part," he recalls.

On top of that frustration, he began to

see disturbing downward trends in what had been a blisteringly hot construction market. That didn't bode well for the construction and demolition container part of Allied's business.

Until early 2007, southwest Florida had claimed the largest statistical housing boom in the country. Condos couldn't go up fast enough to meet the overly exuberant demand. Allied was doing well with its metal recycling, hauling and container business at demolition sites, while PROs were experiencing their own boom in plentiful construction contracts.

Then, as the new year began, the bubble burst in Florida. Almost overnight, the market reached saturation, secondary

mortgage lenders began tightening the purse strings, and new construction dried up.

TIME OF RECKONING

The sudden shift in fortunes shook the entire market. After 15 years in heavily construction-dependent businesses, Allied Recycling had to face conditions that could easily have led to its demise. Instead, the company sought new ways to offer value-added services to existing clients.

Strong roll-off business for hurricane debris removal stabilized the hauling business, so Thompson turned to remedying the lack of a portables division. Based on the trends he'd noted and on research of the needs of potential and existing customers, management launched Allied

Portables. A third division, Allied Site Services, was created to help market and deliver services from both sides of the business.

"We didn't have any background in portables, so we were shooting from

Restroom driver Steve Demay services a unit while roll-off driver John Brock picks up a 30-yard container used for construction debris.



A Satellite service truck with restroom rolls past an 80-yard dump trailer.





One of 10 roll-off containers can be seen alongside a portable restroom unit.



Two more units from Allied Portables are onsite at a precast concrete facility in Florida.

the hip,” admits Thompson. He realized the need to get educated. “I started going to the trade shows and learning how to do it right. In daily operations, we fell back on Allied’s mission to offer superior service and value, and knew our portables customers would be expecting this level of service. When we offered it, they jumped at the chance to work with a known vendor they already had a good relationship with.”

Thompson quickly learned the portable sanitation business would only be as good as the restrooms it offered and the vehicles that serviced them, so he began immediately building the fleet and the inventory. The company purchased two 2007 Satellite MAL 1350 pumper trucks/delivery vehicles with aluminum 900-gallon waste/450-gallon freshwater tanks, both carrying Masport HXL4V pumps. For large orders, Allied uses roll-off trucks to deliver up to 10 units at a time.

Those units consist of 160 PolyPortables Integra restrooms. Allied first bought 75 of these at attractive prices from another company that was changing its corporate colors.

BUSINESS MIX

Metal recycling constitutes the majority of the company’s business, representing about 75 percent of the mix; roll-off container rentals account for 15 percent, and portables about 10 percent. Of that, 85 percent of the units are placed on construction sites, while the rest are rented by homeowners for private use.

“I don’t think we’re going to have

a down season,” Thompson says, because even with the current slump, construction goes on all year. “Jobsites end and the units get picked up, but we’re currently putting out four units for every one that comes back.” How does Allied manage to keep growing while others have cut back?

“Even with the economy slowing, we found gaps in the market that we knew were there, and moved into them.” It was a matter of establishing an economy of scale by reaching primarily into Allied’s existing customer pool with a new service. “People recog-

nize our red units and labeling, so they see it’s a sister service. We did that on purpose. We’ve kept the service really streamlined,

Every employee must convey the company’s mission

Brown Thompson, sales and marketing manager for Allied Recycling Inc., is steered at all times by the company’s mission: “If you’re serious about succeeding in this industry, the first thought should be that you’re in the business of satisfying a need, not just renting a product. You’re in the service business, and that should be the focus that guides all your activities and work.”

But it’s not enough, he says, simply for management to embrace this tenet. It’s important that everyone — from the people who answer your phones to the maintenance people in the yard to your truck drivers — embody your way of doing business. And then they need to express that philosophy in the field.

“For instance, we have this one really good driver. He’s very dedicated, really cares about his work, and is a creative thinker. On one job, he’s separated out a group of units that will be getting tracked with residual tar from roofers. It’s unavoidable, so the driver has made sure those units will only be used on that kind of job. It keeps other units from becoming prematurely unusable, and that saves money for us in the long run. We can pass those savings on to our customers, making us more competitive in a really tough market.

The upshot is that, while one general contractor doesn’t use Allied Portables exclusively, his subcontractor does. “Instead of the general contractor having to tell his customer it’ll take a few days to get a portable to the jobsite, the sub says he’ll call us,” Thompson explains. “We show up immediately. Makes them look good and us look good. We see it as our chance to prove ourselves.”



Brown Thompson (right) speaks with designer Josh Smith. Thompson says decals provide branding and give restrooms a professional appearance.



Allied Portables supplies a bank of restrooms for employee use at the company's scrap metal recycling yard.



Steve Demay uses pre-measured tablets as a mess-free way to service restrooms.

incurring almost no overhead other than buying the new units and pumper trucks. So the bump in business from cross-selling and upselling from other services is almost pure profit. Our customers love it. It's one less subcontractor and (purchase order) for them to worry about."

"Our competitive advantage is that we had already established a brand name in our area, and we just leveraged that," says Thompson. "We're a service company that just happens to service portables and roll-offs. We will go out of our way to find the most efficient and cost-effective way to serve our customers."

"We're dedicated to solving their problems, so we don't nickel-and-dime them for every little thing. We don't market ourselves as cheap, though. We emphasize good value for our cost, and our units are brand new with excellent service."

WEB PRESENCE

The metal recycling industry has strict safety policies because workers are always around powerful machines and heavy equipment. This has also played a part in giving Allied's portables customers peace of mind, since all staff receive the same safety training. All new hires, before they even interview, have their driver's license run by Allied's insurance company. Those that pass muster must take a drug test, and agree to submit to random ongoing tests.

Allied Portables keeps an edge on profitability by driving new business hard. "Web sites are our biggest marketing tool, for sure," says Thompson. "We didn't go cheap on them. They're easy to find and use, and we've implemented a strong

search engine optimization (SEO) program. This is the new age and that's what's here, so that's where we put the majority of our budget. But we still have to hit the streets and get our name out there. We do personal and telephone cold calling."

Allied hired a company to provide restroom decals and apply them professionally. They use *Yellow Pages* ads, and their trucks are branded and well maintained. They aim for a highly professional appearance, with "no cutesy quotes," according to Thompson. "We get a lot of referrals."

Overall, Thompson sees a bright future. "I think we at least have another couple years of the downward turn in construction, so until it turns back up, it's going to be a fight. We not only have to protect our existing market, but also have to grow as aggressively as possible. We'll just keep

winning customer loyalty by delivering what they need and making it easy and convenient to work with us."

In the end, he says, service really is about paying attention to details. "You can do all the big things right, but if your customers have to put up with small details that nag or annoy, that's what they'll remember. Since our growth strategy is to build more layers of service with existing accounts, it's critical that we get all the details right." ■

MORE INFO:

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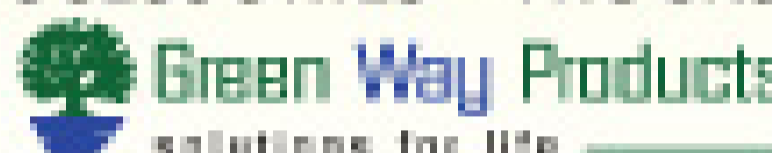
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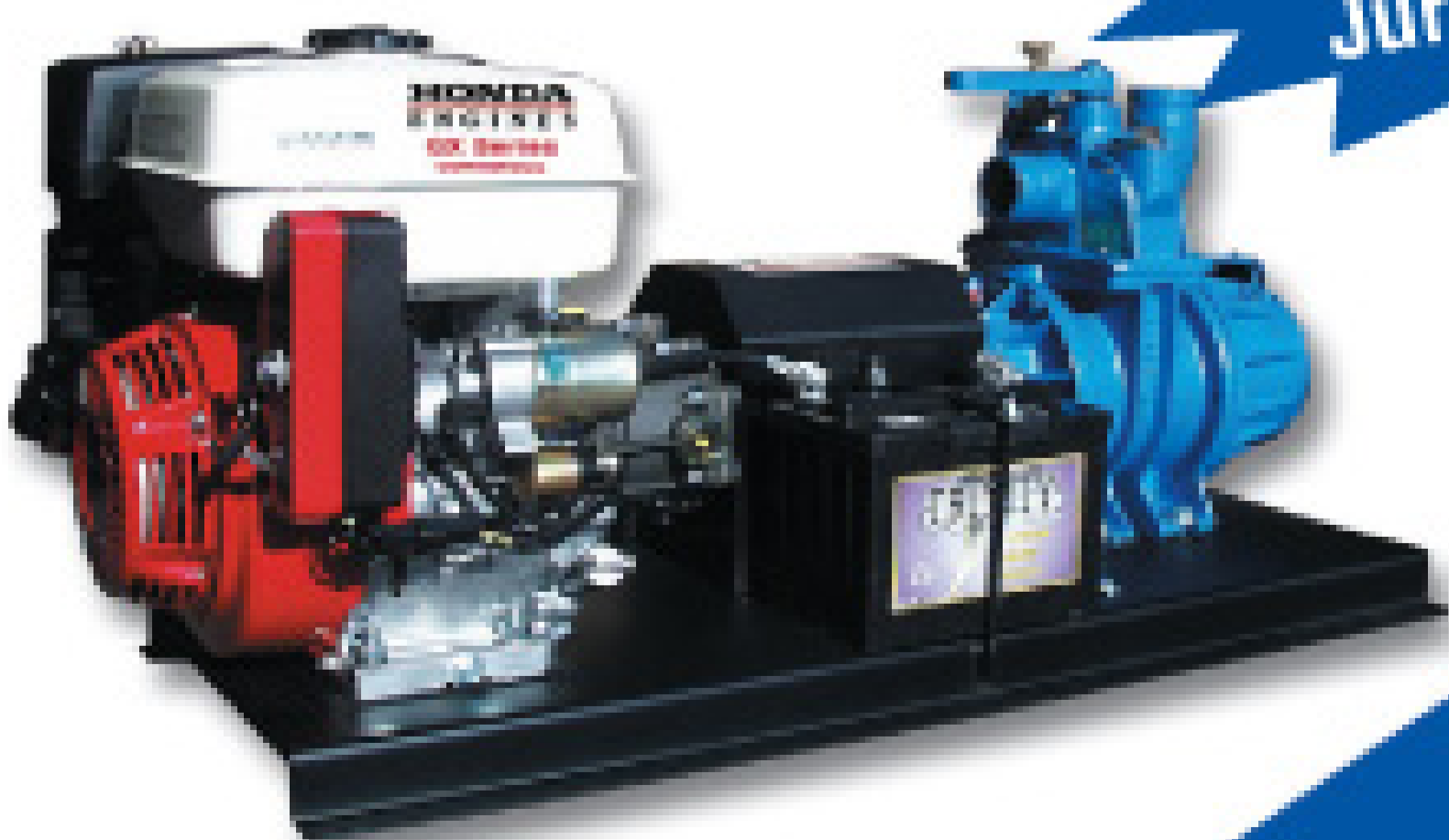
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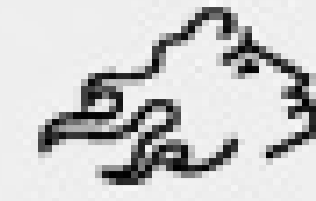


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Mary Shafer writes about issues important to PROs. Direct comments or questions to Shafer at thinktank@promonthly.com.



Occupational Hazard

Fighting odor is a constant priority for restroom contractors set on building customer satisfaction

By Mary Shafer

Let's face it: Odor is part of the nature of this business. Controlling it is an ongoing challenge for every PRO. More than a simple technical problem, odor control can actually become a public relations issue if not handled well. No one wants to use a smelly restroom, and all odor control products are not equal, in makeup or effectiveness. How well PROs meet this challenge can end up reflecting on the entire industry, so it's important to spend some time thinking about. Three contractors share their odor control strategies to provide some food for thought.



Dennis Nelson

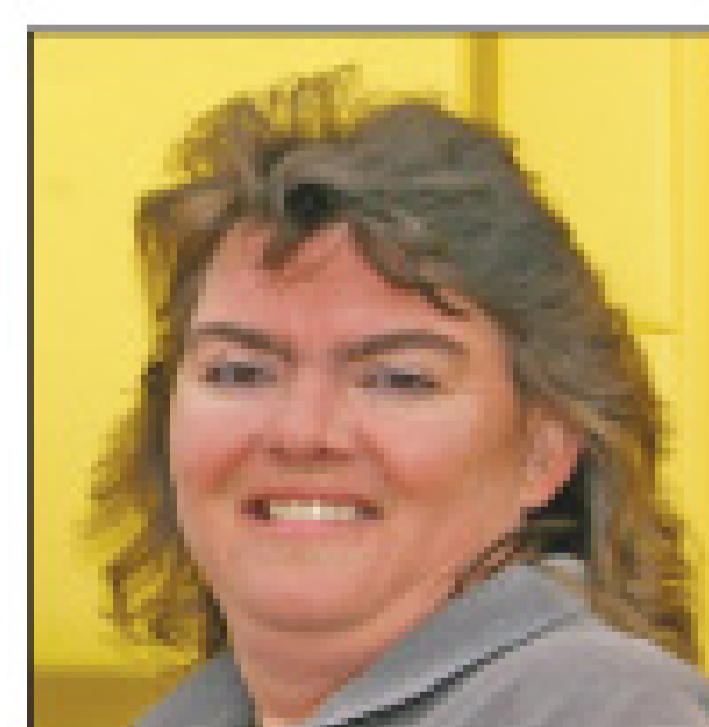
Name: Dennis & Susan Nelson, Owners
Company: Nelson Septic Service
Location: Sheridan, Mont.
Employees: 1
Years in Business: 6



Susan Nelson

Still relatively new in the industry, Dennis Nelson and his wife, Susan, bought their business from a friend when he retired. They continued his use of Satellite Industries' Regular Quick Scent tank additive for most of the year. They move to Quick Scent Plus in summer to boost effectiveness, opting for solid scent blocks in urinals. The Nelsons opt for Satellite's Fresh-Form Deodorizing Oils for tougher applications,

and to avoid interaction with the methanol they use as winter antifreeze. "We're also going to try stick-up disks and paper roll spinners," says Susan, "to see if they add anything for a more pleasant atmosphere."



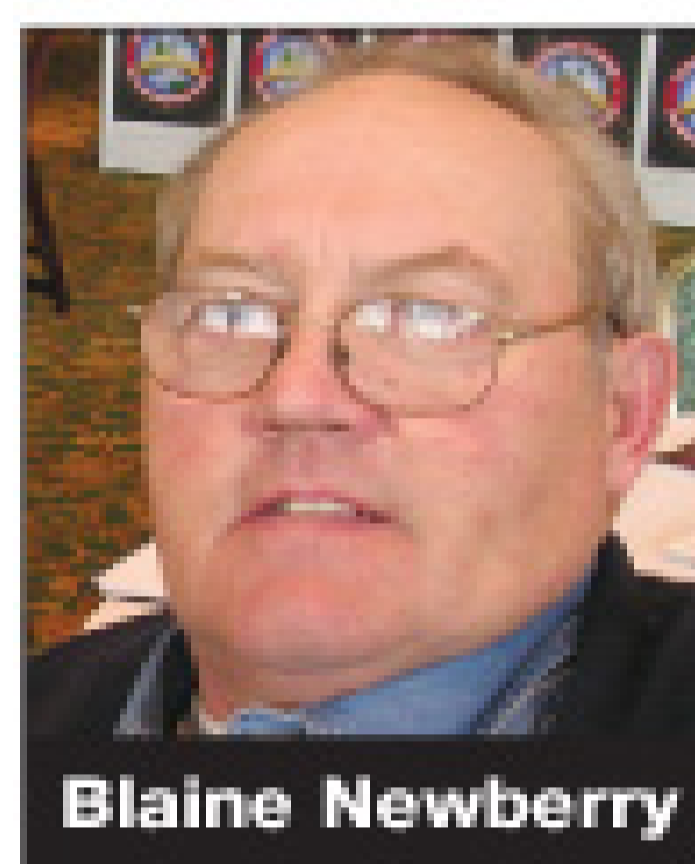
Dawn Beierle

Name: Dawn Beierle, Owner
Company: A Comfort Shack
Location: Platteville, Colo.
Employees: 2
Years in Business: 4

Dawn Beierle takes it personally if one of her units isn't "up to snuff" odor-wise, and has made it her mission that no one who uses one of her restrooms will have to endure unpleasant smells. "If they start stinking, I bring them back to the yard and put bleach in them. They sit for a while full to the rim, and then we disinfect — not just deodorize — them."

Many of Beierle's 250 units are located "30-40 miles from civilization" on the often hot, arid flatlands along Colorado's front

range, she says. "I need to know they're clean. It all starts with pumping it right. We don't leave the last little bit in there. When we're done, it's moist but not yucky. You can touch it." Then she gets in the corners with a pressure washer and wipes the entire unit down before replacing it in the field.



Blaine Newberry

Name: Blaine & J. P. Newberry, Owners
Company: Tri-County Portable Toilet & Septic
Location: Big Rapids, Mich.
Employees: 4-12, seasonally
Years in Business: 40



J. P. Newberry

Blaine and J. P. Newberry find their greatest challenges with odor control and general cleanliness in units rented to construction clients. "We work hard to have nice units," says J. P. "There is, unfortunately, a certain segment of the construction industry that doesn't care, but our name is on the unit," she adds. So, she and her husband recommend larger units to contractors, so the tanks will accommodate actual usage.

"We also try to get them to use enough toilets for the amount of people. On one jobsite, we had a crew of 80 on two units. That's ridiculous, but it's what they were doing, and we don't want our units to have a bad reputation. We have a special cleaning crew that goes onsite to handle those situations, but it's a struggle," adds Blaine. "There are a lot of good products out there, but you can't fault the product when there are just too many people on a unit."

Their company also serves area parks, which can have similar issues, since park managers don't know how many people will show up to use their facilities at any given time. "We get a lot of last-minute calls due to poor planning, though," Blaine says.

The Newberrys use many different products to battle the unavoidable odor of overuse. They use pre-packaged chemicals that comply with state-mandated non-formaldehyde formulas. ■

"There are a lot of good products out there, but you can't fault the product when there are just too many people on a unit."

Blaine Newberry

BONUS Think Tank Thought

Australia's Stephen Juan, Ph.D., who considers himself an "explainer" of human behavior, has written an interesting article on the "Psychology of Smell," which is both enlightening and entertaining. Check it out at http://harpercollins.com.au/drstephenjuan/news_smell.htm.



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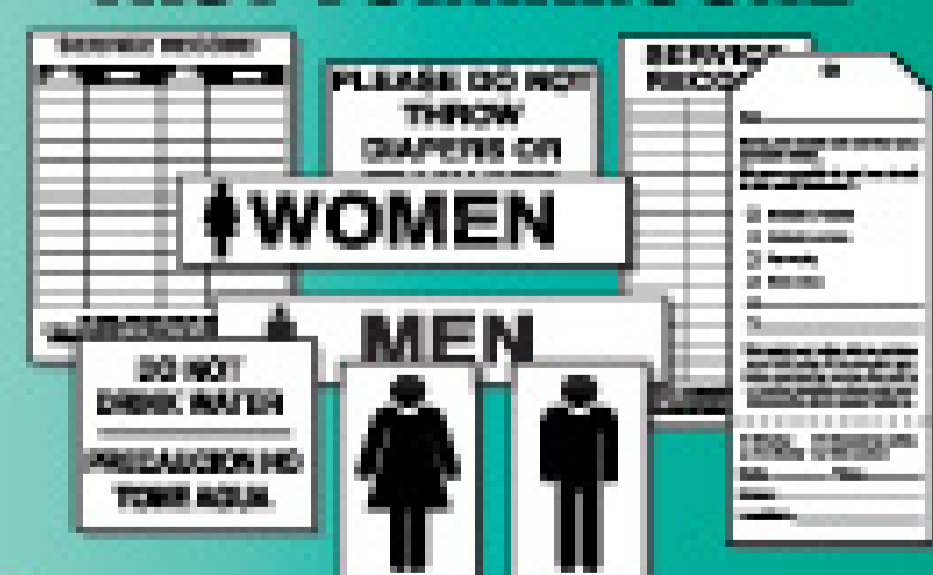
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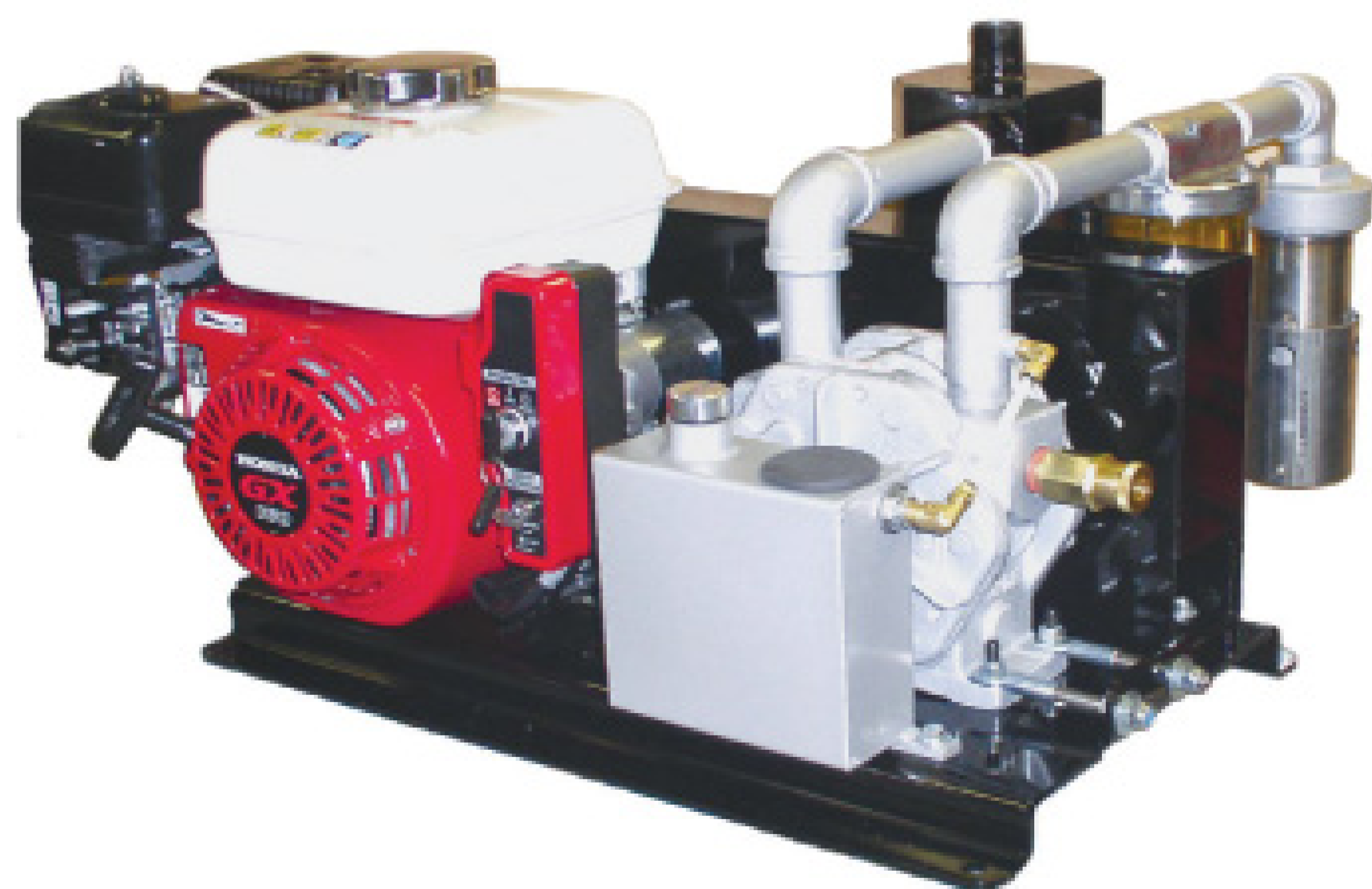


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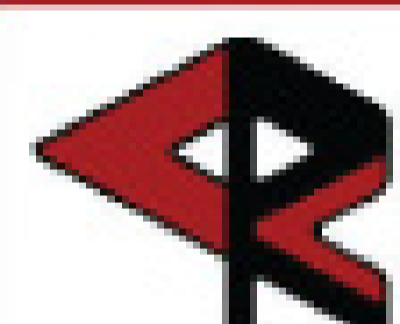


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Green Odor Control

Restroom deodorant manufacturers promote eco-friendly tank additive solutions

By Ed Wodalski

Restroom deodorant makers are seeing the need to go green. Environmentally friendly enzymes and biodegradable additives have become the natural way for restroom contractors to break down restroom waste and control odor. Whether it's

non-staining dyes, graffiti removers or pre-scented restrooms, green has become the color of choice.

Single-day, event-sized tablets, as well as weekly use portions, offer to take the mess and guesswork out of restroom service, making it easy for PROs to save

some green of their own by matching deodorant strength to the job at hand.

As the busy work season quickly approaches, here are some of the environmentally friendly choices designed to make your job easier, safer and a little more green.

DEL VEL RELEASES DEODORIZER, GRAFFITI REMOVER, ANTIFREEZE

Eliminator Nano, a non-toxic, biodegradable emulsifier/deodorant is one of three new restroom products from **Del Vel Chemical Co.** The deep rich blue, non-staining, non-formaldehyde concentrate is available in liquid and gel packs. Scents include bubble gum, cherry and mulberry. Also new for 2008 are the company's **Graffiti Remover** and **Nev-R-Freeze** natural restroom antifreeze. The environmentally friendly, bio-based graffiti remover is available in grit and no-grit formulas. It's designed to remove marker, pen, paint, grease, lipstick and pencil marks. Made of plant and vegetable matter, the biodegradable antifreeze requires no mixing and contains no methanol. **800/699-9903; www.delvel.com.**



J & J CHEMICAL'S ART BLASTER LEAVES PROTECTIVE SHEEN

Art Blaster graffiti remover from **J & J Chemical Co.** is designed to remove paint, pen, crayon, tar, soap scum, grease, calcium buildup and many more substances. Available in assorted sizes, once applied, the spray leaves a protective sheen that makes even pencil marks easy to wipe off. **800/345-3303; www.jjchem.com.**



CHEMPACE OFFERS THREE NON-FORMALDEHYDE TREATMENTS

Big Shot Con 2, **Big Shot Con 2 Plus** and **Ultra PowrPaks** are three of the latest non-formaldehyde restroom treatments from **Chempace Corp.** Big Shot Con 2 and Con 2 Plus feature a blend of odor blockers and neutralizers designed to

stay fresh for up to seven days in summer heat. The time-released, water-soluble PowrPaks offer increased fragrance for greater odor control in heavily used sites and come pre-packaged in a carry pail. **800/423-5350; www.chempace.com.**



EZ PORTABLE RESTROOM DEODORIZER DESIGNED FOR HEAT

Available in fruity floral, candy spice and mulberry mash, **ez Portable Restroom Deodorizer** from **Great Lakes Bio Systems Inc.** is designed to provide odor control in higher temperatures. Featuring concentrated enzymes and natural blue dyes, the formaldehyde- and chemical-free formula naturally emulsifies solids and accelerates the breakdown of solids and odor-causing contaminants. It also removes insect-inviting organics. **800/236-1366; www.glb-enzymes.com.**

ARMAL RELEASES FIVE ECO-FRIENDLY FRAGRANCES

Armal's eco-friendly, non-formaldehyde **odor-control formula** is available in five new fragrances: strawberry field, apple blossom, pinewood trail, rose sensation and vanilla bean. Packaged in 5- and



55-gallon containers, the formula is designed to provide continuous and hot-weather odor control. **866/873-7796; www.armal.biz.**

NON-TOXIC QUIKCHARGE TACKLES TOUGH BACTERIA

The non-toxic, odorless, colorless, non-corrosive and non-flammable **QuikCharge** from **Earth Friendly Chemicals Inc.** is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-registered, Category 4 disinfectant. The silver dihydrogen citrate-based product promises 24-hour residual protection against standard and resistant bacteria, with a 2-minute kill claim on MRSA. The formula also is designed to destroy other pathogens, such as HIV 1, Influenza A, Rhino virus, Herpes Simplex Type 1, Polio Type 2, Human Corona Virus, SARS Surrogate, Rotavirus, Avian Influenza, Feline Calicivirus (Norwalk Virus) and many more. **757/226-2750; www.efchem.com.**



SATELLITE ADDS COMPLETE CONCENTRATE TO SAFE-T-FRESH LINE

Satellite Industries Inc. has added a complete concentrate liquid to its **Safe-T-Fresh** line of deodorizers, providing a midlevel option



to its syrup and ready-to-use products. The company also offers the environmentally friendly **Bio Quick Scent** dissolvable packet and portion-controlled **Quik Tabs**, available in Extreme and Event options. Both come in fresh and mulberry twist fragrances for drop-and-go odor control. **800/328-3332; www.satelliteindustries.com.**

to its syrup and ready-to-use products. The company also offers the environmentally friendly **Bio Quick Scent** dissolvable

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HUR INTRODUCES FOUR WAYS TO BATTLE ODOR

Environmentally friendly **Dyna-Bact**, biodegradable concentrate, pre-measured tablets and water-soluble sachets are four new odor-fighting offerings from **Hur Chemical and Contract Packaging Inc.** Ten years in development, Dyna-Bact incorporates Bionutral technology. The all-natural deodorizer uses biological action to clean tanks and restroom components. Its pre-measured, time-release restroom deodorizers are available in special event **Daily Tablets** or **Supertabs** for weekly service. Both come in mulberry or fresh scent fragrances. The Aqua Toss deodorizing sachets offer environmentally friendly, biodegradable odor control in the convenience of pre-measured packets. **800/233-4089; www.hurchem.com.**



CENTURY ADDS GRAPE BURST TO FRAGRANCE LINE

Century Chemical Corp. has added grape burst to its **Toi-De-Fresh** line of formaldehyde and non-formaldehyde deodorizers. Other fragrances include wild cherry, bubble gum, soapy, lemon and orange. Deodorizers are available in both pre-mix and super concentrated syrup, as well as environmentally friendly, formaldehyde free, pre-measured toss-in packets. **800/348-3505; www.centurychemical.com. ■**


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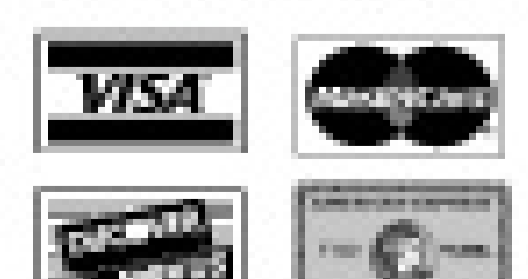
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We're Here for the PROs!

Have you ever wondered how we generate story ideas for the pages of *PRO*? Portable sanitation contractors are our most important sources for the news and feature stories you see here every month.

If you have an issue-oriented story idea or know of a fellow con-

tractor whose success story should be told, please call or write and tell us about it.

Editor Jim Kneisel may be reached through COLE Publishing by phone at 800/257-7222, by mail at P.O. Box 220, Three Lakes, Wis. 54562, or by e-mail at editor@promonthly.com.

Here's a sampling of features that appear in the pages of *PRO*:

WORKING VACATION

Do you have trouble leaving your work behind when you visit faraway places? If your camera holds images of portable restrooms and associated rental products along with the usual vacation shots of tourist attractions or the family frolicking on the beach, we want to hear from you. We'll share your snapshots and portable restroom travel tales in *Working Vacation*.

TAKE 5

Some days you only have a few minutes over a cup of coffee to take a breather in your hectic workday. We want to help you make the most of those few moments by introducing you to a PRO or

industry leader who addresses the five issues that have the greatest impact on their job or business. If you know someone in the industry who could offer valuable insights to others, we'll feature them in *Take 5*.

PRO FORUM CHATTER

An interesting portable sanitation roundtable discussion awaits you anytime at the *PRO E-mail Discussion* at www.promonthly.com. If you haven't already subscribed to this free e-mail idea exchange, check it out on our Web site (click on the *PRO E-Mail Discussion* icon to sign up) and start talking about industry issues with counterparts across the country. We print some of those discussions in the magazine under the headline *PRO Forum Chatter*. ■

Bob Carlson (left) and Jerry Kirkpatrick answer your questions in Truck Corner.



Check the Four-Way Valve Flap

Reverse pressure at shutoff is easily explained; no need to replace the pump

QUESTION:
Lately, whenever I get done pumping, I turn off my vacuum pump and it starts spinning backwards. Is something broke? Makes me wonder if I need a new vacuum pump. But when I turn the pump on again, it runs pretty much OK. Tell me anything, but don't tell me I need a new pump.

Roger McClansky
Pierre, S.D.

ANSWER:
If you want to buy a new pump, you can, but it really isn't necessary. This question comes up quite a bit at seminars. So don't think you're the only one with this problem. It happens. Here's what's going on.

If you have a pump with a four-way valve, the flap under the valve is bad or gone. This can be repaired by replacing the flap. Make sure you look at your parts manual to get the right part for the right pump. Not all parts are interchangeable for different pumps. What happens when this flap breaks, or in some cases just disappears, is that you turn off your vacuum pump, and with the flap broken or gone, the vacuum now wants to escape, if possible. This flap makes it possible.

In the event you don't have a four-way valve, look into the check valve. When there is no four-way valve on the pump, a check valve inside the pump holds the vacuum when the pump is turned off. This valve, if broken, will need to be replaced.

What's the point of all these manways anyway?

QUESTION:
I haven't been in the business long, but I have a question about manways. My tank has an 1,100-gallon capacity, but no manway on top. It does have one coming out the rear head. I've seen lots of trucks with manways on top and no manway in the back. What exactly is the purpose, if there is one, for these manways? And if I buy another tank, do I really need any manways?

Norm Merriman
Portland, Ore.

ANSWER:
First, your tank does not require any manways for the system to function properly. There are three main reasons why pumpers have manholes in their tanks:

- First, the manway on top provides access for visual inspec-

tion of the inside of the tank. Sometimes a pumper may need to check the condition of his baffles inside the tank or look for other defects in the tank. And it's handy for cleaning out the tank with a hose, if needed. This cleaning can be done from above when some items are not dumping. Water pressure can sometimes free up sticky stuff. This is especially helpful in cleaning out the front part of the tank, which can't be reached from the rear.

The downside to manways on top of the tank is that they add an element of risk for those climbing up to open the lid. A man can slide or fall off the tank and possibly get hurt, so care needs to be taken to avoid accidents and injury.

- Second, the rear manway allows for cleaning also. With the rear hatch open, one can again hose out the rear section of the tank. This can be done on the ground and allows for easier and more complete dumping. But, as mentioned above, it may not reach up into the front of the tank if there are baffles in the tank.

- Third, and this is the one that nobody likes, manways on top and in the rear provide access for someone to get inside the tank if necessary. Nobody wants to, but there are times that repairs must be made from the inside. If there are no manways in the tank and the tank needs repair, you will soon be paying for a manhole because the only way to get inside the tank is to cut a hole and put a manway in the place of the cut. It is true, however, that it is possible you'll never open up a manway on top of the tank.

Most of the people we deal with put one on top of their tank. Not everybody puts a manway out the rear head. It's a good idea, but if you have a history of pumping stuff that flows easily, then there is no real need for the rear manhole. Many people simply go with a 4-inch or 6-inch dump valve. Again, it depends on what you are pumping. It adds to the cost of a tank to add these manways, so if you don't really need them, save your money.

Bob Carlson and Jerry Kirkpatrick of Arizona-based Glendale Welding have over 50 years combined experience dealing with portable sanitation truck issues. Fax questions to them, addressed to Truck Corner, at 623/937-3688, or send Bob and Jerry an e-mail at truckcorner@promonthly.com. ■

The manway on top provides access for visual inspection of the inside of the tank. Sometimes a pumper may need to check the condition of his baffles inside the tank or look for other defects in the tank. And it's handy for cleaning out the tank with a hose if needed.



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