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ON THE COVER

Bob Drayton III learned the art of

truck building from his father and

grandfather. Drayton's prize

project is this 2007 International

4400 service vehicle with 2,300-

gallon stainless steel tank.

(Photo by Randy DeMore)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Editor: Same Name on the Door

Extended family steps up to carry on the tradition at Michigan's VanPolen Portables.

Jim Kneiszel

10 Back at the Office: Credit Card Crunch

Because other forms of lending are tight, small businesses are relying more heavily on credit cards; but beware, reforms apply only to consumer cards.

Judy Kneiszel

12 PROfile: Bob the Builder



Can the third-generation owner of Mr. Bob Portable Toilet Rentals build a restroom service vehicle? Yes he can.

Ed Wodalski

18 Consciousness of Stream

Stay on top of routine maintenance to extend the life of your pressure washer.

Dan Leiss

22 On Location: A Good Bet

New California PRO All Cal Services hits the jackpot with a major casino expansion project.

Betty Dageforde

24 **Industry News**

26 Slide-in & Trailer Vacuum Units: Small & Sensible

Pickup-mounted or tow-behind vacuum trailer units offer cost-effective pumping power and convenient emergency backup.

Ed Wodalski

PRO Business: Paying a Premium 30

As another fallout of the financial crisis, you can expect your business insurance costs to rise this year.

Mark Herring

31 Product News

36 Think Tank: The Right Rig for the Job

PROs share their thoughts about matching the right tank and pump with a chassis for the best service rig.

Mary Shafer

38 Truck Corner: Seeing is Believing

Evidence found during pump teardown tells an unfortunate tale of lackadaisical maintenance.

Bob Carlson and Jerry Kirkpatrick

COMING NEXT MONTH - August 2009

Special Issue: Sparkling Service

PRO Business: A blueprint for customer service success



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Ameri-Can Engineering25 Anchor Graphics Inc8	G	The second secon	/lilton Foss	17	Restrooms USA LLC19 Ronco Plastics25
ARMSTRONG EQUIPMENT INC. Armstrong Equipment Inc11	Green Way by Poly		moro		T
Asino8		g Gloup 17	Noro USA East Inc Nosmatic Inc		The Service Program29
Best Enterprises Inc	i illibellal liluustiles	Inc31	N New Way Portable Toilet	2	Toico Industries8
C Century Paper & Chemical5	J & J Chemical Co J. C. Gury Compar		O Odour Treatment Essent	tials7	TSF Company Inc39
Classifieds37			P		w
Comforts of Home	KeeVac Industries	Inc.	Pik Rite Inc	16	Walex11
Comforts of Home Services17	L				WELLS
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Same Name on the Door

Extended family steps up to carry on the tradition at Michigan's VanPolen Portables

By Jim Kneiszel

In December 2007, we introduced you to the VanPolen Family of McBain, Mich., as they were coming to grips with the death of father and husband Bill VanPolen, the rock solid foundation of their family business, VanPolen Portables.

It was a sad, but inspirational holiday-season story about Bill's struggles with serious illness and how his wife, Dollene, and in particular, their spunky daughter, Mary, worked hard to preserve the business in a tough situation. They persevered, and a year ago we caught up with them to find Mary contemplating whether or not she would throw herself full-bore into portable sanitation or choose a different career path.

Candid in her response to finding herself immersed in her parents' business, Mary admitted she didn't know how she wanted to proceed back then. Dollene, dealing with grief while the business phone kept ringing, also didn't have any answers about the future of the company.

It was the kind of story anyone who operates small businesses could relate to. I suspect the VanPolens' plight sparked more than one kitchen table discussion among families who could imagine themselves in the same situation one day. I know hearing of their struggles firsthand made me pause and reflect about the fragile web that holds a family business together.



Above (from left): Bill, Dollene and Mary VanPolen before Bill passed away. Below, the new owners, Ken and Landa VanPolen, will keep the small local business in the family.



Candid in her response to finding herself immersed in her parents' business, Mary admitted she didn't know how she wanted to proceed back then. Dollene, dealing with grief while the business phone kept ringing, also didn't have any answers about the future of the company.

THE NEXT STEP

Closing in on two years after Bill VanPolen's death, there's a resolution to the story. It's a tale of the strength of a mother-daughter relationship and fidelity of extended family that is rare in a day where people are constantly on the move.

Last fall, Mary VanPolen told her mom she wanted to return to her past career as a dental hygienist and leave the portable sanitation business. Dollene respected her decision, but had made it clear that if Mary left the business, she would get out as well. As luck would have it, Dollene found a buyer just a few miles down their country road, as her nephew Ken VanPolen and his wife, Landa, jumped at the opportunity.

Discussing how to go about selling the business, Dollene's son, Scott, wondered if his cousin Ken would be interested.

"We gave him a call on a whim, and he was over here within the hour, so I guess he was quite interested," Dollene recalled.

The two families informally plotted out a transition over the winter, and Ken took over the business in February. "And he didn't have to change the stickers on the door or the name anywhere. If my ads are still in the Yellow Pages, the phone number is still correct," Dollene said.

The opportunity to carry on his uncle Bill's business made a lot of sense to Ken VanPolen. Working in a machine shop that served primarily the auto industry, he was uncertain what the tough economy would

bring. Being handy with tools and growing up working hard on a farm, Ken knew he would be cut out for the new job. And he admitted an emotional motivator.

"Uncle Bill was always my favorite uncle," Ken said. "He was always good to me. We grew up on the farm with him being around and I really respected him. He always looked out for our interests, and he sure left a hole in this community (when he died)."

Ken admitted he'd never considered getting into portable sanita-

tion until Dollene's call. But it didn't take him long to see how it might be a good move.

GOOD CAREER MOVE

"The automotive industry has been tough the last four or five years. A lot of companies went bankrupt and there were other companies in a lot of turmoil," he said. But much like a side business he already ran making seamless gutters, Ken saw portable sanitation as a necessary service that might weather a bad economy better than automotive-related businesses.

That's not to say portable sanitation is booming in Lower Michigan. Quite the contrary, VanPolen Portables, with about 175 portable restrooms, has suffered just as restroom companies have almost everywhere. Dollene said the recession devalued the business, and probably didn't make this the best time to sell.

For Ken and Landa, there is a small silver lining to the economic downturn. It's given them a chance to ease into a business they knew nothing about.

"There's a lot more to it than I anticipated," Ken said. "It's kind of new to us and we're learning the ropes. The bookwork has been a little overwhelming. That's never been one of my gifts."

The couple will both run service routes, and their 16-year-old son, Ryan, and 10-year-old daughter, Sarah, will do what they can to help out. And the former owners have pledged to help ease their cousins into the tough jobs.

What also makes the transition easier is that the inventory and equipment will stay put on Dollene's land. For the time being, the families have agreed to let the yard stand pat, while Ken moved the office down the road to his kitchen table. Dollene will be around for the inevitable questions that come up, and she's happy to lend a hand in the transition.

Dollene said she told Ken, "I have a head full of information, but I'm not going to give it to you until you need it." She knows the business she and Bill worked so hard to build is in good hands ... and there's something reassuring to her about it remaining in the extended family.

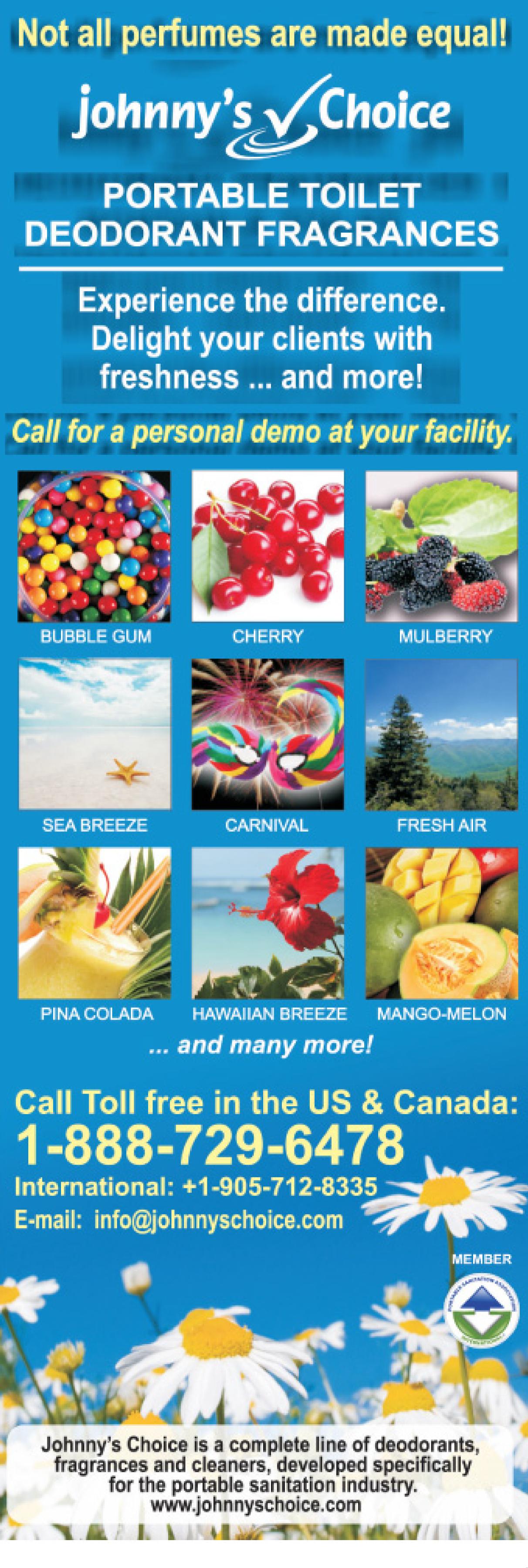
MARY MADE IT FUN

She thought she'd be upset about giving up the business, but Dollene hasn't felt any regrets. She said she will miss catching up with industry friends met at the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo over the years. Though she and Bill didn't spend much time discussing what would happen to the company when he was gone, she thinks he'd be surprised they kept it going as long as they did.

The bottom line for Dollene was the precious time she got to spend working with her daughter.

"Without Mary, it's just lost its pizzazz. Without her, I didn't have any desire anymore," Dollene said. "We worked together wonderfully, and I couldn't have asked for better help."









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BACK at the OFFICE July 2009

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.



Credit Card Crunch

Because other forms of lending are tight, small businesses are relying more heavily on credit cards; but beware, reforms apply only to consumer cards

By Judy Kneiszel

ometimes when clients are slow to pay or unexpected business expenses come up before payments are scheduled to come in, small business owners use credit cards to pay their bills.

Sometimes when banks and other lenders say no, which has been happening more frequently, small businesses finance large purchases with credit cards, despite the high interest rates.

Sometimes credit cards are the only option for small business owners with cash flow problems who want to keep the doors open.

But soon those who use credit cards to finance small businesses will be protected from unexpected interest rate hikes, high fees and penalties, thanks to the credit card reform bill signed into law by President Barack Obama in May, right? These sweeping reforms, which go into effect in February 2010, will protect small businesses that use credit cards, right?

Sorry ... if a card is a small business credit card rather than a consumer card, the reforms don't apply. In fact, credit card companies might make things worse for small business card holders since they'll be looking for someone they can still pick on. They will undoubtedly be looking for ways to make up the \$15 billion in penalty fees the White House estimates the industry could lose each year as a result of the new regulations on consumer cards.

Until protections are extended to small business credit cards, users of such cards must be vigilant and take the fight against interest rate hikes and excessive fees into their own hands. Watch your statements closely and question any unfair charges. Read the fine print. Open and read all correspondence from your credit card company, reduce your balance as much as you can and, if possible, pay it off each month.

BUSINESS VS. PERSONAL

Many small business owners do use consumer credit cards to make business purchases and more will probably opt to do so because those cards fall under the new law's protection. But this option may not always be wise. There are still advantages to small business credit cards.

Using a small business credit card helps you avoid mixing business and personal spending, which in turn helps prevent tax problems and money management headaches. Keeping business purchases separate indicates to the Internal Revenue Service that they are, indeed, business purchases.

And using a small business credit card makes bookkeeping easier because it simplifies the tracking of business expenditures for tax reporting. Many credit card companies provide a year-end statement summary with transactions itemized and categorized. This eliminates the hassle of hunting down receipts.

A small business credit card also provides the opportunity to build business credit. This is helpful as a business grows and needs capital in the form of credit lines or loans.

Small business credit cards also enable you to manage employee spending by allowing you to provide cards for individual employees with preset spending limits.

When a business owner is first issued a small business card, he or she is personally liable for the debt incurred. Personal and professional finances are combined so if the business defaults on credit-card payments, a creditor can come after the person who signed the card. Most card issuers require borrowers to agree to this provision on the application.

But after using a small business credit card for five years or more and establishing a good credit record for the business, the owner can negotiate with the credit card issuer to separate the account from his or her personal finances. The individual holder of a consumer credit card is always personally liable for all debt incurred on the card.

MORE BUSINESSES USE CARDS

If you find yourself using a small business credit card more but are, at the same time, less satisfied with the terms, you are not alone. Access to capital is a challenge for new businesses as well as those that have a long and strong history. All face the credit crunch, bank consolidations and changes in the lending market, and many entrepreneurs have been forced to finance their startup or growing firms with credit cards.

The U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy conducts an annual study on small business lending. In 2008, American Express Bank and Capital One Financial Corp. were among the top five small business lenders, indicating the growing role small business credit cards have come to play in the financing of small businesses.

In addition, the National Small Business Association conducted a Small Business Credit Card survey in the second quarter of 2009, which showed that 59 percent of respondents had used credit cards in the past year to finance their business, up from 49 percent in December 2008. Contrast that with the 16 percent of small-business owners who identified credit cards as a source of funding in 1993.

The recent increase in credit card use occurred despite a rise in the number of small businesses reporting worsening credit-card terms. Asked to evaluate their credit-card terms over the last five years, 79 per-

cent reported worsening terms — up from 69 percent in December 2008.

NSBA data also shows that 71 percent of the small-business owners who use credit cards as a source of funding are carrying a balance month-to-month. This is up from 64 percent in 2000. Twelve percent of small business owners are carrying a balance of more than \$25,000, and 38 percent are carrying a balance of more than \$10,000.

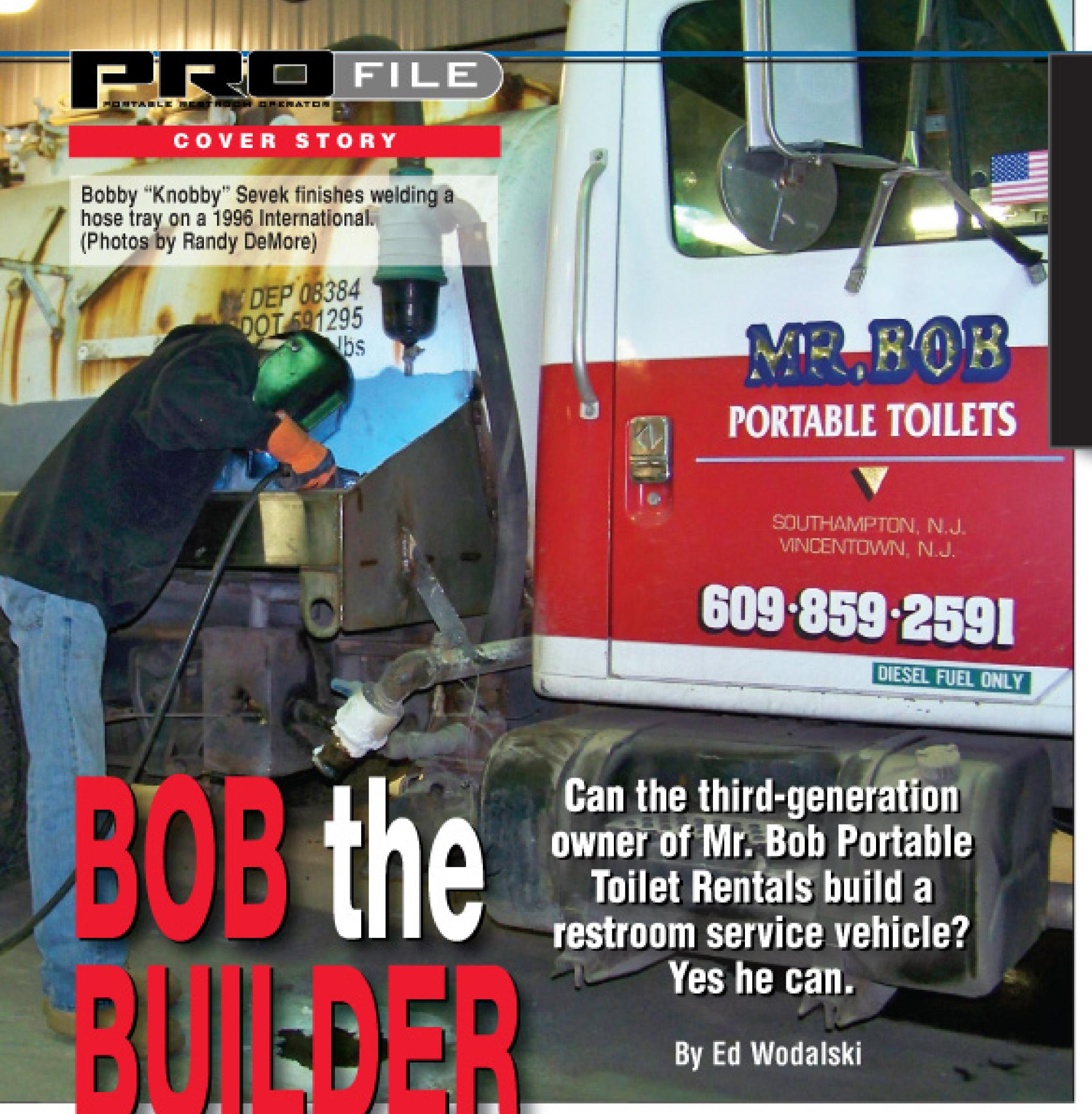
WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Several lawmakers attempted to get the credit card reforms extended to small business cards, but they were voted down. The best they could do was get a provision included that requires the Federal Reserve to conduct a review of credit card use by small-business owners with fewer than 50 employees. The report, which is supposed to include recommendations for initiatives covering small business cardholders, is due to Congress within 12 months of the reform bill's signing.

Until protections are extended to small business credit cards, users of such cards must be vigilant and take the fight against interest rate hikes and excessive fees into their own hands. Watch your statements closely and question any unfair charges. Read the fine print. Open and read all correspondence from your credit card company, reduce your balance as much as you can and, if possible, pay it off each month. You might also want to get involved on a national level by contacting members of Congress and urging them to take up the issue again; this time extending protection to small business credit cards.









Stainless steel hose supports and brake light mounting holes are added to this 1996 International with restroom transportation gate. Below, a freshly painted 2001 International.



was a tinkerer. As a curious teen, the thirdgeneration owner of Mr. Bob Portable Toilet Rentals in Southampton, N.J., a division of Bob Drayton Inc., took apart any machine he could get his hands on.

But, much to the chagrin of his father and grandfather, young Bob, now 36, usually moved on to the next teardown before putting the previous project back together. Though his incessant wrench-turning might have been the source of frustration at times, it continued a long-established interest in the mechanical side of the business that has served the Drayton family well for more than 50 years.

Knowing the ins and outs of vacuum trucks has helped Drayton, his father, Bob Drayton Jr., and late grandfather, Bob Drayton Sr., design and build service vehicles that perform their pumping tasks with greater convenience and longevity. Their skills and understanding of what makes a good pump truck is a source of pride for the younger Drayton and contributes greatly to the company's success.

Mr. Bob Portable Toilet Rentals

NEW

JERSEY

Southampton, N.J.

Owner: Bob Drayton Founded: 1955

Employees: 35

Specialties: Portable restrooms, septic service, roll-off containers

Service area: 40-mile radius of

Southampton

Web site: www.mrbobs.com



Bob Drayton Sr. began digging cesspools in 1955 and built his first vacuum truck in 1968. In 1971 he added 16 Phil Carter fiberglass restrooms. Today, Mr. Bob has approximately 3,000 restrooms, many Satellite Industries Tufway models, Hampel Corp. Country Classic units, along with a fleet of locally made 10- to 30-foot restroom trailers.

When health problems forced the senior Drayton to retire, he turned the business over to his son, Bob Drayton Jr., who, in time, did the same. The third Bob took over the family business nine years ago, he recalls. A legacy of truckbuilding has been instrumental to the company's success.

A self-taught welder, fabricator and mechanic — he also races modified stock cars at the local half-mile dirt track on weekends, an 800-hp, big-block Chevy — the younger Drayton built his first vacuum truck about 10 years ago, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. The company's first service vehicle was a used truck that Drayton's grandfather built. Not uncommon in those days, the intake manifold from the engine was used to build vacuum.

The fourth generation of Mr. Bob, Bobby Drayton IV, is pictured with his father, Bobby Drayton III (left), and grandfather, Bobby Drayton Jr.





Today, Drayton's fleet includes more than 30 vehicles, from pickups and vacuum trucks to a 5,000-gallon Mack septic service truck with NVE 506 blower built by Transway Systems Inc. There's also a 2009 Peterbilt with 5,000-gallon tank and NVE 506 blower currently being built by Transway. Other vacuum trucks include two Internationals with 2,500-gallon tanks and Jurop pumps and a 1989 Mack Super Liner with 3,500-gallon tank.

His restroom fleet includes five flatbeds
— two Internationals and an Isuzu built by
Crescent Tank Mfg. and two Mitsubishis built
by Drayton — 14 service vehicles — all
Internationals, except for a GMC mini truck

used on golf courses. Four of the trucks are spares and most have 1,350-gallon tanks (950 waste/400 freshwater) and Jurop pumps. Two trucks have 2,000-gallon aluminum tanks (1,500 waste/500 freshwater) and Masport pumps. There also are three roll-off trucks — a Peterbilt, a Mack and an International. Some of the trucks Drayton purchased and some he built.

PRIZE PROJECT

His prize project is a 2007 International 4400 service vehicle with 2,300-gallon stainless steel tank (1,600 waste/700 freshwater) and a Jurop pump. "We talked about every-

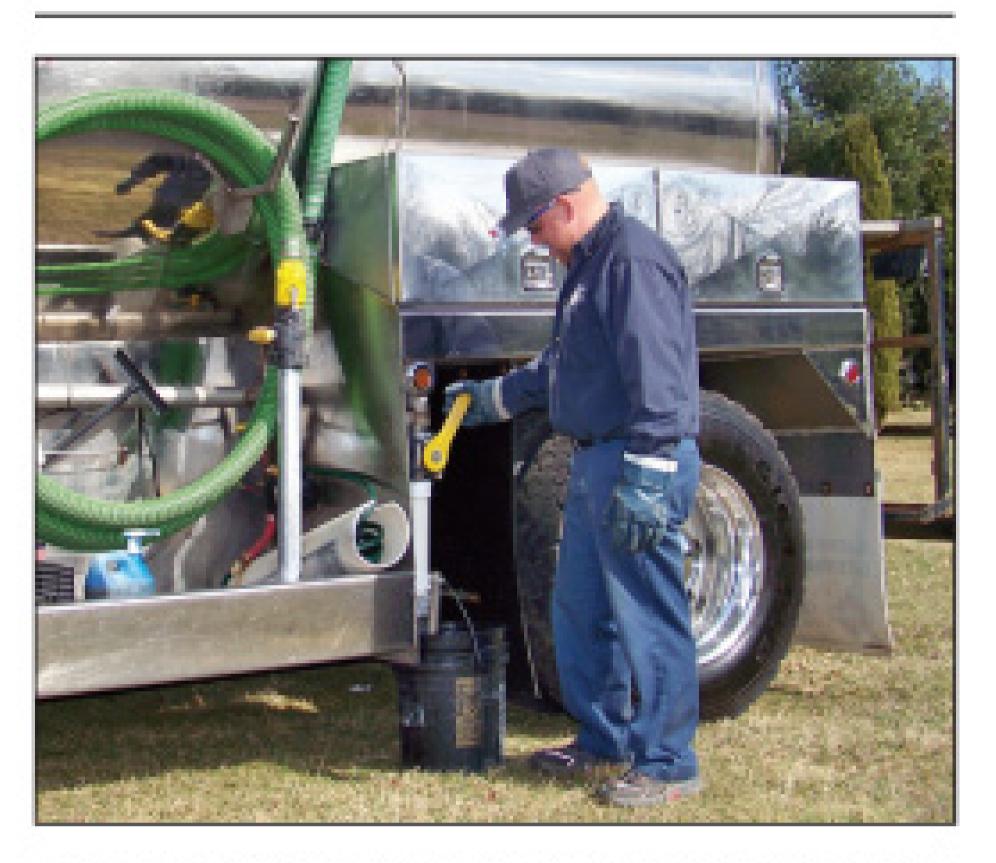
thing you needed to service a toilet as fast as you possibly could, and we put it into this truck," Drayton says. "It's got two jumbo toolboxes on the driver's side — one 6 feet long that holds all your paper products. The other toolbox on the driver's side holds everything you might need — service stickers, graffiti remover, ratchet straps and things like that."

Between the two toolboxes is a drop-down box for storing hoses, hose reels, deodorant, spray cleaners and disinfectants. "Everything's right on the driver's side as soon as you pop out the door," Drayton says. In the rear is a fold-down restroom carrier. It also has LED lights and washdown pump with hose reel.

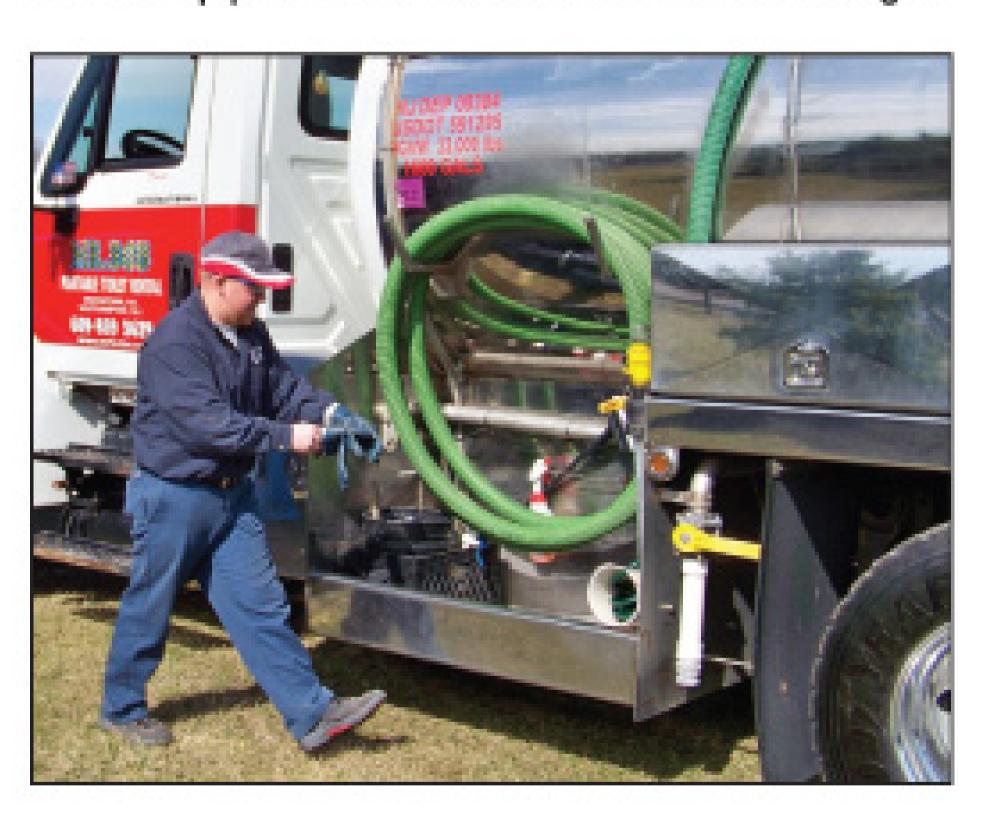
The truck was built specifically for route driver David Phillips, whose 62-year-old father, Charlie, has been with Mr. Bob for more than 20 years.

"We talked about everything you needed to service a toilet as fast as you possibly could, and we put it into this truck. It's got two jumbo toolboxes on the driver's side — one 6 feet long that holds all your paper products. The other toolbox on the driver's side holds everything you might need — service stickers, graffiti remover, ratchet straps and things like that."

Bob Drayton



A drop-down box on the driver's side of Phillips' 2007 International 4400 service vehicle holds hoses and reels, deodorant, spray cleaners and disinfectants. A 6inch PVC pipe is used for the washdown hose hanger.



"Usually the older guys get the new trucks and the younger ones get the hand-medowns. David always got the hand-me-downs, but he took real good care of the equipment," Drayton says of his 26-year-old driver. The truck took three months to build, working off and on during the winter months. Most work was done at Drayton's shop, including the painting and vinyl lettering.

EYE FOR DETAIL

Drayton used to send his trucks out to be lettered, but each would come back looking a little different and the trucks would be away

One Big Happy Family

Mr. Bob Portable Toilet Rentals of Southampton, N.J., prides itself on being a family friendly business, says thirdgeneration owner Bob Drayton.

"Both my sisters (Vicki Carfagno and Jennifer Witts) are part-owners. My dad (Bob Drayton Jr.) is a part-owner too. My wife (Sherri) works here. My uncle, Randy DeMore, is the grounds maintenance man. We have a portable service driver (Charlie Phillips) who has been here close to 25 years, and both his sons (David and Norman Phillips) work here. And we have a fella (Bobby "Knobby" Sevek) who's like an all-around guy, and his twin sister (Cindy Sevek) works here."

In time, another member of the Drayton family will be learning the business, Drayton's 3-year-son, Bob. "He'll be riding with me in the truck pretty soon," Drayton says. "He likes to come up to the workshop with daddy."

Balancing a close-knit family business can be challenging, but also rewarding, Drayton says.

"When you sit back and look at it, we have a nice little business. If my sisters didn't work here or I didn't work here, we probably wouldn't see our siblings or our parents that much. But since we all work together, you're kind of forced to see them. Sometimes it gets frustrating working together, but for the most part, you can actually have fun at it."



Office staff (from left) includes Cindy Sevek, Vicki (Drayton) Carfagno, Jennifer (Drayton) Witts, Sue Harker, Terry VanCarpels and Kathy Bowker.

from the shop for a week or two at a time. So he bought a lettering machine and taught himself how to use it.

"The good part about it is I can have that truck in the shop and be doing stuff to it, or have my mechanic doing stuff to it while I'm doing the lettering at my own pace." The only problem, Drayton says, is finding the time to create the computer-generated lettering.

Drayton chose the International chassis for consistency and ease of repairs. "There might be nicer trucks out there, but once you've got a fleet (of one brand), it's tough to make the switch," he says. He chooses non-corrosive stainless steel for his tanks, and bolts them directly to the frame in the rear and uses race car valve springs for cushion in the front.

Drayton prefers a slightly larger hydraulic-drive vacuum pump than necessary for timesaving convenience. "You can't be waiting for a minute or two for the vacuum to build up," he explains. "If you've got a 60-toilet route, for every minute you add to that route, you're an hour longer doing the route.

route, you're an hour longer doing the route. On a route. It's more expected to the control of t

When Work Goes Well, Everyone Benefits

Working for Mr. Bob has its benefits. In addition to company-subsidized health insurance and 401(k) plan, there's also an annual bonus handed out at the company Christmas party.

Bob Drayton, third-generation owner of Mr. Bob Portable Toilet Rentals, says the bonus was started by his late grandfather and company founder Bob Drayton Sr. and ranges from about \$300 for recent hires to thousands of dollars for long-time employees. The exact amount depends on years of service and how well the company did that year.

"Can we continue this forever? I don't know," Drayton says. "But in a tough year I think it's harder to tell someone that instead of a Christmas bonus, I have to cut your pay."

Drayton could offer higher wages instead of a bonus, but doesn't think employees would appreciate it as much. "If you've got a guy making \$15 an hour, and suppose you gave him a \$5-an-hour raise to \$20 an hour, he's going to find a way to spend it," Drayton says. There's also more motivation with an annual bonus check.

"When we have our drivers' meetings, I'll bring up how we want to be safe on the road. We want to be careful. We don't want any preventable accidents because that all comes off the top. If the damages over the course of the year cost the company \$10,000, that's \$10,000 less that we have to give out."

Drayton also encourages employees to save at least 50 percent of their bonus. "I told them, especially last year, when things were getting tough, 'Listen, when you get your Christmas bonus, see if you can sock some away, because this winter might be tough. You might not be getting as many hours.' "

The past year was the first Drayton can remember having to lay off workers.

For companies considering a bonus, Drayton suggests establishing a cap to avoid disappointing employees in down times. "You could give somebody a really good bonus one year and the next year it's not so good," he says. The result is having to explain that the smaller check is not a reflection of the employee's work. "I think that's a tough sell."

Drayton's employees also receive gift cards to area retail stores at the annual Christmas party and most years there's a Mr. Bob trivia contest as well. Employees are asked how many gallons of waste the company pumped, how much paper or deodorant it used. The answers can be eye-opening. Those coming closest to the correct answers receive prizes. It's a fun way to educate employees on the cost of doing business, Drayton says.

Mr. Bob also contributes a 4 percent match to employee 401(k) programs and until recently paid 50 percent of employee health insurance. Faced with up to a 20-percent increase in premiums, Drayton is changing to a tiered program that places a greater financial burden on older workers, those with chronic medical needs or those who smoke.

"One of the biggest money pits is trying to provide healthcare," Drayton says. "I feel bad for guys because I see what they have to pay — even half for a family. The chunk of change that we have to pay and they have to pay, it's really disheartening."

So you've got to make everything as quickly as possible."

The hydraulic drive adds dependability, Drayton says. "You could miss a worn U-joint during routine maintenance and be left down on a route. It's more expense in the beginning,

but there's less maintenance."

Creature comforts on the prized International include air-ride seats and air conditioning. You might also include the automatic transmission on that list.

Bob Drayton creates his own computer-generated lettering.

DEPENDABILITY AND WORKABILITY

"I'd say 90 percent of my trucks now are automatic transmission, where eight or 10 years ago they were almost all stick." Drayton says the automatics are as much for dependability as for driver ease. "We've got less driveshaft problems, snapping axles, anything to do with transmission gears. Anything to do with shifting the truck is taken out of the equation now. They do burn a little more fuel, but I think it also has a lot to do with driver comfort. I know driving a septic truck and doing hard septic work or driving a potty truck doing a 10-hour route, as the day wears on, shifting those gears gets real tiring."

Typically, Drayton starts with a 24-foot box truck, shortens the frame using a magnetic drill, makes the tank mounts and has the tank fitted within two days. A local fabricating company bends the sides and hose trays. Drayton makes the light brackets and hose hangers. Then starts the time-consuming finish work that gives the truck its personality and functionality.



"I'd say 90 percent of my trucks now on the road are automatic transmission, where eight or 10 years ago they were almost all stick ... We've got less drive-shaft problems, snapping axles, anything to do with transmission gears ... They do burn a little more fuel, but I think it also has a lot to do with driver comfort."

by Crescent Tank Mfg. The International has a 900-gallon tank and the Isuzu has a 700-gallon tank.

Bob Drayton

"All of our original (restroom service) trucks were hand-built," Drayton says. His grandfather would take a cab and chassis and add a 500-gallon oil tank for waste and a 275-gallon oil tank for water. "They were all used trucks, gasoline," Drayton recalls. "When an engine went bad, he'd buy a used school bus, take the motor out and keep on running the truck until it didn't run any more."

More recently, Mr. Bob started buying many of its trucks. "We still buy a lot of our trucks," Drayton says. "But each winter we see if we can build a truck or rebuild a couple trucks."

In addition to his own expertise, Drayton has a part-time employee and a full-time mechanic trained in engine diagnostics. Together they see that Mr. Bob's trucks receive

MORE INFO:

Chandler Equipment Inc.

800/342-0887 www.chandlerequipment.com

Crescent Tank Manufacturing

585/657-4104 www.crescent-tank.com

Masport Inc.

800/228-4510 www.masportpump.com

National Vacuum Equipment Inc. (NVE)

800/253-5500

www.nvepump.com

Satellite Industries Inc.

800/883-1123

www.satelliteindustries.com

Transway Systems Inc.

800/263-4508

www.transway.on.ca

regular maintenance, including oil changes at 5,000 or 8,000 miles. Transmission and frontend work are also done on site.

The two things Drayton looks for in his fleet are longevity and workability.

"The truck's got to make sense to you," he explains. Building trucks gives Drayton a sense of satisfaction and independence.

"The only person who's going to be disappointed is me if it doesn't turn out the way I want it to."











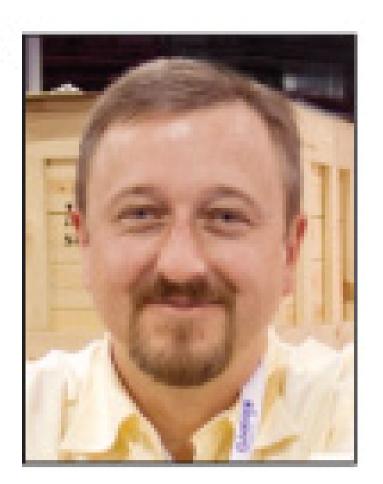






Consciousness OF STREAM

Dan Leiss is president of Jenny Products Inc., Somerset, Pa. Reach him at 888/425-3669 or dleiss@steamjenny.com.



By Dan Leiss

STAY ON TOP OF ROUTINE MAINTENANCE TO EXTEND THE LIFE OF YOUR PRESSURE WASHER

n countless shops and garages from Albuquerque to Albany, at least one nonworking pressure washer sits in the corner, collecting dust after weeks, months, even years of neglect. The machine stopped working perfectly one day and was simply brushed aside to make room for a newer, shinier model. Sound familiar?

But this doesn't have to happen. Properly maintained, a pressure washer can easily be expected to last anywhere from 5 to 10 and even 20 years. Armed with the knowledge of basic maintenance techniques — and how and when to perform them — anyone can save their pressure washer from a short, unfulfilling life.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before beginning a maintenance program, you must become familiar with the parts of the machine. Even experienced operators may not know what each part is and where it's located on the machine. While all pressure washers do not have the same parts, they all have basic components including a pump, unloader, relief valve, hose, and gun assembly. For detailed descriptions and diagrams showing all parts of the machine, refer to the owner's manual.

Also, considering it is a machine designed to clean, wouldn't it make sense that the pressure washer itself should always be clean? It will be much easier to detect problems, such as hose damage and fluid leaks, on a clean machine. Now, follow tips to ensure your pressure washer stays in it for the long haul:

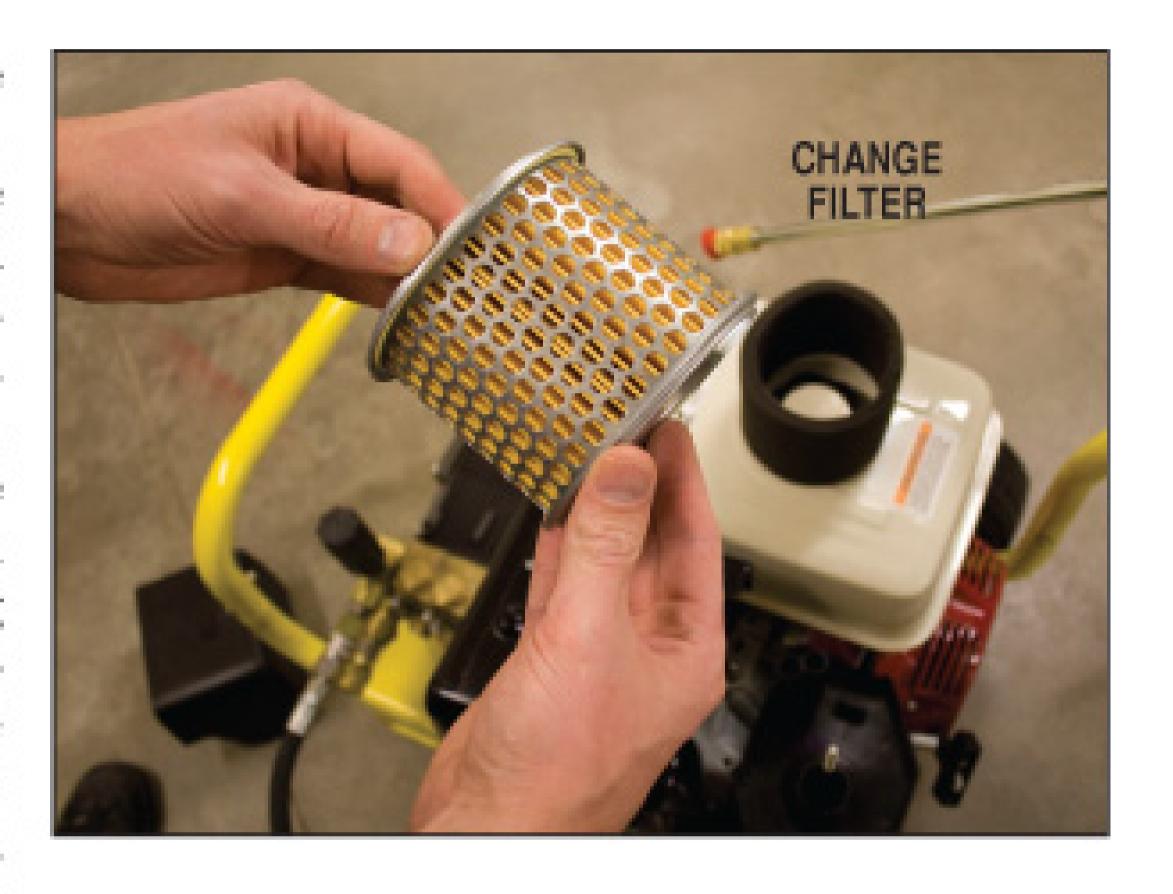
Before and after each use

Before each use, take a few minutes to inspect both the high-pressure hose and

the supply hose for leaks, kinks, cuts and other abrasions or bulges. On electric units, the GFCI power cord should also be checked for visible damage.

Before starting the unit, check the pump oil and top off if necessary.

If the machine is gas powered, check the engine oil and fuel level well, adding as needed. Also, flush out the water system before installing the pressure tip at the end of the gun assembly to prevent dirt in the system from clogging the tip.



When you put away the washer at the end of the day, there may be one more cleaning task. If detergent was used, be sure to clean out the soap compound by running clear water through the injector.

Periodic maintenance

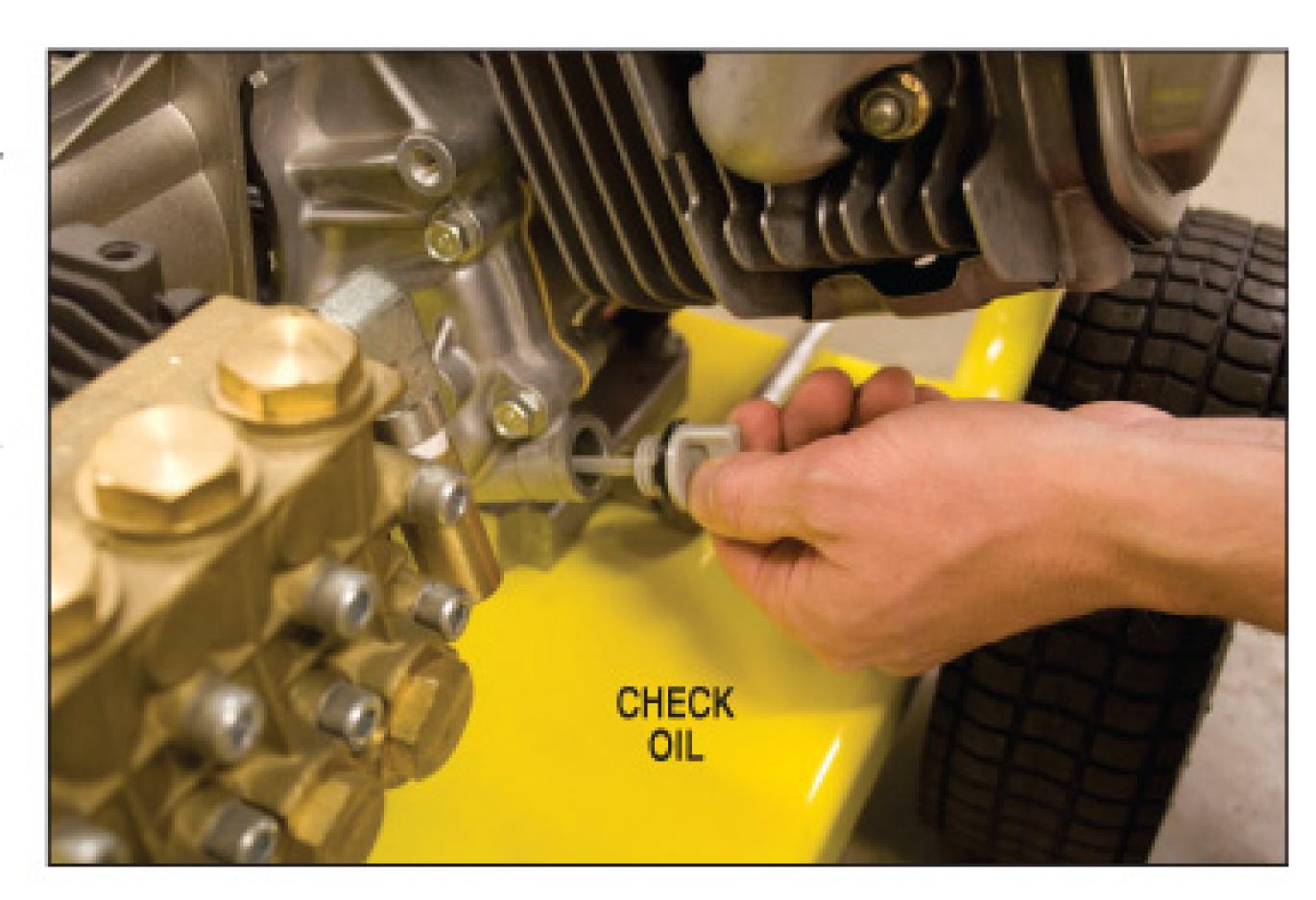
Daily preventative maintenance is the best way to extend the life of a pressure washer. But don't neglect other periodic maintenance. The owner's manual will provide specific maintenance timelines and details unique to each model. Depending on how often the machine is used, these checks may need to be done weekly, monthly or less frequently:

First, check the hose and fittings for water leaks. If you find a leak, change the hose or fitting. But remember, safety first. Shut the machine off before attempting to fix any leaks, as the line remains under high pressure and can injure the operator.

Next, turn your attention to the pump.

There are two different kinds of pumps: belt drive or direct drive. Beltdrive units require extra maintenance. With these, the user needs to check the belt occasionally for wear and correct tension.

If the unit is powered by an engine, the engine oil needs to be



changed every 100 hours (or more frequently when operating in dirty conditions). For new washers, the oil should be changed after the first 20 hours. Also, regularly check the air filter and clean it if it becomes clogged or dirty. A dirty air filter can hurt performance and allow dirt to get inside the engine, which could damage and shorten the life of the engine.

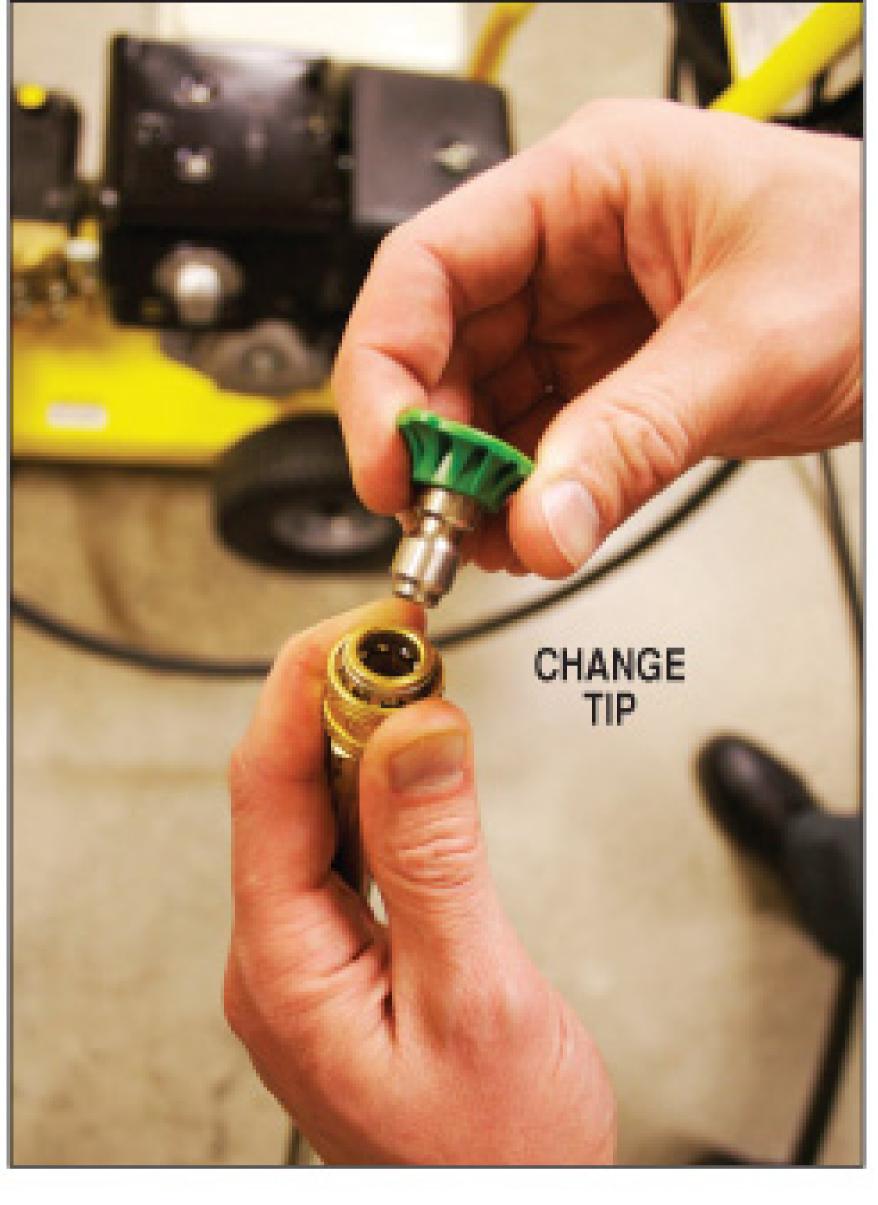
Check the owner's manual for more maintenance tips and recommendations.

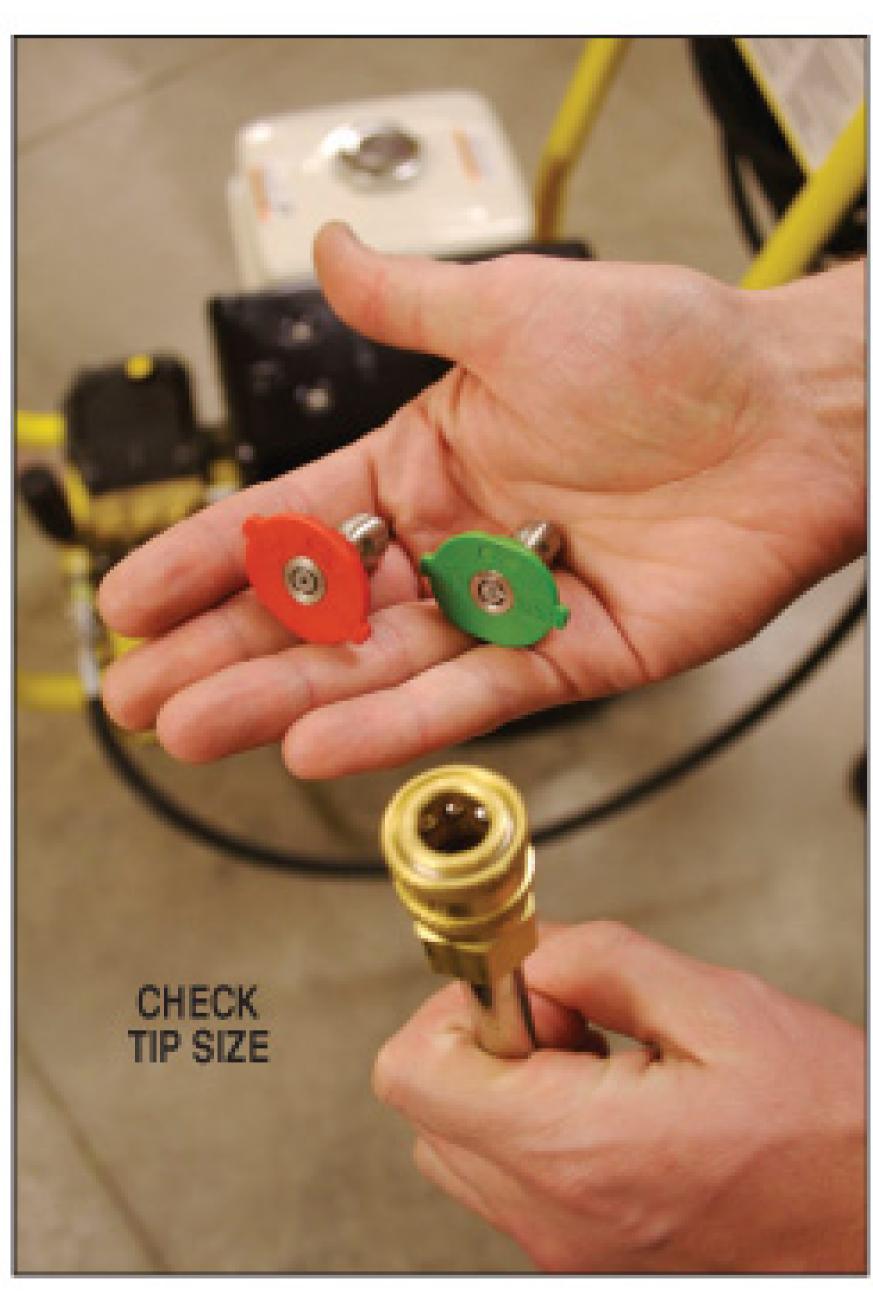
TO ERR IS HUMAN

Operator error can be attributed to several problems with pressure washers, the most common and dangerous being the use of an insufficient power supply.

The National Electric Code dictates the power requirements on machines. If a machine requires a 120-volt, 20amp power draw, a 110volt, 15-amp standard outlet may not be sufficient. If the user attempts to use a standard outlet anyway, the machine may not work at all. If it does work, this overload to the power source could eventually cause serious damage to the machine or even an electrical fire. Adjust the power supply as needed.

Another common mistake is choosing the wrong pressure washer tip size, hose type or trigger gun. Tips aren't coded based on orifice size, but by the angle of the spray. This means the user must look for size information when choosing the tip to ensure it will fit the particular washer. Also, hoses are temperature rated specific to every type of washer. In other words, a hose rated for a cold pres-





sure washer will not work for a hot pressure washer. Finally, all trigger guns are rated according to gpm flow, temperature and pressure. Be sure the gun has a compatible rating with the pressure washer.

Certain detergents are acceptable for use in pressure washers. Detergents are rated based on variances in temperature from machine to machine. Use a detergent with the proper temperature rating for Considering it is a machine designed to clean, wouldn't it make sense that the pressure washer itself should always be clean? It will be much easier to detect problems, such as hose damage and fluid leaks, on a clean machine.

your unit. Using the wrong kind of detergent in a hot washer will eventually plug the heating coil.

Finally, remember there is a reason companies manufacture both hot and cold pressure washers. Never use hot water in a machine designed only for cold, as this can damage the pump's O-rings and gaskets.

A FINAL WORD

Despite how easy maintenance is, most users don't give it a single thought — that is until their machine stops working properly. Rather than waiting to deal with problems until they interrupt your work or require expensive repairs, stick to a basic maintenance schedule. Your pressure washer will thank you by providing years of consistent, powerful service. And think of the space you will save by not having to stack another machine in the dark corner of your shop.



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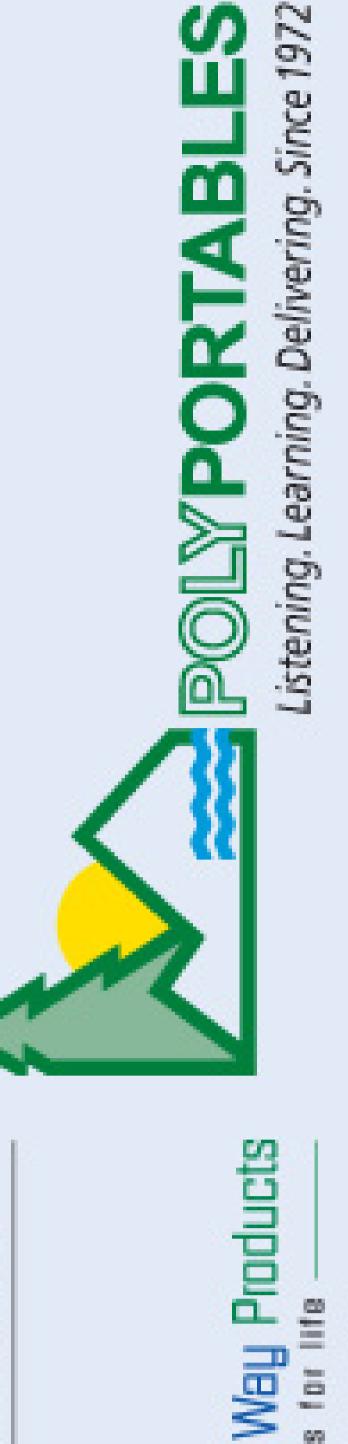
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By Betty Dageforde

THE TEAM

John Baranzelli is the CEO and general manager of All Cal Services LLC in Sacramento, Calif. He has three partners, Joe Ruffaine, vice president of sales and business development; Joe Sestito, COO, and Tony Sestito (now retired). Working with them are eight drivers, two office personnel, and one yard man.

COMPANY HISTORY

In August 2006, Tony and Joe Sestito created J & J Sanitation in Sacramento. Baranzelli, with experience in the portable sanitation industry, came on board in 2007. Baranzelli brought Ruffaine with him, a minority owner of Atlas Disposal Industries, an independent waste and recycling hauling business in Sacramento. The four men formed

a new company, All Cal Services LLC, placing units mainly in the construction market. In August 2008, they got their feet wet in special events, doing an air show at Travis Air Force Base.

THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

The Thunder Valley Casino in Placer County, Calif., 25 miles northeast of







John Baranzelli (left) and Rick Venson service one of the 50 holding tanks on site.

rooms and several new pump trucks (six new rigs over one year).

Sacramento, opened in 2003. It is currently undergoing a two-year, \$1 billion expansion, which will add one-third more floor space to the existing structure, as well as a 22-story hotel, a 10-story parking garage, and a 3,000-seat performing arts center. The United Auburn Indian Community, comprised of Miwok and Maidu Indian tribes, owns the casino.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

General contracting for the expansion project is being handled by a joint venture between JE Dunn Construction Group, Kansas City, Mo., and Davis Reed Construction Inc., a California builder that had worked with Atlas and knew Ruffaine. The company put out a bid in March 2008, and by June All Cal was notified it won the contract.

Because of the size of the project, All Cal purchased an additional 500 portable restAll Cal is the sole portable restroom and holding tank provider for the project. "They didn't want any other trucks on the site so everybody on the job has to go through us," says Baranzelli. As a result, the company has contracts with about 40 subcontractors. "The good news," he says, "is that that's only for the holding tanks. The restrooms are all with the general contractor."

BY THE NUMBERS

THE JOB

The company met with the general contractor to decide how many units to bring in for the 1,700 workers on the job. "It's basically one toilet for every 10 guys," says Baranzelli. The company brought in 170 tan Aspen portable restrooms from Five Peaks

Technology, 20 PolyJohn Enterprises Corp. PolyLift high-rise units, and 85 Five Peaks Sierra ride-along sinks.

They also supplied 50 holding tanks for the sub-contractors' trailers. Each holding tank sits in a wood-framed rubber containment tray in case of leakage. The trays were designed by the company and built by the general contractor.

Rick Vinson services one of 85 sinks at the site.



All Cal supplied one unit for every 10 workers at the casino site, including 170 tan Aspen restrooms from Five Peaks Technology.

LET'S ROLL

By mid-July the company placed 20 holding tanks and 15 units on site in preparation for the groundbreaking. Most days after that, for two months, the company brought in units, tanks and sinks until full ramp-up in November. This was done using its Isuzu flatbed truck or one of its two hauling trailers (one carries eight units, the other 12) connected to a Ford F-350 pickup truck.

Units were placed in two main areas. One was the subcontractors' compound, which was set up on part of an existing parking lot about a half mile from the casino. The rest were set up in various locations around the construction site.



Although badges are not required, all company personnel entering the jobsite for any reason must be uniformed and wear personal protective gear (hard hats, orange vests, boots and glasses).

KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

The company is dedicating one full-time technician to the project, Rick Vinson, and one service vehicle, a 2008 Kenworth T270 from TankTec. The truck has a 2,000-gallon aluminum tank (1,500 gallons waste, 500 gal-

lons freshwater) and a Masport Inc. pump. As luck would have it, the county has a dump station only two blocks from the site.

Each unit and tank is being cleaned three times per week. This requires 150 services a day, six days a week. High-rise units are brought down by crane last thing in the day for an early morning servicing, then replaced first thing in the morning.

Baranzelli says graffiti is a big problem. "We don't ever leave it," he says. So, after the usual cleaning with bleach, oven cleaner for the urinals, Ever Pro Gold Tablets from J & J Chemical Co., the company uses Wipe Off from Sunrise Environmental Scientific to remove unwanted markings.

ON THE GROW

The size of the casino project has been a big boost for the young restroom company. But even before that job, they were growing by leaps and bounds. In a one-year period of time, they increased their service cleanings from 270 units a week to 1,800.

In August 2008, they secured an even bigger contract, the Sacramento International Airport modernization plan, a \$1.9 billion, seven-year project.

Baranzelli is enthusiastic his about company's future. "We're going to continue to grow," he says. "Our next move would be to start expanding geographically." ■

MORE INFO:

Five Peaks Technology 866/293-1502

www.fivepeaks.net

J & J Chemical Company 706/546-7069 www.jjchem.com

Masport Inc.

800/228-4510 www.masportpump.com

PolyJohn Enterprises

800/292-1305 www.polyjohn.com

TankTec

800/428-6422 www.tanktec.biz

INDUSTRY NEWS

Restroom Manufacturer Changes Announced

Satellite Industries Inc. has purchased Hampel Corp.'s line of portable restrooms and will take over ownership, operation, sales and marketing of the Global and 1.5 Global restrooms as well as the StyleLite internal hand-wash sink.

At the same time, Satellite and Ameriform Group of Companies both announced that Satellite will not be purchasing the Five Peaks Technology line of restrooms as previously planned. Ameriform is the original owner of the Five Peaks line.

Satellite said Hampel will continue to manufacture Global parts for Satellite as well as Satellite thermoformed parts, enabling Hampel to increase plastic forming production. Hampel's Country Classic model will be discontinued after remaining inventory is sold, while production of the Sunrise model will be delayed indefinitely.

According to Ameriform, the company is no longer associated with Satellite. In a press release, Ameriform announced it intends to continue manufacturing and selling portable sanitation products for the foreseeable future.





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- High efficiency ducted air conditioning system
- · Brass termination valve with cam lock fitting
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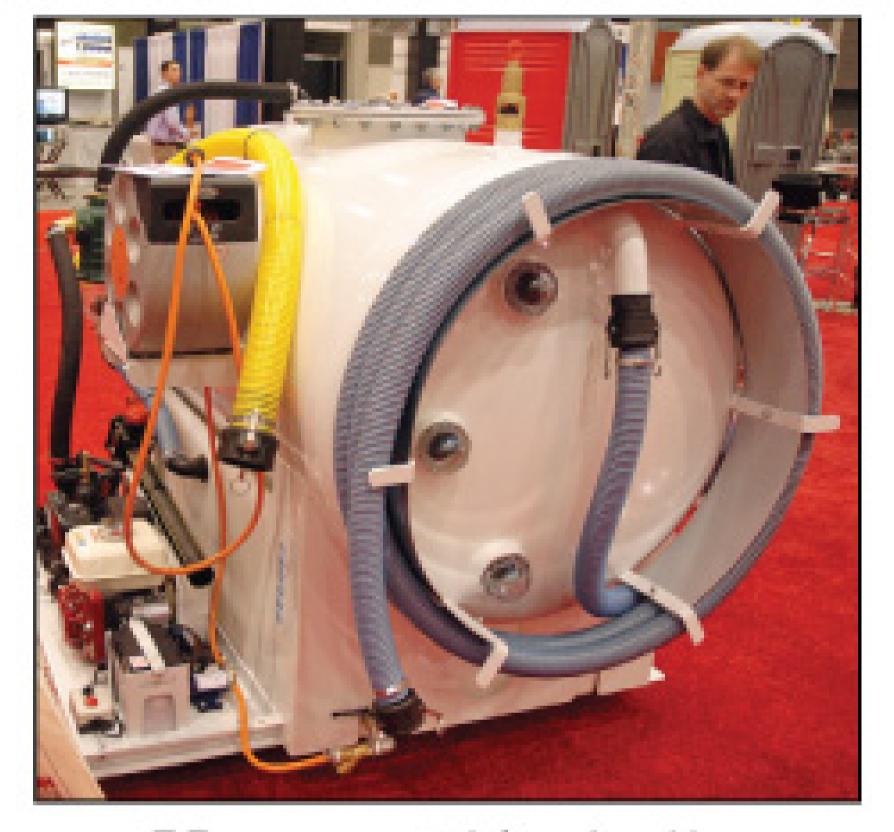
By Ed Wodalski

ometimes smaller is better, even when you're talking about a vacuum tank.

Whether you're spending a lot of time carefully maneuvering around tight service areas, like campgrounds, or you'd find it handy to

have an inexpensive, reliable backup pumping unit, a compact pickup truck- or trailer-mounted vac tank could be a real help to your business.

Here's a look at some of the many units commonly referred to as slide-in or bolt-on tanks:



T-Easy vacuum tank from Armal Inc.

Armal Inc.

The T-Easy vacuum tank is designed for servicing portable restrooms in close quarters, including construction sites, campgrounds and special events. Available in two sizes, Model 1000 has a 336-gallon waste/114-gallon freshwater tank and weighs 1,300 pounds. Model 1300 has a 528-waste/153-gallon freshwater tank and weighs 1,653 pounds. The unit also features a self-retracting

washing hose. 866/873-7796; www.armal.biz.

Best Enterprises Inc.

The trailer-mounted slide-in tank has a stainless steel 600-gallon waste and 200-gallon freshwater tank. Other features include electric water pump, gasoline engine, vacuum pump, hose reel or hose hangers, 10-foot dump hose, 30-foot suction hose with wand, sight glasses for waste and sight tube for water. The dual-axle trailer has room to carry two restrooms. A storage box can be added for sanitary supplies. **800/288-2378**;

www.bestenterprises.net.

Crescent Tank Mfg.

The Crescent slide-in tank has a low center of gravity for greater protection against rollover. The unit features a 350-gallon waste and 200-gallon freshwater tank, with all operations at the back of the truck. Other features include a Masport HXL2 vacuum system, 9-hp Honda electric-start engine and SHURflo water pump. 585/657-4104; www.crescent-tank.com.

Dyna-Vac Equipment

Available in a variety of sizes for pickup, flat-bed or trailer installations, Dyna-Vac units feature 200- to 600-gallon tanks. Integrated wrap-around water tanks are designed for stability and consistent weight distribution. 888/298-8668; www.dynavacequipment.com.

Erickson Tank & Pump

Made of mild steel, stainless steel or aluminum, Erickson's basic slide-in tanks include 270-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater, 300-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater, 400-gallon waste/120-gallon freshwater and 500-gallon waste/200-gallon freshwater configurations. The company also makes two models of slope trailers. The 300-gallon single-axle and 500-gallon tandem axle trailer-mounted tanks are set at an angle for easier unloading. The trailer-mounted tanks feature Masport vacuum/pressure pumps and components. All tanks are manufactured using a four-plate roller and sub-arc welder.

509/785-2955; www.ericksontank.com.



Trailer-mounted tank from Best Enterprises Inc.



Slide-in tank from Crescent Tank Mfg.



Slide-in unit from Dyna-Vac Equipment

FMI Truck Sales & Service

The WorkMate service trailer features a 325-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater slide-in unit that can be removed and installed on the back of a pickup truck. The service trailer has two 5,200-pound axles and can carry two restrooms. Standard features include Masport HXL1V pump with two-way valve, electric start 5.5-hp Honda engine, 60-inch by 24-inch by 18-inch storage box, 10-gpm freshwater delivery system, bottle rack storage, all steel construction with diamond-plate tread, in-tongue poly storage box, LED lighting and Group 24 12-volt battery with tow vehicle charge cord. Options include dump hose storage and additional onboard storage. 800/927-8750; www.fmitrucks.com.

Lely Manufacturing Inc.

The Econo Line portable pumping unit has a 400-gallon tank (300-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater) and choice of Jurop PN23/N or Battioni MEC 2000/PAL vacuum/pressure pump (74 or 80 cfm at 15 inches of mercury and 1,300 rpm). Other features include primary shutoff, 2-inch sight glasses, 2-inch inlet and 3-inch discharge; 1 1/4-inch fill and 1-inch water drain and freshwater sight tube. The unit also has an 8-hp electric-start engine, 2-inch by 25-foot hose, 2-inch full port valve and wand, Flojet water pump, 50-foot garden hose with nozzle and tubing for fork lift. 800/334-2763; www.lelyus.com.

KeeVac Industries Inc.

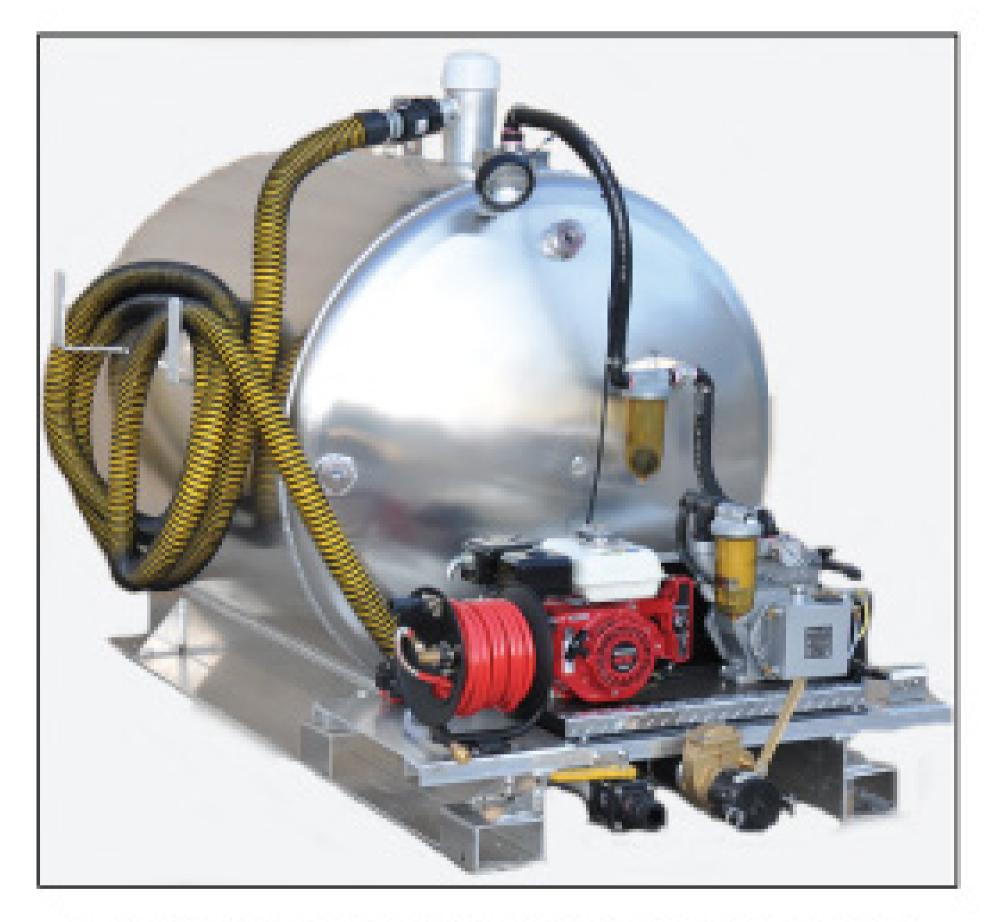
The 435-gallon aluminum slide-in unit (300gallon waste/135-gallon freshwater) features either a Conde or Masport pump, electric-start 5.5-hp Honda engine, oil catch filter, secondary moisture trap and work light. Other features include 30-foot Tiger Tail hose with valve and wand, 2-inch bucket fill, 50-foot hose reel, 3-inch dump and SHURflo water pump. Options include heated tank, 20-inch manways, multiple pump and engine sizes, multiple engine locations and 42-, 48-



WorkMate service trailer from FMI Truck Sales & Service



Portable slide-in unit from Imperial Industries Inc.



Aluminum slide-in unit from KeeVac Industries Inc.

and 54-inch diameter tanks. 866/789-9440; www.keevac.com.

Imperial Industries Inc.

Portable service slide-in units range from 200-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater to 430gallon waste/220-gallon freshwater tanks and a choice of either a Masport HXL3V, direct-drive, 106-cfm vacuum and pressure pump or a Conde belt-drive, 70-cfm vacuum only pump. Made of 3/16-inch steel, aluminum or 10-gauge stainless steel, the tanks are outfitted with 5.5- or 9-hp Honda electric-start engines, interior horizontal freshwater tube, vacuum and pressure relief valves and gauge, primary and secondary shutoff, oil catch muffler, 1-inch sight tube for water, 2-inch sight glasses for waste, 2-inch vented water fill, 2-inch waste intake with 30 feet of 2-inch hose and wand, 3-inch discharge water and waste hose hooks, all poly fittings, 12-volt Whale water pump and 50-feet of water hose.

800/558-2945; www.imperialind.com.

Marsh Industrial

The carbon steel portable restroom service slide-in units range from 400-gallon (300 waste/ 100 freshwater) to 1,250-gallon (1,000-gallon waste/250-gallon freshwater) tanks. Standard equipment includes 1/4-inch shell, primary shutoff in front of waste tank with secondary shutoff to match pump's cfm; water tank with hose hooks and 50-feet of 5/8-inch hose and nozzle, 2-inch bucket fill with vent; sight glasses on water tank; 2-inch load line with 30 feet of 2-inch flexible hose with wand, hose hooks, 3-inch discharge line, sight glasses in waste tank, Battioni MEC 2000 90-cfm vacuum and pressure pump with 4-way valve, electric-start and 8-hp Honda engine. The 500-gallon mini-vac trailer unit features choice of MEC and Masport pumps, 1/4-inch shell, 5-inch sight glasses, formed hose trays, 3-inch load line and 4-inch discharge line, internal surge baffle, tube frame trailer with electric or surge brakes, light package, work light and pintle hitch.

800/952-1537; www.marshind.com.



Slide-in tank from Erickson Tank & Pump



Slide-in tank from Lely Manufacturing Inc.



Mini vac from Marsh Industrial

Pat's Pump & Blower

The bolt-in, self-contained liquid waste pump-out units range in size from 120 to 500 gallons. Options include waste-only or waste/freshwater system. Standard equipment includes electric-start Honda engines and vacuum pump with pressure offloading option. 800/359-7867; www.patspump.com.

Pik Rite Inc.

The PR300 (200-gallon waste/100-gallon freshwater) and PR450 (300-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater) skid-mounted portable service units include Jurop PN23 vacuum/pressure pumps (Masport pumps available), electric-start 8-hp Honda engine, all steel components, freshwater compartment designed for stable weight distribution, 30-foot, 2-inch Kanaflex fill hose,

3-inch discharge, 12-volt washdown pump with 50-foot hose and nozzle. Grease units without freshwater and full-dump trailer units are available. Aluminum units will be available for fall. 800/326-9763; www.pikrite.com.

Satellite Industries

The bolt-in module is designed to fit a 1-ton pickup or flatbed trailer. The 270-gallon waste/170-gallon freshwater tank is secured in the back by a full-length structural mount and in the front by 7/8-inch threaded fasteners connected to two frame brackets. The vacuum system features a Conde 6 pump, belt-driven by a 5.5-hp, electric-start Honda engine. The washdown system includes a 12-volt Flojet pump and 25-foot hose and garden hose sprayer.

800/328-3332; www.satelliteindustries.com. ■



Liquid waste pump-out unit from Pat's Pump & Blower



Trailer unit from Pik Rite Inc.



Bolt-in module from Satellite Industries







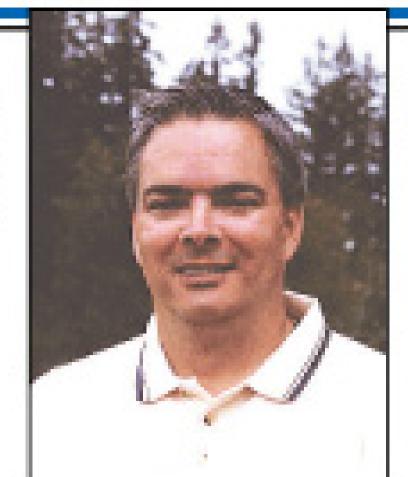






PRO BUSINESS

Mark Herring is vice president of Heffernan Insurance Brokers. Reach him at MarkH@HeffINS.com.



Paying a Premium

As another fallout of the financial crisis, you can expect your business insurance costs to rise this year

By Mark Herring

he current financial crisis will have an impact on your insurance costs. It is an impact you will not like.

Over the past seven years, you should have seen your insurance expense go down nearly every year. That trend is likely over. Many industries have already seen increases in insurance costs. Most experts agree that by the fourth quarter of this year, most insurers will show increases in their insurance rates for most industries. Portable restroom operators are not considered a highly desired class by most insurers, so you can expect a boost in pricing.

A summary of a report of the insurance industry for 2009 performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers says it clearly:

"Insurers are faced with the most challenging economic environment in decades. The ongoing financial crisis is having a profound effect on the industry and policyholders, and the current ways of doing business are under great stress. Moreover, this is perhaps *the* critical year in the crisis, and how insurers manage uncertainty and change in 2009 likely will determine their long-term success."

The reason for this is fairly simple. The financial services industry is in crisis. Insurance carriers are in the financial services industry. Insurance carriers rely on much of their profit coming from the investment of your insurance dollars. Insurance carriers are required to use very conservative investment programs. As you know, even conservative investment strategies are not faring well these days.

The stock prices of most insurance carriers have dropped significantly over the past year. Many have dropped by well over half of their value and more. As the media has sounded an alert, the largest insurer

in the world is in distress. AIG's stock price, once at \$70, has been as low as 35 cents.

Keep in mind that AIG is a lot more than an insurance carrier. The insurance divisions of AIG are solvent per the individual state's guidelines. The fact remains that most insurance companies are hurting and they will need to raise prices to become profitable again.

Claims will happen. Catastrophes will happen. There is nothing the insurance carriers can do to stop claims. Insurance companies project how many dollars from premiums will be required to pay claims and show a profit. Currently, nearly every insurance carrier is in the red. Their return on investments is down and there is nothing they can do about that.

The only thing the insurance carriers have real control over is what they charge for their product, and the price of that

product has been down for many years. The current economic crisis has escalated the impact of the low pricing. Most insurers have been trying to hold the line on pricing. Many of the experts say that by the fourth quarter, pricing will have to go up to make the insurance industry profitable.

The price increases are already showing up in California, which tends to be an indicator of trends across the country. The state bureau that recommends pricing for worker compensation coverage is recommending the average insurance rate go up 23.7 percent as of July. A mid-year increase like this is the sign of a major problem. What the insurance carriers will do is yet to be seen. Will there be increases? Yes. Some insurers will be forced to take all of the recommended rate increase. All insurers are strategizing this challenge now. Many are still not sure what they will do.

One carrier I spoke with is instituting a 10-percent increase, effective in August. The California bureau's recommended rate for the portable sanitation class code will go up 31 percent. This would be on top of the 10-percent increase that happened to the portable sanitation class code in January.

Insurance carriers will try to phase in their increases as much as possible. The key thing to remember is pricing will be trending up. When you are writing bids for long-term contracts, keep these potential increases in mind. Also keep in mind that not all insurers will charge the same increases. Be ready to compare prices with other insurance carriers. If you happen to be with an insurer that takes a large increase and you find out four days before your policy renews, what are your options

if you don't have a plan B in place? Be sure to have a plan B, maybe even plan C.

Many businesses are in survival mode. You need to prepare yourself for changes that may come down the road. An unexpected significant increase in expenses can hurt your business. At least if you prepare for it, you can have a plan to deal with it.

The most important thing you can do is require your insurance broker to get your quote to you at least 2-3 weeks before the renewal date. Tell them it is mandatory to have the quote early. You control your insurance. If you tell the broker his quote will not be accepted if it is after the deadline, you will get the quote prior to the deadline. Or tell the broker that if you do not have the quote by the required deadline, you will be forced to get other quotes.

The next thing to do is to have your last four years of claims experience (called loss

6 Steps to a Business Insurance Checkup

- Contemplate insurance pricing increases when determining budgets and long-term contracts.
- Communicate often with your broker about what they are seeing for rate changes for other pumping and portable sanitation businesses they insure.
- 3) Set a deadline that must be met by all insurance brokers. You do not want to be in a position of having no options and time has run out.
- 4) Thoroughly review your coverage to look for ways to reduce the impact of rate increases.
- 5) Make sure the limit of coverage in your yard is adequate. The amount of property in your yard has probably increased significantly during this economic slowdown.
- 6) Be prepared to shop your insurance to get the best pricing and coverage for your business.



runs) in hand well before the deadline date. If you want to shop your insurance effectively, you must have your loss runs so you can bust out of the gate and get another quote before your policy renews.

You can also shop your insurance with another broker as a backup measure. If you go this route, always remember to get a list of the insurers each broker is going to submit applications to. Make sure the brokers do not deviate from the list and be positive that none of the insurers receive applications from multiple brokers.

I suggest you give your preferred broker first choice of insurers they want to use. Give the backup broker any other insurers that are left. One recommendation to save you and the brokers' time, do not use more than one good backup broker. There are not enough insurers that want to insure this industry, so two brokers should be able to blanket all of them.

Be sure to use a broker that insures many portable restroom businesses. That broker will already know who the hot insurers are for your industry. Discuss your coverage with the brokers; do not just get quotes. Get their recommendations for options available to you. You may want to increase your deductibles or look at other cost-cutting measures to reduce the impact of the increase.

A thorough review by both brokers would be a good thing in this economy. Listen to all of the recommendations and pick the components you like best. A new set of eyes is very good at a time like this. A side note, be sure to evaluate what your coverage is for your yard. Many portable restroom businesses have twice the amount of property in their yard as they did this time last year.

Be prepared for what's on the horizon and the sting will not be nearly as bad. Hopefully things will quickly turn around so that the increases will not be too bad. If you are prepared, you will be ahead of the game.

PRODUCT NEWS



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"We stay small with the small

Isuzu trucks. I like the new flat

tank and hope to have one of

it, so you can haul units or

Shawn Loveless

those soon. I like the design of

whatever on top of the tank."

The Right Rig for the Job

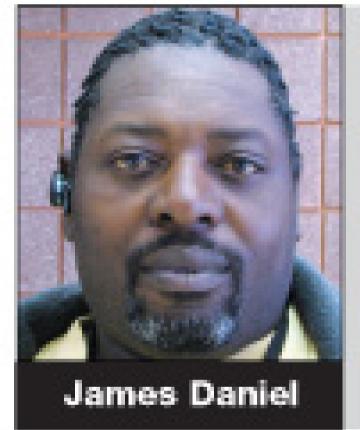
PROS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ABOUT MATCHING THE RIGHT TANK AND PUMP WITH A CHASSIS FOR THE BEST SERVICE RIG

By Mary Shafer

ith portable sanitation service trucks being a home-awayfrom-office for most PROs, the way they're set up tends to be a personal thing. We talked here last year about the considerations operators make for the interior of their rigs, from productivity tools and comfort amenities down to personalized fuzzy dice on the rearview mirror.

But what about the working end of things, what the truck is actually all about to begin with? Turns out that not only is truck size an issue, but tank and pump pairings are also a matter of rather strongly held personal taste.

Sure, the main considerations in these decisions is the type of job each rig is responsible for handling. But there are also matters of more refinement that determine what drivers really look for in their big rig configurations.

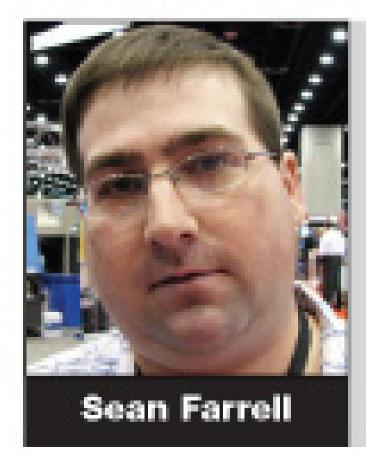


Name: James Daniel Company: Ben Thompson Porta Johns Location: LaGrange, Ga. Employees: 5 Years in Business: 15 Lead driver James
Daniel's routes for Ben
Thompson Porta Johns
take him over a wide
range of roads from
metro Atlanta to far-flung
rural Georgia, just east of
the Alabama state line.

He needs a strong tank that can take the abuse of backroad driving, while being lightweight enough to allow him over small country bridges. A medium-sized (750 gallon waste/300 gallon fresh) aluminum tank paired with a Masport HXL75V pump does the job for Daniel's workload.

Another vehicle of choice is a 1996 Ford F-550 with an old Alexander 1,100-gallon waste/300-gallon fresh aluminum tank. Power comes from a Masport W44 pump. And jobs in tight spaces — say, between buildings or trees — get serviced with a GMC 3500 flatbed with a small slide-in unit, also aluminum.

"I prefer aluminum," says Daniel, "It helps stay within weight limits on the bridges."



Name: Sean Farrell
Company: D & S Vacuum
Truck Services
Location: Flatrock,
Newfoundland, Canada
Employees: 3
Years in Business: 10

Sean Farrell keeps his rigs small for the septic pumping and portables business he runs with his father, Dominic Farrell. They service their home island of Newfoundland at the mouth of the St.

Lawrence River. Their territory also encompasses Labrador, the mainland peninsula of this rugged Maritime Province.

"You don't want to go too big, because then you can't get into

driveways and tight areas," he says. Still, they need a big enough tank to accommodate the longer rural routes. "An ideal tank (for all-around use) for us would be about 2,500 gallons, with 400-500 gallons of freshwater."

The Farrells purchase high-displacement pumps to handle these larger tanks, and they prefer the Moro brand. "The last truck we just bought was built out by Transway (Systems Inc.)," Sean Farrell says. "We're quite happy with that." That new setup is mounted on a GMC tandem axle. Their other new rig is a Peterbilt single axle.

There are no road or bridge weight restrictions in their territory, but lots of hills make the Farrells want a rig that can climb steadily and tanks that can take a bump or two. Their answer is carbon steel, built to last and save money. "Especially in this economy," the younger Farrell says. "You want to save where you can.".



Name: Shawn Loveless
Company: Loveless
Sanitation
Location: Science Hill, Ky.
Employees: 3
Years in Business: 24

Shawn Loveless likes to keep his rigs light and maneuverable for working the roads of south central Kentucky, where he pumps septic tanks and grease traps in addition to renting portable rest-

rooms. "We stay small with the small Isuzu trucks. I like the new flat tank and hope to have one of those soon. I like the design of it, so you can haul units or whatever on top of the tank."

His current tank is a 500-gallon waste/200-gallon fresh aluminum model, powered by a Masport HXL4V pump. The electric start, belt-driven engine of this compact pump suits Loveless for size, productivity and durability, which all add up to value. "When we first went into business, we bought two of these pumps with the Honda engines in them, and they just lasted and lasted," he says. "We've had to redo the vanes in them a time or two, but they've just been really great pumps."

The compact rigs do the job for Loveless, providing necessary maneuverability and lighter weight. "We're on a lot of country roads," he says, and need to be able to negotiate switchbacks and narrow roadways without much shoulder. "The Isuzus turn easily, and we have to think about weight on the bridges."

MARKETPLACE

PADLOCKS

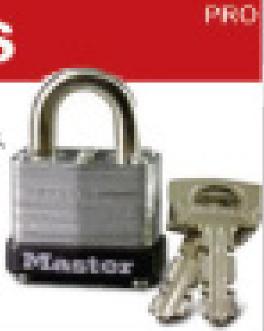
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Bob Carlson (left) and Jerry Kirkpatrick answer your questions in Truck Corner.

Seeing is Believing

EVIDENCE FOUND DURING PUMP TEARDOWN TELLS AN UNFORTUNATE TALE OF LACKADAISICAL MAINTENANCE

asituation that cropped up in the shop today prompts us to set aside the *Truck Corner* mailbag this

month and reinforce our frequent reminders of the importance of monitoring vacuum truck components.

A customer pulled into our shop driving a six-year-old, 3,000-gallon vacuum service rig, complaining that he was under pressure to get a job started. But when he arrived at the work site, the pump wasn't building vacuum like it should. To make matters worse, the tank wasn't holding on to the vacuum once it was built up. "At this rate, I'll never get done," the exasperated pumper told us.

His boss told him to bring it in for us to look at and repair.

We have stressed the importance of regular and preventative maintenance in many articles over the years. Now we have photos to illustrate what happens when a pumper doesn't pay attention.

When a pump isn't building vacuum in the usual manner, our first thought jumps to worn vanes. The pump on this truck was a belt-drive Masport HXL15WV. Consequently, this setup involves belts, a driveline and a pillow block bearing.

TURNING WRENCHES

To diagnose the problem and make the repair, we started by removing the pump. This gave us a clear view of the driveline. The pillow block bearing had caused damage to the driveline. The pillow block bearing had gone bad and chewed into the driveline shaft. Look at photo No. 1 to see how much the shaft had worn down. It's amazing that the driveline would still turn at all. So that was the first problem.

The next step involved breaking down the pump and taking a look inside. Sure enough, the vanes were worn down by at least 3/4-inch and misshapen. This alone will cause the pump to lose a good deal of normal vacuum. Photo No. 2 shows the damaged vanes, the second problem with the service vehicle.

Looking further, we noticed the flappers on the vacuum pump

1. The worn out driveline shaft.







4. A new set of flappers, ready for installation.

were nearly worn away. The flappers seal the pump so vacuum or pressure will not leak out. In this case, as mentioned, the flappers had disintegrated or broken off,

the third issue involving wear items. Photo No. 3 shows what was left of the pump's flappers. Photo No. 4 shows a new set of flappers.

The series of photos explains why the unit would not hold vacuum. Looking at the wear and tear, it's amazing any vacuum was being generated.

So how does a truck owner avoid these kinds of problems? First, check belt tightness and bearing condition on a regular basis. Grease them every 40-50 hours. Secondly, check vanes annually and replace them if they are bad.

Typically, flapper valves don't go bad. In this instance, either the pump had been rebuilt or

had absorbed too much heat. This led to the failure of the flappers and most likely to the chipping of the vanes. Only in rare cases does anybody take the top of the pump off to check the flapper valve.

TELLTALE CLUES

One clue that you may have flapper problems comes when, upon shutting down the pump, rather than holding the vacuum, the pump begins to turn backwards as the air pushes out.

The customer in our shop ended up having a new pillow block bearing, a new driveshaft and a rebuild kit installed in his pump, including the new flapper valves.

Obviously, regular maintenance could have prevented most of these problems. So the next time you break down while you're on the job and wonder why it happened, think about how much time you spent maintaining and checking the failed system. If

there's any consolation for this pumper, it's that he's not the only operator who's been lax about maintenance and faced the consequences.

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. ■



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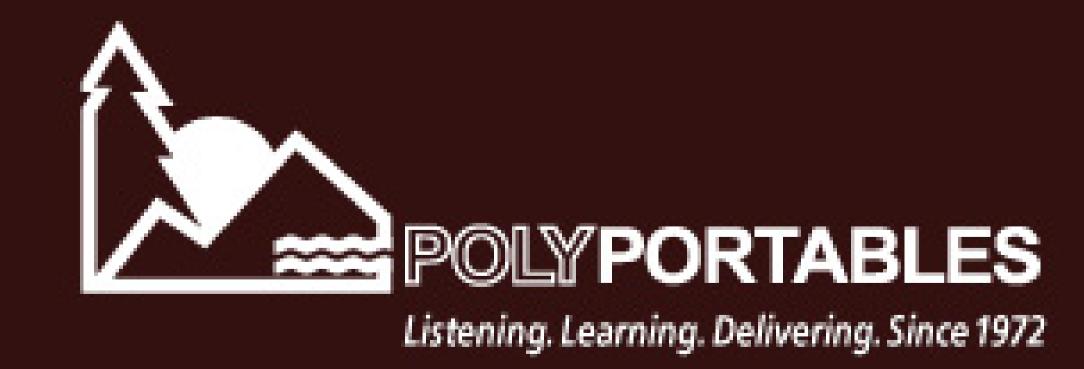
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