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October 2011
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service to William and Kate

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ON THE COVER

Mather Rental/Johnny on the Job technician Steve Hester services restrooms at a carnival in the company's hometown of Topeka, Kan. (Photo by Jim Sovanski)

PRO

PORTABLE RESTROOM OPERATOR

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Think About ATGATT

MOTORCYCLISTS FACE THE THREAT OF DISTRACTED DRIVERS AT EVERY CORNER. WHY NOT EMPLOY THIS EXTREME SAFETY MEASURE WHEN YOU SERVICE PORTABLE RESTROOMS?

By Jim Kneiszel

I try to be a careful motorcycle rider. I didn't start riding until I was 49 years old and my first time riding on two wheels and a motor came at a Motorcycle Safety Foundation class.

From the outset, I learned many defensive driving rules to reduce the chances of meeting other motorists under unfortunate circumstances. Safety is paramount when you head down the road on a bike, and that is reinforced when you constantly see car drivers talking on cell phones, applying makeup and eating dinner while behind the wheel.

It was reading about motorcycle safety that introduced me to a term I think PROs would do well to remember every time they head out on a service route. Cycle riders often argue about the merits of ATGATT. This is the acronym for *All The Gear, All The Time*. It refers to the wisdom of wearing a helmet, gloves, body armor jacket, rugged pants and ankle-height boots every time you get on the bike.

Of course, if you've ever passed a parade of Harleys on the highway

While it seems like the PRO's job can be routine, and that there's little risk of an accident if you pay attention to what you're doing, dangerous situations can and do happen. You never know when you'll run into problems.

One story from a PRO often comes to mind, and I recall the scary tale every time I'm in the workshop and neglect to look for my safety goggles. The contractor told me about the time he was horsing around a 55-gallon drum of full-strength cleaning solution in the warehouse. In a fluke situation, the drum tipped and splashed chemicals over him, hitting him in the eyes. I cringe whenever I recall this story. The contractor suffered severe eye injuries, but eventually recovered his full sight. He's now careful to keep his goggles handy and always wears them when moving or using chemical products.

For PROs, I look at gloves like I view a helmet on a motorcycle rider. There's no excuse not to be wearing them every time you leave the truck to clean a restroom. I have seen a number of contractors pump restrooms and septic tanks without hand protection. These workers routinely risk exposure to pathogens in human waste or chemicals in other sludges. For the relatively low cost and ease of use of good rubber gloves, I can't understand why it wouldn't be automatic to grab a pair when jumping out of the cab and grabbing a hose.

WHILE IT SEEMS LIKE THE PRO'S JOB CAN BE ROUTINE, AND THAT THERE'S LITTLE RISK OF AN ACCIDENT IF YOU PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU'RE DOING, DANGEROUS SITUATIONS CAN AND DO HAPPEN. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'LL RUN INTO PROBLEMS.

in the summer, you've seen that usually few riders observe the ATGATT rule. Many riders ignore safety gear all together, or say that it's too restrictive or uncomfortable.

While I think *All The Gear, All The Time* is a worthy goal, I have to admit that many times a helmet and gloves are the only safety gear I use on my short commute to work. At minimum, I want to protect my head and hands from the unforgiving pavement should my bike go down.

A LESSON FOR PROS

So what does my riding and the concept of ATGATT have to do with portable restroom service? I think plenty, if operators aren't using basic recommended safety gear for pumping waste and working with powerful cleaning chemicals.

Over the years, I've heard horror stories from PROs about what happens when workers don't wear the appropriate gear. Going out on photo shoots, I have also witnessed restroom technicians who either never knew they should wear gloves and goggles on the job or just didn't care to take any precautions.

TAKE CARE OF WORKERS

Depending on the work you do from day to day, there may be other safety gear you should be using. Perhaps long pants, steel-toed shoes and a work helmet are necessary if you visit construction sites. If your truck doesn't already have a first-aid kit, maybe you should stock a tote with bandages, eyewash and other items that would come in handy in emergency situations.

I like what one company owner said to me about his commitment to safety when his employees were working with high-powered water-jetters, pumping sludge and going into confined-space situations. He said, "My job is to make sure these guys make it home to their families safe and sound every night. That's the most important thing I can do for my guys."

We could all learn something from that business owner's attitude about safety. And even though making the effort can seem inconvenient or make working conditions a little less comfortable, we should all remember ATGATT and work toward that ultimate safety goal every time we go on the job. ■

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Firing the Customer



'THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT' IS A BUSINESS CATCHPHRASE, BUT IF YOU HAVE A CUSTOMER WHO IS SO WRONG THEY ARE HURTING YOUR COMPANY, THE BEST OPTION MIGHT BE TO 'TRUMP' THEM AND SAY, 'YOU'RE FIRED!'

By Judy Kneiszel

In a recent *PRO discussion forum* column, a reader asked for suggestions in dealing with a customer who refused to pay for twice-weekly service, yet complained when the restrooms they were renting were far from clean after a week of heavy use. The route driver not only had to spend extra time cleaning the units, but waste time listening to the complaining each week as well. There were several good suggestions made, which you can read at www.promonthly.com/editorial/2011/07/encouraging_an_extra_service, but the one that caught my eye said this:

"Consider servicing it twice a week without charging extra for a specific time – say two weeks. After that experimental time they pay for the extra service or they find another service provider. Go the extra mile and if that doesn't work, fire them. Firing customers is legal. You will both be happier."

TOXIC CUSTOMERS

What you have in the story above is a toxic customer poisoning a company. In this case it has been going on for four long years. And while it may be difficult to lose a long-term customer, consider the negative impact keeping this toxic customer has had on the business.

YOU DON'T WANT TO BURN BRIDGES ENTIRELY. WHO KNOWS? A MANAGEMENT CHANGE OR UPTURN IN THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION MIGHT SOMEDAY BRING THEM BACK TO YOU AS A NON-TOXIC CUSTOMER.

First, having their name on the side of overflowing restrooms is the worst kind of advertising they could get. Everyone who uses them, or chooses not to because of the filthy conditions, associates the experience with the provider.

Also, enduring four years of extra work and complaining has probably been bad for company morale. If a customer's treatment of a service provider's employees becomes bad enough, there is a risk of losing good employees because of a bad customer. And even if the good employee isn't driven to quit over the bad customer, their continued abuse might negatively affect how the employee treats other innocent customers. If the bad customer is the first stop of the day, how cheerful is the employee going to be on the second stop of the day after being berated and having to do extra cleaning?

Maintaining toxic customers can cost a company money even if they are good paying customers. Why? They will consume more time and effort from your workforce than they are paying for. They will not recommend you to others and they could spread negative comments about your company in your service territory.

WHO TO FIRE

This isn't to say you should fire every difficult or disagreeable client. Each situation requires objectivity. There are some common characteristics of customers who are candidates for firing, however. They are unprofitable for you, they waste your time, they make you look bad, and they drive you and your employees crazy.

If a particular customer comes to mind when you read those characteristics, ask yourself if they are demanding more time than is cost effective. Do they pay late? Refuse to do what you recommend even if it compromises health and safety? Are they never satisfied? Do they require too much handholding? Are they verbally abusive? Are they threatening?

Maybe you have a toxic customer who is difficult to work with, but good about paying. Before you decide to end the relationship, consider how expensive or time consuming it will be to make up the lost revenue. You don't want to let a profitable client go if losing that revenue could break you. If you're close to the edge financially and really, really need the money this client is bringing in, but also really want to be rid of the headache of dealing with them, devote extra time and effort to finding a replacement customer before you fire them.

HOW TO FIRE

The best time to fire a customer is when their contract is up for renewal. But whenever you decide to sever ties, speak to the customer personally rather than ending the relationship via voice mail, email or just pulling your units out under cover of darkness. Clearly, without emotion, explain the issues, even if you've done it many times before. Listen to their objections and repeat them back to the customers. Sometimes people don't realize how silly they sound until they hear their words repeated back to them.

If you believe the relationship is salvageable and the customer is worth keeping, try to rehabilitate them. Offer solutions to the customer. Also consider in-house changes that may make serving the toxic customer more tolerable, such as having only your most even-tempered employee deal with them or having employees rotate so no single person has to take the brunt of the toxic customer.

Remain calm and act in a professional manner. Don't get pulled into

a verbal battle. Calmly explain that your company is no longer able to meet their needs. Make sure you have met your contractual obligations to them, and be prepared to refund any money they paid up front for service you have not yet provided.

And as you are firing them, soften the blow by recommending a competitor who might be better equipped to handle their needs. You don't want to burn bridges entirely. Who knows? A management change or upturn in their economic situation might someday bring them back to you as a non-toxic customer.

DON'T MAKE IT A HABIT

If you have more than one toxic customer, don't cut them all off at once. Pick the worst of the worst and see how it goes. You might learn something from the process that will help you resolve issues with your other customers without resorting to firing.

If all your customers are toxic, start looking inward and ask yourself what you and your employees are doing to routinely attract this type of clientele. Maybe it's your pricing. Maybe it's your customer service.

The easiest way to avoid getting yourself into the position of wanting to fire customers is to avoid toxic customers in the first place. While they are not always easy to see coming, there can be predictors that someone is likely to be trouble. For example, if a potential customer walks through the door bad-mouthing a competitor you know to be reputable, you might have someone on your hands who is impossible to please. Or if they demand a ridiculous amount of service for a ridiculously low price, don't assume once you get them on board you can fix the situation. ■

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TOPEKA TRIFECTA

KANSAS CONTRACTOR LARRY MATHER BUILT A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR HIS 50-YEAR-OLD BUSINESS BY MIXING PORTABLE SANITATION, TRAFFIC CONTROL AND CONTAINER STORAGE SERVICES

By Ken Wysocky

Above, technician Jesse Tucker (left), Jack Kelly and Carrie Kelly unload a Satellite Industries restroom unit for Cruise Night in downtown Topeka, Kan. Below are company principals (left to right) Jack and Carrie Kelly and Larry Mather. (Photos by Jim Sovanski)

From a business standpoint, Larry Mather realized years ago that it's risky to sit on a one-legged stool. That's why Mather Flare Rental Inc. in Topeka, Kan., consists of not one, but three diverse yet complementary on-site-services divisions – portable restrooms, traffic control and temporary semi-trailer and shipping-container storage – that offer a more comfortable and secure perch.

Diversifying into three distinct yet related businesses made sense because one division often provides business leads for another. And in a relatively unpopulated area, serving three markets instead of one is often a necessity, Mather says.

"A good example is the restrooms, which is a good compatible business for traffic-control services," he says. "If a project requires traffic barricades, there's roadwork going on, and where there's roadwork going on, there's a need for portable restrooms.

"Plus, this is a small area, so you can't generate the kind of sales volume (with one business) that you can in more populated areas," he adds. "So you have to branch out in order to survive."

The portable restroom branch of Mather Rental is A-1 Rental Inc., which does business as Johnny On the Job. Mather's daughter, Carrie Kelly, and her husband, Jack, are in the process of buying out the business from him on a contract agreement. Mather and his wife, Cheryl, run the other two divisions: Topeka Trailer Storage and Traffic Control Services.

GIVE TRAFFIC CONTROL A GO

Mather and his father, Louis, started the company in 1960 when they bought a traffic-control services company in Topeka. Mather was 21 at the time.

"The business seemed lucrative enough," Mather notes. "It's cheaper for the

(continued)



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Larry Mather

state and local municipalities to rent signs and barricades than to own them.”

Today, the division owns more than 800 traffic barricades, mostly made in-house; thousands of self-fabricated highway signs; and eight electronic arrow boards. Four electronic message boards were made by Allmand Brothers Inc.

“We grew through personal contact with contractors and companies and by providing excellent customer service,” Mather says. “We’re always available on call, even in the middle of the night – we’re a 24-hour business. We take care of people, and they appreciate that, which leads to a lot of repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals.”

NEW BUSINESS BRANCH

Based on his frequent contact with contractors and traffic-control customers, Mather decided in 1965 to acquire a small portable restroom outfit in a nearby town. The inventory: 16 plywood units.

Today, the restroom division of the company owns 600 standard restrooms, mostly made by Satellite Industries Inc.; a 40-foot restroom trailer made by Satellite Shelters; and a 34-foot restroom trailer made by Ameri-Can Engineering. The division’s business mix is about 60 percent special events and 40 percent construction rentals, Mather says.

To service customers, the division relies on a 2001 Ford F-450 with a 650-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank; a 2000 Ford F-450 vacuum truck with a 650-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank; a 2004 Ford F-550 with a 650-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank; a 2006 Ford F-550 with a 650-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank; and a 2008 Ford F-750 vacuum truck with an 850-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater steel tank. Satellite Industries built out the trucks, all of which feature Conde pumps made by Westmoor Ltd.

The fleet also includes a 2006 Ford F-550 vacuum truck with a homemade 600-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank; a 2006 Chevy CK 4500 truck with a 1,000-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater aluminum tank, built by Tri State Tank; a 1997 Ford F-350 flatbed; a 2000 Dodge 3500 flatbed, and a 2001 Ford F-450 flatbed.

Johnny On the Job services a large area, and on many of the routes, bigger trucks don’t make sense, Carrie Kelly says of the division’s preference for smaller vacuum rigs. “Larger trucks cost more to buy and maintain,” she says. “We have two larger trucks that we use on the farthest routes in the larger cities. We also use the larger trucks more for the large (special) events.”

FAMILY STEPS IN

The Kellys started operating Johnny On the Job on their own about a year ago, although Jack had already helped Mather run the restroom end of his business for about 25 years.

Mather Flare Rental Inc.

Topeka, Kan.

Owners: Larry and Cheryl Mather

Founded: 1960

Employees: 10

Specialties: Portable sanitation, traffic-control service, storage service

Service area: 100-mile radius of Topeka

Website: www.matherrental.com

KANSAS

“It just seemed like the right time,” Carrie says, noting she was frustrated with her job after 24 years as an accounting manager for a national shoe retailer, and her father was looking to cut back on his hours. “I felt like if we were going to run this end of the business after Dad retired, we needed to do it now or never, because we’re not getting any younger, either.”

(continued)



Technician Steve Hester grabs the hose and prepares to service restrooms at a carnival at the West Ridge Mall in Topeka, Kan.

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Steve Hester, left and below, follows the cleaning protocol at a special event. Busy crews are aided by Microsoft Streets routing software and an Advanced Tracking Technologies GPS product to improve efficiency.

“IF A PROJECT REQUIRES TRAFFIC BARRICADES, THERE’S ROADWORK GOING ON, AND WHERE THERE’S ROADWORK GOING ON, THERE’S A NEED FOR PORTABLE RESTROOMS.”

Larry Mather



During fall, local festivals and football games at Kansas State University in Manhattan, about 50 miles west of Topeka, and at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, about 25 miles east, keep employees hopping. Johnny On the Job restrooms remain on the university campuses for the season, which greatly reduces back-and-forth deliveries and setup times, Mather says.

Labor Day weekend poses one of the division’s biggest challenges: games at both universities, plus a major American Bikers Aimed Toward Education (ABATE) motorcycle rally at Perry Lake, about 30 miles away.

“It’s difficult,” Carrie says. “We try to set up ABATE a week before so we’re not doing everything at the same time. Dad takes the restrooms up to ABATE in a semi-trailer. We set up about 70 restrooms at Kansas State the Monday prior and at KU on Wednesday or Thursday.”

The ABATE event involves about 115

restrooms and twice-a-day service. A local treatment center that used to accept waste doesn’t do so anymore, so crews have to haul it back to Topeka for disposal.

Kansas State games receive only half-time service, which requires two trucks. A fair amount of people never go into the stadium for the game, preferring instead to keep tailgating in the stadium’s one large parking lot, which can make service a challenge. On the plus side, though, a treatment center in Manhattan accepts waste, she says.

Johnny crews service KU games on Sundays. The 60 or so restrooms situated at KU games are a bit more complicated to service than those at Kansas State games because the stadium is in the middle of campus. There aren’t many parking lots around it, so the restrooms are scattered around the campus.

REINING IN EXPENSES

Carrie says her biggest challenge is keeping costs down – especially labor costs. To minimize overtime, she relies on a Microsoft Streets software program to route trucks as efficiently as possible, although she notes that last-minute calls for emergency service tend to mess up even the most strategically planned day.

Johnny On the Job also relies on a global positioning system product from Advanced Tracking Technologies Inc., which collects data such as how fast drivers travel, how long they stop, how many miles they drive per day, where they went and other critical operational information.

The system provides good raw data, but the trick is to find someone who has enough

(continued)

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At left, technician Kyle Kelly uses a Satellite Industries vacuum rig to pump restrooms at Cruise Night. Above, technicians Jesse Tucker (left) and Kyle Kelly place a row of units for the event.

time to review it. "It can spit out a lot of papers," Carrie says. "Our system doesn't operate in real-time. It downloads data from each truck into a database every night."

To ensure a reasonable profit, Carrie runs a detailed cost analysis on all major special events, which tells her exactly what the cost of service is. "That analysis factors in everything from chemicals and toilet paper to fuel and labor," she explains.

"The cost analysis also tells me how much I can pay employees to work at a special event. For special events, I try to pay employees a flat rate. During the week, we pay them hourly, but on weekends, I pay a flat rate. That way they can decide whether or not they want to service an event.

"It makes things easier because I know how much I'm going to spend while doing cost analysis, as opposed to guessing and paying a lot of overtime," she continues. "Plus it gives them an incentive to get in

and get out instead of messing around. They know how much they're making and we know ahead of time how much we're spending.

THE FAMILY LEGACY

Mather is pleased that the restroom business remains in family hands for the foreseeable future. He says it worked out well because Carrie, a Kansas State graduate, has an accounting background and Jack is mechanically inclined.

"They're both hard workers, and they work good together," he says. "Jack can fix just about anything – he keeps everything going.

"Sometimes it's a little bit hard to let go," Mather says about passing the torch. "But I just turned 72, so it's time to step back a little bit and do a little fishing. I feel good about the fact that they're still in it and making money and carrying on what I started. I still get a lot of calls from national companies that want to buy us out, but I'd rather see it directed this way."

And keep that three-legged stool on solid footing along the way. ■

Identifying New Opportunities

Just about everyone agrees that business diversification is a good thing. But how does the average Joe go about finding a way to branch out?

For starters, examine closely what's going on in your own life, in terms of services you use, suggests Larry Mather, owner of Mather Flare Rental Inc. in Topeka, Kan., a portable restroom company that also provides other on-site services, such as traffic control and temporary semi-trailer and shipping-container storage.

"Sometimes your own experience tips you off to good business opportunities," Mather says, noting that he bought the semi-trailer storage business after he rented a couple trailers to store household items while he built a home. "You need to be open-minded all the time, especially in a small market. You have to keep an eye out for any opportunity as it arises and get on top of it quickly."

Mather bought a Topeka-based trailer-storage business in 1989 because it seemed lucrative, based on the rental rates he paid, and it seemed to be compatible with his existing businesses and customers. The company owns about 70 used trailers that range in length from 28 to 53 feet.

"A lot of businesses use trailers to store goods," he says. "We also use the trailers to move large amounts of restrooms, so they come in handy in more ways than one. We can put 22 restrooms in a storage trailer. It saves a lot of fuel when we can make one trip instead of, say, six trips."

A couple years later, Mather Flare expanded into renting shipping containers for temporary storage. The company now owns about 100 containers, which Mather says he buys used as he can afford them. He transports them on a 40-foot lowboy trailer made by Landoll Corp.

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DESTINATION INDY

THE 2012 PUMPER & CLEANER ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO INTERNATIONAL WILL DELIVER THE BEST THE INDUSTRY HAS TO OFFER, ALL WRAPPED UP IN A CONVENIENT NEW PACKAGE

By Jim Kneiszel

It will never be more convenient to attend the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo International than in 2012, when the biggest tradeshow for the environmental services industry moves to Indianapolis.

The renovated and expanded Indiana Convention Center will host the 32nd annual Expo Feb. 27-March 1, providing a simple-to-navigate exhibit space connected through skywalks to several modern hotels. Indiana, known as The Crossroads of America, is easy to reach by car, and the Circle City, as it's called, offers a state-of-the-art airport a short cab- or express bus-ride from downtown.

With 250 restaurants and clubs, and a large shopping mall connected to the complex of hotels serving the Expo, everything is within

easy, climate-controlled reach. In fact, Expo attendees who stay in 4,700 interconnected hotel rooms will be a leisurely two- to three-minute walk from the exhibits.

"Visitors will walk back and forth to the exhibit hall, restaurants and shopping. And they'll be able to do that without ever taking their jackets along," says Bob Kendall, owner of COLE Inc., the Expo sponsor. "This convenience will help create more networking opportunities than ever before at the Expo."

The quality of the new facilities will be matched by the exhibit and education offerings. The Expo will feature approximately 500 exhibitors who use this lofty stage to introduce the latest technologies in the wastewater industry to nearly 10,000 contractors from al-

most 50 countries. And interest in Expo Education Day continues to grow, with participants getting the cutting-edge training they crave.

Education Day kicks off Expo week with 40 seminars on Monday, Feb. 27, in new meeting rooms adjacent to the exhibit hall, with another 35 seminars planned for Tuesday and Wednesday. The doors to the hall swing open Tuesday through Thursday, Feb. 28-March 1. Hours for the exhibits are 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday and 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday.

NETWORK & LEARN

Several popular Expo events will continue as the show moves to Indy, according to Julie Gensler, Expo coordinator for COLE. The Expo will continue to offer fantastic networking opportunities, including roundtable discussions that were popular in 2011. An Industry Appreciation Night event is being planned for Tuesday, Feb. 28. The popular COLE Pub truck, which offers refreshments and a place for attendees to relax and un-

"VISITORS WILL WALK BACK AND FORTH TO THE EXHIBIT HALL, RESTAURANTS AND SHOPPING. AND THEY'LL BE ABLE TO DO THAT WITHOUT EVER TAKING THEIR JACKETS ALONG."

Bob Kendall

wind, will be moving into the exhibit hall for the first time.

And the Roe-D-Hoe competition, sponsored by the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association, will continue to attract top-notch machinery operators looking to win cash prizes for their skills, Gensler says.

New for 2012, the National Association of Wastewater Transporters is planning a series of events aimed at sparking friendly competition among pumpers, portable sanitation contractors and drain cleaners in attendance.

Tracks of Education Day seminars are being presented by:

- National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association
- National Association of Sewer Service Companies
- National Environmental Health Association
- National Association of Wastewater Transporters
- Portable Sanitation Association International
- Southern Sections Collection Systems Committee
- Northwest Michigan Onsite Wastewater Task Force

Another Education Day track of seminars

will be presented by returning motivational speaker and business coach Scott Hunter. Additional seminars will be scheduled on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, according to Gensler.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Expo lodging is plentiful within walking distance of the ICC. Hotels connected to the exhibit hall include several Marriott properties, the Westin, Hyatt Regency, Omni Severin and Crowne Plaza. Many more hotels are located only a block or two away, near the Indiana State Capitol, White River State Park and Monument Circle. Gensler recommends booking early by going to www.pumpershow.com and clicking on the "hotels & travel" tab.

Based on other events set for Indy in early 2012, there's no doubt the city is up to the hospitality challenge of the Expo. Just before Pumper & Cleaner, Indianapolis will host the 2012 Super Bowl. Just after the Expo, the NCAA Final Four tips off at the Lucas Oil Stadium.

"The NFL chose Indianapolis for a reason," says Kendall, referring to the hotel, restaurant and entertainment infrastructure that has exploded in recent years to make Indy a world class destination. With everything so handy, Kendall says folks who drive to the Expo will be

able to park their cars and walk everywhere. And those who fly to Indy can cab it to their hotel and forget about needing to rent a car to get around.

"Once you're there, you can stay there," Kendall says. "Rental cars will not be necessary, which will save attendees a lot of money."

Those who want to venture out further will find that other attractions are a short cab ride away, including fabled Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the eclectic Broad Ripple Village neighborhood or the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, billed as the world's biggest children's museum, to name a few.

THE MAIN EVENT

Setting aside the many options for entertainment, Kendall says there remains one overarching reason for environmental services contractors to head to the Expo.

"We continue to offer the premier showcase for the best products the industry has to offer," he says. "The hands-on exhibits, networking and learning opportunities make this a can't miss event for industry professionals."

Early registration for the Expo costs just \$50 per person (until Jan. 20, 2012). At-the-door full registration is \$70 (\$50 for exhibits only). To learn more, go to www.pumpershow.com or call 866/933-2653. ■

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Fit for a KING

By Betty Dageforde

STAR-STUDED CHARITY POLO MATCH FEATURING BRITAIN'S PRINCE WILLIAM GIVES ANDY GUMP THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OFF ITS ROYAL SERVICE

Platinum trailers from Ameri-Can Engineering Inc. and an ADA-compliant NuConcepts trailer were placed in the VIP area at the charity polo match. (Photos courtesy of Andy Gump Inc.)

THE TEAM

Andy Gump Inc. is a third-generation family-owned business with five Southern California locations: North Hollywood – that managed the polo event – Bakersfield, Antelope Valley, Fontana, and their Santa Clarita headquarters. Vice president Nancy Gump handles marketing and is set to take over the reins when her father, Barry, retires.

The company has 145 employees, 60 in the sanitation division including coordinators, customer service reps, drivers, prep workers, attendants and technicians. The company's portable restroom inventory includes 250 Satellite Maxim 3000s and 100 NuConcepts VIP flushing units, but they are particularly known for their fleet of 90 high-end trailers.

Special event coordinator Amy Archie handled numerous revisions over seven months leading up to the four-hour event. John Torres, operations manager, coordinated logistics and made preparatory site visits.

COMPANY HISTORY

In the 1940s, Nancy Gump's grandfather, Andy, bought a septic service

business. He expanded into portable restrooms during the post-war building boom when California passed ordinances requiring portable sanitation on construction sites. Gump and his sons, Barry and Bill, built the first five units out of scrap plywood in their garage, while his wife, Irma, daughter Cherilyn, and Barry's wife, Pati, handled the office work.

In the '70s, Barry Gump took over, adding temporary power, fencing and mobile storage. When he coordinated the efforts of a number of sanitation companies to provide portable restrooms for the 1984 Summer Olympics, the company became known for special events. Other high-profile events such as the 2000 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach and the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City were instrumental in encouraging the company to invest in high-end trailers.

Barry Gump's daughter Nancy joined the team in 1989 and was inspired by her grandfather's work ethic. "We wouldn't be where we are today if not for my grandfather's foundation," she says. "Wanting to help people was

ON LOCATION

THE PRO: Andy Gump inc.

THE JOB: Charity Polo Match featuring Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton

LOCATION: Santa Barbara, Calif.





Prince William (above, left) waits to begin play with his teammates at the charity polo match in Santa Barbara, Calif. At right William's new bride Kate Middleton talks with attendees at the event.

his main driving force. It's about service. We're operations-driven, not sales-driven."

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The company's reputation was its entree to the event. Nancy Gump reports that the manager of the event planning company that gave them the job had said, "I'll only use Andy Gump because they're phenomenal, I know all their people, they're like family."

When the company presented its proposal in January it had not been told royalty would be involved. "We just thought it was another high-end special event," Gump says.

THE MAIN EVENT

As part of their visit to the United States, Prince William and his new bride, Kate Middleton, participated in a fund-raising polo match at the Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club as part of the Club's 100-year celebration. They arrived about 11 a.m. on Saturday, July 9, by helicopter, then joined VIP guests for a white tent lunch prepared by celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis. The Prince then took to the field for the round-robin tournament, scoring four goals leading to Team Royal Salute's victory over Team Audi and Team American Express. At the insistence of the crowd, the

Duchess presented him with a kiss on the cheek along with the Tiffany & Co. silver trophy.

Nearly 3,000 attended, with 600 having paid \$4,000 for their VIP seats. The event raised millions of dollars for Prince William and Prince Harry's foundation supporting disadvantaged youth, military and environmental causes.

THE JOB

Gump was asked to provide restrooms, upscale restroom trailers and ADA-compliant flushing units for use by the royals, celebrities, media and crew.

Since the company is located nearly 90 miles from Santa Barbara, it chose to partner with another service provider.

"Our philosophy is that if it's not in our backyard, we're going to work with a local company to help make that event happen," Gump says. They selected MarBorg Industries because of the quality of their work and strong operational team. "There was no question that we'd work with them," Gump says. "They did a wonderful job and are one of the reasons it went so well."

MarBorg provided a number of the units and did all the pumping.

BY THE NUMBERS

The company and event planners worked together to determine what equipment would work best. "The goal is to have the least amount of trailers with the highest amount of capacity," Gump says.

The company provided four restroom trailers from its top-of-the-line Platinum series. The 32-foot and 42-foot models included an ADA-compliant stall and were placed in the VIP red carpet area between the field and the lunch tent along with a NuConcepts ADA-compliant flushing standalone unit. The 34-foot and 36-foot trailers were located on the opposite side of the field. Gump's Platinum trailers are built by Ameri-Can Engineering and feature pewter porcelain sinks, chrome



The Andy Gump team serving the charity polo match included attendants and technicians Leo Orornia, Sr., Patricia Cabrera, Amy Archie, Alberto Hernandez, Guillermo Hernandez, Isabel Hernandez, Kathie Telles and Pedro Ponce. The setup and removal team included Leo Osornia, Jr., John Torres, Hipolito Martinez, Eduardo Rivera, Richard Zelaya, Hector Romero, Raul Escobedo and Rafael Figueroa. Nancy Gump is also in the group photo.



“WE WOULDN’T BE WHERE WE ARE TODAY IF NOT FOR MY GRANDFATHER’S FOUNDATION. WANTING TO HELP PEOPLE WAS HIS MAIN DRIVING FORCE. IT’S ABOUT SERVICE. WE’RE OPERATIONS-DRIVEN, NOT SALES-DRIVEN.”

Nancy Gump

faucets, ceiling-to-floor stall doors and custom artwork. The 42-foot trailer has a slide-out sink compartment, making it roomier when in use.

A 25-foot Executive trailer from Olympia Fiberglass Industries with four women’s and four men’s stalls was located in the media compound. MarBorg placed four NuConcepts VIP single units with flush toilets in the VIP shuttle parking lot and six PolyJohn Enterprises Corp. Fleet Series units in the crew staging area.

LET’S ROLL

Units for the crew were set up 10 days before the event. Everything else was brought in during the four days prior, and pumped out and removed Saturday night.

Gump uses smaller trucks – Ford F-550s and an F-350 – to haul its trailers to prevent violating highway vehicle length and weight restrictions.

PERSONAL SERVICE

Eight of the company’s most experienced attendants – one who doubles as a technician – were on site to clean, restock and manage lines. They wore white dress shirts and black pants. Two arrived at 6:30 a.m. to be on hand for media and the Secret Service. The others were in place by 9 a.m.

A security check was done on drivers and attendants before they were issued badges and passes. The Secret Service inspected each unit, including passing mirrors under the trailers and bringing in police dogs.

UNCOMMON EXPERIENCE

Providing service for a royal couple was exciting, even for Gump personnel accustomed to working high-profile celebrity events. “They were thrilled,” Nancy Gump says of the staff. “We have a photo of Kate walking in and another one of William on a



An attendee at the charity event photographs a prize cup given out as part of the polo match.

horse.” Later that evening Gump saw one of her trailers on Entertainment Tonight as the photographer panned the background during a celebrity interview.

Perhaps the biggest thrill was that Prince William actually used the 42-foot Platinum, which the company has now nicknamed, “The Prince.” ■

MORE INFO

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The photos at left show the importance of screening and staging when serving a VIP event. Andy Gump workers spent a lot of time to set up and maintain restroom trailers at the polo match. Below, this NuConcepts VIP ADA unit was used at the charity event.





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Content is Key to Successful Social Media

TO USE YOUR BUSINESS FACEBOOK PAGE TO BEST ADVANTAGE, YOU MUST OFFER UP A VARIETY OF NEWS AND HUMOR TO KEEP YOUR FRIENDS COMING BACK

By Genae Girard

It seems like every company is trying to use Facebook to move their business forward and stay connected to their customers in this fast-paced world. Why are some companies more successful at this than others? Content is the key to staying in touch with your customers and keeping them informed. The content, however, must be a rich mix of information, education, humor and fun. Use the HICCUP approach to make your Facebook page more successful:

Humor

Humor allows your audience to come away with a warm fuzzy feeling and a friendly attachment to your message. It doesn't have to be industry specific, although it can be. You can do viral searches on YouTube and/or sites that plug social media. Always watch a video all the way through before posting as you don't want it to include any profanity or other questionable behavior. Video is king. Written blogs are being trumped by the clever, colorful and often fun video blogs.

IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, GET PLUGGED IN TO ALL ONLINE MEDIA, AND/OR TRADE PUBLICATIONS ONLINE. WHEN SOMETHING INTERESTING POPS UP, PASS IT ALONG FOR OTHERS.

Interactivity

Don't be afraid to ask open-ended questions to your group. As an example, a financial advisor might ask, "What is your biggest concern with the down economy?" The purpose here is to begin the conversation. People posting their answers will create a community buzz. Letting the responses unfold naturally also gives you a marketing advantage. The financial advisor can track the concerns and create future training or webinars around his/her consumers' needs.

Content

If you don't provide a myriad of interesting topics, information and trends, current and potential customers simply go away. Clicking "Unlike" on Facebook is just as easy as clicking "Like." Smart, clever and challenging content will keep your audience waiting for more. With most companies having a presence on Facebook, competition will become fierce and you have to stand out.

Current events

If you haven't done so already, get plugged in to all online media, and/or trade publications online. When something interesting pops up, pass it along for others. If a regulation change impacts your industry, for example, pass it along. Never make a personal judgment about the news. Let your community unfold. Use Google Alerts in which you can program key words to notify you of events and news feeds related to your industry. Use a program like HootSuite to consolidate and Tweet events to all of your feeds and accounts at one time.

Utilizing industry facts

Keep your followers abreast of changes in your industry and relate them back to your own business. For example, an accountant might see tax changes around the corner and keep people aware by posting on Facebook. A medical office might want to post information on when a flu vaccine is available and what days and times to sign up for an office visit. Specific actions endear customers to your brand.

Promos and specials

Mention specials, promotions, new products and services. Get creative and run a coupon or contest. Talk about new employees, business awards or articles written by your staff. You can drive traffic to your business and services by using this concept. As a caution, you shouldn't overuse Facebook to market to your customer base. They can grow tired of it and quickly "Unlike" your page.

THE BOTTOM LINE

To be successful, all categories should be represented on your posts daily. If you personally don't have time, assign this process to an employee or virtual assistant. Give them these rules for your industry and explain the process. Generally, creative people are best suited for this task. If you follow this model on Facebook, customers will stick around to see what you post next. As the Facebook community grows, we will all have to fight for the attention of the consumer.

Genae Girard is founder of www.BeyondtheBoobieTrap.com, an online social media group, and regularly speaks on social media topics. Reach her at info@BeyondtheBoobieTrap.com or 512/796-1618. ■

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CLEAN MACHINES

Hard-working, time-saving vacuum and washdown pumps enhance cleaning performance and build productivity for the route driver

By Ed Wodalski

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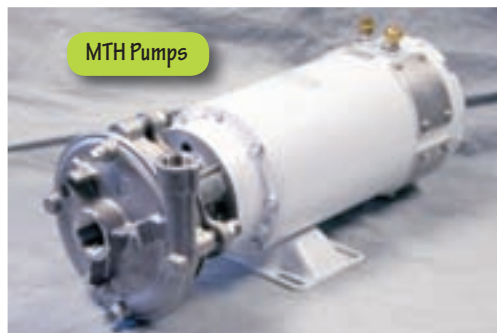
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DCSC and DCSS heavy-duty washdown pumps from **Moro USA** have a stainless steel pump head, pressure switch and 12-volt solenoid that enables users to control flow at the nozzle without damaging the pump. Specifically designed for filling sinks and portable restrooms, the pumps have a maximum delivery rate of 20 gpm at 42 psi. Features include 1-hp, 12-volt DC motor, 1-inch discharge and 1 1/4-inch intake as well as stainless steel impeller for durability and efficiency. **800/383-6304; www.morousa.com.**



WATER CANNON

The **Annovi Reverberi washdown pump** from **Water Cannon** delivers a maximum 2,500 psi and maximum flow rate of 3.5 gpm. Flow and pressure rates can be adjusted to avoid backsplash. The pump mounts to most trucks and can be connected to existing hydraulic systems. No gasoline or electric power is required. Hydraulic requirements begin at 7 gpm; pressure requirements start at 800 psi. Additional hydraulic-driven models with power up to 5.5 gpm and pressure to 4,000 psi are available. **800/333-9274; www.watercannon.com. ■**



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INDUSTRY NEWS

Wastequip Names VP, Launches Ad Campaign

Wastequip promoted Shawn King to vice president of sales, responsible for outside sales. She has held various marketing, sales and product management positions and was most recently vice president of marketing for Wastequip. The company also launched a print advertising campaign to focus on challenges and solutions for the industry. The ads will run throughout the year.

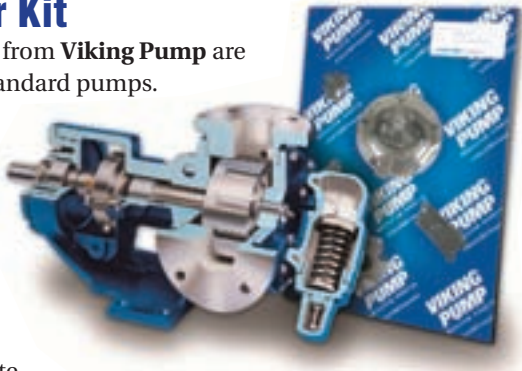


Shawn King

PRODUCT NEWS

Viking Pump Offers Repair Kit

Repair part kits from Viking Pump are available for most standard pumps. Seal kits include shaft seal, O-rings, gaskets, seal lubricant, bearings and bearing housing hardware. Rebuild kits include parts commonly needed for a complete wet-end rebuild, including idler and bushing, head and pin assembly, bracket or casing bushing and fasteners. Each kit includes an exploded diagram and parts lists with a link to the pump's technical service manual. **319/266-1741; www.vikingpump.com.**



CEAttachments Introduces Skid-Steer Snow Blower

EDGE snowblower attachments for skid-steers from CEAttachments Inc. feature a hydraulic motor and cylinder for controlling the 280-degree rotating chute. The attachments can throw snow up to 45 feet and range in size from 48 to 96 inches. Other features include auger paddle for more efficient transfer of snow to the fan, bolt-on fan cover, environmental coils for weather resistance and face-seal hydraulic fittings, red safety tape on the back of the unit and storage tube. **866/232-8224; www.ceattachments.com.**



New Pig Introduces Drum Containment Bag

The drum containment bag from New Pig Corp. provides secondary containment and an easy way to hoist containers on and off trucks. Features include 6,000-pound capacity lifting straps, UN rated for Packing Group II solids, puncture-resistant, PVC-coated shell that clips shut, abrasion-resistant bottom and removable poly liner to contain leaks. **800/468-4647; www.newpig.com.**



Water Cannon Offers Anniversary Pressure Washer

The 30th Anniversary skid-style, Honda-powered hot water pressure washer from Water Cannon is customizable with psi ratings from 3,000 to 4,200. The self-contained washer has a 15-gallon fuel tank and 12- or 15-volt battery in a marine duty battery box. The 12-volt unit includes a 20-amp charging system, while the 15-volt model includes a 2,400-watt generator. The powder-coated frame can be equipped with an electric-start Subaru engine and further customized with pumps from Cat, General Pump and Annovi Reverberi. Features include schedule 80 coil to heat water using minimal fuel, stainless steel coil wrap, burner hood and Beckett burners. Other features include control panel, adjustable thermostat and safety pressure release valve. **800/333-9274; www.watercannon.com.**



Powerblanket Offers Wraparound DEF Heaters

Wraparound diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) heaters from Powerblanket offer temperature control for totes, pumps and dispensing units. Utilizing GreenHeat technology, the heaters safely and consistently warm equipment without compromising chemical integrity. By applying heat externally to a DEF container, the heaters eliminate the potential for contamination, localized boiling and purity failures. Standard blankets are rated to -10 degrees F; Arctic versions are rated to -40 degrees F. Certified to UL, CSA and ETL safety standards, the blankets are available for 275- to 330-gallon tote sizes. Custom sizes are available. **877/398-7407; www.powerblanket.com. ■**



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Bob Carlson is owner of Glendale Welding in Glendale, Ariz. His company has been building and repairing portable sanitation trucks for 40 years. Send questions for Carlson to truckcorner@promonthly.com.



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CONSIDER HOW A VIDEO BACKUP CAMERA CAN ENHANCE SAFETY IN YOUR VACUUM TRUCK FLEET

By Bob Carlson

QUESTION:

Rear-view video cameras are showing up more and more on all types of trucks. Any opinion on their value and worth?

Ray Nesbitt
Atlanta, Ga.

ANSWER:

Let's face it. It's difficult to get a clear view of what's behind your vacuum truck when you're backing up. The dangers are countless. Maybe there's a kid on a bicycle. Perhaps the backend of a car or maybe just something lying on the ground awaits your crunch. I have to admit, I backed into a vertical guard pipe once because I couldn't see it.

The video camera on the back of a truck combined with the screen in the cab pretty much eliminates blind spots behind the vehicle. How many pumpers have backed into something they never saw? Probably quite a few.

The monitor not only eliminates the blind spot, but may provide you the opportunity to get your insurance premiums reduced. The video monitor makes a dramatic difference in the everyday safety of a pump truck, or any truck for that matter. The cost of these electronic devices has come down in recent years, and it's going to always be cheaper than the first accident deductible.

THE MONITOR NOT ONLY ELIMINATES THE BLIND SPOT, BUT MAY PROVIDE YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET YOUR INSURANCE PREMIUMS REDUCED. THE VIDEO MONITOR MAKES A DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN THE EVERYDAY SAFETY OF A PUMP TRUCK, OR ANY TRUCK FOR THAT MATTER.

Choosing the right restroom carrier

QUESTION:

I've seen many different restroom carriers on vacuum trucks as I drive around town. Some seem lightweight and some seem overweight. What's the best way to go?

Mark Saunders
San Antonio, Texas

ANSWER:

There are pluses and minuses to the various kinds of carriers. Some are built of lightweight tubing. Some are made from 1 1/2-inch tubing and some even down to 1-inch tubing. This reduces the overall weight on the truck and makes the carrier easy to lift up and down. On the other hand, in the event of a minor collision with another vehicle or a fence post, the carrier is finished. Lightweight tubing can carry two restrooms to a work site, but can't withstand much damage.

The heavier carriers can stand up to minor collisions, but they are heavy and difficult to fold up when not in use. Heavy-duty carriers are made of 3-inch or heavier square tubing. They can add considerable weight to the truck, which can be a problem if you run close to your weight limit.

Take all of these factors into consideration and choose the right carrier for your truck and your worker situation.

Why do paint costs vary so much?

QUESTION:

I have been pricing vacuum trucks and when I ask about the paint on the tank I get quite a range of costs. What could account for the wide variety of estimates for painting a tank?

Steven Redmond
Salt Lake City, Utah

ANSWER:

Truck builders use two different types of paint: One type, acrylic enamel, is less expensive. When the vacuum tank is painted, the shine on the tank will be lustrous and full. Then, depending on your location, the sun will generally wear down that shine as time goes on. In as little as a year, and sometimes longer, the shine and luster can be dull or flat. The tank will often need repainting in three to five years (again depending on how much sunlight it's working in).

On the other hand, there is the polyurethane group of paints. This is generally a two-part paint system and it is often referred to as giving the tank a "plastic" finish. When this paint system is applied properly, the finish is lustrous and smooth, and gives the tank a finish that will outlast acrylic enamel by a long time.

A polyurethane finish is expensive, costing as much as \$1,500 to \$2,000 or more. The manufacturer also has the added cost of environmentally friendly disposal of the leftover paint materials.

The paint selection is another customer call, but over time the polyurethane system becomes the better buy. ■

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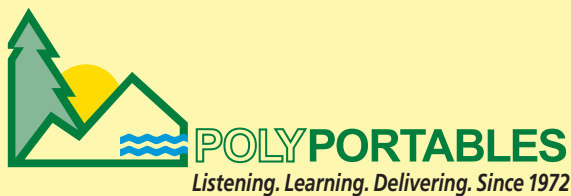
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