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October 2012  
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PORTABLE RESTROOM OPERATOR

## ROCK AROUND *the Clock*

Long hours and loud music  
at the Rocklahoma festival  
test the At Your Service team

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## *A Sanitation* EVOLUTION

It's 55 years and counting  
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# PRO

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## Regrets, You Had a Few?

**NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE STOCK IN HOW YOUR BUSY SUMMER SEASON WENT. WERE YOU HAPPY WITH THE EFFORT, OR DID YOU LEAVE A FEW LOOSE ENDS TO TIE UP NEXT YEAR?**

By Jim Kneiszel

The busy season is wrapped up for most PROs. The county fairs have run their course. The music festivals have died down. Even the last of the fall brides have walked down the aisle.

The summer was so busy; you probably look back and wonder how you accomplished as much as you did. You recall how the team pulled together to deliver, service and remove restrooms from the biggest job of the year. You marshaled a good-sized crew of regular staff, family, friends and high school summer workers to complete a job well done. You did a lot last summer, hopefully more in the way of billings and revenue than any year prior.

But as you look back, you always say to yourself, "I could have done more." No matter how many goals you met, you think you could have done better. For small business owners coming off the busiest period of work during the year, there are always regrets. I could tell you to forget those nagging, unresolved questions. I could tell you to focus only on the accomplishments. But I know missed opportunities are always going to be top-of-mind as you head into the winter and it's time to make plans for next year.

Let's look at a couple of those missed opportunities and how you might overcome them in the future.

### Returning that last call.

Do you recall that busy stretch in August where you didn't have time to answer the phone and let calls go to voicemail? It was easy to justify ignoring a few phone calls when you were stretched to the limit, but you also realize you probably left some money on the table by not answering every one.

Can you designate a helper to make sure every request is handled, even during your busiest weeks of the year? If you add frontline help to clean

restrooms when all hands are on deck, you should do the same with office help or an assistant in the field who is authorized to answer the main phone and learn to sell your services.

Having an assistant who is empowered to negotiate contracts and say yes to customers is a luxury that will pay for itself over and over again. It's a mistake to set up a small business so that yours is the final word in any transaction. How many prospective customers will take their business elsewhere immediately rather than wait for a callback from you confirming a contract? In today's fast-paced world, the answer would be "most of them."

### Marketing in the midst of chaos.

During the summer, you seemingly have as much work as you can handle, but you need to keep thinking of the future and spending time looking for business to fill out your fall and winter months. And even though you just finished up with that big music festival, the event planners may already be looking at how they can handle the event better next year.

It's easy to tell yourself you don't have time between Memorial Day and Labor Day to consider website updates, the money to spend on advertising or the help to plan and execute mailings to new customers. But a company that strives to grow year to year can't ignore three-months-worth of a marketing plan.

If it means staying a half-hour late every night or coming in a half-hour early every morning to maintain a year-round marketing presence, that's a sacrifice you should consider making every summer. If you can't do that, or marketing isn't your strong suit, consider hiring an agency or independent marketer to put in the time necessary for a four-season sales effort. If the work is out there to be had and competitors are fighting for every local job, you can't take your foot off the marketing pedal.

### Having enough help.

When you look back at the summer, was there ever a time where you said to yourself, "I could have nailed more jobs if I only had more workers?" Apart from landing more work, were you so busy that some jobs just didn't get done to your standard of service because you were short-handed? You need to recognize those times and do something about it.

First off, you should never be turning work away. Half the job of building revenue - maybe more than half - is finding the customer to buy your service. Once you find a customer, you need to land them and satisfy them. Every time. That means recruiting plenty of good workers.

Next spring, build your recruiting efforts, to both add more workers and add better workers. Meet with your local high school counselors to find good kids who might be happy even to take on three or four weeks worth of work

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on standby. The economic woes have really hurt summer job prospects for young people, as more adults are willing to take modest service jobs. Students are hungry to earn a few dollars. Turn that desire into a ready workforce for your company.

Likewise, some proven adult workers have been more likely to take on seasonal work in recent years. And retirees, with time on their hands and shrinking 401(k) accounts, are also more willing to work a few days or a few weeks - even on weekends. Tap into every available avenue for seasonal part-time help next year.

**Keeping equipment in tip-top shape.**

Work trucks are typically your biggest capital investment. And often, they are your most important marketing tools. Did you keep them up to maintain their resale value as well as you expected over the past several months? And did you fully utilize them as rolling billboards for your business?

You want a clean machine for many reasons. First and foremost, a washed truck shows customers you're a professional. It's also an indicator that your driver cares about cleanliness - and this translates into how you service a restroom. And lastly, when they're clean, they'll smell fresher. Another big bonus.

To accomplish those goals, make it easier for your crews to keep the trucks clean. Pay the drivers for the extra time to put the truck away clean every night. Give them an added incentive - perhaps a bonus - to wash the trucks regularly and vacuum out the interior. Set up a wash station for your vehicles in your yard. Add a concrete pad and a power washer and stock cleaning supplies to make the job easier.

As for the rolling billboards, take a good look at your trucks this fall. Are the graphics getting a little outdated or ragged around the edges? Is all

the modern contact information for your business front and center in your graphics? What about your website address, social media information, and a positive, professional slogan or message? Is it time for an update in any of these areas? If so, the winter is a perfect time to get it done.

Take a good look at your trucks this fall. Are the graphics getting a little outdated or ragged around the edges? Is all the modern contact information for your business front and center in your graphics? What about your website address, social media information, and a positive, professional slogan or message?

**Taking time off with the family.**

As the farmers say, you have to make hay while the sun shines. For PROs, that means you're all putting in extra hours summer into fall. So many you probably don't want to count them. But even in the midst of your busy season, it's important to make time for the family. After all, their need for your attention isn't seasonal like your business.

If having one night a week for a family picnic or a long weekend at the lake requires delegating more authority than you're used to, do it. Give your top hand more responsibility and let them grow in the business. Your employee will surely appreciate a vote of confidence and your family will be happy to see you a little more often next summer. ■

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*Writer Judy Kneiszel has operated her own small business for 15 years 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](mailto:thewordhouse@ameritech.net).*



## You Ought to be in Pictures

**CREATING A YOUTUBE CHANNEL FOR YOUR BUSINESS CAN SHOW WHAT YOUR COMPANY DOES IN GREAT VISUAL DETAIL**

By Judy Kneiszel

If you go to YouTube on your office computer only when you want to de-stress by spending a few minutes watching a baby panda sneezing ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAcdvnmZ\\_GM&feature=endscreen&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAcdvnmZ_GM&feature=endscreen&NR=1)) or otters holding hands (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epUk3T2Kfno>), you need to rethink the power of this social networking site as a business marketing tool and consider creating a YouTube channel for your company.

### WHAT CAN YOUTUBE DO FOR YOU?

Don't be scared off by the word "channel." You're not buying a local television station. Your YouTube channel will simply be the home page for your account. If you are an iPod user, think of your channel as a playlist of

your company videos. It will show the account name, which will probably be your company name, and display the videos you've uploaded for public view, plus any other information you've entered.

You can customize the background color scheme of your channel and include your company logo. YouTube channels also can display videos from other users (if you have their permission), activity streams, comments, subscribers and other social networking features.

Why would you want a YouTube channel for your business? Well, if a picture paints a thousand words, a video can paint ... I don't know ... a million? But allow me to explain with my meager words: Say you have a potential new customer who wants portable restrooms for a garden party on her palatial estate, but just doesn't understand what she calls "your exorbitant rates for just a few little potties." If you could show her a video of all that goes into the siting, delivery, setup, cleaning, pumping, and tear down of restrooms at special events, she just might get it.

Or, if you are trying to convince a customer that a new line of restrooms you've added would be perfect for their event, but they don't have time to come in and see for themselves, a video could walk them through the features from the comfort of their own desk chair.

### SPREADING YOUR MESSAGE

Whether your goal is attracting business prospects or providing customer support, video is an effective way to present your message. Companies that advertise on TV use YouTube to get a little more bang for their buck by posting the same commercials there. And here are some other ideas of how to use YouTube:

- Post videos of customer testimonials.
- Prepare a brief instructional video on how planners should calculate the number of restrooms and wash stations needed for an event.
- Toot your own horn by making a video of the youth sports teams you sponsor, or showing any charitable events you participate in as a company.
- Shoot a video tour of your facilities, trucks and inventory to show how spic and span your operation is. Don't forget to introduce your smiling office staff.
- Record someone in the office explaining your company's billing procedures. Try to answer the questions you get most from customers.
- Do a "ride-along" video to show customers and potential employees what's all in a day's work for your crew.

Once you get the creative juices flowing, there are endless video possibilities for your channel. With their permission you can link to

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channels of other local businesses or your suppliers, and have them link to your channel. It is, after all, social networking. It's OK to ask them for some positive feedback comments too.

Yes, you might get feedback on your channel, both positive and occasionally negative. That's OK. Feedback of any kind means viewers. And you can respond immediately to the feedback you get, which makes YouTube a conversation, not just a one-way presentation like TV.

Feedback of any kind means viewers. And you can respond immediately to the feedback you get, which makes YouTube a conversation, not just a one-way presentation like TV.

### GETTING STARTED ON YOUTUBE

Once you've decided to try YouTube as a marketing tactic, here's how to get started:

- 1. Go to YouTube.com and click on "Create Account" on the upper right hand side.** Actually, you'll be creating a Google account, since Google purchased YouTube in 2006 and has implemented a cross-site account system. Your account or channel name should be your company name because it's what users will see when they visit your channel. If your exact company name is already taken, find an acceptable variation of it that will work. Just a word of caution: Setting up a company account can be a little tricky because of the pervasiveness of Google in all of our Internet dealings these days. You may already have a Google account and not realize it, so make sure you are not linking your business channel to your personal account.
- 2. Customize your channel.** YouTube allows you to brand your channel by changing the background color and layout. Include your company logo and any other relevant graphics.
- 3. Add social features.** YouTube has several features allowing you to interact with your viewing audience that you can include on your channel page such as subscriptions, friends and upcoming events.
- 4. Create a banner for your videos.** This makes it easy for people who come across your videos on YouTube to find your company's YouTube channel. Say someone searches "MyTown portable restroom" on Google and one of your videos for MyTown Portables comes up. They can click on the banner you created to link to your brand channel and see all the rest of your videos.
- 5. Create a subscription widget to put on your website, blog and email signature.** In the past, people had to go to a specific YouTube channel to subscribe. Giving them a tool to subscribe directly from your website or an email increases the chances they'll do it, thus giving you a built-in audience. Once they are subscribers, they will be notified every time you post something new on your channel. That should increase the number of views you are getting and it allows you to reach your specific targeted audience.

### DON'T JUST TAKE MY WORDS FOR IT

Because many people are visual learners, posting videos on YouTube is a great way to educate them about what your company does. YouTube also is a great way to learn how to do things ... like create a YouTube channel for your company. Yes, there are lots of videos on YouTube about how to use YouTube. So if my words here didn't paint a clear enough picture, visual help is available. But don't forget to visit the sneezing panda and handholding otters too ... everybody needs to smile once in awhile. ■

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## ON LOCATION

**THE JOB:** Rocklahoma  
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**THE PRO:** At Your Service Restroom Rentals

### COVER STORY

Filling kiddie swimming pools is one of the extra jobs At Your Service takes on to help festival attendees keep cool. Technician Josh Talley uses his Kenworth service truck built out by Crescent Tank to deliver water. (Photos by Scott Johnson)



# ROCK AROUND *the Clock*



Technician Dillon Harwood services a restroom at Rocklahoma.

When it comes to working long hours amid a loud and raucous music festival crowd, Oklahoma's At Your Service has the right stuff

By Betty Dageforde

### THE TEAM

At Your Service Restroom Rentals in Owasso, Okla., provides portable restrooms, restroom trailers, temporary fencing, power washing and 55-gallon drum trash services in northeastern Oklahoma. Owners Stacey and Tammy Hillis have a staff of 16 - three office workers, seven technicians, one mechanic/operations manager and five high school students for the summer. Daughters, Skyler, 17, and Addison, 14, also are very involved, working both in the office and in

the field. "They've done everything right along with us," Tammy Hillis says. "It's a family business and they're part of it."

The family and nine employees worked at Rocklahoma. Because a lot of alcohol is served at this event, team members must be able to avoid the temptation to drink and remain even-tempered when confronted by patrons who may be over-served. The event also requires skilled drivers who can maneuver large vehicles through distracted crowds.

### COMPANY HISTORY

In 2004, after working for a national trash hauling company for 15 years, Stacey Hillis decided it was time to make a change. "We were just ready to try something on our own and saw a huge need, especially in the special event arena," Tammy Hillis says. Through hard work, dedication and Stacey's selling skills, they scaled up quickly, buying 100 portable restrooms in their first three months and adding restroom trailers in their second year.

*(continued)*

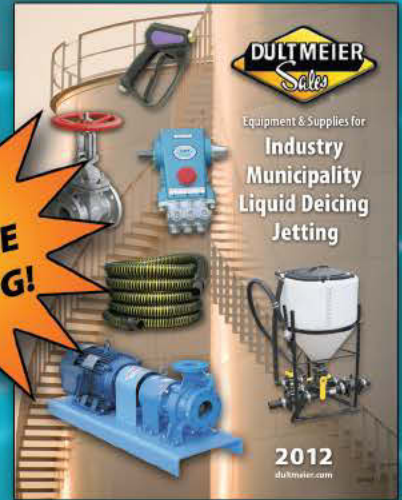
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Today they're up to 1,700 restrooms and five trailers, either built in-house or purchased from Wells Cargo, UltraLav and Rich Specialty Trailers. They have a 60-mile service territory and about 25 percent of their work is for special events.

The Hillises believe their most important asset is their employees and do a lot to instill team spirit. They hold weekly breakfast meetings – part information, part inspiration – and staff are encouraged to speak up. “If anyone has positives or negatives, that’s when you lay it on the table. That way we can put a spark out before it becomes a fire,” Hillis says.

**“If anyone has positives or negatives, that’s when you lay it on the table. That way we can put a spark out before it becomes a fire.”**

**TAMMY HILLIS**

### **MAKING CONNECTIONS**

Seven years ago the company was asked to place a bid for Rocklahoma. They won the bid and did such a good job the event has been theirs ever since. “Our bottom line is, we know what we’re supposed to do so this piece of the pie you don’t need to worry about,” Hillis says.

### **THE MAIN EVENT**

Each year over the Memorial Day weekend, a sleepy 400-acre site near Pryor, Okla., hosts what’s billed as “the biggest, loudest rock and roll party in

America.” This year the 30,000 daily attendees of Rocklahoma were treated to the sights and sounds of 40 bands with colorful names like Chickenfoot, Megadeth, Hellyeah, EchoFuzz and Puddle of Mudd. All-night parties followed all-day performances.

The venue has four stages, three campgrounds, a general store and shower facilities. A Thursday night pre-show kicks off the event, which ends Sunday night, leaving Monday for recovery and travel.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

At Your Service provided portable restrooms for attendees, restroom trailers for artists and VIPs, RV pumping for the campers, and – for those who brought all the comforts of home – swimming pool filling services. They placed 180 light gray, event-only PolyPortables Inc. Integras and Satellite Industries Tufways, 15 ADA-compliant units (PolyPortables Inc. Senators and Satellite Industries Freedoms) and 15 hand-wash stations (PolyPortables Inc. Tag Alongs and Satellite Industries Waves) in 30 locations, including campgrounds, performance sites, food courts and VIP pads. One restroom trailer was placed in the VIP vendor area, another in the Marlborough client hospitality center.

The team worked everyday from 6:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., taking meal breaks together to recharge and share a few laughs. Although the Hillis family returned home each night, they put employees up in a hotel for four days so they could avoid making the 50-mile trip to Owasso each night and again the next morning.



## LET'S ROLL

Campgrounds opened the Sunday before the event, so the company started bringing units in 10 days before. They used custom-built hauling trailers of various lengths that carried 20, 16 and 10 units each. By Saturday all units were in place, prepped and locked. Starting Tuesday, they were gradually unlocked over a three-day period.

Despite their exhaustion, the team cleaned, pumped and removed nearly everything on Monday. Not because event organizers required it but to avoid making the long trip back to get them. "That's just how we operate," Hillis says. "If you leave it behind, you get busy, and then it's out of sight, out of mind."

## KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

All units were cleaned two and sometimes three times a day. Tammy Hillis was the master coordinator and dispatcher for the event, planning service routes each day, plotting maps and taking RV pumping and swimming pool orders from an on-site ticket booth. Each morning the drivers, wearing shorts and company shirts, were handed marching orders and filed out two to a truck to clean units and pump RVs. Stacey Hillis and his daughters helped with crowd control, kept the units stocked with bathroom tissue, and filled numerous swimming pools - everything from kiddie pools to 1,200-gallon models. Cellphone service was unreliable so they rented walkie-talkies.

Service vehicles included two Kenworth T-300s (2003 and 2011) and a 2009 Hino 268, each with a 1,000-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater steel



Taking a rare break in the action, At Your Service owner Stacey Hillis mugs for the camera with the Rocklahoma stage in the background. The festival draws 30,000 fans daily.

tank. They also used a 2012 Ford F-550 with a 750-gallon waste/350-gallon freshwater steel tank and a 2005 GMC 1-ton with a 350-gallon waste steel tank and a 100-gallon water tank for servicing small areas. All were built by Crescent Tank Mfg. with Masport pumps. Two flatbeds and several service vehicles carried 800-gallon and 250-gallon water totes. Their water source was an on-site fire hydrant.

Golf carts accompanied service vehicles to help block out banks of restrooms, as one of the biggest demands of the event was accessing units while patrons were around. Company personnel are expected to work quickly. "But we don't just pump and go," Hillis says. "We're thorough. We take all the cans out, pump and scrub the tanks and floors and start the toilet paper rolls every time." Units are kept fresh and smelling clean with products from Chempace Corp., Walex Products and J & J Chemical Co.

## THE RIGHT STUFF

Tammy Hillis reports that this was their smoothest Rocklahoma ever. "Every year we learn something and every year we get better," she says.

"It's one of those events you dread but you look forward to because of the challenge. You truly, by the last day, see what you're made of. It pushes you to your max but a lot of joy comes out of it. You laugh through the sweat." ■

"It's one of those events you dread but you look forward to because of the challenge. You truly, by the last day, see what you're made of. It pushes you to your max but a lot of joy comes out of it. You laugh through the sweat."

TAMMY HILLIS

The At Your Service crew takes a break to pose for a photo. Among the workers shown are Josh Talley, Jimmy Miller, Kevin Penrod, Collin Schoolcraft, Dillon Harwood and David Hayward.

## MORE INFO

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Jeff Wigley is president of the Portable Sanitation Association International and co-owner of Pit Stop Sanitation Services Inc. in Atlanta. Contact him at 770/439-2888 or by email at [wjwigley@bellsouth.net](mailto:wjwigley@bellsouth.net).



# Join the Annual Convention and Trade Show in San Diego

By Jeff Wigley

The Portable Sanitation Association International invites you to its Annual Convention and Trade Show in San Diego, Calif., Oct. 30-Nov. 3. Our 40th Anniversary celebration will culminate with a series of dynamic speakers, awards, workshops, roundtables and a trade show featuring the latest products in our industry. San Diego is an outstanding destination with beautiful scenery, magnificent weather and diverse tourist attractions.



**Here is why the PSAI Convention and Trade Show is relevant to you and to your business:**

### Relevant and current topics for discussion

We will feature a workshop and a roundtable on GAP, or good agricultural practices. This is the most discussed – and least understood – topic concerning pending regulation in crop-producing areas throughout the country. PSAI is developing a proactive position on this issue with the goal of establishing the GAP standard for portable sanitation.

### Education and cost savings

For the second year, PSAI will feature a DOT enforcement official to present the latest rules and guidelines for commercial compliance and vehicle safety. Learn the rules and save in costly fines and penalties.

### Roundtable discussions

Spend time with operators from throughout the country and the world discussing ideas to improve your business. Topics of discussion include creating and compensating a sales force, unique marketing techniques, truck maintenance programs, best-practice customer service, and new technology in the workplace.

### Free business consultation

In addition to roundtables by topic, PSAI always features roundtables by company size, where attendees discuss issues common to similar-sized businesses. Compared to hiring a business consultant, this is an outstanding value. Meet friendly competitors from distant cities and continue a dialog well after the convention ends.

### Time with PSAI associate members

See the latest in products, equipment and services for our industry. Investigate products to meet customer demand and generate increased revenue for your company.

### Andy Gump Award and the Service Technician of the Year Award

Since 1993, The Andy Gump Award has recognized lifetime achievement in the PSAI, honoring those who have improved the image of the industry and innovated through improved products and services. The Service Technician of the Year Award honors employees who embody the highest standards of our industry. These awards inspire greatness in others and motivate them to achieve.

### PSAI industry certification

Now celebrating the 20th Anniversary of “Raising the Standards in Our Industry,” PSAI certification is recognized as approved training in numerous states and municipalities. The education, training and testing are offered on Saturday afternoon.

The PSAI Annual Convention and Trade Show is a classroom, a boardroom and a conference room where you and your business can benefit and expand. Register today at [www.pσαι.org](http://www.pσαι.org) or call the PSAI Office at 800/822-3020. ■

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# Tools of the Trade

## VACUUM PUMPS AND HOSES HELP TO KEEP YOUR PORTABLE RESTROOM BUSINESS PERFORMING AT ITS PEAK

By Ed Wodalski

**V**acuum pumps and hoses are basic tools for the portable sanitation contractor. Without reliable products, PROs can't jump in the truck in the morning and run revenue-building routes. Whether you're still working at full steam or looking to update equipment for next year, here are a few products you'll want to consider:

### CHANDLER EQUIPMENT, INC.

Jurop RV-Series vacuum pumps and Chandler Equipment Inc. packages are designed for industrial and energy applications. Both the RV360 and RV520 are available in multiple drive configurations, including either gearbox, hydraulic or belt drive. The pumps operate at or near 73 dB(A) while producing 18 inches Hg. The RV360 has a recommended input speed of 1,100-1,300 rpm with an output of 360 cfm at free air and 332 cfm at 18 inches Hg. The RV520 has a recommended input speed of 1,100-1,300 rpm with an output of 520 cfm at free air and 466 cfm at 18 inches Hg. **800/342-0887; www.chandlerequipment.com.**



### KURIYAMA OF AMERICA

The Tigerflex Amphibian AMPH series heavy-duty, abrasion-resistant polyurethane hose from Kuriyama of America is designed for wet or dry applications where abrasion is a factor. The static dissipative cover is made to prevent the



buildup of static electricity for added safety and to keep material flowing. Cold-Flex material keeps the hose flexible in subzero temperatures, while the liner resists most animal- and petroleum-based oils. **847/755-0360; www.kuriyama.com.**

### LMT

The eVAC electric vacuum system from LMT can be used for light-duty grease collection and portable sanitation applications in noise-sensitive environments. The model 1205 has a Conde ProVac 3 vacuum/pressure pump (35 cfm) and runs off the vehicle's power system. Features include an automatic, electronic on/off system. Measuring 18 inches wide, 16 inches long and 26 inches high, the 12-volt unit includes a 2-inch oil catch muffler and 2-inch secondary shutoff. **800/545-0174; www.tanksandpumps.com.**



### MORO USA

Heavy-duty, water-cooled vacuum pumps from Moro USA are capable of pumping nonvolatile liquids and sludge long distances. Features include integrated check valve, changeover valve and automatic oiling system for easy operation and installation. Other features include industrial-duty bearings, seals and low operating speed. Available in three sizes, Model PM60W has a maximum flow rate of 252 cfm, the PM80W produces 417 cfm and the PM110W produces 630 cfm. The PM60W and PM80W have 3-inch hose connections and the PM110W has 4-inch connections. All pumps are capable of 29 psi and continuous vacuum of 24 inches Hg. Models are available in preassembled pump packages with stand, secondary, oil catch and gearbox, hydraulic, pulley or engine driven. **800/383-6304; www.morousa.com. ■**



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The JOTS team includes (from left, back row) Jason Collins, Bob Stewart, Charles McFarland, Norman Anson and Jason Parlato; (front row) Shawn Turley, Joe Collins, Kenny Mays, Wes Hackworth, Ronnie Abrams. Center in the foreground is Charlie Gussler. (Photos by John Flavell)

# A Sanitation EVOLUTION

After 55 years and many product and service advancements, Ohio's Johnny on the Spot continues to look for new ways to serve customers more efficiently **By Peter Kenter**

**W**hen Robert Slagel Sr. founded Johnny on the Spot (JOTS) in 1957, Dwight D. Eisenhower was in the White House and portable restroom units were built out of wood. The company has survived and thrived by keeping up with the times, continually updating its stock and diversifying from a sound base while maintaining a reputation for service.

The business is headquartered in Ironton, Ohio, along the Ohio River at the state's south central tip. A stone's throw from both Kentucky and West Virginia, JOTS employs 18 and serves all three states with portable restrooms, hand-wash stations, septic pumping and freshwater service. The company also operates two related businesses: Storage on the Spot (SOTS), producing storage containers, and another, DropBox Inc., producing office containers for field service.

"In the earliest days of the business, the company was servicing portable restrooms with buckets," says Charles Gussler, operations manager of JOTS and SOTS. "We've seen the full parade of history from the earliest pump trucks, which were basically tanks mounted on the back of pickup trucks, through to the current high-tech pump trucks and service vehicles."

Slagel's son John took the reins of the business in 1978 and passed them on to his sons. Still operated by the family, the past 10 years have seen the company grow and add more services.

## A DIVERSE CUSTOMER BASE

Customers range from residential one-off clients to large, commercial clients, including refineries, coal and nuclear power plants and construc-

### Johnny on the Spot, Ironton, Ohio

Owners: Robert Slagel, Dave Slagel

Founded: 1957

Employees: 18

Specialties: Portable sanitation, freshwater delivery, septic service, container trailer manufacturing

Website: [www.jotsandsots.com](http://www.jotsandsots.com)

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Technician Norm Anson pumps the holding tank of a construction unit in Ironton, Ohio.

“The internal sinks really add value to the standard portable units. Our customers who would traditionally need to order a portable restroom and a separate hand-wash station will see some savings by ordering the all-in-one units.”

**SHAWN TURLEY**

tion sites. The company’s location means business is centered in an approximately 60-mile radius around larger cities: Ironton and Ashland, Ky., and Huntington, W.Va.

Typical event contracts include the Summer Motion arts and crafts and concert in Ashland, the Rally on the River car and motorcycle show in Ironton, the Rib Fest in Huntington and the Lawrence County Fair in Proctorville, Ohio.

Construction contracts include serving the sanitation needs of projects at Marshall University in Huntington, King’s Daughters Medical Center in Ashland and Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio. The business also serves the current Ironton/Russell Bridge project, spanning the Ohio River.

“These contracts typically run six months to two years,” Gussler says.

JOTS also services units for other companies. “It’s a cooperative arrangement,” Gussler says. “Sometimes we service their units with pumping and cleaning, but they’re just as willing to service ours when we operate in their areas.”

The company’s portable restroom stock is consistently refreshed to meet new industry expectations. The current inventory hovers close to 600, with the units mostly supplied by either Satellite Industries or PolyJohn Enterprises. The Satellites are geared largely to special events and weddings, while the PolyJohns are put into rough service, primarily on construction sites. Each year, the overall stock is tending toward larger units that contain a greater array of standard conveniences.

The company’s latest shipment of Satellite units have a sink with foot pump. JOTS introduced these new units at summer events earlier this year.

“The internal sinks really add value to the standard portable units,” says Shawn Turley, business manager for JOTS and SOTS. “Our customers who would traditionally need to order a portable restroom and a separate hand-wash station will see some savings by ordering the all-in-one units.”

## MANUFACTURING ITS OWN FLEET

Building on its container manufacturing, the company has its own containerized JOTS line that includes both shower and restroom units. The designs of these lines – like the portable offices and storage products – are based on portable steel Conex storage containers.

JOTS offers more than 50 Conex-based restroom trailers, which are available in 20-foot and 40-foot lengths. The trailers are insulated and heated, and provide a quick-connect single phase 220-volt hookup.

“These are heavy-duty, industrial-strength units,” Gussler says. “We deliver them on flatbeds or hydraulic tilt trailers. After delivery, the containers can be placed directly on the ground, and don’t require setups, stairs or any special blocking, because they sit on the running rails of the Conex box. At most, you might have to place a few concrete blocks at one end to level the structure, then just bleed the lines and it’s ready to use.”

The 40-foot model comes with four men’s toilets, four urinals, one women’s toilet and porcelain sinks. A 1,500-gallon freshwater tank and 1,600-gallon waste tank are self-contained inside the unit. Heavy-duty service options include a gang urinal and gang sink made of metal to serve three people at a time. The standard porcelain toilet also can be switched out for a macerating toilet. The pumps are Omnivores, supplied by Liberty Pumps and the poly tanks are supplied by Kentucky Tank of Shepherdsville, Ky.

## Streamlining the disposal process

The vacuum trucks from Johnny on the Spot (JOTS) of Ironton, Ohio, don’t have to wait in line at waste treatment plants to dump their loads. That’s because the company has its own Ohio Environmental Protection Agency-approved pretreatment system on site.

“The pretreatment facility is located right here on our five-acre premises,” says Charles Gussler, operations manager of JOTS. “This process has been in place for the past 15 years and has increased service fleet efficiency considerably. Whenever you can streamline the delivery and disposal process, it not only improves the bottom line, but also gets the service vehicles back out into the field as quickly as possible.”

(continued)

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Terry Summers prepares to service a Satellite Maxim unit at an industrial site.

The 20-foot containerized units provide the same design and amenities with more space dedicated to a women-only area. However, this model contains no interior tanks. Turley explains that, although units of both size can be easily hooked up to direct plumbing, the 20-foot units are often ordered for events where plumbing will be available for the length of the contract.

"We also run into construction jobs at refineries or power plants where there are size restrictions regarding what can be placed on the ground, or inside the project under construction," he says. "In some cases, we might bring exterior tanks at the beginning of the job, and then remove them and switch out service from the tanks to the plumbing, the moment that either water or waste service is established in the new construction."

Gussler notes that the Conex-based restrooms are sometimes purchased outright for permanent installation at power plants.

"Delivering them to the site and hooking them to the existing plumbing proves to be much cheaper for them than actually building a restroom facility from the ground up," Gussler says. "They get a lot of longevity out of these industrial-strength units."



### SERVICE IS KEY TO SUCCESS

The company prides itself on service. "We maintain a 24-hour servicing schedule to help turn initial contracts into ongoing business relationships," Gussler says.

The majority of the servicing occurs during daytime hours, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., but an on-call staff provides after-hours and nighttime service.

Terry Summers washes his 2009 International truck, built out by Abernethy Welding with a 700-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump.





Terry Summers (left) and Wes Hackworth pump a 10,000-gallon waste processing station built by JOTS.



JOTS maintains a fleet of 18 vehicles, mostly Internationals. Three pickups round out the fleet: two Ford F-250s and a 2500HD Chevrolet Silverado.

“We operate 14 pump trucks with the majority of the tanks built and outfitted by Abernethy Welding & Repair Inc.,” Gussler says. “They’re almost all 1,100-gallon waste and 400-gallon freshwater splits made of stainless steel, outfitted with pumps by Masport.”

One Peterbilt 330 is fitted with a dedicated 3,500-gallon waste tank, while a Kenworth T800 has a 3,800-gallon waste and 200-gallon water split with a trailer jetter from JETTERS NORTHWEST.

“That jetter takes care of our few smaller jetting contracts, although

“You can provide any sort of rental or specialty restroom unit. But if you don’t keep those units serviced and spotless, you won’t be asked back next month or next year.”

**CHARLES GUSSLER**

many of them aren’t sewer related,” Gussler says. “We might use it to help clean out a chemical plant line, a power plant grease trap or a bulk hauling facility. We offer the service as more of a bonus or perk to our existing clients.”

The company thrives on word-of-mouth and offers an extensive website and Facebook presence. A frequently updated blog provides news and photos surrounding special contracts the company has taken on and new additions to the JOTS lineup.

“We get a lot of traffic on our site and a considerable number of emails directly through the site,” Turley says. “It’s clear to us that some of the clients are reading the blog and are up on our latest news.”

Despite its manufacturing operations, JOTS recognizes it’s a service operation at the core, Gussler says.

“You can provide any sort of rental or specialty restroom unit,” he says. “But if you don’t keep those units serviced and spotless, you won’t be asked back next month or next year.” ■

**MORE INFO**

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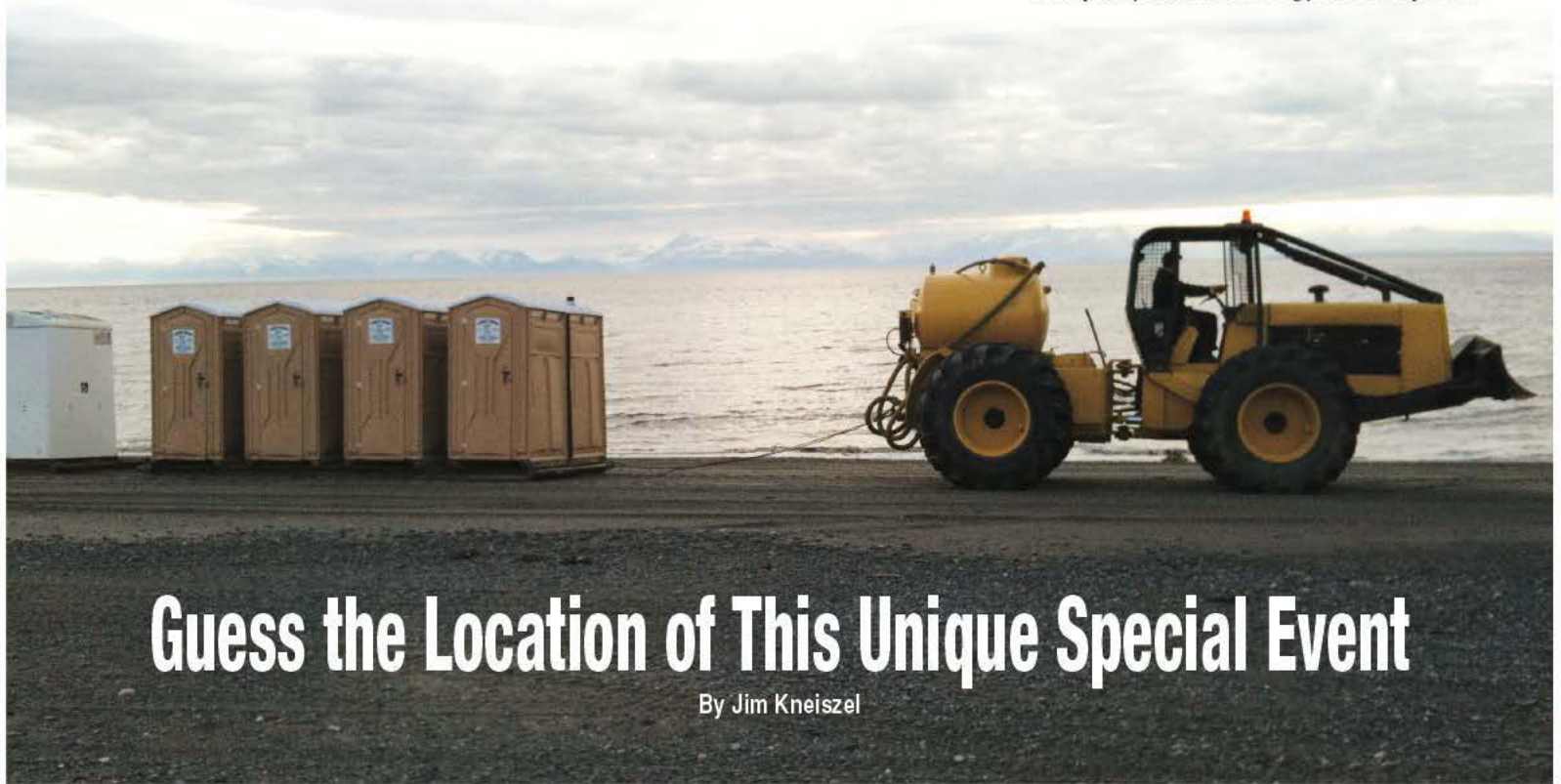
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| Weight-Empty        | 185 pound  |
| Waste Tank Capacity | 60 gal     |
| Width               | 43 inch    |
| Height              | 90 inch    |
| Depth               | 47.20 inch |



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**SEND YOUR MYSTERY PHOTOS!** *Do you have an interesting spot where you've been dropping and servicing restrooms? Send some photos to be considered for our "Where in the World is this Restroom?" If we decide to run your photos in a future issue, we'll send you a PRO T-shirt! Send your photos to [editor@promonthly.com](mailto:editor@promonthly.com).*



## Guess the Location of This Unique Special Event

By Jim Kneiszel

You might be able to see another country from here. Look closely, are those mountains on another continent?

**O**ur latest installment of "Where in the World is this Restroom?" shows us what a portable restroom operator encountered when placing units at a mystery beach location. Read the clues, study the photos and be prepared with your best answer to the location of these photos, both the name of the city and the body of water shown. Bonus points if you can explain this happening.

### HERE ARE SOME CLUES:

1. Look north of the equator, way north of the equator, to a place where the locals see white all winter long, but enjoy many interesting outdoor activities in the summer.
2. These restroom units have to be cleaned every day, sometimes multiple times, to serve campers who could stay here for a few weeks pursuing an unusual ritual.
3. Typically, the people are few and the wildlife is plentiful in this region of spectacular scenery. But at the height of summer, when these photos were taken, people flood into this hotspot. But these folks are not tourists. In fact, tourists can't take part in this activity.

To win the contest, be the first person to respond to me with the name of the city and the precise landmark where the photos were taken. The winner will receive a *PRO* T-shirt and recognition as a geographical whiz. Send your responses to [editor@promonthly.com](mailto:editor@promonthly.com). The winner will be announced in the editor's blog at [www.promonthly.com](http://www.promonthly.com) and through the *PRO* Facebook page. ■



Units are delivered on a skid to reach this waterfront location, where overcoming harsh conditions is nothing new for PROs and residents alike.



They travel from hours away, over hill and dale, sometimes competing with furry predators, for the chance to land a tasty dinner. And, day or night (it might be hard to tell the difference), they need portable restrooms (circled in the photo) in this remote location.

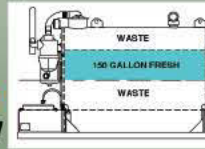
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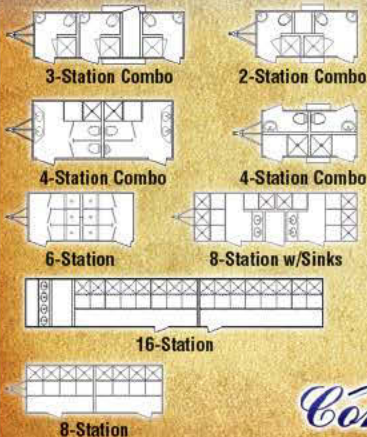
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| Manufacturer - COMPANY  | Name of Pump       | Recommended Tank Size (Gallons) | Maximum Vacuum (Hg) | Maximum Pressure (PSI) | Net Weight (lbs) | Number of Vanes | Air, Fan or Liquid Cooled | RPM Range   |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Elmira Machine Industries</b><br>20 Martins Ln., Elmira, ON N3B 2A1 Canada<br>800-801-6663 - 519-669-1541 - (f) 519-669-8331<br>info@elmiramachine.com, www.wallypumps.com | Wallenstein 30     | 50 - 1,800                      | 28"                 | 35                     | 20               | 4               | Air                       | 500 - 1,750 |
|   | Wallenstein 151    | 50 - 1,800                      | 28"                 | 35                     | 100              | 4               | Air                       | 500 - 1,750 |
|   | Wallenstein 202    | 50 - 1,800                      | 28"                 | 35                     | 160              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 302    | 50 - 1,800                      | 28"                 | 35                     | 185              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 402    | 50 - 1,800                      | 28"                 | 35                     | 200              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 403    | 1,800 - 4,300                   | 28"                 | 35                     | 245              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 403LN  | 1,800 - 4,300                   | 28.5"               | 35                     | 245              | 3               | Liquid                    | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 553    | 1,800 - 4,300                   | 28"                 | 35                     | 300              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 753    | 1,800 - 4,300                   | 28"                 | 35                     | 340              | 3               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 753LN  | 1,800 - 4,300                   | 28.5"               | 35                     | 340              | 3               | Liquid                    | 500 - 1,200 |
|   | Wallenstein 1054   | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28"                 | 35                     | 700              | 5               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,100 |
|   | Wallenstein 1054LN | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28.5"               | 35                     | 750              | 5               | Liquid                    | 500 - 1,100 |
|   | Wallenstein 1504LN | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28.5"               | 35                     | 750              | 3               | Liquid                    | 500 - 1,100 |
|   | Wallenstein 1604   | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28"                 | 35                     | 1,200            | 5               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,100 |
|   | Wallenstein 1604LN | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28.5"               | 35                     | 1,200            | 5               | Liquid                    | 500 - 1,100 |
|   | Wallenstein 2106   | 3,200 - 10,000                  | 28"                 | 35                     | 1,700            | 5               | Fan                       | 500 - 1,100 |
| Wallenstein 2106LN  | 3,200 - 10,000     | 28.5"                           | 35                  | 1,700                  | 5                | Liquid          | 500 - 1,100               |             |

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| <br><b>See ad page 21</b> | <b>Armstrong Equipment, Inc.</b><br>11200 Greenstone Ave., Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670   800-699-7557 - 562-944-0404 - (f) 562-944-3636<br>sales@vacump.com, www.vacump.com             | Conde, Fruitland, Gardner Denver Wittig, Jurop, Masport, Moro, National Vacuum Equipment, Wallenstein |
|                           | <b>CEI - Chandler Equipment, Inc.</b><br>4180 W Sunset, Springdale, AR 72762   800-342-0887 - 479-751-9771 - (f) 888-645-9700<br>todd@chandlerequipment.com, www.chandlerequipment.com | Jurop   |
| <b>See ad page 11</b>     | <b>Dultmeier Sales</b><br>13808 Industrial Rd, Omaha, 68137   800-228-9666 - 402-333-1444 - (f) 402-333-5546<br>dultmeier@dultmeier.com, www.dultmeier.com                             | AMT, CAT, Conde, Delevan, General, Giant, Goulds, Jurop, Shurflo, STA-RITE                            |
| <b>See ad page 7</b>      | <b>KeeVac Industries Inc</b><br>3100 Cherry Creek S Dr., #704, Denver, CO 80209   866-789-9440 - 303-789-9440 - (f) 303-459-4439<br>kevin@keevac.com, www.keevac.com                   | Conde, Fruitland, Jurop, Masport, Moro, National Vacuum Equipment                                     |
| <br><b>See ad page 31</b> | <b>Liquid Waste Industries, Inc.</b><br>2962 MT Tabor Church Rd., Dallas, GA 30157   877-445-5511 - 770-424-5575 - (f) 770-424-5536<br>bill@lwiinc.com, www.lwiinc.com                 | Battioni, Conde, Jurop, Moro, National Vacuum Equipment   |
|                           | <b>Marengo Fabricated Steel, LTD.</b><br>1089 Cty. Rd. 26, Marengo, OH 43334   800-919-2652 - (f) 419-253-2120<br>www.mfsltd.com   | Masport, Moro, Wallenstein  |
|                           | <b>Mid-Continent Truck Sales, Inc.</b><br>891 W Adkins Hill Rd., Norman, OK 73072   800-414-5365 - 405-329-5365 - (f) 405-329-5381<br>mcts@telepath.com, www.vacuumtrucksales.com      | Wallenstein   |
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*Bob Carlson is author of Pumper 101: The Complete Guide to Owning and Operating a Vacuum Truck and has spent many years building and repairing trucks for the portable sanitation industry. Send questions for Carlson to truckcorner@promonthly.com.*



# Diagnosing a Mystery Vacuum Loss

**SO YOU JUST REBUILT THE PUMP AND SUCTION PERFORMANCE IS SUFFERING? HIT THE TRUCK CORNER CHECKLIST TO DETERMINE WHERE THE SYSTEM IS BREAKING DOWN**

By Bob Carlson

**QUESTION:** I installed a rebuild kit in my vacuum pump and everything worked great for a week. Now when I start the pump, it doesn't build up the vacuum it should. I've got a sick pump. What should I do to get it working properly?

Mark Garrett  
Chicago, Ill.

**ANSWER:** I am going to assume the vanes and gaskets were installed properly, so we'll rule that out as the problem. The best way to bring your pump back to good health is to diagnose several potential problems, one by one.

First, turn on the pump and check for sounds that indicate the hose has holes in it. This could be one cause of the problem. If needed, replace the leaking hoses. If not, move on to the next step, which is to make sure all hose connections to the tank are secure. Again, any leaking vacuum will reduce the efficiency of your pump.

Follow through, checking your ball valves or knife gate valves to make sure they are sealing properly. If the valves sustained damage and leaks are found, replace the valves. Now we've checked the hoses and the valves.

If you haven't found the source of the problem, it's time to check the primary and the secondary moisture trap to ensure a free flow of air through each. To check the primary, remove the lid and make sure the stainless steel ball is loose and moving freely in the cage. It is possible that it got stuck to the opening when you were taking on waste. This would have a dramatic impact on vacuum pump performance. Same thing for the secondary; remove the band around the two halves and make sure the ball is free and able to move about.

## COLLAPSING HOSES

If all appears well so far, then let's check the connecting hoses between the primary and the secondary and from the secondary to the vacuum pump. These hoses may have collapsed due to age or the connections are not properly secured. They may have been bumped somehow and the fittings aren't sealing properly.

If you've checked all these spots and you know the new vanes, bearings and gaskets have been installed correctly in the pump, it's time to backtrack for a moment. Sometimes, the obvious is overlooked. I have a saying at my house: If it doesn't work, plug it in.

Return to the vacuum suction hose. Disconnect it from the tank and run the pump. If the vacuum rises to its normal operating speed, the answer is simple. There is no leak in the hose, because you've checked it earlier, but perhaps a rag or something has made its way in and is creating a minor airflow blockage. Or for that matter, it might be a major blockage.

Checking the vacuum tank without the hose quickly tells you if the problem is a blocked hose. If it is, then locate what's blocking the airflow and figure out how to remove it, or simply replace the vacuum hose. The blockage may be in a spot where you can't get to it without cutting the hose open. You can still save shortened hose pieces for other purposes, such as bridging the primary and secondary.

**The best way to tell if your system is operating as expected is to read the pressure/vacuum gauge. ... It only takes a second to view the gauge and this is the quickest way to confirm something is wrong with your system.**

## A SIDE NOTE

The best way to tell if your system is operating as expected is to read the pressure/vacuum gauge. It should be located within easy eyesight as you are starting the pump. If your pump operates normally at 19 or 20 inches of mercury Hg, and then one day drops to 14 or 15 inches of mercury, something is wrong. It only takes a second to view the gauge and this is the quickest way to confirm something is wrong with your system. The gauge is there for a reason. Use it. ■

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