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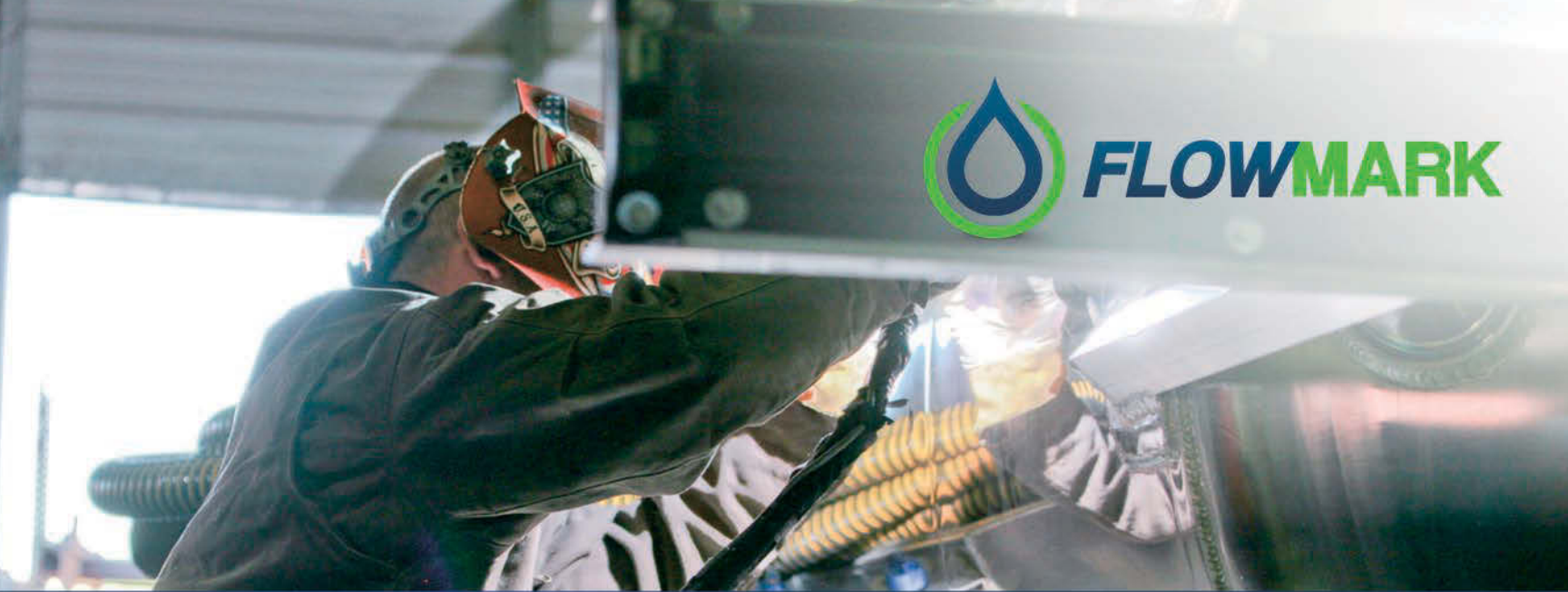
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Nowhere To Go

SAN FRANCISCO USES A TARGETED APPROACH TO PORTABLE RESTROOM PLACEMENT TO AID THE HOMELESS AND REDUCE A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT

By Jim Kneiszel

Last month, I wrote about the Portland Loo, a new permanent public bathroom design being used to serve busy downtown districts in several cities, beginning in the Pacific Northwest. Now I'd like to tell you about a similar program that serves the poor of San Francisco with portable restrooms deployed to the areas of greatest need.

The city's Tenderloin Pit Stop initiative was started last year as a response to a growing problem of homeless people defecating and urinating on sidewalks and alleyways, causing public health and nuisance concerns. The program name comes from the Tenderloin neighborhood, just south of San Francisco's popular Union Square, an area hit hard by homelessness.

The city started a pilot program through the Department of Public Works and the San Francisco Clean City Coalition in 2014, contracting for several portable restrooms to be placed at three locations. The units were placed 2-9 p.m., Tuesdays through Fridays, and monitored and cleaned regularly.

The result of the program was a 60 percent decline in calls to the city requesting work crews steam clean areas where human waste was reported. Prior to the program, the city would get an average of 50 calls daily for cleaning. With the restrooms in place, the city is saving 2,600 gallons of water per month and the time spent by cleaning crews. Earlier this year, the city authorized spending \$200,000 to continue the project.

City officials are elated, according to news accounts.

"The results have been favorable both for Public Works and reducing the number of calls for services we need to respond to serving people who don't have a place to go and really need to," a Public Works official says.

"Because it's turning actually into an environmental program, we're eligible for other funds because we are saving the city water," a city supervisor adds.

WASTELAND ON THE WEB

How the city honed in on the problem areas is a fascinating story. A Web developer, Jennifer Wong, compiled data relating to 5,000 feces and urine complaints to the Public Works Department from June-November 2014. She created an interactive map of the city, called "(Human) Wasteland," marking each complaint location with a brown dot. You can see the map here: <http://jennz0r.github.io/wasteland/>. The Tenderloin was a problem area along with others – including the infamous hippie hangout Haight-Ashbury.

It's clear that not every city is going to have an acute need to serve the homeless with portable sanitation. But this is a growing problem I see in news accounts regularly – and it cannot be ignored. And in addition to serving homeless populations, many cities just aren't equipped with adequate public restroom facilities anymore. There seems to be a trend away from

Offer to put a few restrooms on a downtown street, in a busy park or on the local beach. Monitor usage and share your findings with local officials. As a PRO, part of your commitment is to public education about the critical role your industry plays in the local quality of life. Be generous with your time and share your expertise.

maintaining public bathroom facilities in urban areas and relying on private businesses – such as fast-food restaurants – for these services. And in many cases these businesses are overwhelmed by unwelcome traffic.

What is the situation where you live and work? Is it possible there's a growing sanitation problem due to homelessness or other factors? Does this create an opportunity for you to offer your professional service to help clean up the streets? If you think so, consider taking these initiatives to explore a potential new market for your restrooms:

Check with the police about problem areas.

Law enforcement officials in your nearest urban center may track feces cleanup calls like they do in San Francisco. Give the police a call and talk to them about the issue. If they don't keep records, they surely know the problem areas and can offer locations where portable restrooms would make the biggest difference. Documenting a growing problem – either through police statistics or anecdotal evidence – may help convince civic leaders of the need for strategically placed portable restrooms.

Lobby local officials.

Meet with elected and administrative officials in areas where restrooms are most needed and tell them how placing and regularly servicing restrooms will have a positive impact. Explain how portable sanitation is necessary to maintain the cleanliness and dignity of the homeless population, that providing this service should be a public health mission and that it's critical to preserving the image of the city.

Offer to work with city officials to coordinate an urban portable sanitation effort. Lend your expertise on issues including safe handling of waste, the equipment needed to run an effective program, and care and maintenance of portable restrooms, hand-wash stations, shower trailers and the like. Make them aware of the strides the industry has made in promoting sanitary conditions and conserving water. Show them the benefits of working with professional service providers to answer this need.



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Partner with homeless shelters and agencies that help the poor.

Help organizations like the Salvation Army and local homeless advocates see safe and clean portable sanitation as an extension of their missions. They fight every day to help restore respect and dignity for the homeless population. So they will fight for your ideal of providing portable restrooms where they see a tremendous need. Work with these groups to seek funding options to support your service. They may know where to tap into grant money and how to navigate government bureaucracy to get your units out on the street.

Look for a coalition of downtown businesses for support.

Consider being a part-sponsor of an urban restroom program through a discount for your equipment and services. Make it known that you are putting up some of your own money for this endeavor and then ask other local companies to join you. In exchange for their support, let corporate sponsors announce their participation through advertising on the restrooms. Throw in 10 percent and find nine other companies to do the same and list everyone on your equipment. The advertising could bring a lot of goodwill to sponsoring companies.

Remember, urban sanitation need goes beyond the homeless.

What if your downtown doesn't have an issue with public urination or homelessness? Plenty of busy urban areas don't have enough public bathroom access, even affluent tourist areas with crowded sidewalks all summer and only a few overused public bathrooms. Offer to put a few restrooms on a downtown street, in a busy park or on the local beach. Monitor usage and share your findings with local officials. As a PRO, part of your commitment is to public education about the critical role your industry plays in the local quality of life. Be generous with your time and share your expertise. ■

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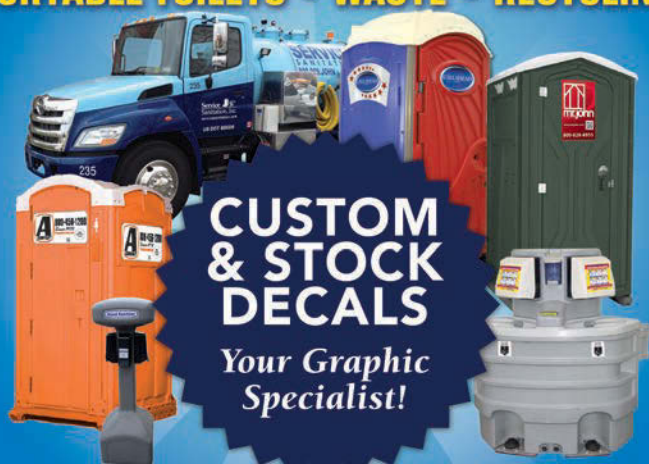


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Google Search Tips

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Google's search algorithms have shifted in recent years to help consumers find localized results. Local search determines how customers find businesses, which has big implications for you. Here are some tips to make sure customers can find you when they're hitting up Google for restroom rentals.

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BETTER INVOICING PRACTICES CAN IMPROVE CASH FLOW AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS

By Judy Kneiszel

Last week I discovered a longtime client was two invoices behind in paying me. This had never happened with this particular company before, so I shot off a quick email to the office manager asking if those invoices had been paid. Because, to be honest, usually when I think a client has missed a payment, it's an error on my part, and I just forgot to enter the payment into my accounting software before depositing the check, or the check got buried under a pile of papers on my desk. (Don't judge. This month's theme is not office tidiness.)

The other common scenario is that on the very day I get around to asking a client if they've paid an overdue invoice, the check magically appears in my mailbox and I have to send an embarrassing, "Never mind, I got it" email. In the case last week, however, it was not my mistake. The checks weren't on my desk or in the mail that day.

My mistake wasn't in the asking, but rather the person I chose to ask. I got a tersely worded reply to my inquiry saying that the checks would be mailed that day and it wouldn't happen again, but if it did I should ask her, the owner of the company, because she handles the finances.

Suddenly I felt like I was in the middle of some office politics. The business owner didn't want the office manager to know something ... either that she was behind in paying the bills or that she suffered a memory lapse. Anyway, it got me thinking about my invoicing procedures and wondering if I'm doing everything I can to speed up the process of getting paid. Here are some invoicing best practices I found to both adopt and share:

Determine who cuts the check.

In the scenario above, it would have been helpful for me to know who actually processes my invoices. Then I could have asked her directly about the missing payments, and awkwardness would have been avoided.

It can also help to know who cuts the checks so that you can occasionally thank that person by name. If you take the time to get to know the person who handles your invoices, your invoice might mysteriously float to the top of the pile when that person is paying bills in the future. Honestly, haven't you made people you like or companies who have treated you well a priority over nameless, faceless payees when you've had a stack of bills to deal with?

Invoice faster to get paid faster.

You've got to make invoicing a priority, no matter how busy you are with other tasks. Not taking time to send invoices will disrupt cash flow, and not having cash flow can hurt, or kill, a company ... even a busy one. For jobs completed in a short time frame like a weekend special event, bill immediately. For ongoing jobs, send invoices in frequent, regular intervals. Not only will this maintain your cash flow, but customers are also less likely to question several small invoices than one huge invoice at the end of a long, ongoing project.

Look at the invoice as an opportunity to let clients know just how much bang they are getting for their buck. Do this by explaining every charge on your invoice, using language anyone would understand, rather than industry or business jargon.

Know the basics of billing.

I *thought* anyone in business knew what to put on an invoice, but then I received one from a so-called professional that was handwritten on a piece of lined paper torn out of a child's school notebook that didn't even have the name of the business on it. So I'll get down to basics. Make sure you include: the date and the name and address of your business, as well as your name, phone number and email address so the recipient can contact you if they have questions. Also include your company's invoice or job number, whom the check should be made out to, a detailed explanation of charges (more below), the total amount due, your payment terms (payable upon receipt or payable in 30 days, etc.), and a brief thank you message. Also include a purchase order (P.O.) number or vendor number if the company supplied one to you. And while I don't put my tax number on the invoice for the world to see (or steal), if it's a new client, I make sure to call and provide them with that and any other information they need to set me up as a vendor.

Introduce yourself.

As I said earlier, if the person processing the invoices knows you, you might get paid faster. With a new client, ask for their name, phone number and email address. This will prove helpful if you ever have questions regarding outstanding invoices. That initial call to get set up as a vendor is a great time to get this information. You might also benefit from asking the person who pays you if there's anything you can do to make their job easier. Does it matter to them, for example, if the invoice is an emailed PDF, a Microsoft Word document, or (gasp) printed out and snail mailed? Is there a vendor or P.O. number you should include? If it's a big company, ask if they would prefer to pay electronically, which would be efficient for both of you. Also, to help you stay organized, ask them to include your invoice numbers on the checks if they are not already doing that. This is especially helpful if you are sending a partial bill for an ongoing job.

Stay on top of things.

Most companies have a predictable payment schedule. Don't be afraid to politely question if a payment is later than usual. It's usually an easily cor-

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rectible oversight. But also watch for subtle changes in how quickly you are paid. If a client pays immediately the first time, but gets slower and slower with each subsequent invoice, it could be a sign of trouble. Or, it could simply mean that they've hired a new accounts payable person, or any number of other scenarios. Don't be accusatory. Simply ask if they have received your invoice and when you can expect to be paid.

Be nice, be precise.

Make your invoices look professional and stand out. Make sure your company name is large and readable, and include your logo. Design or select a layout that is attractive and easy to read. And again, somewhere include a message thanking the recipient for the business. Accounting software and countless other applications are available for automating the invoicing process, and most allow you to customize invoices.

When it comes to invoice content, itemizing takes time but can help avoid misunderstandings with clients about what they are being charged for. Seeing details in black and white can eliminate their need to call and ask questions, thus getting you paid in a timelier manner.

Look at the invoice as an opportunity to let clients know just how much bang they are getting for their buck. Do this by explaining every charge on your invoice, using language anyone would understand, rather than industry or business jargon.

Just do it ... well.

Remember, you are in business for no other reason than to make money. To do that, you've got to invoice your customers. There's no way around it. It can be considered the single most important thing you do. So do it well. ■

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When the gas and oil industry comes calling, Energy Waste Rentals & Service is ready to be a one-stop portable sanitation and equipment rental solution **BY KEN WYSOCKY**

Kenneth Schumacher, owner of Energy Waste Rentals & Service, is shown with a Hino vacuum truck built out by Satellite Industries. (Photos by Mark Greenberg)

WE'VE GOT IT COVERED

Providing great customer service isn't the stuff of rocket science. Yet there always seem to be contractors who don't provide it - and that spells opportunity for those who do, as Kenneth Schumacher can attest.

Almost 30 years ago, Schumacher took note of a friend's dissatisfaction with a trash-trailer company he'd hired to collect garbage at oilfield drilling sites. Schumacher responded by starting his own trash-trailer venture in 1986, and that eventually led him to establish Energy Waste Rentals & Service, a thriving portable restroom operation with offices in Yoakum, Texas, and a yard in Cuero, Texas.

Schumacher's business philosophy is simple: Listen to what customers want and deliver the goods. It's short and to the point, and he says the mantra is critical to his success working in several enterprises.

"My friend wasn't getting trailers when he needed them," Schumacher recalls of his venture into refuse collection. "Sometimes it took two or three days to get new [empty] trailers. And once those trailers were full, there was no place to put trash. Between the raccoons and the wind, it was creating big messes. So I asked him if I built some trailers, would he rent them from me? And he said yes."

(continued)

Energy Waste Rentals & Service Yoakum and Cuero, Texas

Owner: Kenneth Schumacher

Founded: 1986

Employees: 70

Service Area: Texas and Pennsylvania

Services: Portable sanitation, nonhazardous trash disposal and equipment rentals

Affiliations: Portable Sanitation Association International

Website: www.energywasterentals.com





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At the time, Schumacher admits he didn't even know what a trash trailer was. But after his friend explained it, Schumacher built two of the wire-mesh-enclosed trailers and began hauling trash. A couple months later, the same associate asked Schumacher if he'd be willing to provide portable restrooms, too. Schumacher complied by buying 28 restrooms and a small slide-in tank unit to service them.

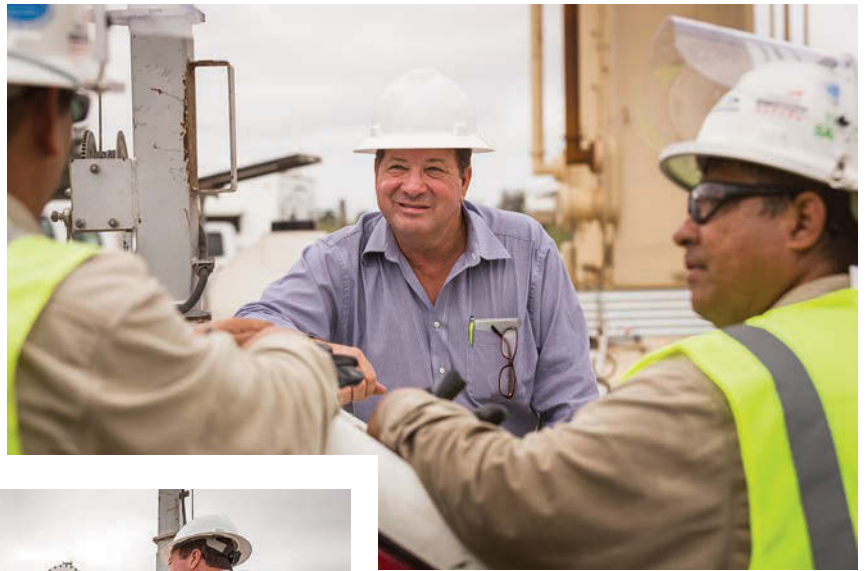
Energy Waste Rentals has grown considerably since then. It now employs 70 people and provides nearly 2,000 restrooms and other equipment, catering primarily to oilfield drilling companies. It deploys 18 vacuum trucks and eight slide-in units and operates branch yards in Cuero and Cotulla in south Texas; Mertzon, Monahans and Pecos in west Texas; and New Castle, Pennsylvania.

SERVICE IS EVERYTHING

Schumacher graduated from college with an agricultural education degree and taught vocational agriculture as a high school teacher for eight years before he and his wife, Jacque, purchased her family's office-supply business, Dewitt Poth & Son in Yoakum, in 1996 (they still own the store). He had also worked many summers for his late father, Marvin, who was a heavy-equipment contractor.

Hearing about his friend's experience with poor customer service in the oilfields drove Schumacher to succeed in a new field he knew nothing about.

"Even though we've gotten fairly large, we started with nothing - and I mean nothing," he says. "Like any business, whether it's in construction or business supplies, if you want to grow, it all comes down to customer service. Some people talk the game and some people actually play the game.



Above: Regular meetings with the crew keep Kenneth Schumacher (center) apprised of service to oilfield customers.



Left: Leaning on an Allmand Brothers Inc. light tower in the company yard, Schumacher reviews the workday with technicians Andy Garcia (left) and James Gonzales.

"If you're supposed to have a cleaning truck out to a drilling site twice a week, it needs to be there," he continues. "The oilfield industry is very demanding. If we get a call at 6 a.m. and someone needs a restroom by 7 a.m., we've got to get it going ... there's usually not a lot of notice or advance warning.

(continued)



The crew of service technicians at Energy Waste Rentals & Service is assembled for a group photo in Cuero, Texas. The company employs 70 workers.



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Right: A group of Allmand Brothers Inc. light towers – an important offering for the oil and gas industry – are tested in the company yard. In the foreground, a Ford pickup is waiting to deliver one of the company's Gen Combo units, a Top Hat fifth-wheel trailer carrying an Airman generator, diesel fuel tank and Wylie water tank for use with travel trailers used in the oilfield.

Below: The yard at Energy Waste Rentals & Service is home to a variety of equipment, including restroom trailers and portable restrooms from Satellite Industries and restroom trailers from Rich Specialty Trailers.



Moving forward by giving back

Paying it forward. Giving back to the community. No matter how you prefer to describe charitable giving by businesses, one thing is certain, says Kenneth Schumacher: It's better to give than receive.

The owner of Energy Waste Rentals & Service has been providing free or discounted portable restroom services to many groups – everything from churches to fire departments to schools – in the Eagle Ford Shale region for 29 years.

"If we get a call from a church or a nonprofit group, we either discount the rate or offer free service," Schumacher says. "I've always believed in giving back ... in being a good corporate citizen. We feel blessed by our success, so we want to give something back."

In recognition of the company's philanthropic efforts, the South Texas Energy & Economic Roundtable (STEER), based in San Antonio, honored Energy Waste with a 2013 Eagle Ford Excellence Award in the community and social investment category for companies with less than 250 employees. It's the first year STEER handed out the awards; the group's mission is to coordinate communications and public advocacy for the oil and natural gas industries in south Texas.

The award acknowledges the efforts of companies that preserve the environment, contribute to their communities and promote workplace safety. Judges included representatives from the Alamo Area Council of Governments, CPS Energy and the University of Texas at San Antonio.

"It was very nice to be recognized for something we've been doing for a long time," Schumacher says. "We don't do what we do to get honored, but to get recognized ... honestly, it really made our employees feel good."

"We decided to become a full-fledged rental company about six years ago. When the fracking boom hit the Eagle Ford Shale, we found our customers preferred to use just one vendor to bring in the whole package."

KENNETH SCHUMACHER

"In the end it's all about listening to customers and providing what they need, and doing what you promised you would do," he adds. "And you need to do the little things, like being on time and cleaning the outside of the restrooms as well as the inside. It's the little things that differentiate you from everybody else."

FLEET AND INVENTORY

Nine vacuum trucks built by Satellite Industries on Hino chassis form the core of Energy Waste's fleet. Four of the trucks feature steel tanks (1,100 gallons wastewater/500 gallons freshwater) and the others carry aluminum tanks (1,500 gallons waste/500 gallons freshwater). All are equipped with Masport Inc. pumps. Schumacher says he buys steel tanks for trucks that travel more frequently on rough roads.

Schumacher says that when it comes to tank size, he prefers to strike a balance between having enough capacity to minimize disposal runs, but not so big that they require his drivers to obtain a CDL.

"I prefer not to run big rigs down the road," he notes. "Our pump trucks are just the right size ... they can dump in the morning and clean all day, then be ready to go the next morning. In addition, bigger trucks are harder to get around on fracking sites, where there's not a lot of room to maneuver."

Energy Waste also runs five Ford F-550s and four Dodge 5500 trucks equipped with 700-gallon waste/200-gallon freshwater stainless steel tanks built by Satellite with Conde pumps from Westmoor Ltd. To conserve truck-bed space, tanks on these trucks are mounted crosswise behind the cab. With this configuration and a raised liftgate, the truck can transport four restrooms and still tow a trash trailer. Moreover, all nine trucks feature four-wheel drive and dually rear axles to better handle muddy conditions. "We operate in as tough an environment as you can imagine," Schumacher points out.

In addition, Energy Waste also runs eight slide-in units mounted on Ford F-350 dually pickups. Made by Satellite, the 350-gallon waste/200-

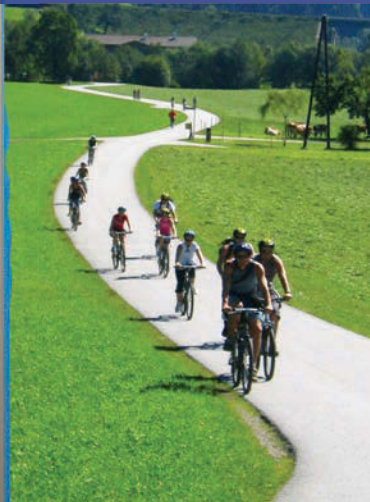
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gallon freshwater tanks are stainless steel and are tied to Masport pumps.

Rounding out the portable sanitation inventory are three nine-stall and eight two-stall restroom trailers from Satellite and Rich Specialty Trailers; about 125 Satellite Breeze hand-wash stations; more than 200 trash trailers made by the local Griffin Enterprises; and eight restroom transport trailers built by McKee Technologies.

The company also owns about 1,800 restrooms, most from Satellite and some from PolyJohn Enterprises and PolyPortables LLC. All restrooms have hand sanitizers. Energy Waste uses Satellite Safe T Fresh deodorant products.

Equipment for rent to the oilfield customers includes Airman portable generators (MMD Equipment), Allmand Brothers Inc. light towers, flat holding tanks from Satellite and PolyJohn Enterprises, and bulk water tanks from Wylie Manufacturing. Energy Waste also designed what it calls a Gen Combo, which adds an Airman generator, diesel fuel tank and Wylie water tank to a Top Hat fifth-wheel trailer. Local fabricator Watson Ag and Welding has built about 30 of them for the company.

EFFICIENT ROUTING COUNTS

Because drilling sites are so remote, it helps to own trucks that can do more than one job, Schumacher points out.

“We try to minimize travel time and the number of trips for deliveries and pickups,” he says, noting that most oilfield restrooms require cleaning either twice a week, every other day or every day. “A lot of times we have to go out there and move the same restroom just 2 miles down the road. So if we pick up a restroom [with a slide-in unit], we can suck it out and then haul it empty. Whenever possible, I like to bring the restrooms back to the yard to fully sanitize them, but sometimes we only have time to move them from one site to the other.”

Energy Waste relies on GPS units to boost driver safety and increase efficiency. The company also uses TrakQuip software, made by Corporate Services LLC, to better follow oilfield equipment rentals – another offshoot business for Energy Waste.

“At some point, our customers asked us to supply light towers [for rent],” Schumacher explains. “From there, we eased into rentals over time. We decided to become a full-fledged rental company about six years ago. When the fracking boom hit the Eagle Ford Shale, we found our customers preferred to use just one vendor to bring in the whole package.”

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Schumacher says he wouldn't have considered starting a rental business without long-standing customer relationships. “Our customers basically told us they'd use us if we had the equipment to rent ... and that stemmed directly from relationships we've built over the years. I trust them as much as they trust me,” he says. “We've all been good for each other.”

Schumacher says there were growing pains for the business. “We struggled over the years,” he says. “We had to learn the logistics of the business and deal with all the financial aspects of buying and financing equipment. It's not all roses all the time.”

But things got easier as Energy Waste established itself. As Schumacher puts it, “It takes awhile for people to see that your word is good and you'll do what you say you'll do – and do it for a fair price.” The energy services work significantly boosted the company's revenues but also increased route densities, which produced efficiencies that, in turn, improved operating margins.



Above: Andy Garcia, left, and James Gonzales service restrooms at an oil work site in the Eagle Ford Shale.



Left: Technician James Gonzales updates a service log inside a Satellite Industries portable restroom at a hydraulic fracturing work site near Cuero, Texas.

“Our business increased a lot just because of the sheer volume of activity going on during the last five or six years,” Schumacher says. “It changed the complexion of our business and of all the little towns around here.”

Does Schumacher see more growth ahead? Definitely.

“Someone once told me that you're either moving forward or backward, or up or down,” he says. “I'd rather be going forward than backward, or moving up than down. So far, it's been a fun ride. And as our customers continue to grow, we hope to grow right along with them.” ■

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By Ed Wodalski

If money is no object, what are the top features you want in a dream garage? As a portable restroom operator, your garage needs to be a functional and comfortable space, a workshop that supports your thriving business and provides storage for your most important equipment.

Need inspiration? Roger Penske's state-of-the-art race facility in Mooresville, North Carolina, was built for performance and style. Two buildings totaling 424,697 square feet are built on 105 acres. One million pounds of Italian tile (250,000 pieces) provide the flooring in the administrative and NASCAR shop areas.

While your garage probably won't rival those used by NASCAR racing teams, PROs can take away some good ideas from the top garages in America.

Doors and drawers: Nate Birkenmeier with CTech Manufacturing in Weston, Wisconsin, designer of aluminum cabinets, tool drawers, pit carts and other storage devices for the U.S. military and motorsports teams, says the key to a good garage is organization.

"Racers are constantly looking for ways of improving the performance of their car; being organized at the track, garage or shop is the key to staying focused," he says. Birkenmeier suggests paper towel racks, aerosol can holders, battery-charging stations and fold-down workbenches for optimal organization.

"The perfect shop would consist of premium, all-aluminum cabinets," he says. "Aluminum far exceeds steel or wood. It resists weather, won't mold or invite pests."

Floors and coatings: Tom Hennessy, president of CD Products in Appleton, Wisconsin, provider of industrial flooring and coatings, says there are four levels of flooring to consider for your dream garage.

"Among other things, you want to have the concrete made impervious to grease and oil stains, gasoline spills. You can start with a clear sealer; epoxy or urethane would be a very good choice," he says. "A step up from that would be the same idea in a color. Of course the product would have to have chemical resistance to automobile fluids. Once that's determined, it's a matter of product choice."

A multilayer chip or flake-type floor with a speckled look is another option. "Now we're getting into the designer type colors where you want it to

(continued)

"Racers are constantly looking for ways of improving the performance of their car; being organized at the track, garage or shop is the key to staying focused."

Nate Birkenmeier



Organization is the key to any dream garage.
(Photos courtesy of CTech Manufacturing)



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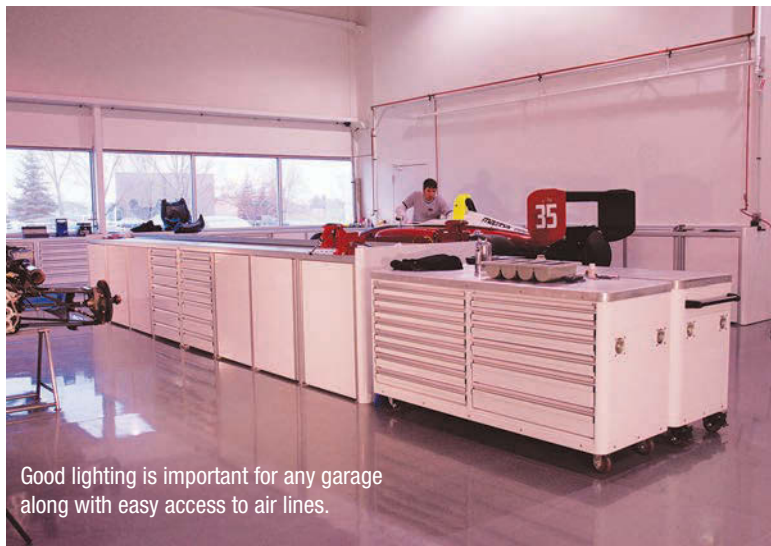
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Good lighting is important for any garage along with easy access to air lines.

accent or contrast with the walls,” Hennessy says. “Again, you want to be sure the materials you used were resistant to automobile liquids.” For “wow” appeal, consider a quartz floor, made by blending colored sands with epoxy or urethane topcoats.

A bright idea: Lighting is a key feature for any busy small-business garage, and today’s LED technology offers optimal quality at a price that keeps coming down. NASCAR legend Richard Petty realized a 50 percent reduction in energy use after retrofitting his 100,000-square-foot garage with 700 LED lights.

Elevation: Five-time NASCAR winner Dave Marcis, of Arden, North Carolina, says a dream garage will have a lift or lifts for better access when

vehicle repairs are needed. “I would have two lifts,” he says. “I’d have one where you put the car on with wheels and have one where you could put the car on a frame.”

Air to spare: Marcis says a dream garage also needs easy access to air lines for powering drills, sanders, ratchets, paint sprayers, die grinders, hammer/chisels, impact wrenches, reciprocating saws, as well as inflating tires and cleaning debris out of hard-to-reach places. “Have stuff close together along the wall so you don’t have to run cords that you’re tripping over.”

Heated floors: “I think the stuff with the tubing in, the heated floors; again depending on what part of the country you’re in – down here not necessary, but in Wisconsin you need it,” Marcis says. “Those floors are cold in the winter. If you can keep your feet warm it’s a lot nicer working.”



A lift makes quick work of many difficult jobs.

Welding and grinding: You might also have an area for welding and grinding with a vacuum system to collect the filings, Marcis says. Having a spacious and safe work area makes welding bent forks, blades and buckets a breeze. Grinders give repairs a finished look and have unlimited uses, from cutting bolts to removing rust.



Be sure to save room for your toys.

Keeping clean:

While cost conscious, Marcis says two things he won’t do without are a restroom and shower. “Yes, definitely,” he says. “A good place to clean up, because a lot of nights we worked until 1, 2 in the morning, certainly midnight a lot of times; it was always nice to take a shower before you hit the road.”

Wash bay: Marcis says a dedicated area for cleaning vehicles is a must. “It’s nice to have a place for pressure washing the [vehicles] inside and out, and a steam cleaner all in one bay,” he says. “Have it big enough where you can pull your truck or equipment in there and clean it.”

Eyes on the outside: As with any investment, security is a must. Consider video cameras, motion detectors and alarms for your garage and surrounding yard. You might even include a wet/dry fire suppression system.

Personality: “I think what makes a great garage is not how much money you put into it or how different your cabinets look or how ostentatious it is, but how it reflects the personality of the owner or the company,” says Chad Haas, founder of Vault, designer and outfitter of custom dream garages in Beaverton, Oregon. “If you’re passionate about Ferraris, have Ferrari red on the walls and a Ferrari neon sign. The garage should exude personality,” he says.

SEND US A PHOTO

What’s in your dream garage? Send us a snapshot at editor@onsiteinstaller.com. We’ll share photos and your ideas for a top-notch small-business garage in a future issue of the magazine. ■

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Take 5 ... with Fred Hill

King of the Hill

Gotta Go Now's Fred Hill conquers challenges to build a fast-growing business in the nation's capital

By Sharon Verbeten

Vast experience in the construction industry – as a general contractor, home inspector and income property investor – may have played an important role in Fred Hill's success in the portable restroom business. Hill's Washington, D.C., portable sanitation company, Gotta Go Now, has quadrupled revenue every year since startup in 2006.

"It's all predicated on service," says Hill, 51. "That's what keeps them calling." Part of the success – even throughout the past recession – may be attributed to his paying close attention when he worked in the construction field. He knew what he wanted in portable restrooms, and he knew what wasn't being offered. So his solution was to enter the industry himself.

After starting modestly with 175 restroom units (mostly Satellite Industries Tufways), he now has almost 500 units, most yellow PolyPortables Integra models. "All the customers are loving them," Hill says. "They like the brightness of them."

Hill says demand has shown the potential for continued growth. "My goal is to have 1,000 units," he says. "I'm always optimistic and have always dreamed about getting to the 1,000 units. That's the drive that has kept me going."

Hill has added a three-unit trailer by Comforts of Home and an eight-unit trailer he built himself. And the compa-

ny started renting child-sized TJ-Shorty units from T.S.F. Company Inc.; he has 10 units he refers to as the Pint Size Potties division, which was his wife Renita's idea. The units go to Little League games, kids' birthday parties and other events.

Cardboard trash containers Hill bought from Party Time Tents & More Inc. at a past Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo have been a popular addition for special event customers who like the convenience of hiring Gotta Go Now to haul away trash. The company has 500 of the containers.

His trucks include 2005 Ford F-350 (400-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater) and 2004 Dodge Sprinter (with 200-gallon waste/75-gallon freshwater) flatbed/liftgate trucks with steel slide-in units and Conde pumps from Northern Services; a 2007 Isuzu NQR with a 600-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater Imperial Industries tank and Jurop/Chandler pump; a 2000 International 4700 with a 1,000-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater Best Enterprises stainless steel tank and Jurop/Chandler pump; and a 2002 F-650 24-foot stake body with liftgate.

Expansion presents challenges, but Hill plans to keep overcoming them.

"We've got a good team of people that want to work and see success come our way," he says. "It's going to be a lot of work, [but] I grew up learning from my grandfather. [He said], a day you don't work is a day you don't eat. I never forgot that."

EXPLORE FIVE ISSUES THAT AFFECT FRED HILL AND HIS PORTABLE RESTROOM BUSINESS:



Fred and Renita Hill, owners of Gotta Go Now in Washington, D.C. (Photos courtesy of Gotta Go Now)

1 SERVING THE WHITE HOUSE

In a few years, Hill has made his company's name known to the White House and other high-profile capital events, like the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace & Freedom Walk and President Obama's re-election campaign. "We're starting to gain recognition among politicians," Hill says, adding that he has supplied restrooms to a host of congressional events, including some on the National Mall for politicians of all parties.

He doesn't consider the political events any more challenging, except for the time-consuming security checks and last-minute notifications of events. "When they call, within an hour or so, we're able to do a delivery," he says. "We set our schedule around that. It's very fun; everybody's moving at a fast pace."

(continued)

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The crew from Gotta Go Now sets up a bank of PolyPortables LLC restrooms at a school construction site in Washington, D.C. The vacuum truck on the left is an Isuzu built out by Imperial Industries with a Jurop/Chandler pump. The Dodge Sprinter is shown before Hill added a vacuum tank from Northern Services.

2 SATISFYING GOVERNMENT CUSTOMERS

When Hill got out of general contracting, he took a job as a supervisory construction analyst with the D.C. government and began building a portable sanitation business on the side. The experience was a perfect training ground for landing government contracts for Gotta Go Now.

One of the larger government-funded opportunities includes the renovation of a dozen schools in D.C. "They were old and inefficient," says Hill. Most of these are two- to three-year contracts. Gotta Go Now is providing eight to 30 restrooms on each site.

Hill has a dedicated marketing team that pursues government contracts. "The awareness of what is out there has really grown," he says. "It's pretty amazing that we've grown as fast as we have."



Shown with a Comforts of Home restroom trailer in the background, the Gotta Go Now team includes, rear from left, Phillip Hill, Lorenzo Green, William Cuff, Kevin Keys, Ricky Lyons, Fred Hill Jr., Wade Washington and Charles McCullum. In the front row, from left, are Regina Godfrey, Renita Hill, Fred Hill III, Jerline Hill and Gordon Contee.

3 SUCCESSFULLY UTILIZING CERTIFICATIONS

The company's growth is fueled by many valuable certifications. In addition to being a minority and disabled-veteran owner, Hill also benefits from participation in the U.S. Small Business Administration's HUBZone Program (the Historically Underutilized Business Zones program helps small businesses in urban and rural communities gain preferential access to federal procurement opportunities).

"We have a lot of opportunity to work in those categories," he says. "We are taking on more federal projects; with our certifications, there is definitely going to be a need to fill those requests."

And while Hill admits that some of his competitors work in some of the same areas, "Our opportunity comes when their contract runs out."

Many certifications must be renewed annually, and Hill's marketing staff and business consultant handle the paperwork and research.



4 SERVING MAJOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to working on the new school construction and renovation in D.C., Gotta Go Now also landed and fulfilled multiple contracts for events and construction at the new Gateway Pavilion, which will host many outdoor events. Gotta Go Now has done an event almost every weekend at the pavilion. They supplied eight units for the construction. "After that, we've had as many as 30 up there for special events. I've seen as many as 3,000 attendees at these events."



Fred Hill services restrooms at a special event. His unit stickers include the message "Always Clean, Always Fresh."

5 COPING WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

"The doctors called me the Miracle Kid," says Hill, who is coping with debilitating multiple sclerosis. While he has had the degenerative autoimmune disease for years, he takes shots three times a week to keep it in check. Stress can impact his health, but Hill says his condition has not altered his ability to work.

"[Doctors] thought it would have been [worse] by now," he says. "They're happy. The treatment that I underwent was new, and I can only think that it's been one of the major changes in my health. So I believe and keep fighting." ■

Fred Hill

"Take 5" is a feature in which one PRO or industry leader shares unique business challenges with the entire portable sanitation community. It's a chance for service providers to meet over the back fence - and across the country - to learn more about each other and promote industry excellence. If you know a PRO who would be an interesting subject for "Take 5," send their contact information to editor@promonthly.com.



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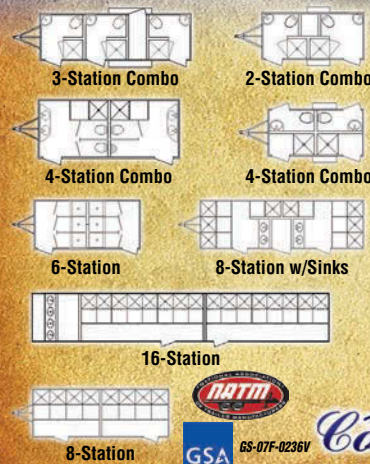
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Karleen Kos is executive director of the Portable Sanitation Association International. She may be reached at karleenk@psai.org or 952/886-7416.



What Do You Think about the PSAI's Proposed Code of Excellence?

By Karleen Kos

We've all seen those inspirational posters showing grand vistas with statements at the bottom about things like "Achievement" or "Ideals." They were everywhere for a while. Then folks started mocking the whole product line. Partially this was because people will tease about anything that is popular. Some of the derision, I think, was because the pictures gave lofty instructions with no path to practical application. It is one thing to say, "Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way" or "Excellence is not an act but a habit" – two real posters from that era – but it is quite another to describe what excellence actually looks like.

We didn't want to make that mistake.

When the PSAI decided to create a voluntary Code of Excellence for the portable sanitation industry, we designed it to be both aspirational and practical. Whether you are an industry member or not, our Code should paint a picture of what the best companies already do, what good companies are working toward, and stand them in stark contrast to the "bad actors" that harm the reputation of our industry.

The draft Code, issued for comment in early March, was discussed extensively at the PSAI's Annual Convention and Trade Show later in the month. It covers five key areas:

- Excellence in our actions
- Excellence in our reputation
- Excellence in our relationships
- Excellence in our operations
- Excellence in our environment

Each section of the Code contains some broad statements intended to be idealistic and motivational. These are followed by specific, practical actions portable sanitation companies take (or should take) to achieve excellence in that domain. We don't just say that excellence in our environment means, "We protect the health and safety of others." We back it up with statements like, "We ensure our employees are trained on disease and infection control," and "We take all reasonable steps to conserve natural resources," among others.

We intend this voluntary Code of Excellence to be something that is educational for both the industry and the public – a useful tool for attaining and recognizing excellence in the portable sanitation business. Adherence to it will be voluntary, of course. Nonetheless, we hope its widespread adoption will help companies improve their businesses and result in the industry as a whole gaining greater respect and consideration for the important role we play in providing essential services. Unlike what happened with those formerly popular posters, we intend the Code to be something that helps our industry be taken more seriously as time passes.

Before the Code of Excellence is adopted, we are seeking comments from throughout the portable sanitation industry. Please, take the time to visit our website and read the draft at www.psa.org/excellence-information and then send your comments to excellence@psai.org. We want to hear from you! ■

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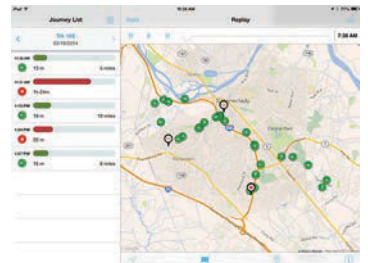
Locqus provides a cloud-based field service management platform for small- and medium-sized service businesses. It provides the ability to schedule jobs, send enroute customer notifications, collect payments on site, track inventory,

create quotes/invoices/receipts and view transactions. Geolocation services allow users to view the location of fellow employees and their assigned jobs on the map. It functions on both mobile devices and computers to make communication with the back office easy. Options include vehicle trackers, QuickBooks integration and financing to customers and businesses. **800/647-1951; www.locqus.com.**



FLEETMATICS REVEAL

The **Reveal** GPS vehicle tracking system from **Fleetmatics** is designed to improve productivity for virtually any mobile workforce. The cloud-based platform includes native apps for iPhone and Android, providing visibility in field activity and actionable insight into driver behavior and workforce productivity. **704/716-7646; www.fleetmatics.com.**



GPS INSIGHT

GPS Insight fleet- and asset-tracking software is designed to allow managers to have complete visibility into mobile operations to reduce costs and improve driver efficiency. It tracks delivery trucks and portable restrooms,

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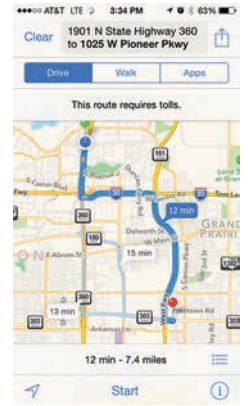
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CASE STUDY

**Real-time mobile applications
result in cost savings**

PROBLEM: Scott Walters of Walters Portable Toilets, Grantville, Pennsylvania, wanted to improve driver and back-office communications, eliminate wasteful activity, reduce staff time and drive down costs by moving to paperless operations, providing real-time updates between drivers and office staff.

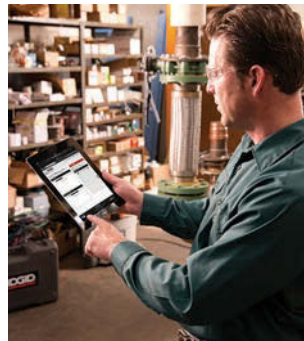
SOLUTION: Walters turned to Clear Computing, which offers a mobile driver application that runs on tablet devices and works with cloud-based operations software. Using iPads, drivers get instant service route and work order updates, along with the site information needed to complete their work throughout the day. "I like that jobs are closed out automatically," says Walters. "As my drivers update their status on each work item, the office is always informed without the need for interruptions.



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RESULT: There was high driver acceptance and a reduction of total fleet hours by 10 percent. These hours came from a.m./p.m. yard time, idle time between jobs and time on the phone. "We spend less time on the phone with customers and drivers," says Walters. "Our dispatch boards show real-time service and work order activity, and overall operations have improved because everyone knows what's going on." Walters is now integrating the driver's tool with voice, GPS and texting. **888/332-5327; www.clearcomputing.com.**

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Summit Automatic Decision Mapping and Dispatch from Ritam Technologies uses Summit Rental System customer accounting and operations management for billing and to prepare routes. One click sends service data to the automatic decision mapping and balances loads between drivers, considers truck capacity, respects customer time commitments, minimizes overtime and optimizes routes for efficient travel. The results are sent to drivers' mobile devices to instantly provide best service sequence, voice navigation and digital customer signatures or driver confirmation of service completed. In the office, view information instantly, dispatch emergency services and monitor real-time GPS-type tracking of drivers on street level maps. No special hardware is required. **800/662-8471; www.ritam.com.**



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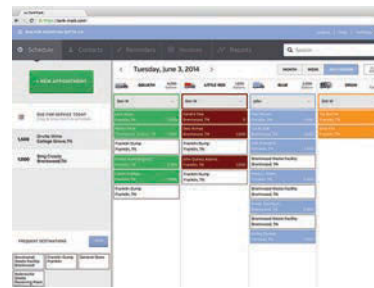
Mobile Technician software from **SWRemote** allows technicians to manage a job in the field using a mobile device (iPad, iPhone and select Android devices) while linking and updating directly to Successware21 Office Management System in real time. Technicians have access to full customer details online, including history and equipment, to be better informed when arriving at the customer's location. Once a call is scheduled at the office, technicians can remotely manage their time card, build invoices, get authorization signatures, take payments, debrief a job and email the final receipt to the customer, all while being connected to the office in real time. **800/299-2079; www.swremote.com.**



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**Fruitland Manufacturing
names president, COO**

Fruitland Manufacturing named Chris White president and chief operating officer. He will oversee the company's production facilities, including the new 33,000-square-foot warehouse and powder-coat facility, and focus on research and international business development. ■

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