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July 2018

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ELEVATED SERVICE

From the mountains to the streets of Denver, Columbia Potties for the Rockies presents a winning user experience

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A CROWD ON THE MOVE

A team from India's 3S takes on the challenge of sanitation for a huge religious procession [Page 24](#)

PRODUCT FOCUS

Cleaning and Maintenance

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Tuff-Jon



Tuff-Jon III



100 Gallon Fresh Water Supply Tank



TJ Kids

TJ Shorty



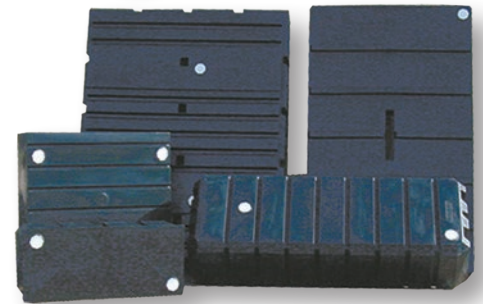
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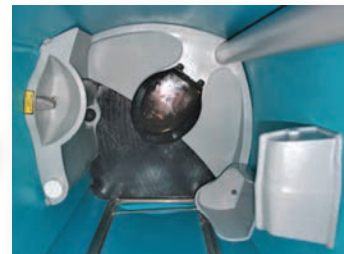
TJ Junior Single Free Standing Sink (16 gallons fresh water)



Sink Lifting Bracket



60 Gallon Rinse Tank



Interior View of Deluxe TJ-III

- Lifting Bracket Assembly
- Sky Heater
- Corner Shelf
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Our mission is to tell your stories, encourage industry networking and promote professionalism. You can help us accomplish that.
- Jim Kneiszel

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So many account options may be confusing, but no matter your age, the time to start saving for retirement is now.
- Judy Kneiszel

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PROfile: Elevated Service
From the plains to the mountains and throughout a growing Denver metro area, Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties for the Rockies concentrates on presenting a winning user experience. - Betty Dageforde

ON THE COVER: Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties for the Rockies are riding a wave of economic prosperity in the Denver area. Kent Simmons, operations manager, is shown with a 2015 Kenworth T300 carrying a TankTec 300-gallon waste and 100-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump. (Photo by Carl Scofield)

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- **Take 5:** Piling up the miles in Texas

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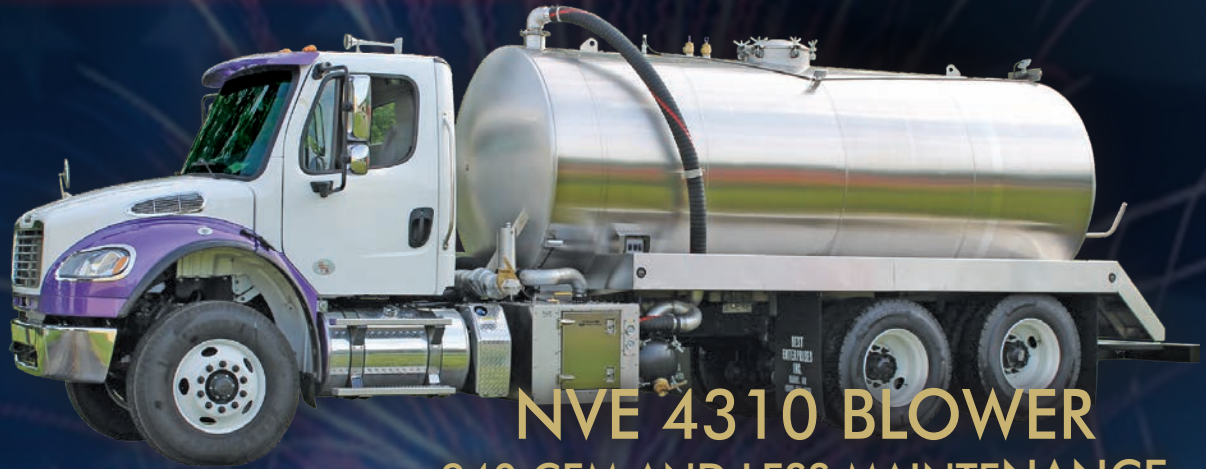


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We Value Your Knowledge and Want to Pass It Along

OUR MISSION IS TO TELL YOUR STORIES, ENCOURAGE INDUSTRY NETWORKING AND PROMOTE PROFESSIONALISM. YOU CAN HELP US ACCOMPLISH THAT.

By Jim Kneiszel

The portable sanitation industry is dynamic and ever changing. Small companies can grow quickly. Manufacturers push the limits of innovation to serve their customers. Competition flourishes and pushes every PRO to work smarter.

Your job is to respond to the growing demands of a general public that now expects to find relief stations placed conveniently on construction sites, at special events, and wherever crowds gather. Our job at PRO is to keep pace with an industry that is maturing at a fast pace, bringing news you can use once a month in the mailbox and daily in an online format at www.promonthly.com.

We're here to help you with your mission. And I'm asking you to help us with ours.

Well into our second decade of publishing the magazine, we've continued with a number of popular monthly feature stories, most notably our Contractor PROfile, On Location and Take 5 packages that highlight interesting PROs. We look for a wide range of contractors to feature, from seasoned industry veterans to younger contractors just starting out.

We've featured well over 300 restroom contractors over the years, covering the histories of their family businesses and following them to photograph their crews working events across North America. We've been to music festivals, air shows, state fairs, football stadiums ... and last month we even highlighted a Minnesota company that had the honor of working the Super Bowl.

It's been great fun for me and our writers and photographers to get to know the hardworking folks who provide these vital portable sanitation services. It doesn't matter whether we're talking to a father-and-son team who operate one truck and have an inventory of 150 restrooms or the CEO of a large regional or national company. We learn from their valuable business insights and pass the advice along to you. We will certainly continue to publish these major features and hope PROs continue to be receptive to sharing their success stories.

We also publish a Product Focus story, as well as a handy Buyer's Guide once a year (which appeared in the June issue). These features provide you with information on the latest innovations from portable sanitation industry manufacturers and connect you with the professionals who can help you determine which products will help you grow and work more efficiently.

MORE FOR YOU

We'd like to bolster our coverage with more content to help bring PROs together to share information and network as a group. That's where you come in.

We often hear from readers who say they look forward to receiving the magazine every month and enjoy learning about the companies we

It doesn't matter whether we're talking to a father-and-son team who operate one truck and have an inventory of 150 restrooms or the CEO of a large regional or national company. We learn from their valuable business insights

feature. In fact, readers have told me they like to pass each issue around to the crew before filing it in a bookcase for reference later. (Thank you, by the way, to all the PROs who regularly read the magazine). I always follow that feedback by inviting PROs to get more involved with us. As I like to say, this magazine is yours. It wouldn't exist without you.

So how do you contribute to the editorial content? Contact me and offer your opinions, give a story suggestion or share your own advice in response to an article you read. If you drop me an email at editor@promonthly.com, I promise to respond.

One of the obvious ways to help out is to suggest a company for a PROfile or Take 5 feature. That could be your company or another deserving restroom business you know about. Maybe there's someone in the industry who you think should be recognized for many years of professional service to his or her community. Maybe you know about a PRO or a multigenerational company we haven't featured yet and you think we should. I follow up every PROfile suggestion shared with me.

Or how about suggesting an event for our On Location feature? The summer/fall event season has a long way to go, and we are always looking for new and interesting venues to visit. And you may have never considered this: We know that many event organizers (your customers) are ecstatic to see their celebration promoted in a national magazine, sometimes even landing on the cover. Give us a call before your premier event of the season, and we'll see if we can send a photographer.

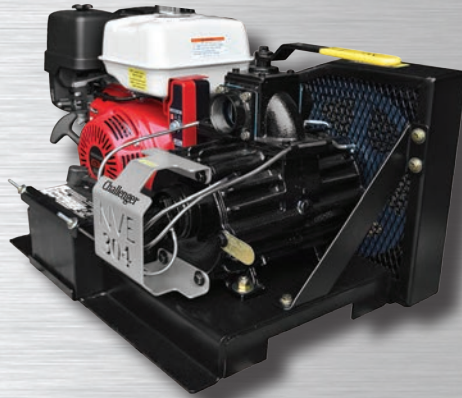
Here are a few more ways I invite you to become more involved:

Let's talk trucks: We run an occasional feature called PRO Rides, where we display and talk about a contractor's new or refurbished vacuum service truck. I'd like to build on this feature, maybe even bringing it to the status of our popular Classy Truck feature in *Pumper* magazine. Send me a photo of your favorite restroom truck and we'll publish it along with a story. If we get enough of them, we can run an annual PRO Rides Truck of the Year contest like we do in *Pumper*.

I'd also like to develop a new vacuum truck advice column for PRO. For years, the late Robert Carlson wrote about trucks, but to return a column like that, we need to identify experts willing to answer technical truck questions. We also need readers to send questions and suggest topics they'd like to see

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explored in a truck column. If you'd share your expertise or have questions you'd like answered, please contact me.

Getting to know you: Sometimes we delve into human-interest topics in our PROfile stories, and they typically generate positive feedback. Readers have a genuine interest in fellow PROs, beyond learning about their business practices. Do you have an interesting hobby you'd like to share with the rest of us? For example, I am restoring an old car, I volunteer for a dog rescue organization, and I serve on my local county board. Most folks have an interesting story to tell.

Or maybe you or members of your family are working on a charitable cause that you would like to tell others about? Maybe you run foot races to raise money to support medical research. Perhaps you belong to a civic organization that helps your hometown. Whatever the cause, let us know about it and we might write a story about your efforts and your community.

Just for fun: A few years ago we started a feature called Where's the Restroom? We ask readers to send in a photo of one of their units set up in a mystery location, and then we give clues to the location. Then readers figure out the location and send in their answers. This has been popular, and we've awarded a prize for the correct answer each time. To keep this fun feature going, we need readers to send us photos. If we run your photo, we will send you a T-shirt from one of the COLE Publishing magazines.

LET'S TALK

There's nothing more rewarding to a trade publication journalist than making another new connection with a member of the industry. I appreciate the passion you all have for portable sanitation and the lessons I learn from each of you. My goal every month is to pass along as much of that expertise and knowledge as I can through the magazine. Let's keep it going. ■

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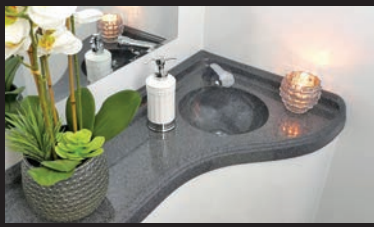
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ALL FOR ONE

Profit Sharing Unites Workers

The consensus among economists is that profit sharing plans boost productivity. It's not hard to figure out why. Knowing that if the company does well, employees will directly benefit by receiving a bonus is extremely motivating. And profit sharing isn't just for huge companies. This article explains important things to think about when creating a profit sharing plan. promonthly.com/featured



OVERHEARD ONLINE

“If you're looking for someone who can make decisions wisely, without needing to come to you for approval over every tiny thing, a veteran is a great bet.”

– Why Your Next Hire Should Be a Veteran
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WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Fixing a Disastrous Event

Hopefully this doesn't happen too often, but every PRO



knows what it's like when one thing after another goes wrong and a big event turns into a full-blown crisis. When Murphy's law is in full effect, follow these tips to turn that disastrous event around.

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PUBLIC PERCEPTION

No Detail Too Small

Many factors go into how a portable restroom company is perceived by the public: customer service, fair pricing, responsiveness and clean equipment. Sheila Nessler, owner of Columbia Potties for the Rockies, includes color schemes and scents in that category and considers them important details. Check out this exclusive online story about how everything from truck colors to deodorizer scents factors into the company image.

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Writer Judy Kneiszel has operated her own small business for 20 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.



PROs Must Learn the Alphabet Soup of Retirement Savings Plans

SO MANY ACCOUNT OPTIONS MAY BE CONFUSING, BUT NO MATTER YOUR AGE, THE TIME TO START SAVING FOR RETIREMENT IS NOW

By Judy Kneiszel

The website www.manta.com conducted a survey of 1,960 small-business owners in 2017, and 34 percent of those surveyed said they don't have a retirement savings plan. Of those respondents who do not have retirement savings, 37 percent said they don't make enough profit to save for retirement and 21 percent said they used their previous retirement savings to invest in their business.

Eighteen percent of those without a plan said their business was their retirement, meaning they hope proceeds from selling the business will be enough to retire on. That's what financial experts call putting all of your eggs in one basket, and it's risky because if the business fails, your retirement savings vanish.

In that same survey, 12 percent of those without a retirement savings plan said they didn't see any need to save for retirement, and another 12 percent said they don't have any plans to retire. People in those two groups hope to have a huge inheritance coming from a long lost relative or they plan to work themselves to death.

If you are in any of these no-plan scenarios, it might be time to learn your letters and numbers. No, not the *Sesame Street* ones, but rather the confusing stew of letter and number combinations that make up the variety of retirement plan options for small-business owners.

If you do have a retirement savings plan for yourself, you may be interested in starting plans for your employees as well. It's a benefit that can set you apart from competing employers and help you keep good employees. A job offer that includes a retirement plan is more attractive than one from a company without that benefit. Likewise, it makes more sense for an employee to stay with a company until he or she is vested than to quit. For

You may be interested in starting plans for your employees as well. It's a benefit that can set you apart from competing employers and help you keep good employees.

example, employees may not be fully vested for five years so leaving after two or three years would mean only a percentage of the money contributed to a retirement account by the company is theirs.

Here are some features of the most common retirement savings plan options:

1. SEP IRA. The simplified employee pension, or SEP, IRA is available to companies filing taxes as sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations, and S corporations and can be used by self-employed individuals or small-business owners, including those with employees. A SEP is easy to set up and maintain, and there are typically low or no setup fees or annual charges.

A SEP IRA can cover employees, but it is completely employer funded — employees do not make contributions. For 2018, an employer can contribute up to 25 percent of an employee's compensation up to \$55,000. For business owners with employees, it's important to note that while you are not required to make a contribution every year, you must contribute the same percentage for employees that you contribute for yourself.

As for access to the funds, withdrawals are allowed at any time, but a 10 percent penalty may apply before the plan owner reaches 59 1/2.

2. SIMPLE IRA. A savings incentive match plan, or SIMPLE, IRA is available for self-employed individuals and also allows businesses with 100 or fewer employees to establish an account for employees. The SIMPLE IRA is available for companies filing taxes as sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations or S corporations.

Employees are allowed to make salary-deferral contributions of up to 100 percent of compensation up to \$12,500 in 2018. Employees over age 50 can also make a \$3,000 catch-up contribution. The employer can either match employee contributions up to 3 percent of compensation or contribute 2 percent of compensation if the employee does not contribute. The employer contribution limit is \$5,500 for 2018 in either scenario.

Fees for this type of plan vary by administrator, but are usually pretty low at about \$25 per participant or a few hundred dollars per plan. Money

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may be withdrawn at any time with a 10 percent penalty before age 59 1/2. If a withdrawal is taken within the first two years one participates in the plan, however, that penalty is 25 percent.

3. Self-employed or solo 401(k). This type of plan is available for self-employed individuals or business owners with no employees other than a spouse. It is available to sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations or S corporations. It is a good choice for a self-employed individual who needs to play catch-up when it comes to retirement savings because, depending on your age and income, it allows a person to save as much as \$60,000 a year.

Some people like that it can be self-directed, allowing the account holder to allocate money to the stocks, bonds or other investments of their choosing. Another feature some business owners like is that they can borrow against a solo 401(k). Withdrawals cannot be taken from the plan until age 59 1/2, except in cases of disability or plan termination.

4. Simple 401(k). For companies with fewer than 100 employees, the Simple 401(k) is sometimes preferred because it's easier to administer than a standard 401(k). Employees can elect to contribute, and the employer is obligated to make a matching contribution. The employer must file a form 5500 but does not have to perform the nondiscrimination testing required by the IRS with a regular 401(k). The simple 401(k) is not the best type of plan to offer if your motivation is employee retention, however, because this type of account vests immediately.

5. 401(k). The 401(k) most people are familiar with is most appropriate for companies with 20 or more employees. Startup and maintenance fees vary by plan. It is funded by employee deferrals and employer contributions. Employers may make matching contributions up to 25 percent of an employee's compensation up to a total maximum of \$55,000. Total employer and employee contributions cannot exceed \$55,000 annually, and the IRS conducts nondiscrimination tests to make sure plans do not favor highly compensated employees. Early hardship withdrawals may be available, but penalties usually apply before age 59 1/2.

6. ROTH IRA. Taxes are paid on money before it goes into a ROTH. It then grows tax-free and can be withdrawn tax-free when the account owner reaches 70 1/2. An advantage of the ROTH IRA is that if you meet IRS income restrictions, you can contribute to your company's SEP or SIMPLE IRA, as well as a ROTH. That gives you one tax ad-

vantage now and one later. Eligibility for a ROTH is based on modified adjusted gross income or MAGI. For single filers in 2018, if your MAGI is higher than \$120,000, your contribution limit is reduced. It is eliminated completely at \$135,000. For married taxpayers who file jointly, contributions begin decreasing when income hits \$186,000 and are phased out completely at \$199,000.

NEW TAX LAWS

One of the incentives for investing in a re-

tirement savings plan besides having a nest egg when you retire is that there are tax benefits. The new federal tax laws that went into effect this year do not change retirement savings incentives. While there was talk of rule changes, they did not end up being part of the final tax package passed by Congress and signed by the president. Talk to your accountant or financial planner for details on how to set up a retirement savings plan and how contributions will affect your 2018 tax picture. ■

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Kent Simmons, operations manager, is shown in the company yard with a vacuum truck from Vacutrux and a Satellite Industries Turfway restroom. (Photos by Carl Scofield)

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From the plains to the mountains and throughout a growing Denver metro area, Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties for the Rockies concentrates on presenting a winning user experience

BY BETTY DAGEFORDE

Columbia Sanitary, located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains just outside Denver, has been providing septic services to neighboring communities since 1959. But new ownership and a new line of work in the early 2000s put the company in perfect position to benefit from tremendous growth the city has experienced in the last 10 years.

Sheila and Denny Nessler bought the company in the late 1990s and a few years later added portable restrooms. As majority owner, Sheila Nessler was able to obtain Minority/Woman-Owned, Disadvantaged and Small Business Enterprise certifications, which opened the doors to a number of large public works projects. The city implemented the certification program a number of years ago when studies indicated certain groups were historically not given equal opportunities and were underutilized in some industries.

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But those certifications are also what's making it a challenge for the Nesslers, at 67 and 73, to transition out of the business as they think about retirement and the future of the company. A logical replacement would be their great-nephew, 30-year-old Kent Simmons, who grew up in the business and is now the operations manager, but certifications would be lost.

The family operates the company out of a half-acre property in Golden with a staff of 15 — four portable sanitation drivers, three septic drivers, two advanced septic system maintenance technicians and three office personnel. Their 75-mile-radius territory includes communities in the mountains and the plains, as well as the metropolitan area.

Technician Derald Jones prepares to service a Satellite Industries restroom in a public park using a Ford F-550 from Imperial Industries carrying a 650-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump.



STARTED WITH SEPTIC

The septic company was founded in 1959 by Harvey Seipp. His son Jeff took it over in 1985, but by 1998, he was ready to get out. "My (great) uncle rode with him one day and said that's what he wanted to do," Simmons says. "My (great) aunt had the money, so she bought it." Simmons, then 11, also came on board around that time when he moved in with them and started riding around with Denny Nessler.

The business came with one truck and 3,000 customers, but with Denny Nessler's experience as a diesel mechanic and Sheila Nessler's entrepreneurial and accounting education picked up between layoffs as an airline mechanic, they quickly grew the business.

Today the company has five vacuum trucks. The 2001 Sterling 9500 and 2006 Peterbilt 385 with 3,200-gallon Imperial Industries tanks (pumps from National Vacuum Equipment and Masport) are used as backups these days. The active fleet is 2013-17 Kenworths (T800 and T880) with 3,400-gallon tanks from Vacutrux and pumps from Elmira Machine Industries / Wallenstein Vacuum. All tanks are steel. Other equipment includes a Prototek locator.

(continued)

The Columbia Sanitary team includes (from left) Troy Milburn, Kay Wells, Matthew Kulp, Kent Simmons, Jason Kulp, Fred Rule, Derald Jones, Pete Gallegos, and Wayne Geong. Trucks in the background are from Vacutrux and Satellite Industries. Restrooms are from Satellite Industries and PolyPortables, a division of Satellite.



Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties for the Rockies

Golden, Colorado



Colorado

Owners: Sheila and Denny Nessler

Founded: 1959

Employees: 15

Services: Portable sanitation; septic pumping, maintenance and inspections

Service area: 75-mile radius

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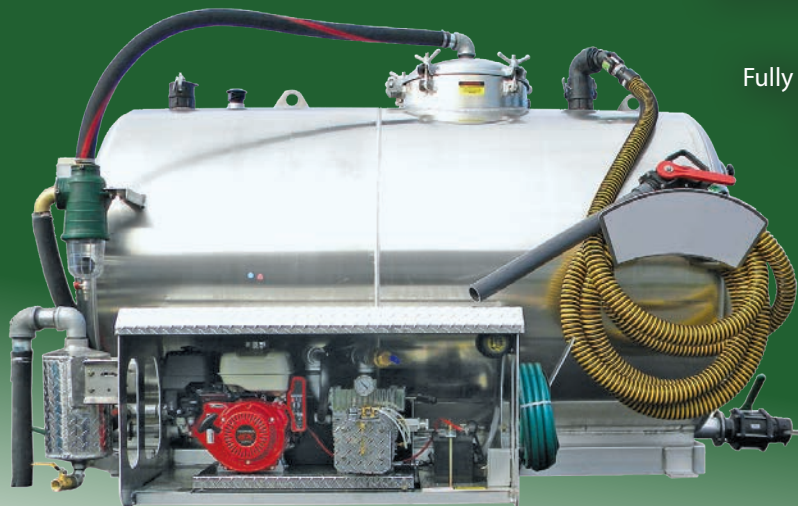


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Derald Jones is ready to clean a restroom at a local park.

room/septic companies. All septage is now taken to the metropolitan treatment plant.

In 2006, Simmons graduated from high school and had a decision to make. “My aunt said, ‘Do you want to go to college, or do you want to work for us?’ I said, ‘I guess I’ll just work for you,’ and I jumped into it.” By 2014 he was overseeing day-to-day operations.

MANY EVENTS

Although the septic side has always been a solid staple for the company, portable restroom work has benefitted significantly from the growing economy and now accounts for about 50 percent of the company’s business. Half of that work is for events including many county fairs and town festivals, as well as metro-area events such as the Colorado Irish Festival and Red White & You.

In 2014 the company added restroom trailers and now has three Satellite Industries units (10-, eight- and four-station).

The trailers were something of novelty in the state at the time, Simmons says, and people went crazy for them. They’ve been popular for parties and weddings and have gotten considerable use at the Bandimere Speedway drag strip VIP area and a lake marina in Frisco.

When attendants are requested, Sheila and Denny Nessler like to go

The company uses software from Westrom Software for work order tracking. It integrates with QuickBooks and is used with mobile devices so technicians can finish work orders in the field, enabling the company to quickly send invoices. It generally works well, Simmons says, but notes cell service in the mountains is still sketchy in places.

PORTABLES FLOURISH

When customers complained it was difficult getting portable restroom companies to deliver units to their remote locations, the Nesslerers decided to add a new line of business in 2003, calling it Columbia Potties for the Rockies. They bought 15 Satellite Industries units and used their septic truck to service them until buying a 1995 pickup with a 300-gallon waste and 100-gallon freshwater slide-in unit from Specialty B Sales.

Today they have five service trucks — a 2008 Sterling Bullet from Satellite Industries with a 650-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank and a Conde (Westmoor) pump, a 2013 Ford F-550 from Imperial Industries with a 650-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump, a 2015 Ford F-550 from Imperial Industries with a 700-gallon waste and 400-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump, a 2015 Kenworth T300 from TankTec with a 300-gallon waste and 100-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump, and a 2017 Ford F-550 from Satellite Industries with a 650-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank and Conde pump. The company’s seven hauling trailers are from McKee Technologies - Explorer Trailers.

Inventory includes 550 Satellite Industries Tufways, 50 pink urinal-free Integras from PolyPortables, a division of Satellite, four blue and four pink flushable Satellite Industries Maxim 3000s, 20 ADA and wheelchair-accessible units (Satellite Industries and PolyPortables, a division of Satellite), 30 45-gallon T.S.F. hand-wash stations and a few TagAlongs from PolyPortables, a division of Satellite. Service products are from Surco Portable Sanitation Products, J&J Chemical and Walex Products.

“Our motto is we have the best-smelling toilets,” Simmons says. “We power-wash them all, keep them clean, keep the urinals fresh. If they get gummed up, we’ll put brand-new urinals in them.”

In 2006 the company added a third business line, a land application operation, under the name Gator Gro. Although it was mostly a break-even enterprise, it did save them an enormous amount of money in disposal fees, so it had quite an effect when land application was outlawed in 2015. They continue to use their 1995 and 1997 Kenworth W900 tractor-trailers with 8,000-gallon steel tanks to haul waste for a couple of small portable rest-

Felon-friendly

Many companies are hesitant to hire former prison inmates, but Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties for the Rockies has done it since 1998 when Sheila and Denny Nessler took over the business. “It’s Sheila’s equal-opportunity employment view,” says Kent Simmons, operations manager. “She just wanted to give the opportunity to them.”

The company is registered with the Jefferson County (Colorado) Sheriff’s Office where they’re on a list of employers willing to hire ex-convicts or probationers. The person is given the list, and it’s up to them to contact the companies. The main requirement Columbia Sanitary and Columbia Potties For the Rockies has is the applicant needs to have a basic driver’s license. Crimes could be felonies or misdemeanors.

The company has also worked with the juvenile offender system. For a while, Jefferson County would even pay the salaries of juveniles hired as summer help. Although that program no longer exists, the company is still willing to hire these kids for the summer.

Simmons says the company has not experienced any problems with the program. “These people are on parole or probation, so they have that parole officer pushing them,” he says. The company does not have to report to the court officer. “The only thing we do is if they need time stubs or pay stubs or anything for their parole officer, we give it to them.” A few parolees over the years have stayed on with the company. They have one excellent employee right now, Simmons says, who’s been with them two years.

The success of the program in helping these people get back into the workforce is mixed. “It really depends on the person,” Simmons says. “If they’re drug addicts or alcoholics, they tend to eventually go back to it. Or if they’re so used to being in jail, they just go back to jail.” But the company doesn’t give up. One juvenile worked for them for two summers then ended up getting in trouble again. When he got out, he called Sheila Nessler and she readily took him back. “We do everything we can to train them and get them back out into the real world,” Simmons says.

because they get to see the event and talk to the people. Simmons regretted not going himself to a Vail wedding in July 2017 when he found out it was for the former Colorado Avalanche ice hockey center Matt Duchene. "They had to keep it super hush-hush, so I didn't hear about who was getting married until the day we delivered the trailer," he says. "Sheila and Denny were up there doing the wedding, and they had no idea who any of the people were. I was super jealous."

On the construction side, the company has worked on some of Denver's largest infrastructure projects, starting in 2006 with the Denver Justice Center, which took three years. Certifications do not guarantee participation in projects, but after proving themselves on this job, they went on to do the Union Station train terminal redevelopment project, converting the historic station into a transportation hub incorporating the city's light-rail and bus systems, a six-year project.

And they've been involved since 2011 on the construction of Denver's expanding light-rail system to several suburbs. They also worked on the long-anticipated airport light-rail line where they still have 60 units out at grade-level crossings with twice-a-week servicing.

The down side to the growing economy has been a tight labor market. With low unemployment and lots of competition, Simmons says it's been a struggle to attract and keep good workers. But the company has several

"We power-wash them all, keep them clean, keep the urinals fresh. If they get gummed up, we'll put brand-new urinals in them."

KENT SIMMONS

things in its favor. They offer a good benefits package with health, dental, and vision insurance, and Sheila Nessler is looking into a retirement program.

They also do some fun things with the staff. The Christmas party is held at the Nessler's home where they serve turkey and ham and pass out bonuses and presents. There's also a spring party and a party if the team reaches 250 days in a year without a safety incident.

But Simmons says their biggest selling

point is their family-friendly, family-first philosophy where people feel like they matter.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The next big project the company hopes to bid on is the upcoming reconstruction of a 10-mile stretch of Interstate 70 through central Denver, expected to take five years.

Simmons says he'd like to take over the business some day and see his great aunt and great uncle take time off and enjoy themselves. But losing Sheila Nessler's business enterprise certifications would be a significant change for the company. Succession planning has been discussed, and it's in the back of everyone's mind but no formal plans are in place. "We're trying to figure it out," he says. "We're going to re-evaluate in three years."

That will also give Simmons time to really assess his interest in taking it over. But right now, he says he loves it. "I'm outside every day, not stuck in the office. And I love seeing the joy on the customer's face. Even on the restroom side of it, people enjoy having a clean toilet. That's what I enjoy the most — just seeing how excited people can get." ■

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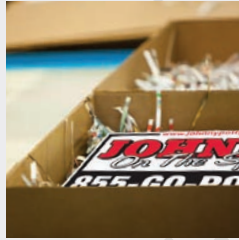
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Kate Zabriskie

Not so long ago, most people in the workplace received feedback once a year during a performance review. An employee didn't expect a development plan, a career track, or anyone to take an interest in his or her professional growth. That responsibility was often a solo activity. In fact, as recently as a couple of decades ago, there wasn't a great deal of help on the road to career success, and most people didn't complain. It simply was what it was.

But times change, and norms evolve. The practice of once-a-year feedback is fast becoming an anachronism and out of place in the modern business setting. The reason the average worker has evolved to expect a steady diet of attention and conversation is debatable and perhaps worth scholarly inquiry. In the meantime, however, a demand for dialogue exists and must be answered.

So, why should portable sanitation company owners and managers take action? What does it take to establish and maintain an ongoing give-and-take? How can you balance the constant conversation with their own workplace responsibilities?

For some, accepting the new reality means moving past the fact that they came along when life was hard. Sorry, it's time to get with the times, and get over it. Practices have evolved. First-class organizations have career paths, they invest in employee development, and managers engage in regular dialogue with their employees. Bottom line: If you want a top-notch worker, you better start acting like you know what to do with one.

GET THE CONVERSATION STARTED

Once you've bought into the notion that routine conversation is a must, the next step is knowing how to guide interactions. First, take an interest. Very little builds engagement as well as a manager who seems to genuinely care for people, promotes their success, and has the ability to develop them. This is not an annual affair. Rather, you've got to have a range of formal and informal conversations throughout the year. To get started, ask questions, and pay attention to the answers.

- "What are you working on that's exciting to you?"
- "What aspects of your job do you enjoy the most?"
- "If you could eliminate parts of your work, what would you stop doing?"
- "If you could try something new with limited chance for failure, what risks would you take?"

As a manager, your job is to focus on the work that gets done and how it gets done. When you pay attention and are specific with your feedback, you show you've spent time to notice what's working and where opportunities exist.

- "Tell me a little about what first attracted you to this job. Has anything changed about how you feel about your work here?"
- "How do you feel about our interactions? Do I give your development the right amount of attention, and do you receive the right amount of feedback?"

There is no limit to the questions you could ask. The key is showing a sincere interest in the answers, withholding judgment about what you're told, and taking action when you can.

Secondly, be observant. As a manager, your job is to focus on the work that gets done and how it gets done. When you pay attention and are specific with your feedback, you show you've spent time to notice what's working and where opportunities exist. In other words, it's important to communicate to people that they matter to you.

FINDING THE TIME

There is no clock fairy or magic solution to time management and fitting feedback and development conversations into a regular workload. It's an effort that requires discipline. To ensure planned dialogue happens, you need to put formal meetings on a calendar, schedule them at regular intervals, show up on time, and put the smartphone away.

While increased levels of informal feedback and scheduled conversation can seem overwhelming at first, the more often a manager engages, the easier it is, the franker the discussions become, and the greater the understanding between the employee and the manager grows.

With whom should you be having conversations? ■

Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works, a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at www.businesstrainingworks.com.



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A huge team from India's 3S Corp. takes on the challenge of sanitation for one of India's huge religious processions

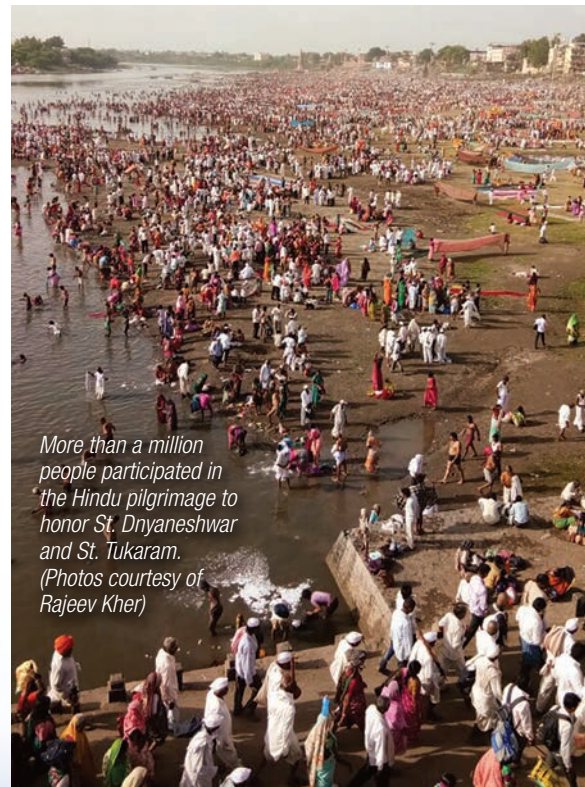
BY DAVID STEINKRAUS

THE TEAM

3S Corp. founder and CEO Rajeev Kher depends on a core team of four people to do the initial planning. They do the reconnaissance work, traveling through the state, visiting all the villages where pilgrims will stop, looking at locations for units, and contacting local officials. Kher also speaks with the official who coordinates the entire event. In 2017 he learned another vendor couldn't meet its responsibility, so 3S Corp. brought in a couple hundred portable restrooms from one of its locations to make up the difference.

From that initial group of four, the core team expands to include about 50 people who coordinate service while the pilgrimage is happening, Kher says. "We have to hire a couple hundred more people to help with this event. I have three or four guys we've trained and who have done the PSAI (Portable Sanitation Association International) tests. We also have an agency that helps train the temporary staff in the skills they will need," Kher says.

(continued)



More than a million people participated in the Hindu pilgrimage to honor St. Dnyaneshwar and St. Tukaram. (Photos courtesy of Rajeev Kher)

A Crowd on the Move

THE JOB: Annual Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram Pilgrimage

LOCATION: State of Maharashtra in western India

THE PRO: 3S Corp., Pune, India



Pilgrims have designated overnight stops. Each day they walk about 10 miles along a 140-mile route that starts in two different towns and converges on the temple town of Pandharpur.



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COMPANY HISTORY

3S Corp. was founded in 1999 by Kher to bring sanitation to people in India who did not have access to toilets. In 2008 it was merged with Saraplast, which had been started as a separate manufacturing company. Kher has advocated for portable restroom as a way for people in poverty to help themselves. Renting a restroom to someone in one of India's slums allows the renter to make some money by charging for the service and related hygiene products. Saraplast operates about 4,000 units and has about 300 employees in India's largest cities: their base of Pune, plus Mumbai (formerly called Bombay), Bengaluru (formerly called Bangalore), Hyderabad, Chennai, and the capital city of New Delhi.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

3S Corp. has been providing sanitation for about five years but only in the last three has the national government placed an increased emphasis on hygiene, Kher says. That is due to the efforts of Prime Minister Narandra Modi who has set a goal of having no open defecation in India by Oct. 2, 2019, the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. As a result, the demand for restrooms along the pilgrimage route has also increased dramatically, Kher says. Previously, 3S Corp. provided only a few hundred units instead of the thousands requested now.

THE MAIN EVENT

June and July are pilgrimage season in India. Hundreds occur all over the country. Pune is located in the western state of Maharashtra, about 60 miles from the Arabian Sea and the city of Mumbai. Here the primary pilgrimage honors two saints, Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram. About 1 million Hindus attend.



3S Corp. used its own trucks to move all the portable restrooms and used some of its own pumper trucks. It also hired a number of vacuum trucks from villages along the pilgrimage route to handle the workload and dispose of wastewater.

Pilgrims start in the towns of Alandi and Dehu and over the course of two weeks, walk about 140 miles to the temple town of Pandharpur. With them on the journey are wagons bearing representations of the saints' footprints. Each day pilgrims walk about

10 miles. The entire pilgrimage has 16 stops where 3S Corp. provided portable restrooms. In 2017 3S Corp. was the lead provider of sanitation on the routes for the pilgrims, as it has been for several years.

BY THE NUMBERS

About 3,000 units were used for 2017. All of these are built on a Satellite Industries shell that is fitted with an India-produced molded insert to allow squatting. This is a preferred position for using the toilet in much

(continued)



This is a fraction of the 3,000 portable restrooms that 3S Corp. provided for the pilgrimage in the Indian state of Maharashtra. In addition to restrooms, 3S Corp. provided several thousand gallons of water at each overnight stop.

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of Asia. In addition to portable restrooms, 3S Corp. also provides urinals and water for the pilgrims. “In India, it’s a big headache to provide enough water for pilgrims to wash and perform their ablutions. People don’t use toilet paper here, so they need a huge amount of water for drinking and to clean themselves,” Kher says. In addition to restrooms, each stop also receives several water tanks with capacities of up to more than 500 gallons. Chemicals are from Satellite Industries and Walex Products.

With more than 3,000 units to deal with, with the shells provided by Satellite Industries, work was done in teams. One team was dedicated solely to cleaning, the other to transport. After pilgrims left their overnight stop at 3 or 4 a.m., technicians went to work to clean all the units and move them to the next designated stop.

LET’S ROLL

“The pilgrims leave about 3 or 4 a.m. Our guys clean the units, put them on trucks, and haul them to the next designated stop,” Kher says. “There was a huge transportation cost in moving the toilets,” Kher says. Technicians are divided into teams. One is tasked with nothing but cleaning, the other with transporting units.

The size of this job makes it a challenge, and so does the season. The pilgrimage comes in the middle of the monsoon season when drenching rains bring India much of the annual moisture that farmers need for crops. “For us, it means trucks get stuck in the mud,” Kher says.

“In India, it’s a big headache to provide enough water for pilgrims to wash and perform their ablutions. People don’t use toilet paper here, so they need a huge amount of water for drinking and to clean themselves.”

RAJEEV KHER

Working during the monsoon season also means caring for the health of technicians because the rainy season is associated with spikes in certain illnesses such as typhoid and cholera. To keep workers comfortable and safe, their hours of work are carefully regulated, they receive vitamin supplements to promote health, and 3S Corp. arranges lodging and food.

photo with his phone to show the units are in place, cleaned, and ready for use, and the representative signs off on the phone. This eliminates disputes about whether units were placed or what condition they were in, and the technology greatly reduces paperwork, Kher says. ■

KEEPIN’ IT CLEAN

3S Corp. uses 50 to 70 of its own trucks to move units and hires additional vacuum trucks from local villages to haul waste to the nearest disposal point. This may be a municipal wastewater plant. In some cases, there was no municipal plant available, so 3S Corp. created large sludge pits, covered waste with soil, and added enzymes to speed the process of converting it to fertilizer.

All the 3S Corp. trucks are built on chassis from either Mercedes-Benz or Tata, the Indian automaker.

IN THE SPIRIT

“We use a lot of tech to manage this job and ensure that units are where they’re supposed to be and are clean,” Kher says. Key to this is a smartphone app used by technicians. Each village where units are placed has an appointed representative of the pilgrimage organizer. When units are in place, the 3S Corp. field supervisor takes a

MORE INFO

Satellite Industries
800-328-3332
www.satelliteindustries.com
(See ad page 31)

Walex Products Company
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GRAFFITI REMOVAL

CENTURY CHEMICAL GRAFFITI WIPES

Graffiti Wipes from **Century Chemical** are used for fast, easy cleanup of paint from nonporous surfaces. The abrasive, yet nonscratching fabric aids in cleaning and can be used on a variety of surfaces, including portable restrooms, showers, partitions and wash stations. They are premoistened with an environmentally safe and biodegradable cleaning formula that removes paints (including enamel), ink and permanent marker. A few swipes with a single wipe dissolves unwanted paint and graffiti, according to the maker. Each case contains six canisters, with each canister holding 70 wipes that are 9 1/2 by 12 inches. **800-348-3505; www.centurychemical.com.**



J&J CHEMICAL ART BLASTER AND GRAFFITI BLASTER



Art Blaster and **Graffiti Blaster** from **J&J Chemical** form a powerful combo for removal of graffiti from portable restrooms in the field or yard. Art Blaster is a liquid graffiti remover, cleaner and protector designed to quickly and easily remove graffiti such as paint, marker and even pencil from portable restrooms. It leaves a protective sheen with a green-apple scent. It is meant to be convenient to use in the field. Graffiti Blaster is a gel-like liquid that clings to the sidewalls of portables while cutting through difficult, baked-in graffiti. The company promotes it for cleaning units in the yard. **800-345-3303; www.jjchem.com.**

WALEX PRODUCTS BANISH GRAFFITI REMOVER

Banish Graffiti Remover, a cleaner and protectant in one from **Walex Products**, is designed to be safer than aerosols and remove all types of tough graffiti without harsh fumes and chemical odors. It tackles marks on surfaces including plastic, glass, brick, wood, concrete and fiberglass. Marks created with crayon, pen, marker and dirt can be removed with just a spray and a wipe clean. Tougher materials and marks, such as gum, stickers, scuff marks, glue, and tar, can also be removed. Banish Cleaning Pads work in conjunction with Banish Graffiti Remover. **910-371-2242; www.walex.com.**



ODOR CONTROL

BIONETIX INTERNATIONAL PORTA-TREAT

Porta-Treat from **Bionetix International** is designed to quickly deodorize portable restrooms and holding tanks and leave a fresh fragrance. It contains natural, safe bacteria that produce specific extracellular fast-acting enzymes to attack waste and its byproducts at the molecular level, degrading organic wastes. It digests odor-causing compounds and targets large waste particles that settle at the bottom of holding tanks. Adding the water-soluble pouch after emptying and cleaning the tank reduces substances such as cellulose in toilet paper into odorless carbon dioxide and water. The nonformaldehyde formula is safe, with no adverse effects on waste or sewage treatment plants. Pouches with exact dosage are easy to store and use with no measuring, waste or mess. **514-457-2914; www.bionetix-international.com.**



CPACEX PowrX

For odor control in extreme heat and overuse conditions, **PowrX** from **CPACEX** is designed to provide continuous performance for up to seven days. It combines the latest fragrance and odor control technology for maximum odor control necessary in the summer, according to the maker. It is available in three formulations to fit specific climates and applications. Each blend is biodegradable and contains deep, rich blue dye. Powerful time-released additives continually break down waste to control mounding while assisting in odor elimination. New fragrances include cinnamon and lemon-twist. **419-450-6208; www.cpacex.com.**

(continued)

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SAFE-T-FRESH QUICKBLUE

QuickBlue from **Safe-T-Fresh** is a dual-film, effervescent deodorizer packet that dissolves in brine. It is manufactured by combining a PVA film with paper. The paper film dissolves much faster in water than PVC and is accelerated by the effervescent action, which also disperses the deep blue color more evenly in the tank. The Event & Winter blend is designed for winter service. **888-556-4067; www.safetfresh.com.**



FIVE PEAKS GLACIER BAY DROP-N-GO PACKETS

Glacier Bay Drop-N-Go Packets from **Five Peaks** provide the same effective odor control, fragrance and deep-blue color mask as liquid deodorant with the convenience of premeasured, ready-to-use pouches. The packets eliminate the guesswork of liquids and allow for a better inventory control system.

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GREEN WAY PRODUCTS BY POLYPORTABLES SUPER TURBO TUBES

Super Turbo Tubes from **Green Way Products by PolyPortables** are portable toilet deodorizers in a 1,000 mL squeeze bottle with a drip-proof cap. Flip the cap up, point it into the holding tank, and squeeze the bottle. A one-second squeeze delivers 10 mL, ideal for cooler temperatures and special events. A two-second squeeze delivers 20 mL for high-heat and heavy-use applications. A three-second squeeze is recommended for severe temperatures and demand. It is available in all standard fragrances, as well as a fragrance of the month. **800-241-7951; www.polyportables.com.**



SURCO PORTABLE SANITATION PRODUCTS FRESH STRAPS

Fresh Straps self-locking portable restroom air fresheners from **Surco Portable Sanitation Products** are waterproof air freshener straps that cinch to the portable restroom vent pipe. The self-locking feature deters theft, and they last up to 60 days. They are available in Xtreme fresh, lavender and berry cherry fragrances. They are packed 72 individually wrapped straps per case. **412-789-8683; www.surco.com.**

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PRODUCT NEWS

Bionetix International PORTA-TREAT P Plus deodorizer and cleaner



Bionetix International's PORTA-TREAT P Plus is a safe, environmentally friendly solution for cleaning and deodorizing portable restroom holding tanks. The water-soluble pouches are easy to store and can be tossed into portable restroom tanks after routine cleaning without special measuring required. The nonformaldehyde, non-bronopol formula has no adverse effects on sewage treatment plants. Bacteria inside PORTA-TREAT Plus transforms waste into a liquefied substance that is easier to pump, extending pump life and reducing odor. Bacteria count is 1 billion CFUs per gram. **514-457-2914; www.bionetix-international.com.**



Greenwood Tool Phone-Lite holder

The Phone-Lite holder made by Greenwood Tool mounts to any portable restroom door and allows the user to use their cellphone flashlight to illuminate the restroom at evening events. It keeps the restroom cleaner and saves an investment of installing high-cost solar lights. The yellow, high-impact polypropylene plastic product requires no maintenance. **302-396-4820; www.greenwoodtool.com.**

Muncie Power Products Muncie Start



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