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REPEAT PERFORMANCE

Louisville's Moon Portable Restrooms
sets up and serves popular Waterfront
Wednesdays concert series

Page 16

BY THE BOOK

Former state trooper
Devan Hanson pursues
a small business dream
with Texan Restrooms

Page 24

PRODUCT FOCUS

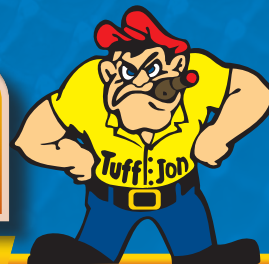
Standard Restrooms

Page 38



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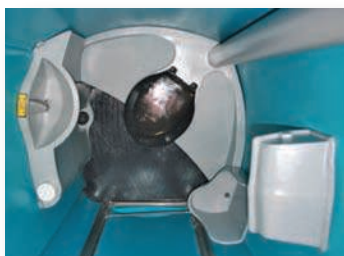


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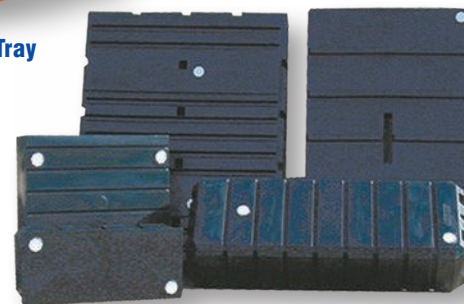
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- 8 From the Editor:**
Another Portable Restroom Burned to the Ground?
 Arson is the most serious form of vandalism portable sanitation companies have faced yet. Follow these tips and fight back!
 - Jim Kneiszel
- 10 @PROmonthly.com**
 Check out exclusive online content.
- 12 At Your Service: Keep Your Service Truck Paperwork**
 Whether you're stopped by the highway patrol or injured on the job, carry these helpful documents and first-aid supplies to keep running safe and legal. - Jeff and Terri Wigley
- 16 On Location: Repeat Performance**
 From spring to fall, Louisville's Moon Portable Restrooms sets up and services restrooms at monthly Waterfront Wednesday concerts.
 - Betty Dageforde

COVER STORY



PROfile: By the Book

A former Texas state trooper pursues his business ownership dream through successful startup company Texan Restrooms. - Ken Wysocky

ON THE COVER: Devan Hanson had a dream of owning his own business, so he switched careers from law enforcement to portable sanitation, starting Texan Restrooms in 2016. Hanson is shown with a row of his PolyJohn restrooms and a service truck outfitted by Best Enterprises and carrying a Masport pump. (Photo by Olivia Ogren-Hrejsa)

- 34 Safety First: Keep Communication Lines Open to Resolve OSHA Safety Violations**
 Nobody wants to blow the whistle on a dangerous workplace situation. But when it happens, work to get into compliance rather than punish the reporting employee. - Jared Raney
- 38 Product Focus: Standard Restrooms**
 - Craig Mandli

COMING NEXT MONTH — February 2019

- **On Location:** Serving a big 10K race in North Carolina
- **PROfile:** Iowa restrooms fit for a king

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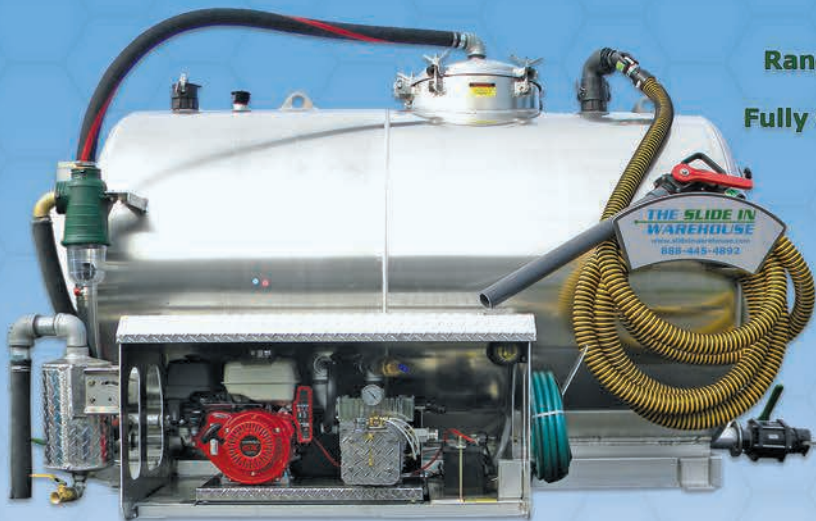
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advertiser index

A



A Restroom Trailer Co.
(ART Co.) 6



Allied Graphics, Inc. ... 30
Armal, Inc. 27

C



Century Paper Products
..... 30
Classifieds 41



Comforts of Home
Services, Inc. 10



CPACEX 31



Crescent Tank Mfg. 32



Cro Software Solutions 11

D



Deal Assoc. 31

F

F.M. Manufacturing, Inc.
..... 17



Five Peaks 7



FlowMark Vacuum Trucks
..... 13

Forest River, Inc. 33



Fruitland Manufacturing
..... 25

I



Imperial Industries, Inc.
..... 22, 23

J



J & J Chemical Co. 3

K



KeeVac Industries, Inc. ... 5



KeeVac Industries, Inc. 14

L



Liberty Financial Group,
Inc. 27



Liquid Waste Industries,
Inc. 39



Lock America, Inc. 6

M

Marketplace 41

- Johnny Mover Trailer Sales
- McKee Technologies Inc./
Explorer Trailers
- Meaty-Delivery
- Surco Products

Masport, Inc. 9

N



National Vacuum
Equipment, Inc. 33



NuConcepts 35

P



PolyJohn 43



PolyPortables, a Division
of Satellite 44

P

Portable Sanitation
Association International
..... 37



PortaLogix 15

R



R. A. Ross & Associates
NE, Inc. 15

Rich Specialty Trailers 27



Robinson Vacuum Tanks
..... 33



ROEDA, Inc. 10

RouteOptix, Inc. 32

S

Sansom Industries LLC 29



ScreenCo Systems LLC
..... 14



Slide-In Warehouse 5

T

T blustar 21

Thieman Tailgates, Inc. 14



T.S.F. Company, Inc. 2

W



Walex Products Company
..... 19



Westmoor Ltd. 39

WWETT Show 40

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Another Portable Restroom Burned to the Ground?

ARSON IS THE MOST SERIOUS FORM OF VANDALISM PORTABLE SANITATION COMPANIES HAVE FACED YET. FOLLOW THESE TIPS AND FIGHT BACK!

By Jim Kneiszel

It seems like every day I review my Google Alerts to find a news report on firefighters responding to a blaze originating from a portable restroom. Just this morning I read about two more, one in a residential neighborhood in Vancouver, British Columbia, and another in rural Hamilton Township in eastern Pennsylvania.

The fires are always called suspicious, and seldom do the local law enforcement officials have information that leads an arrest. According to CTV News, an official in Canada called that fire a likely case of arson because “port-a-potties don’t just catch fire.”

We all know what’s going on here. Young vandals figure out portable restrooms are easy targets for mayhem. They are often in secluded locations, an obvious addition to the landscape, and they are easily torched, it seems. The fires are the most serious form of vandalism to restrooms, but they are surely not the first.

These units — the key equipment responsible for your livelihood — have been targets for years. You’ve lost many restrooms to graffiti, construction site pranks involving saws and drills, tip-overs, and stomplings. Vandals have hit them with vehicles, pushed them into lakes and rivers, and quite conspicuously run over the tops of rows of units as part of a drinking game at major sporting events.

IT’S GETTING WORSE

You’ve tried many ways to hold folks responsible for the damage that reaches into the thousands of dollars a year for many PROs. You’ve asked customers to pay a damage waiver surcharge for each unit. You’ve threatened to pull units from sites where damage happens frequently. You work with the police whenever possible to bring the vandals to justice.

But from the trends I’ve been watching, it looks like the problem of vandalism is getting worse, not better. And instead of cleaning graffiti or changing out a plastic panel once in a while, you’re finding a charred heap of plastic when called to the scene of another incident. Rather than a minor annoyance, it’s a total loss when a restroom burns.

I know this is disheartening to restroom companies already challenged by slim profit margins in many markets and the inevitable rising cost of equipment and supplies faced in all industries. Each lost unit takes away from your bottom line — and the accumulated losses tumble down to have an impact on things like employee raises and benefits, equipment upgrades, and effective marketing of your company. How can your business advance when you’re always taking a step backward due to these losses?

When a customer calls, you should ask more than simply where and when they want the portable restroom delivered. Create a security checklist for all jobs, and add a step for an initial site visit to work out the best placement with the client.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There is no perfect answer to reducing equipment vandalism. Your units are out there, many times in a vulnerable, public location and you can’t stand by 24/7 watching them. But there are small things you can do to stem the tide of damage and ease that feeling of helplessness you experience whenever the phone rings and you get a report of damage.

How about trying these?

Talk to customers about creating permanent enclosures.

A community organization in Milwaukee that runs youth sporting events at local parks is looking into building enclosures to house portable restrooms. The shelters will have roofs, and restrooms will slide in and out for servicing and cleaning. They are doing this for aesthetic reasons, but this could be a solution to deter vandalism. The enclosures could be designed to keep vandals away from the restrooms inside and locked securely when a park is closed.

Create your own temporary security solutions and charge for them.

Design a security cage or fencing structure that can surround units on work sites where you may anticipate vandalism issues. Also consider putting more restrooms on single-unit transport trailers and ask your construction customers to move them from convenient spots to more secure locations on the job site at night. Add an upcharge to the invoice to cover the cost of these security measures. Justify the charges by explaining the monetary loss you suffer each time one of your units is damaged, set on fire or stolen. The alternative to these added security measures at high-risk sites is holding the customer responsible for all damages.

Perform a rigorous placement assessment.

When a customer calls, you should ask more than simply where and when they want the portable restroom delivered. Create a security checklist for all jobs, and add a step for an initial site visit to work out the best placement

with the client. Look for locations with the highest street visibility, where police surveillance is most likely to catch vandals in the act, where night lighting will act as deterrence, and where you may be able to put up a temporary security camera. This process will raise awareness with your customers about your shared concern for vandalism and might even help them think about ways to reduce vandalism of their equipment and property on a job site.

Develop a relationship with law enforcement.

Your local police can help you develop the security checklist mentioned above. They can share their expertise about crime prevention and ways they go about investigating vandalism reports. You can give them a greater perspective on how these losses impact your business. Establish a good rapport with the police and exchange information frequently so they know about your presence in the community and can patrol areas around your units most effectively. Don't be afraid to ask for their help in reducing vandalism.

Add a mandatory security attendant at major events.

When you are charging a customer for 50 to 100 units at events like a weekend camping concert venue or big auto race, the cost of a 24/7 security worker is negligible. The wages for this person might amount to the cost of a few additional restrooms, but it could save considerable damage to your equipment. Write the fee for an attendant into your bid for the job, and then explain how this worker benefits both the event planners and your company. The attendant will deter vandalism and report issues as soon as they come up. Aside from vandalism, they may stop other criminal activity or unacceptable behavior — like drug use or sex — in the restroom areas, preserving an event's good reputation. And as an added bonus, the security worker could alert your cleaning crews to overfull holding tanks or the need to replenish paper products.

Warn vandals there will be consequences and follow through.

Add prominent labels inside all restrooms spelling out that your company will seek penalties for vandalism to the full extent of the law. In serious terms, make it clear that you will not tolerate this behavior and will work with authorities to punish any infraction. Then whenever the police arrest a suspect for vandalizing your equipment, make sure you attend every hearing and inform prosecutors and

judges about how these crimes have negatively impacted your business. Follow up on even the smallest loss and you make prevent more serious vandalism issues in the future.

BE VIGILANT

Vandalism has proven to be a huge, nagging problem for PROs, and solutions have been elusive for many years. When the costs are added up, vandals take a huge toll on the ability to turn a fair profit and improve professional service. Money lost repairing and replacing damaged

equipment could be better invested on building up your assets — both in your human resources and the tools required to do a good job.

That these troubling news stories keep popping up in the media is frustrating. The only way to counter the frequency of these incidents is to keep on fighting and searching for ways to make things better. If you have ideas to add to my list, send them to me at editor@promonthly.com. I will share them with readers. ■

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With disposal fees climbing higher, Rick Rogers of Mondak Portables knew there had to be a better way to dispose of waste. Here Rogers shares how he worked with health officials to set land-application regulations for North Dakota.

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- Want to Start a Portable Restroom Business?
Here Is Some Advice to Get Started

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THE DISRUPTOR

PRO Finds a Greener Way

Nature Commode owner Nicole Cousino is going her own way with plastic-free units and sawdust. The dry toilets are part of the company's bigger aim to create a greener path in portable sanitation. Read more to find out how.

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THE TOP 10

Most-Read Articles

From restroom innovations to customer service issues, this rundown of the most-read articles of 2018 on PROmonthly.com covers all your bases. Take some time for yourself and review the highlights of the year.

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Keep Your Service Truck Paperwork

WHETHER YOU'RE STOPPED BY THE HIGHWAY PATROL OR INJURED ON THE JOB, CARRY THESE HELPFUL DOCUMENTS AND FIRST-AID SUPPLIES TO KEEP RUNNING SAFE AND LEGAL

By Jeff and Terri Wigley

January is definitely a month for planning, and we had two interesting questions this month concerning this topic:

Question: What documents should I keep in the service truck in case I am stopped by a state trooper or the DOT?

Answer: From personal experience, we can say that the preparation and organization of documents is instrumental in creating a favorable impression with law-enforcement officials. Having the necessary documents in order and easily accessible is calming for your driver during those first nervous moments after being pulled over by the officer. The ability to present all of the documents together in an organized fashion indicates your company is making a good faith effort to comply with various rules and regulations.

One suggestion that many owners have employed is using a red notebook to contain all necessary documentation and that is then stored behind the passenger seat, within easy reach of the driver. What should be in this notebook? While there may be some slight variation by state, the basic components are:

Copy of Vehicle Registration: Make sure the registration is valid and that the VIN and tag match each vehicle. This form may also indicate if the vehicle requires drivers with a CDL.

Copy of Proof of Insurance: Make sure that this form is also valid and the insured dates are up to date.

Copy of Federal Annual Inspection: This form demonstrates that the particular vehicle passed all federal safety and compliance standards. A decal is also usually affixed inside the cab with the expiration date listed.

Copies of Safety Data Sheets: SDSs have 16 sections of information and are more precise than the old, more popular Material Safety Data Sheets. In 2012, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration published HazCom 2012 that instituted the use of these forms. Make sure you have an SDS for each chemical component carried on the truck, such as deodorizer, odor eliminating fragrance, cleaning compounds (such as bleach, urinal cleaner, etc.), urinal blocks and any other item that is used. Contact your supplier for these sheets. Discard old MSDS you have.

Copy of Company Waste Disposal Permit (or Similar Approval): Depending on the disposal location rules and regulations, there may be a permit number assigned to your company. Proof of approval of proper disposal can be an effective tool when, and if, the situation arises. It can also be an effective sales tool in assuring customers that your company is compliant and environmentally conscious.

Waste Disposal Manifests: To be completed at the disposal facility before disposing of waste.

Spill Containment Procedure Report: To be completed in case of an

accidental septage spill. The Portable Sanitation Association International has an excellent example in its training materials. The report form should be verified by legal counsel in your areas of operation.

Accident/Incident Report: The design of this form will vary, based on company policies, but the basic information would include driver's name, date, time, weather conditions, names of parties involved with phone numbers, a narrative of the incident, police report number (if applicable), etc.

Pre-trip Inspection Report: Some companies will include in the notebook, while others prefer that it be with the Route Sheet for that day and be on the front seat. Still others may maintain them electronically.

List of Important Phone Numbers: Management and other key personnel, fellow driver's numbers, etc. The detail will vary greatly by company.

Other: Any and all information you deem to be pertinent. When in doubt, include it in the notebook.

...

Question: What do you suggest for setting up a first-aid kit for each vehicle in preparation for the upcoming busy season?

Answer: After a careful review of the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration regulations, there are no specified requirements for the contents of a first-aid kit. While first-aid kits in the office and near the yard should be extensive and complete, including eyewash stations and possibly defibrillators, first-aid kits in trucks need to be as similar as possible but on a smaller scale. A basic first-aid kit should contain:

- Various sizes of adhesive bandages
- First-aid tape
- Gauze
- Antibiotic ointment
- Burn-cooling gel
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Health care gloves
- Acetaminophen (or similar) extra-strength caplets
- First-aid guide.

Although not included in a basic kit, a strong suggestion is a personal eyewash kit. These small kits are relatively inexpensive, yet provide immediate access to a saline spray in the case of eye injury or chemical splash.

Most basic kits will fit quite nicely behind the passenger seat next to the organizational notebook. As was discussed with the organizational notebook, if in doubt, add it to the kit! ■



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THE JOB: Six WFPK Waterfront Wednesday concerts
LOCATION: Louisville, Kentucky
THE PRO: Moon Portable Restrooms

Repeat Performance

From spring to fall, Louisville's Moon Portable Restrooms sets up and services restrooms at monthly Waterfront Wednesday concerts

BY BETTY DAGEFORDE

THE TEAM

B.J. Davis is co-owner and operations manager of Moon Portable Restrooms in Louisville, Kentucky, one of three Moon companies providing services to construction and other accounts, including trailer leasing, storage units and roll-off containers. In addition to shared office staff, Davis has 10 employees. The WFPK Waterfront Wednesday service team included Josh Downey, manager, and service techs Greg Wilcher, Matt Thomas, and Davis' son, Dylan West. Key coordinators were dispatcher Cecilia Duffin and Davis' mother and sales rep Bobbie Davis.

(continued)



The crowds took good advantage of a neat row of PolyJohn restrooms during a Waterfront Wednesday concert in Louisville, Kentucky.

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Right: Manager Josh Downey sets up some of the 50-plus PolyJohn units delivered at every Waterfront Wednesday concert. Transport trailers are from Lane's Vacuum Tank and F.M. Mfg.

Below: B.J. Davis meets with a Waterfront Wednesday official during setup.



Left: Technician Greg Wilcher adds J&J Chemical deodorant to the units being set up at a Waterfront Wednesday concert. Technician Matt Thomas is helping out.



COMPANY HISTORY

After losing his corporate accounting job in 2002, Davis went to work for his father-in-law, David Pottinger, owner, along with David Jones of Moon Cos. He learned the business from the ground up, starting as a laborer working on everything from equipment maintenance and prep to sweeping the yard. Happy with his enthusiasm and work ethic, after eight months Pottinger moved him into sales where he spent another five months. "Then they came to me and said they'd always wanted to get into the portable restroom business because it went hand in hand with their construction work," Davis says.

Pottinger and Jones supplied the office, a truckload of portable restrooms, and one truck, and Davis provided the sweat equity — sales, delivery, service and accounting. The internet wasn't quite up to speed yet and he just missed the phone book advertising deadline so he marketed the business by joining construction organizations and pounding the pavement. He also used his equipment as advertising. "I'd carry a unit with me everywhere I went — going home, taking my son to school, baseball games." When he nearly reached burnout after about a year, he hired his first employee, which, along with development of a website, led to further expansion. A couple years later, he became a full partner in Moon Cos.

Today the company has 1,200 standard and 10 flushable PolyJohn units, 12 Wells Cargo and JAG Mobile Solutions restroom trailers, and one JAG Mobile Solutions shower trailer. Their service territory covers a 60-mile radius. About 30 percent of their work is for special events including waterfront activities and football games at the University of Kentucky.

"Ashley always wanted to make sure there were enough. If she thought the weather was going to be beautiful, she'd have me bring another 10 down. She made the final decision by 2 p.m."

B.J. DAVIS

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Through his networking activities, in 2005 Davis was introduced to Ashley Cox Smith, event manager for the Waterfront Development Corp., sponsor of many activities along the Ohio River park including WFPK Waterfront Wednesday. He approached her for work.

"She wasn't unhappy with the current vendor," he says, "but I was going to provide newer units and be in and out a lot faster. She saw I was a young entrepreneur and the passion I had." He also sold her on the fact that all his units had hand sanitizer, which she really liked, and that all were the same style and color (tan). "Since day one, I wanted to have that branding. When you go around town and see tan units, you just know it's from Moon."

THE MAIN EVENT

The Big Four Lawn along the Ohio River was the site of the WFPK Waterfront Wednesday concert series held from 5 to 11 p.m. on the last Wednesday of every month from April through September, featuring national emerging talent, upscale festival food, and cash bar. The event was free for the 5,000 to 10,000 attendees, hosted by the Waterfront Development Corp. and radio station 91.9 WFPK-FM. Started in 2002, it's one of many events resulting from the revitalization of the waterfront. Each month three bands performed in succession, and kids explored the new Classical Corner activity area.

BY THE NUMBERS

For each concert, the company brought in 50 standard units (PolyJohn PJN3) and four wheelchair-accessible units (PolyJohn Comfort XL) and always had another 10 to 20 on standby. "Ashley always wanted to make sure there were enough," Davis says. "If she thought the weather was going to be beautiful, she'd have me bring another 10 down. She made the final decision by 2 p.m." All units were supplied with hand sanitizer, two rolls of 2,500-sheet tissue and J&J Chemical deodorant tablets.

In July and August, the company also showcased two of their newest units called Floosh developed by Mark Townes. The self-contained, solar-

(continued)

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A row of PolyJohn restrooms are configured for maximum efficiency, including some of the units placed under a roof at Waterfront Wednesday.



Above: Moon Portable Restrooms is experimenting with a few new solar-powered Floosh restrooms developed by Mark Townes.



Left: B.J. Davis gathers with Waterfront Wednesday staff members, including Catie Nelson (in a gray shirt) to discuss placement of the Floosh restrooms.

powered unit with automatic lights, ceiling fan, pedal-flushing porcelain toilet and motion-sensored vessel sink were well-received, Davis says. The company bought the units for their wedding business to fill the price gap between portable flushable units and high-end trailers.

Units were set up Wednesday mornings starting around 9 a.m. in two large banks on either side of the Big Four Lawn. Two units were placed behind the stage and one in the concession area. Service vehicles and Davis' 2017 Dodge 2500 pickup truck were used for delivery along with 10- and 20-unit Lane's Vacuum Tank and F.M. Mfg. hauling trailers. Wheelchair-accessible units were transported on a 20-foot flatbed trailer.

KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

Service and removal of units was done Thursday mornings after other vendors were out of the way. The service team, wearing bright yellow company shirts, would arrive around 7:30 a.m. to pump and clean the units before returning them to the shop. They used two service trucks from their fleet, which includes a 2015 Chevy 3500 with a 450-gallon Imperial Industries steel slide-in tank and two 55-gallon water totes, a 2015 Ford 750 with a 1,500-gallon waste and 500-gallon freshwater FlowMark Vacuum Trucks aluminum tank, a 2016 Hino with a 750-gallon waste and 350-gallon fresh-

"I like neat and pristine, and I'm a little OCD that the units all have to be straight and look perfect. ... Are these good enough for my mother to sit on the seat? I would get in there and clean them like no other."

B.J. DAVIS

standards and providing above-average service. "I like neat and pristine, and I'm a little OCD that the units all have to be straight and look perfect," Davis says. "Roofs are a big thing with me. I want my roofs clean along with the inside of the units." His operating philosophy is: "Are these good enough for my mother to sit on the seat? I would get in there and clean them like no other."

And Smith was fanatical about making sure there were always more than enough restrooms for the event and plenty of hand sanitizer and tissue. The two of them went over the numbers after each concert. "I'd give Ashley a call and let her know how much waste we collected and how heavy the use was," Davis says. "She asked me every time, 'Do you think we have enough?' — and we always did."

Their attention to detail was not lost on the crowd. "I just got a lot of compliments," Davis says. ■

water Crescent Tank steel tank, and 2016 and 2017 Dodge 5500s with 1,100-gallon waste and 400-gallon freshwater FlowMark Vacuum Trucks aluminum tanks — all with Masport pumps. Waste was taken to the treatment plant just down the block from the company's office.

GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE

Davis and Smith are always on the same page when it comes to having high

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Devan Hanson, owner of Texan Restrooms in Stephenville, Texas.
(Photos by Olivia Ogren-Hrejsa)



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BY THE BOOK

A former Texas state trooper pursues his business ownership dream through successful startup company Texan Restrooms *BY KEN WYSOCKY*

It may seem implausible that a Texas state trooper would suddenly steer his law-enforcement career into the portable restroom industry. But lured by the prospect of eventually owning his own business, that's exactly what Devan Hanson did in 2010 when he quit his job with the Texas Highway Patrol to work for a restroom company in Stephenville, where he'd worked during his college years.

The deal to buy the company eventually fell through. But Hanson's ambitions did not. The 34-year-old entrepreneur went on to establish Texan Restrooms in 2016 and hasn't looked back.

Growth came quickly; the company now owns roughly 350 restrooms, up from 75 initially, and three service trucks, an increase from one when he first started out.

Texan Restrooms Stephenville, Texas

Owners: Devan Hanson
and two silent partners

Founded: 2016

Employees: 3

Services: Restroom rentals and service

Service area: 65-mile radius around Stephenville

Website: www.texanrestrooms.com



The company increased its annual gross revenue for 2018 by 60 percent over 2017. Hanson says his formula for success is relatively simple: Establish a solid business plan. Do business with a personal touch. Invest in new, productivity-enhancing equipment whenever possible. And work really, really hard.

"In the end, it all boils down to doing the work," Hanson says. "If you want something, go do it. No one is going to do it for you. I simply will not let anyone outwork me. Period — end of story."

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Hanson's first foray into portable restrooms occurred while he was attending Tarleton State University in Stephenville, about 80 miles southwest of the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area. His high school baseball coach's father-in-law ran a portable restroom outfit and the

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Left: Technician Justin Taylor loads PolyJohn restrooms onto a 12-unit transport trailer from McKee Technologies - Explorer Trailers.

Below: Devan Hanson, left, visits with construction customer Toby O'Neal. The service truck is from Best Enterprises and carries a Masport pump.



coach said he could get Hanson a job there. He slowly moved up from delivering and picking up restrooms to handling customer relations, mostly with construction contractors — a skill that would come in handy later.

Hanson graduated from Tarleton in 2007 with a criminal justice degree, then turned down a job offer to work full-time for the restroom company. Instead, he went through six months of state-trooper training, followed by a 2 1/2-year-long stint as a highway patrolman, based in Austin. "I loved that job," he says. "Aside from my current job, it was the only thing I ever did that didn't seem like work."

Then came the career U-turn, as the owner of the restroom company asked if he was interested in buying it. Thinking ahead about earning potential and the chance to steer his own ship, Hanson said yes and recruited two investors. "Plus, I had just starting dating a girl who I thought was going to be my wife. So I started thinking about raising a family and Stephenville is where I wanted to do that, not in Austin. Now we're married with 4-year-old twins and I feel that it was the right move."

As one thing led to another, the deal eventually fizzled out. Hanson nonetheless stuck around for a while longer until he was unexpectedly fired in spring 2016.

"I didn't start this business because I wanted to get rich — I wanted to serve customers. I started this business with the premise that if all I do is worry about customers' needs, enough money will follow."

DEVAN HANSON

THE BUSINESS PLAN

One of the two potential investors then encouraged Hanson to start his own company. The more he thought about it, the more appealing the prospect became. So he wrote a 30-page business plan; found another investor after one of the original two dropped out; and bought 4 acres of land, 75 restrooms, and a new 2016 Dodge 3500 truck outfitted by Best Enterprises with an 800-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater stainless steel tank and a Masport pump.

Developing a business plan is critical to success. Hanson stresses that even if an entrepreneur is thorough and "articulates everything to a T" during a face-to-face meeting with a potential investor, it's still not as valuable as a well-written business plan.

"This may sound dumb, but writing a business plan made me iron out the numbers so they were very tight, instead of general estimates of what things might cost — items such as diesel fuel, toilet paper and so forth," he says. "Pinning down your overhead costs is so important. ... When you're starting from scratch with zero customers, you can project your revenue all day long. But with expenses, you can determine what they're going to be."

In addition, developing a plan is one thing; knowing it is another. "An investor will pick it apart, so you have to be able to answer all the questions," he says.

Hanson relied on an attorney friend for advice and also got help from a small-business administration department at Tarleton, as well as the federal government's Small Business Administration website. He found a business-plan template on the internet. "Even if you don't need funding from outside sources, it's still beneficial to write up a plan," he adds.

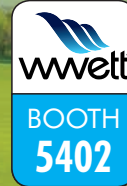
KEEPING IT PERSONAL

Starting out from scratch with no employees wasn't easy. Hanson did everything by himself until he hired an old college buddy, Justin Taylor, who has been instrumental to the company's success. "He's such a great asset to the company," Hanson says. "I know he's always handling his business. He does so much for this company ... if I could find another one like him, it would really be smooth sailing."

(continued)



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An emphasis on developing personal relationships with construction firms has been critical to the company's growth. About 90 percent of revenue stems from construction rentals, he says.

In fact, aside from providing a critical service, the relationships are one of the things that Hanson relishes most about his job. He counts many construction customers as personal friends and says he sees them socially. For example, he recently sponsored a table at a charitable event and invited contractors to attend the dinner with him and his wife, Sara.



Above: Technician Justin Taylor washes a group of PolyJohn restrooms.

Left: Taylor adds stickers to restrooms.

"I love the connection with the builders. I don't ever want to get so big that I don't know customers personally," Hanson says. "I didn't start this business because I wanted to get rich — I wanted to serve customers. I started this business with the premise that if all I do is worry about customers' needs, enough money will follow."

When Hanson calls on new customers, he tries to make it a face-to-face meeting and always tells them he'll take them out to lunch. "Some of them think I'm just blowing smoke, but I do it," he says. "It's all about taking care of relationships and fostering new ones. I want to build such a strong connection with builders that it never crosses their mind to switch to another company."

Maintaining a work ethic is key. Hanson says he's usually at work by 5:30 a.m., and if someone calls at 4:30 p.m. and needs a restroom right away, he'll get in his truck and deliver it. "That's my game," he says. "We all offer the same basic product with four plastic walls, so one of the only ways to differentiate is through customer service — how fast you can get someone a restroom when they really need it."

"I also constantly have my head on a swivel, looking for new business," he adds. "If I see a new pad being built, I do a 180-turn and go talk to somebody. If you don't at least try talking to someone about becoming their restroom provider, the answer always is no."

EQUIPMENT INVESTMENT

The company's roughly 350 restrooms (about 300 for construction and 50 for special events) are made by PolyJohn. Other equipment includes 10 two-sided hand-wash stations and 10 hand-sanitizing stations; 15 hand-icapped-accessible restrooms; and 10 250-gallon holding tanks (for construction office trailers), all from PolyJohn.

The hand-wash and hand-sanitizing stations are a good investment because they provide a chance to generate more revenue by upselling to customers. Moreover, a county ordinance requires some kind of hand-washing capability for any event where food is present.

"More and more construction companies are starting to rent them, too," Hanson says. "In my mind, you want to be able to offer customers everything available in the sanitation world — provide every piece of that puzzle so there's no need for customers to call anyone else." As such, Hanson says he plans to invest in a restroom trailer in 2019.

(continued)



Pricing transparency

Some restroom-rental operators resist revealing prices upfront. Devan Hanson, the owner of Texan Restrooms in Stephenville, Texas, is not one of those operators.

Instead, Hanson believes that transparency is critical in order to attract customers and make renting restrooms as easy as shopping for other items on the internet. That's especially important in light of what he calls the Amazonization of today's consumers, who demand purchasing ease and convenience.

As such, the Texan Restrooms website offers a detailed spreadsheet outlining the costs of its products, right down to volume discounts, delivery fees and total costs with taxes included. "No one wants to have to call somebody to figure out how much something costs," he says. "That's just the world we live in today."

But isn't Hanson concerned about competitors knowing his prices in such detail? Not really, he says, because they can always find out by calling themselves and posing as a customer, which he believes is a common practice in the industry anyway. "I'd rather save customers the trouble and hassle," he says.

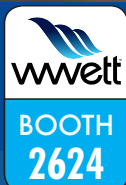
Speaking of prices, Hanson says he rarely lowers his rates if customers ask him to match a competitor's lower price. But he makes exceptions in certain instances where route density and volume make it a profitable venture. For example, he might cut a rental rate by \$5 per unit per month if a construction company wants to rent 15 or 20 restrooms, with most of them located on the same street or in the same neighborhood.

"In that kind of situation, the profit margins might be even higher, even though the rental rates are lower, because the labor and fuel costs for servicing that many restrooms are so much lower," he explains. "I'm not interested in engaging in price wars. But if it makes sense for the right customer, I'll consider lower rates."

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The company also owns six trailer-mounted single PolyJohn units; they're rented by customers that need to frequently move units between job sites. The company charges a nominal fee for the trailers. The company also owns a trailer made by McKee Technologies - Explorer Trailers that carries up to 12 restrooms and a 16-foot flatbed trailer built by Texas Bragg Trailers to carry handicap units.

The Texan Restrooms team includes (from left) Colton Salyer, Devan Hanson and Justin Taylor.

Along with the 2016 Dodge 5500 service truck, the company owns a 2012 Dodge 3500 with a 400-gallon waste and 200-gallon freshwater stainless steel slide-in tank from Best Enterprises and equipped with a Conde pump (Westmoor). Another Dodge 2018 5500 truck from Best Enterprises is on the way.

GET TO 500

Looking ahead, Hanson's goal is to own 500 restrooms, then stop. Expanding farther geographically to the east, past the Interstate 35 corridor leading into Fort Worth, doesn't make sense because he would have to charge so much more for extra fuel and labor costs that he'd be unable to compete with larger firms in the Fort Worth area.

"You've got to have goals. And if you have motivation and drive, you can achieve whatever you want in the world. I know that sounds cliché, but I truly believe it."

DEVAN HANSON

So instead, he envisions buying another small restroom-rental company located in the opposite direction, or establishing a branch facility in a strategic location. "My goal is to do that two or three times, with no more than 500 restrooms at each location," he says. Is that goal pretty ambitious for a 2-year-old company? Not really, he says.

"You've got to have goals. And if you have motivation and drive, you can achieve whatever you want in the world," he concludes. "I know that sounds cliché, but I truly believe it." ■

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Keep Communication Lines Open to Resolve OSHA Safety Violations

NOBODY WANTS TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON A DANGEROUS WORKPLACE SITUATION. BUT WHEN IT HAPPENS, WORK TO GET INTO COMPLIANCE RATHER THAN PUNISH THE REPORTING EMPLOYEE.

By Jared Raney

Everyone in the industry has heard at least one horror story about someone getting fired or demoted for reporting a safety violation.

In fact, OSHA's whistleblower department investigates approximately 3,000 such cases a year. Reporting a safety violation is rarely easy. Employees don't want to get their company in trouble and may be afraid of bringing the issue to superiors.

When employees notice a safety concern, it's not uncommon that the fear of blowback results in a reluctance to bring it to the attention of their supervisors. But repressive atmospheres that discourage employees from reporting can lead to much bigger problems for employers and their employees.

If an employer takes what could be considered a retaliatory action against an employee for protected activity like reporting safety issues, the best-case scenario is months of investigation, most likely legal fees and headaches, without even taking into account the potential penalties if an employer is found to be at fault. This can also result in decreased productivity for the organization.

That's why the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires an anti-retaliation culture among employers to reduce these instances. The agency recently issued recommended practices to help employers establish anti-retaliation programs in their workplaces.

"The idea is that if we educate an employer about its responsibilities under the law and the benefits of having an effective program that allows employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation, there's less likelihood of having to hire an attorney or legal team to defend itself against an allegation of retaliation or an unreported hazard that causes a serious injury or death," says Anthony Rosa, deputy director of OSHA's Directorate of Whistleblower Protection Programs.

Though employers often feel compelled to do everything they can to suppress reports of safety violations, creating an atmosphere that supports employees in raising those concerns can make them feel more comfortable to deal with the problem in-house, potentially avoiding OSHA involvement altogether. Moreover, it allows the employer to address the safety or health concern before an incident occurs, which could result in greater loss to the company.

The most important component for developing a safety-first culture is making sure employees understand their right to a safe workplace and their right to report any violations without repercussions.

SAFETY AND HEALTH VS. WHISTLEBLOWING

There are two relevant offices within OSHA that come into play in these circumstances.

The safety and health program is actually separate from the whistleblower protection program. If an employee notices a safety issue on a work site that their employer cannot or will not resolve, they have an absolute right to report that violation.

In that instance, you would call the nearest OSHA area office.

If, after reporting that violation, an employer or superior within the company finds out that a particular employee was involved and takes retaliatory action against them, the whistleblower protection program in the nearest OSHA regional office gets the call.

When OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Program receives a report of retaliation, an initial review decides whether the case meets the minimum investigative requirements to proceed through the system. This is known as a prima-facie allegation.

Over half of the complaints are administratively closed without investigation based on the initial evaluation, such as being filed late, lack of jurisdiction, or lack of a prima-facie case. About 7,000 reports are filed with the whistleblower protection program each year, and only 3,000 are docketed for investigation.

"One of the things I ask employees, and it's probably the hardest thing, is to have patience with us," Rosa says. "I have a lot of empathy for people that bravely come forward because they're going through some strife, they're going through economic hardship, and our investigations can take a long time."

Patience and cooperation are important, as many cases are dropped simply because the employee gives up or doesn't respond by the time OSHA is able to reach out to them.

"In many instances, we end up dismissing the case because the employee never got back to the investigator, and there's a missed opportunity there," Rosa says.

"If we educate an employer about its responsibilities under the law and the benefits of having an effective program that allows employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation, there's less likelihood of having to hire an attorney."

Anthony Rosa

MANY TECHNICALITIES

First and foremost, all workers have a right to contact OSHA at any time to report a safety violation without being subjected to retaliation from their employer.

OSHA has many resources available on the website, by contacting an OSHA office, or by calling OSHA at 800-321-6742. If you are unsure whether there is a safety issue or have questions about your rights or about the limits on the reporting process, it's always best to check.

Timing can be a factor. For example, with environmental complaints,

there is a 30-day window to file a report with the whistleblower protection program after the retaliation.

Employees should also be aware that the circumstances around suspected retaliation can have an impact.

Say an employee notices an unshored trench on a work site. If they simply walk off the job site and are fired, that will most likely not be considered a protected work refusal. There are precipitating factors that OSHA looks for in determining valid work refusals.

Work refusal requirements:

- **Imminent Danger:** In order for OSHA to consider a protected work refusal, the urgency of the situation must be so unsafe that serious injury or death could occur and there is not enough time to call OSHA.

- **Notify Employer:** The field supervisor or other relevant management must be aware of the danger before work can be refused. Where possible, the employee must have sought the employer but have been unable to obtain correction of the dangerous condition.

- **Good Faith:** Refusals must be made in good faith, which OSHA defines as “a reasonable person would agree that there was imminent danger.”

- **Alternative Work:** Employees who believe a situation is too unsafe to proceed should ask the employer if there is another job or work duty they could perform while the issue is addressed.

When all of these boxes are checked, the employee should still not leave the work site until directed to by his or her employer. If that is the case, it is possible that OSHA will find merit to the complaint, especially if the employee is subsequently disciplined or fired after the work refusal.

POST-INVESTIGATION

After the whistleblower protection program investigates a complaint and finds it to have merit, they will forward it to the court system for litigation or issue a merit determination, depending on the whistleblower statute.

Most merit cases are settled, but if not, then the court or the Secretary's Findings can order a number of compensatory and punitive damages, again depending on the whistleblower statute.

In the case of an investigation, it is important for both employer and employee to keep records, as these are crucial pieces of evidence in OSHA's evaluation and determination.

“Our job is to investigate whether the allegations hold water. If the parties want to get together and settle, we absolutely entertain the settlement. In fact, we have an Alternative Dispute Resolution program that actually can halt the investigation while the parties try to settle the case,” Rosa says. “That's our goal — that we always look for opportunities to settle the case.” ■

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Standard Restrooms

By Craig Mandli

ARMAL WAVE

The **Wave** portable restroom from **Armal** is designed for easy assembly, handling and cleaning. The single block floor is resistant to impact. The units are made of high-density polyethylene and are treated to resist UV damage, creating color stability and parts durability at extreme temperatures. Its curved corners make it easy to handle, and its ultrasmooth surfaces make it easy to clean, according to the maker. The unit can be configured with several options. **866-873-7796; www.armal.biz.**



FIVE PEAKS GLACIER 1

The **Glacier 1** from **Five Peaks** offers ultrasmooth interior and exterior sidewalls making it easy to clean, according to the manufacturer. Its integrated vents eliminate unnecessary screen maintenance. Extra-deep molded-in grab handles are in all four corners for ease of maneuverability. It is manufactured from durable, high-density polyethylene with UV stabilizers and includes a twin-sheet heavy-duty door and jamb with a strong integrated hinge and return spring. The 65-gallon tank has sloping lines to keep the tank top dry and clean. It comes with a hover handle, oversized mirror, two shelves, gender sign, utility hook, beverage holder and three-roll toilet paper holder. **866-293-1502; www.fivepeaks.net.**

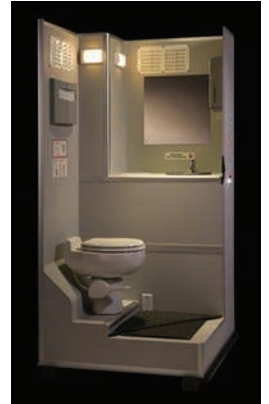
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The **Kros Urinal** from **Kros International USA** has a 100-gallon tank and a small footprint at 36.6 inches square. It has a draining connection under the unit to connect it with other urinals and allow it to drain through 1.5-inch pipes to a holding tank. It handles four users simultaneously, resulting in shorter waiting lines and cleaner portable restrooms. **855-576-7872; www.krosinternationalusa.com.**



NUCONCEPTS VIP

The **VIP** from **NuConcepts** is built using extruded aluminum structural elements, polyethylene walls and sun strong fiberglass doors. It is solar-powered and self-contained; it has a flushable porcelain toilet, sink with auto-off faucet, LED interior lights, exterior in-use light, power roof vent, acrylic mirror and roto-cast tanks. Options include air conditioning (requiring 110 volts), interior heating, winterizing package, water heater, city water connections, dump valves and an upgraded countertop. **800-334-1065; www.nuconcepts.com.**



POLYJOHN PJN3

The **PJN3** from **PolyJohn** has a spacious interior and a translucent roof. It includes anti-slip floors, maximum ventilation, a two-roll paper dispenser and an occupancy signal latch. Options include a hand-washing sink or hand-sanitizing dispenser, convenience shelf with hook, locking kit and gender signs. It is available in the standard drop tank model or with an optional recirculating flush tank. Its waste tank design makes cleaning and servicing easy, according to the maker. Each unit comes with a door-mounted mirror, handle and a nonsplash urinal. It is made from high-grade polyethylene. **800-292-1305; www.polyjohn.com.**

POLYPORTABLES, A DIVISION OF SATELLITE, AXXIS

The **Axxis** standard-size portable restroom from **PolyPortables, a division of Satellite**, is designed to be durable, customizable and easy to maintain and clean. Its self-closing hinges operate from an internal stainless steel spring. It is made of outdoor-rated materials and molded polymer construction, with a heavy-duty, easy-to-use rotary latch made to withstand the roughest users, according to the manufacturer. An ambidextrous door pull provides better grip and handling convenience. Its re-engineered door frame has a single jamb point and twin-molded construction. **706-864-3776; www.polyportables.com.**



SANSOM INDUSTRIES ZENITH

The **Zenith** portable restroom from **Sansom Industries** includes an 80-gallon holding tank with deep sump, blow-molded construction, a roomy interior with ample headroom, smooth interior surfaces for easy cleaning, stainless steel fasteners, a three-roll paper holder and attractive aesthetics, the maker says. Many custom options are available. 844-972-6766; www.sansomindustries.com.



SATELLITE INDUSTRIES TUFWAY

The interior of the **Tufway** restroom from **Satellite Industries** is built for user comfort. A combination of floor and molded-in wall vents promote continuous airflow. The urinal drains down the vent pipe, which prevents unwanted tank odors from venting back into the cabana. The seat is positioned at the farthest point away from the urinal, away from odor and user's direct sight. There is a convenient door hook to hang a purse or jacket. Made from high-density polyethylene, it can withstand impact and

abusive handling without cracking or breaking. Its front-sloping tank top, slightly domed floor, and smooth, deep sumped tank make it easy to clean and service, according to the manufacturer. Adding slope to the tank and floor surface forces liquids to drain rather than puddle, and the sumped tank improves deodorizer coverage and assures quick, complete waste removal. 800-328-3332; www.satelliteindustries.com.

T BLUSTAR RAPIDLOO

The **Rapidloo** standard portable restroom from **T blustar** is composed of a modular interlocking system that can be assembled and unassembled in less than two minutes using no tools or rivets and stored or transported as stacked individual parts, according to the maker. The lightweight components can be disassembled and stacked on a trailer for easy maneuverability. If parts are damaged, unlock the broken part and replace it with a new part in less than a minute. Units are designed to fit three unassembled units inside of one assembled unit, allowing PROs to efficiently transport four times the units in one trip. During downtime, units can be disassembled and stored neatly and organized, taking up a quarter of the space. 404-719-0715; www.tblustar.com.



T.S.F. TUFF JON III

The **Tuff Jon III** from **T.S.F.** has molded wall vents, a sky heater, lifting brackets and a 16-gallon hand-wash station with foot-pedal pump. Designed for easy cleaning, the one-piece polyethylene unit is available in nine colors and has a 70-gallon holding tank. Options include towel holder and soap dispenser. 800-843-9286; www.tuff-jon.com. ■



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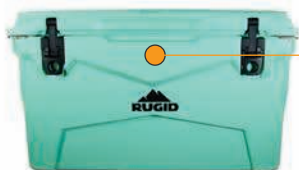


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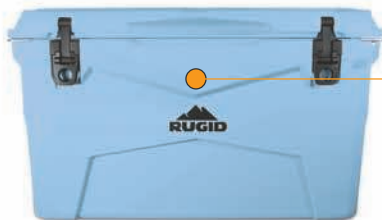


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