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## 'TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK'

A cohesive crew, environmental concern and a solid local network pay off for Randy-Kan

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## BEST FOOT FORWARD

It's a sprint to the finish line as Nature's Call serves a big Carolina race weekend

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**CIRCULATION:** 2018 circulation averaged 7,717 copies per month. This figure includes both U.S. and International distribution.

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(Photo by Stephen Brashear)

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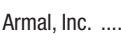






















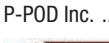

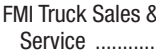





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# PRO and Jeopardy! Contestant Phil Tompkins Is One Smart Cookie

**GAME SHOW HOST ALEX TREBEK WAS FASCINATED BY THE OCCUPATION OF THE RESTROOM TECHNICIAN FOR SERVICE SANITATION IN GREATER CHICAGO**

**By Jim Kneiszel**

**Question:** The first portable restroom operator to appear on *Jeopardy!* with Alex Trebek?

**Answer:** Who is Phil Tompkins?

“I can’t verify it’s 100 percent true, but (Trebek) did say that,” says Tompkins, 34, a route driver for Service Sanitation in Gary, Indiana, shortly after he was a contestant on the popular quiz show. In fact, Tompkins believes his profession had something to do with sharing the stage with Trebek in the first place.

“It’s rare to see any blue-collar worker on the show. It’s almost always teachers and librarians,” an astute Tompkins says about his lifelong favorite television show.

“When I got to the audition, they only wanted to ask me about my job. And when (Trebek) was actually talking to me on the show, three different times he mentioned my job and how unusual it was.”

While taping *Jeopardy!* toward the end of 2018, Trebek strode over to Tompkins while the three players were being introduced.

“He read my job title, looked me right in the eye and said, ‘You’re the first person with that job who’s ever been on this show.’ And I said I had a feeling that might be the case,” he recalls. Then Trebek asked him to recount some of the interesting places he’s been to because of his job, and Tompkins mentioned back stage at the Lollapalooza music festival and the Chicago Marathon.

“I had a whole list of things to say about work and I was going to rattle them off, but I froze up. ... There was an awkward pause and he walked over to the next contestant,” Tompkins says. He was going to mention the Chicago Bears’ Soldier Field; the home of the Chicago Cubs, Wrigley Field; championship parades for the Cubs and the Chicago Blackhawks; skyscraper construction sites ... and many more fascinating locations worked by the drivers of the large restroom company serving metro Chicago.

Maybe Tompkins was saving all the talking for his run toward the Final Jeopardy question ... but more on that later.

## **JEOPARDY! FANATICS**

How did a scholarly portable restroom technician wind up in front of the bright lights and imposing board of questions on the most challenging game show on television? It was an appearance that was a lifetime in the making.

Tompkins grew up watching *Jeopardy!* every day with his father, Brad Tompkins, an English professor who “probably owns 10,000 books, is the most well-read person I know and is extremely knowledgeable. I’m smart enough to get on the show, but his knowledge puts me to shame,” the younger Tompkins says.



*Phil Tompkins, restroom technician, with host Alex Trebek on the set of Jeopardy! (Photo courtesy of Jeopardy!)*

Tompkins’ own educational background probably helped, too. Before becoming a portable restroom operator, Tompkins graduated in 2010 from Hyles-Anderson College in Crown Point, Indiana, with a pastoral theology degree. He was trained to become a Baptist minister, but preferred to use his CDL rather than his bachelor’s degree to kick-start a career.

He has been employed by Service Sanitation for six years, running a service route covering northern Indiana. In the summer, he services 200 to 250 units a week. The route includes a power plant, parks, schools and residential construction sites.

“I think my favorite part of the job, though, is helping everyday people with their biggest occasions. Weddings, open houses, reunions, parties — seeing how happy they are setting up for these things and getting to play a small part is fun,” he says.

Both father and son have been trying to get on *Jeopardy!* for years. How does that work? Once a year the game show conducts online testing to qualify contestants. During three call-in sessions, participants are given 15 seconds each to answer 50 random questions. A field of 80,000 to 100,000 people is narrowed to a few thousand who are called back for further testing and interviewing at cities across the country. Tompkins auditioned in Detroit and was among about 400 people chosen to be on the show. He was invited to tape a show last fall, and like all contestants, he had to pay his own



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way to Los Angeles, accompanied by his wife, Rosie.

"I was thankful to have (Rosie) there. She was a big support, and the fact that she was willing to leave her babies (Niko, 7, and Emmy, 5) for a few nights was huge," Tompkins says.

### THE GAME

Tompkins arrived on a Wednesday when a week's worth of shows are taped, about one an hour. He was asked to bring several changes of clothes in the event he kept winning and had to appear in successive programs. A group of 11 contestants and the returning champion spend the day together, appearing in and watching shows in the studio audience. For each episode, two new contestant names are drawn from a bowl to take on the returning champion.

"I didn't get all that nervous taping the show. You spend a few hours doing paperwork and procedures. There's a few hours with all the contestants and they take your pictures and there are rehearsal games," Tompkins says. "By the time they start recording, you're real comfortable on the stage and playing the game."

In the game, Tompkins started out slow. He says learning to time the buzzer to be able to answer the question is about as hard as knowing the

**"It's rare to see any blue-collar worker on the show. It's almost always teachers and librarians. ... When I got to the audition, they only wanted to ask me about my job."**

**Phil Tompkins**

answers. The game is split into two boards of *Jeopardy!* questions covering several categories each. Tompkins got hot during the Double Jeopardy portion of the game, amassing \$14,000 in winnings, and held a narrow lead over the other players going into the Final Jeopardy.

In Final Jeopardy, contestants are given the topic of the question (Catholicism in this case) and asked to make a wager. He risked more than the returning champion and all three players got answered the question wrong. Consequently, Tompkins finished in second place and walked away with \$2,000.

### LOST, BUT WON

Tompkins says the response to his appearance on *Jeopardy!* has been gratifying. A local Facebook page talked about it and garnered 1,000 likes and another 200 shares and comments came to him. His phone rang off the hook. Friends at his First Baptist Church were thrilled.

Tompkins says his boss at Service Sanitation, Marc Keen, and dispatch manager, Nate Staley, helped him by working around the audition and show taping. And the company played the show on all the office TVs when it aired and played a loop of his appearance in the drivers' rooms so they could see it.

"Many, many people have been incredibly excited and supportive about my appearance on the show," he says.

"It was a fantastic opportunity and loads of fun," Tompkins says. "I've been watching the show daily since I was a kid, and Dad is a big fan and was trying to get on the show for decades. He was extremely proud of me and maybe a little more jealous." ■

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“ Working with the government can be tricky ... But a government contract can fill huge holes in restroom service routes, as generally government work is highly concentrated depending on the type of job it is. ”

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*Jeff and Terri Wigley are portable sanitation industry veterans, having owned and operated Atlanta-based Pit Stop Sanitation Services for 22 years. Send your questions for them or comments to editor@promonthly.com.*



# So You Want to Work in Disaster Relief? Let's Get Started.

**REGISTER WITH THE RIGHT AGENCIES, SPRUCE UP YOUR WEBSITE AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO NETWORK WITH OTHER PROS WHEN LOOKING TO LAND BIG GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**

**By Jeff and Terri Wigley**

**Question:** With the multitude of natural disasters in 2018, how can my company get involved in serving first responders in these situations?

**Answer:** Governmental agencies — federal, state and local — have procedures that must be followed to become eligible to assist. While these procedures involve paperwork, this time of the year is ideal to begin the process before the event and, in some areas, the construction season begins in earnest. Be prepared for many acronyms and abbreviations. Remember: You are working with the government and the process may be time-consuming.

### Registering with the federal government

Federal Emergency Management Agency is responsible for emergency response in natural disasters. Beginning in 2012, in an effort to streamline operations, the System for Award Management or SAM took over functions of FEMA's Debris Removal Contractor Registry.

**Step 1:** Make sure that you have a DUNS (data universal numbering system) number. This is required for Step 2. The DUNS is a unique nine-digit identification number for each physical location of your business. If you need to obtain one, visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. You will also need the NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) code for your wastewater business. (This was formerly known as the SIC code.) The NAICS code 562991 is for pumping and cleaning septic tanks and cesspools and/or renting and/or servicing portable restrooms.

**Step 2:** Register your business with SAM at [www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov). Indicate that you would like to participate in the Disaster Response Registry. According to the website, it takes 2-3 days to complete the registration process. The SAM Service Desk is available to help at 866-606-8220. You can also get free support from your local Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), which is an official resource for governmental contracting assistance. The available material says to expect a wait of up to 30 days before your registration is activated.

**Step 3:** Read the FEMA procedures, and then register your company at the following website: [www.fema.gov/small-business-program](http://www.fema.gov/small-business-program).

**Step 4:** Now, to view federal contract opportunities over \$25,000, create an account in Federal Business Opportunities, known as FedBizOpps. This website is where contracting officers post help wanted ads for contractors. The website is [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov).

### Registering with state and local government

As referenced in Step 2 above, your local PTAC could be the best place to start since each state and local government will vary as to requirements, rules and regulations. The fact that your company is already in the SAM

**While these procedures involve paperwork, this time of the year is ideal to begin the process ... Be prepared for many acronyms and abbreviations. Remember you are working with the government and the process may be time consuming.**

and FEMA databases for the federal government will be an advantage in this process.

### Other suggestions as a result of our research include:

- Establish relationships with your municipal and county governments. When disaster strikes, FEMA often consults these offices due to their local familiarity.
- Maintain an informative, professional and highly visible website. Often FEMA will perform "quick and dirty" market research in order to get results.
- If you are familiar with another company that provides assistance in natural disasters, consider working with that company as a subcontractor in order to gain experience in this area.
- Contact your company's insurance provider and inquire as to its knowledge of "approved contractor lists." The Insurance Information Institute maintains a list of approved contractors they share with policyholders in a claim situation. Assuming that your company meets the qualifications, this is another way to increase your chances of being contacted in an emergency.
- Due to this often time-consuming process, consider working with companies that will guide you through these various registrations. Often the price you pay for these services could outweigh the cost to your own staff accomplishing these tasks. In addition, these companies promise faster turn-around on results.

...

**Question:** What is EBITDA? I have heard it mentioned in various financial discussions. Is this something I should calculate for my company?

**Answer:** EBITDA is "earnings before income tax, depreciation and amortization." This is simply looking at your company's financials on a cash-flow basis and its ability to create profit. EBITDA can determine the financial health of your organization in the short term. It can also provide a glimpse as to the value of your company in the long term.

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however, does not necessarily mean that the business is generating cash. That's because this formula ignores changes in working capital and in capital expenditures. Working capital is needed in a growing business, and capital expenditures are needed to replace assets.

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## ON LOCATION

Chett McCubrey, Nature's Calling general manager, stands in front of a load of restrooms from Satellite / PolyPortables, on a 16-unit Laxi-Taxi trailer made by F.M. Mfg. The load is ready to head out to the Cooper River Bridge Run. (Photos by Sarah Beach)

**THE JOB:** Cooper River Bridge Run/Flowertown Festival  
**LOCATION:** Charleston, South Carolina  
**THE PRO:** Nature's Calling, North Charleston, South Carolina

# Best Foot Forward

It's a sprint to the finish as Nature's Calling places, serves and picks up 600 restrooms on Charleston's big race weekend

BY STEVE LUND

### THE TEAM

Nature's Calling was founded in the early 1990s by Russ Perkins. The company serves the Savannah, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina, markets from offices in Ridgeland and North Charleston, South Carolina. Nature's Calling serves construction sites, company picnics, building renovations, festivals, sporting events, emergency response efforts and military mobilizations. It offers portable restrooms, hand-wash stations, large and small specialty trailers, roll-off and front-end containers for trash or recycling, plus compactors. Nature's Calling provides waste disposal for many large special events in the Southeast U.S., and it aims to be a one-stop shop that can take care of all the liquid waste and solid waste disposal needs for construction sites or events. As Chett McCubrey, general manager, puts it, "We try to be the one-invoice, one-contact-number provider for an event coordinator."



### THE EVENT

The Cooper River Bridge Run, held on April 7 last year, bills itself as the third largest 10K (6.2 mile) race in the country and the best organized 10K race in the world. The first run was held in 1978 with about 1,000 runners, double what the organizers expected, and it has grown to where the field has to be capped at 40,000 participants. Nature's Calling has been the exclusive portable restroom provider since 1999.

*Runners gather at the starting line for the 2018 Cooper River Bridge Run.*

*(continued)*

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## PLANNING PROCESS

After working this event for 20 years, Nature's Calling has a good idea where restrooms should be placed for maximum utility, but every year there are always some changes. Before the event, the company holds a meeting

*Technicians Jake Williams, left, and Micheal Heyward load restrooms from Satellite / PolyPortables, following the Cooper River Bridge Run in Charleston, South Carolina.*

with run organizers and representatives from local government to go over unit placement and changes in traffic patterns. "There are always some road construction issues," McCubrey says. "There are places where we put units last year that we can't this year. We provide comments and suggestions about what

we could do a little differently. We try to work out all those issues before race day, obviously, and go from there."

## BY THE NUMBERS

Nature's Calling deploys more than 600 portable restrooms and 30 hand-wash stations (Satellite | PolyPortables) over the weekend, and more than 500 of them are for the Bridge Run. The run also requires front-end containers and roll-off containers for trash and recycling (Baker Waste Equipment). The Flowertown Festival also requires restrooms, hand-wash stations and trash and recycling containers.

To move the portable restrooms to the sites and back, Nature's Calling deploys three 16-unit Laxi-Taxi trailers made by F.M. Mfg. The trailers are towed by three Dodge Ram 3500 or 4500 pickup trucks with stake bodies that can hold four to six portable restrooms, so each truck-trailer rig can haul 20 or 22 units at a time.

Four vacuum trucks are used to empty the units before bringing them back to the Nature's Calling yard in North Charleston. The fleet includes Hino 195 and 268 trucks, plus two International 4300 models. The trucks are outfitted by Amthor International or TruckXpress with aluminum tanks (1,500-gallon waste, 500 freshwater) and Masport pumps.

*(continued)*

The runners start in Mount Pleasant and follow a route over the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge, also known as the Cooper River Bridge, into downtown Charleston. The bridge is one of Charleston's major thoroughfares, and it is closed for several hours to accommodate the race. The event is a fundraiser for numerous local charities. At the finish downtown, there is a festival in Marion Square.

There are also numerous other events, some tied to the Bridge Run, and some just timed to take advantage of the large influx of tourists that weekend. Nature's Calling is the provider for several of them, the largest being the Flowertown Festival, a three-day event in a nearby Charleston suburb of Summerville.

**"We pull people and resources from every department, not just our portable toilet division, to make sure we can accomplish what we need to accomplish in a timely manner and get it back in a timely manner."**

**CHETT MCCUBREY**

*The Nature's Calling crew at the Cooper River Bridge Run includes (from left) Clifton Jennings, Micheal Heyward, Jeffrey Fennell, Teddy Bammann, Kengwon Ingram, Samantha Coy, Dominique Givens, Gerald Mack, Jake Williams, Richard Gantt and Steve Greene.*







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**Right:** Service technicians Clifton Jennings, left, and Del Springs service restrooms after the runners have left the area.

**Below:** The staff at Nature's Calling includes (from left) Kenny Fludd, George Staats and Del Springs. They are shown with an International service truck built out by Amthor International and carrying a Masport pump.



## LET'S ROLL

On the Mount Pleasant side of the river, where the Cooper River Bridge Run starts, Nature's Calling can start putting out portable restrooms as early as the Monday before the Saturday event because most of the units can be placed in parking lots or other places that don't impede the flow of normal traffic. None of the units go on the bridge itself. Most are at the starting area, where participants begin to gather a couple hours before the start of the run. Another large number of units are downtown where participants and family members might spend a few hours after the race. Because the downtown units have to be out of the way of traffic, they have to be placed overnight Friday for the Saturday morning event, and they are picked up overnight Saturday and early Sunday.

"It's a pretty big weekend for us coordinationwise, staffingwise and equipmentwise," McCubrey says. "We pull people and resources from every department, not just our portable toilet division, to make sure we can accomplish what we need to accomplish in a timely manner and get it back in a timely manner."

Nature's Calling dedicates one crew to placing units in Mount Pleasant starting on the Monday before the race, and that crew stays busy with Bridge Run work the rest of the week. For the weekend itself, McCubrey says everyone knows it's the biggest weekend of the year for the company and people who don't normally work on weekends will be on duty.

**"We provide comments and suggestions about what we could do a little differently. We try to work out all those issues before race day, obviously, and go from there."**

**CHETT MCCUBREY**

"We can count on some of the toilet route drivers who don't normally work on the weekend to be available," McCubrey says. "We use some of our other roll-off drivers, septic truck drivers, yard folks and managers, and whoever we can pull at the time to make sure things get out and get picked up quickly as well. We use people from across divisions, so we keep the staffing all in-house, which is nice."

## QUICK PICKUP

Since it is a one-day event, the portable restrooms for the Bridge Run don't need to be serviced, but they need to be picked up quickly. "We have units that line pretty much the entire mass of people waiting to start," McCubrey says. "As the groups of runners are going through, we're actually coming in right behind them and pumping the units and picking them up immediately. We also have a crew loading them on trailers and bringing them back to our yard. They drop them off and head back to get another load. We'll do that back and forth until we get all the units picked up. We're doing trash collection and some recycling collection in conjunction with the portable toilet removal." The normal route to Nature's Calling's yard in North Charleston would be over the Cooper River Bridge, but at that point the bridge is still closed, so the pickup crews have to take a longer route.

It's a different story with the equipment at the Flowertown Festival. That's a three-day event, so the toilets have to be serviced each day and the trash and recycling containers have to be swapped out each night after the festival hours. ■

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**Sue Bingham**

It's a great irony that the discipline policy preferred by most companies is called "progressive." The word progressive means "making favorable progress or change;" nothing is further from the truth with this type of policy.

A progressive discipline policy is about punishment — not improvement. This senseless and dehumanizing process was created to protect companies from adverse legal rulings, and mostly at the advice of legal counsel. The irony is that a claim or charge can be adjudicated in favor of the employee — not because of what the terminated employee has or hasn't done — but because the company failed to follow the myriad details outlined in its own policies.

Most managers denounce their company's progressive discipline policy as lengthy, overengineered and ineffective. For the bad apple who

**Assume that the vast majority of employees are good people who want the company to succeed. They are adults who own homes, raise children and serve in their communities. If a problem develops and is brought to their attention, their desire is to solve it.**

shouldn't have been hired in the first place, this process takes far too long. And the small minority of abusers use the policy like a playbook and keep ahead of the game by changing the performance issue that is violated. They also know the time required for the last warning to be removed so they can do it again. Here's how it works:

**PLEASE SIGN HERE**

Typically, progressive discipline policies are comprised of steps, with each step involving an employee and his/her manager and eventually witnesses. In each step, the communication is routinely one-way and parent-child, ending with the threat: "Failure to improve will result in further disciplinary action up to and including termination."

- Step 1 is a verbal warning. The word "warning" is correct because the discussion ends with a threat. The angry employee then leaves (often after being asked to sign the written verbal warning).
- Step 2 is just like the first step but is now called a written warning. Again it ends with a threat (in a more serious tone) and the angry, dispirited or apathetic employee leaves after being asked to sign the warning.
- Step 3 varies among companies. It may be a second written warning or an unpaid suspension from work. The employee is sent home (which seems much like sending a child to his or her room), and the employee and his or her family are being punished because the company is withholding pay.
- Some companies even have a Step 4 — a third and final written warning. This is usually a tense and negative interaction between the manager and employee. It exists to create a paper trail that will hold up in an unemployment claim or court of law once the employee is terminated (at this stage, the decision has already been made to fire the employee).

Punishment is not instructive. It cannot teach a new behavior or solve a problem. The improvement or desired behavior will never be permanently learned unless an employee and his or her supervisor work together to solve the problem.

In most traditional companies, equipment is treated better than employees. Using a progressive disciplinary approach is like banging on a machine to make it run better.

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## HERE'S A BETTER WAY

Assume that the vast majority of employees are good people who want the company to succeed. They are adults who own homes, raise children and serve in their communities. If a problem develops and is brought to their attention, their desire is to solve it.

A performance coaching approach is based on this assumption. If a problem arises, those involved will want to solve it. This coaching meeting has an agenda the manager partially prepares in advance to be clear and concise about the problem. When prepared, the manager can state the issue, usually in under 15 seconds, and then ask, "What's going on?" This turns the problem-solving conversation immediately over to the employee to discover the cause of the performance issue.

This is not a "step" process. This is an adult conversation, and the ending depends on the employee's response. For example:

- Cooperative: If the employee is cooperative (most are), he or she accepts responsibility and offers an action or commitment to address the cause — problem solved! The action or solution is not provided by the manager. The manager helps follow through on the employee's plan.

- Uncooperative: The employee may be uncooperative, meaning he or she isn't forthcoming regarding the cause, blames others or simply avoids responding as an adult to the manager's questions. When this happens, the manager reflects what he or she is seeing and hearing. Most people become cooperative at this point. If not, the manager will ask the employee to go home for the rest of the day. Unlike a suspension, this time off is paid because the employee's job that day is to decide about his or her employment. Is this a job he or she wants? Can he or she meet expectations? If so, the employee is expected to return with a sincere commitment statement or plan of action. If the employee determines the job is not for him or her, the company processes his or her resignation. (A surprising number of people make the decision to change).

- Disrespectful: Occasionally an employee can go beyond uncooperative and become downright disrespectful. There is no room for disrespectful behavior in this process. The manager reflects what he or she is seeing or hearing, and if the employee continues to be disrespectful, the manager ends the meeting. The employee is sent home and informed that the manager will call in the morning to let the employee know if he or she still has a job.

In all three instances, the problem is solved — usually with less than two conversations.

This process does have documentation. When a manager lacks confidence that the improvement will be made, a letter is sent to the em-

ployee that documents both sides of the conversation including the employee's plan of action. It is kept in a company file. When the employee's response results in resignation or termination, a report detailing the conversations is submitted.

## AVOID LEGAL ISSUES

With this approach, the legal process is now focused on the employee's response and subsequent actions versus whether the detailed progressive discipline steps were followed by the company.

As competition for good people becomes more intense, companies that treat their employees with respect, and as adults, gain the advantage. Managers are then free to use the leadership, judgment and communication skills for which they're paid. ■

*Sue Bingham is founder of HPWP Group, a coach, speaker, and author of Creating The High Performance Work Place: It's Not Complicated to Develop a Culture of Commitment. Reach her at [www.hpwpgroup.com](http://www.hpwpgroup.com).*

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Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms employees gather in the company yard. From left are Stephanie Gilliland, Loren Armstrong, Josh Corso, Sania Smith, Alea Battin, Curtis Nelson and Todd Morgan. (Photos by Stephen Brashear)



# 'TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK'

**A cohesive crew, environmental concern and solid community connections pay off big for PROs Randy Bauer and Karrie Henricksen**

**BY STEVE LUND**

**K**itsap County, Washington, located on a peninsula just across Puget Sound from Seattle and just east of Olympic National Park, is the kind of place where you'd expect the population to have a higher-than-average concern for the environment. Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms, which serves contractors, sports facilities and events in the area, reflects that concern in its operations.

The company is operated by Randy Bauer and Karrie Henricksen who have been life partners as well as business partners for more than 16 years and who share the environmental concerns of local residents.

"In our particular market, there are a lot of environmentally conscious people," Bauer says.

"People like it when you are eco-friendly over here," Henricksen says, explaining why Randy-Kan uses "earth-friendly"

deodorizers and cleaning products. "It's really beneficial for the schools, parks and us to know that, if for some reason there is a tip-over or something like that, the waste isn't going to be harmful."

Randy-Kan uses Safe-T-Fresh products from Satellite | PolyPortables.

*(continued)*

## **Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms Poulsbo, Washington**

**Owners:** Randy Bauer and  
Karrie Henricksen

**Founded:** 2002

**Employees:** 9

**Services:** Portable sanitation

**Service area:** Kitsap County, Washington

**Website:** [www.randykan.com](http://www.randykan.com)





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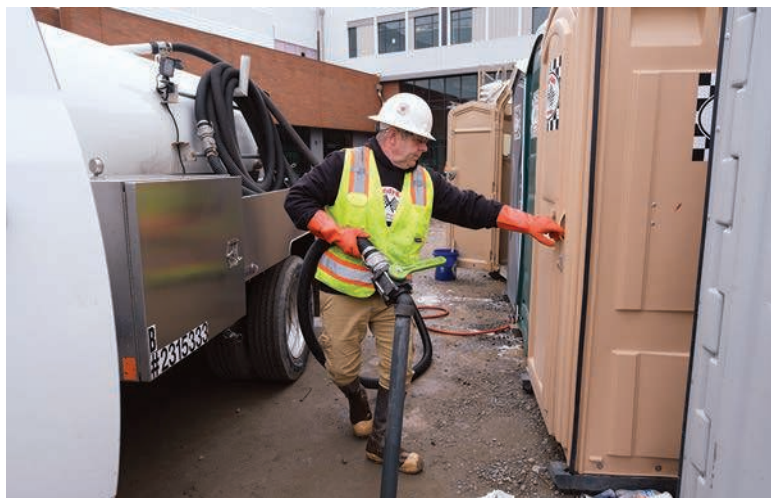
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**Right:** Technician Josh Corso places a Satellite / PolyPortables restroom at a work site. His TruckXpress service truck with a Masport pump is shown in the background.

**Below:** Technician Loren Armstrong services restrooms on location. The truck is a Dodge 5500 built out by TruckXpress with a Masport pump.



**Left:** Stephanie Gilliland (left), office manager/dispatcher, and drivers Todd Morgan (center) and Armstrong review routes on mobile devices at the beginning of the day.

“A lot of people love the eco-friendly part of it, not to mention that portable restrooms do save a lot of water,” Henricksen says. “Even if you didn’t use eco-friendly products, just the fact that they are using a portable restroom rather than wasting water is a big benefit to the community as well as the environment.”

The focus on environmental concern and being connected to the community is paying off for Randy-Kan. The company has been growing rapidly, more than doubling in size since 2014. The company has close to 1,000 portable restrooms, most of them Global models with some Access, Liberty and Freedom units, all from Satellite | PolyPortables. Bauer estimated that Randy-Kan has more than 35 ADA-compliant portable restrooms. It also has 30-40 hand-wash stations from PolyJohn (Bravo, Applause) and Satellite | PolyPortables (Tag Along and Breeze).

“It’s how you deal with the issues and how you deal with the people that makes you successful. Problems do come up. We try to be very accommodating and deal with our emergency situations quickly.”

**KARRIE HENRICKSEN**

### ALWAYS A SANITIZER

The company also has a four-unit luxury restroom trailer from Satellite Suites. Bauer says it has been a good addition to the inventory, as it gets rent-

ed almost every weekend in the summer. Sometimes it is booked a year in advance.

Randy-Kan makes hand cleaning easy for people using their toilets. The company puts hand sanitizers in every unit. It even has the tag line: “Be wise, sanitize” on its website homepage. “We’re serious about

sanitation,” Henricksen says. “We tend to have the sanitizers in the units because it’s something that sets us apart. We try to consistently have that in our units.”

Another strategy of Randy-Kan is the company’s strict focus on portable restrooms. It does not offer fencing, storage containers, temporary offices or other associated products many PROs provide.

“We just try to focus on one thing and try to be the best at what we do,” Bauer says. “We concentrate on doing one thing well, instead of two things three-quarters of the way.”

Bauer, who spent summer vacations on the Kitsap Peninsula as a child, has lived there more than 27 years. He had a septic pumping business there before he started Randy-Kan. When he saw a large company was buying up the portable restroom operators in the area, he thought the community should have a local provider of portable restrooms, and he decided he’d be the one.

He started the company with 25 Satellite | PolyPortables restrooms (Global) and an Erickson Tank & Pump 150-gallon waste and 75-gallon freshwater slide-in unit. He still has the Erickson slide-in, although not on the same truck, but he no longer has the septic pumping truck. “We don’t do any of that kind of work anymore,” Bauer says.

(continued)

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**Left:** A drone photo shows Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms' Satellite Suite restroom trailer and a Satellite / PolyPortables restroom serving the groundbreaking ceremony for a new VA hospital in Silverdale, Washington. (Photo courtesy of FPH Construction)

**Below:** Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms supplied a Satellite Suites restroom trailer for the Kitsap Wedding Show in Kitsap, Washington. (Photo courtesy of Randy-Kan)



## THE RIGHT FLEET

In addition to a 2006 Dodge Ram 2500 pickup with the Erickson slide-in, Randy-Kan operates five other service vehicles: 2016 and 2018 Ram 5500 trucks with 650-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater steel tanks and Masport pumps from TruckXpress; a 2015 Ram 4500 with a 550-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump from TruckXpress; a 2013 Hino 338 with a 1,500-gallon waste and 500-gallon freshwater Progress Tank aluminum tank and Masport pump; and a 2007 GMC 4500 with a 700-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater steel tank and Masport pump from Abernethy Welding.

## Keeping the team together

As Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms grew steadily — more than doubling in the last four years — recruiting and retaining good employees is critical to success.

Paying good wages is part of the recipe, but it's not the only ingredient.

"We pay better than the national average for portable restroom operators, which helps us get decent people in the door," says Randy Bauer, one of the owners of Randy-Kan. "We try to offer medical benefits for our staff, although they don't always choose to take it."

The benefit that seems to matter most to his staff, Bauer says, is the company's ability to accommodate workers' family needs in scheduling.

"We try to work around our key workers' family things they need to take care of," Bauer says. "That seems to be a real big thing in today's workforce. Being able to make workarounds so your employees have the ability to do what they need to if they have kids. If they need to take time for personal business, we make time that they can do that. Working with your people on the points of the schedule where everybody needs a little flexibility sometimes really helps keep them around."

Bauer still regularly drives a service route.

"I get in the truck and I work with my guys," he says. "It's good for your staff to know you are right there in the trench with them. They appreciate knowing that we're not just owners who sit back and watch what goes on. We're actually involved in our business."

Karrie Henriksen, Bauer's partner, puts it this way: "Teamwork makes the dream work."

The company also has been using a 10-unit Liquid Waste Industries transport trailer and a Super Mongo Mover hauler (Deal Assoc.) for moving units around the yard and at event sites. Bauer says Randy-Kan typically loads the Liquid Waste Industries trailer with restroom units and puts the hand-wash stations inside the restrooms.

Randy-Kan also has 6,000 gallons of storage tanks underground at its yard in Poulsbo. There is only one wastewater treatment plant in the area, so the extra storage is handy when time is tight. "We try to keep up with our own waste hauling, but we work with haulers who will gladly help us out if we need it. We have a great network of people," Bauer says.

The area Randy-Kan serves has been growing rapidly. Part of the reason is that it is becoming a bedroom community for Seattle, which is a ferry ride away across the Puget Sound. "It's thriving now. It's really developing fast," Bauer says. "It's bad for traffic, but good for business."

The traffic is starting to become an issue for Randy-Kan. Given the geography of the area, with many inlets carving up the peninsula, it can take a long time to get to places that are not very far away as the crow flies but require long drives around the water. Traffic is already slowing down some routine trips.

"We've noticed that sometimes it takes half an hour longer compared to a year ago," Bauer says. "We can only imagine that it will get worse."

## GETTING THE NAME OUT

A lot of the marketing for Randy-Kan is achieved by participating in community events. The company has some signs and it has a website, but there is also a personal touch to the marketing.

"We live in this community, and we just try to do our part," Bauer says.

(continued)

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*Randy Bauer and Karrie Henricksen own and operate Randy-Kan Portable Restrooms in Poulsbo, Washington.*

“We do things for a lot of youth sports, a lot of cleanups here and there and fundraisers for the parks. Every little donation can help all of us.”

Randy-Kan has portable restrooms at many youth sports venues. Sometimes if there is a big tournament at a site, Randy-Kan will provide extra service to help out the organizers. The company also helps the local humane society and the Kathleen Sutton Fund, a local organization that provides transportation for women with cancer, among other organizations.

“We just do some little things that we think personally we’d like to help with, just doing our part that we like to do as Randy and Karrie. It seems to pay great dividends,” Bauer says.

Henricksen, who runs the office and handles the marketing, says building the company’s reputation is worthwhile. “The loyalty comes back tenfold. Our customers just know what the good product is and the right people to call, and our phone just rings,” she says.

“We buy advertising signs at various places, such as the fairgrounds, sports fields and riding arenas for the rodeo people,” Bauer adds. “And there are a lot of Randy-Kans on the side of the road.”

Cleanliness is another priority. “We have really clean restrooms, and customers know what they get,” Bauer says. “We’re not the cheapest. We have a fair price, and we do the best job. That’s what we have to offer in our industry, doing the best customer service that we can.”

### **BUSY EVENT SEASON**

The goal of providing top-notch customer service gets tested in the summer when the calendar fills up with the special events. Randy-Kan serves numerous festivals such as Viking Fest in Poulsbo, the Bridge Blast and the Blackberry Festival in Bremerton, Whaling Days in Silverdale and the biggest one, the Kitsap County Fair & Stampede in Bremerton.

“I get in the truck and I work with my guys. It’s good for your staff to know you are right there in the trench with them. They appreciate knowing that we’re not just owners who sit back and watch what goes on.”

**RANDY BAUER**

The fair is a five-day event, with a day of setup ahead of it and a day of work afterward retrieving the restrooms and hand-wash stations. “The fair means servicing 50-plus units every day, sometimes twice a day,” Bauer says. “When you throw that on top of our everyday schedules, it takes really good people.”

Bauer and Henricksen estimate special events, including company picnics, parties, weddings and the local festivals, constitute about 40 percent of the business. Construction sites and youth sports venues fill out the rest.

Most of the time, Randy-Kan services routes with one person on a truck, unless someone is being trained, but the routine changes for the big special festivals.

“On special events, we’ll have multiple trucks,” Bauer says. “For the county fair, we’ll have two people on the truck just because it makes it go faster. They like to get done quicker so they can do their daily route. None of us want to work all the time, but we try really hard to help each other out so that not one or two people are just grinding it out and no one else is around.”

### **HIRING AND RETENTION**

Growth of the business has required significant growth in the staff. The company has seven employees in addition to the two owners.

“It seems like it’s a constant training mission,” Bauer says. “We’ve had some good luck with some really key people. It’s not a career people are seeking out all the time, but if you get the right people and you pay them a good, livable wage like you should, they have a tendency to realize that the portable toilet business isn’t all that bad.”

Bauer says Randy-Kan’s wages are higher than the national average for portable restroom operators, and the company offers health insurance and other benefits.

What Bauer and Henricksen look for in their staff members is the ability to solve problems for their customers.

“The portable restroom industry is challenging,” Henricksen says. “It’s how you deal with the issues and how you deal with the people that makes you successful. Problems do come up. We try to be very accommodating and deal with our emergency situations quickly.”

“There are a lot of difficult days. We try to minimize the flat tires,” Bauer says, indicating that he means personnel or customer relations problems more than actual flat tires. “The best days are when everything goes smoothly, every driver comes back with a smile on his face and there are no truck issues.” ■

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# Trucks and Tanks

By Craig Mandli

## VACUUM TANKS

### AMTHOR INTERNATIONAL FLAT VAC

The **Flat Vac** multipurpose portable restroom vacuum tank from **Amthor International** allows the operator to carry up to 12 restrooms on top of the tank and pull a restroom delivery trailer. The tank has a rounded bottom with a full-length formed sump design for drainage and full baffles for strength. The flat tank has wastewater and freshwater compartments, as well as an option for a chemical or brine compartment. It is available in steel, stainless steel or aluminum. A liftgate is installed behind the tank to load and unload restrooms. All units are custom built to specifications. **800-328-6633; www.amthorinternational.com.**



### BRUDER TANK 1,200-GALLON PORTABLE RESTROOM TANK

The 1,200-gallon portable restroom tank from **Bruder Tank** is available in aluminum or stainless steel, with capacity for 900 gallons of waste and 300 gallons of freshwater. It has dual service inlets, 36- by 30- by 24-inch work cabinets, four LED work lights and a two-unit fold-up toilet carrier. All tanks can be configured to specifications. **217-292-9058; www.brudertank.com.**

### CRESCENT TANK VACUUM TANK

The **Crescent Tank** vacuum tank is completely flat inside and out. It can carry up to 10 portable restrooms, and the weight capacity is the same as a flatbed truck. It has no baffles, allowing it to be emptied completely to avoid internal corrosion. With the included pump at specified cubic feet per minute, unnecessary fatigue of the structure is eliminated and the life of the tank is prolonged. It is made from 1/4-inch-thick steel, for structural strength. Freshwater is held inside the external 1/2-inch-thick poly tank to avoid internal wastewater contamination. It can be installed on any chassis within the specifications required for each model based on axle ratings and maximum load capacity. **585-657-4104; www.crescenttank.com.**



## VACUUM TRUCKS

### FLOWMARK VACUUM TRUCKS ISUZU NPR

The **Isuzu NPR** 999-gallon portable restroom service truck from **FlowMark Vacuum Trucks** has an aluminum vacuum tank with capacities of 700 gallons of waste and 299 gallons of freshwater. Vacuum is provided by a Masport HXL4 156 cfm pump, and it includes a Flojet water pump, LED lighting and two-unit fold-up restroom hauler. It is designed for efficient operation. **833-653-8100; www.flowmark.com.**



### FMI TRUCK SALES & SERVICE WORKMATE

The **WorkMate** service truck from **FMI Truck Sales & Service** is designed for the rigors of the portable sanitation industry. The always-equal weight distribution of the sidewinder tank extends brake life and improves handling. Its two food-grade poly water-tanks are plumbed to provide brine, freshwater, pre-mix or any combination of fluids with no corrosion or rusty water. The ergonomically designed workstation, with more than 60 cubic feet of storage space, saves time and effort during the workday, minimizing restocking and driver movement, according to the maker. It carries four restrooms for delivery and pickup. E-track load securement systems eliminate the need for ropes. The modular design allows components to be easily replaced or transferred if damaged. The entire vacuum system is plumbed using hot-tar hose and Masport components. **800-927-8750; www.fmitrucks.com.**

### IMPERIAL INDUSTRIES 700-GALLON ALUMINUM SIDEWINDER

The 700-gallon aluminum sidewinder from **Imperial Industries** can haul four portable restrooms on its deck. It has an 8-foot aluminum flatbed with 385-gallon water capacity, 700-gallon waste tank, 1,600-pound capacity Thieman liftgate and comes equipped with a COX hose reel, bucket holder, strobe package and a Masport HXL4 pump. The unit is built on a 2018 Ford F-550 chassis. **800-558-2945; www.imperialind.com.**



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## VACUUM TRUCKS

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The KV999 from KeeVac Industries is a 999-gallon portable restroom truck that can be used by operators who want to stay under the Department of Transportation tanker endorsement requirement. This tank, available in aluminum, stainless steel and carbon steel, with single- or dual-side service, holds 699 gallons of waste and 300 gallons of freshwater and includes a two-unit fold-down restroom carrier with trailer hitch. At this capacity, it can service between 65-70 portable restrooms, allowing the driver to complete a larger service route each day. The tank can be mounted on a variety of chassis and coupled with a variety of pump options. Each unit also comes with an upgraded DC-10 washdown pump and hose reel from Hannay Reels. Exterior controls and dual cabinets offer operator safety and convenience. An arctic package and safety lighting are available. **866-789-9440; www.keevac.com.**



### VACUTRUX HOOKLIFT ROUTETRUX

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### BEST ENTERPRISES HEATING LINES

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radiator to the heated coils installed inside the water compartment, heated water collars and waste dumps, allows warm water/antifreeze to flow through the system, keeping the equipment operational in freezing weather. Having the heated collars on the waste dump and water dump valves allows for operations such as sucking out waste, washing out portable restrooms and dumping waste in freezing conditions. Placing high-pressure water pumps, washdown pumps, vacuum pumps and hose reels inside insulated stainless steel or aluminum boxes with DC heaters can keep pumps and lines from freezing. This DC electric heater has a three-speed fan motor, so the heat can be adjusted. **501-988-1905; www.bestenterprises.net.**



### PIK RITE FLATBED RESTROOM HAULER

The Flatbed Restroom Hauler from Pik Rite has a 650-gallon tank, flatbed and liftgate. The tank has a 400-gallon waste compart-

ment and internal 250-gallon freshwater compartment for even weight distribution. The truck includes a National Vacuum Equipment 304 vacuum pump, dual 2-inch fill hoses, 20 gpm washdown system, dual spring return freshwater hose reels and dual 2-inch bucket fills to make it user-friendly. A 20-inch top manway, 5-inch sight eyes and clear hose sight tube are included. The truck is also equipped with a 98-by-102-inch aluminum flatbed and Thieman TVL liftgate. Two diamond plate toolboxes are mounted on the passenger side. The truck has an LED running light kit with a durable, fully molded wiring harness. **800-326-9763; www.pikrite.com.**

### PRESVAC SYSTEMS PORTABLE TOILET TRUCK

The Presvac Systems portable restroom truck is a versatile vacuum unit. Basic or custom models are available. Units come in carbon steel, stainless steel or aluminum with vacuum pump options from 100 to 300 cfm at 28 inches Hg full vacuum, water tank volumes of 300 to 500 gallons, and waste tank volumes from 400 to 1,500 gallons. Options include custom hose trays and toolboxes and heated valves. **800-387-7763; www.presvac.com.**



### TRUCKXPRESS MD950

The mild steel MD950 from TruckXpress offers a full range of vacuum and washdown systems tailored to fit specific applications. Recent changes include lowered cabinets for



better sightlines, increased workspace in the hose-tray area, a reinforced unit hauler, and stainless steel side and rear panels to prevent rusting. Other tank options include aluminum or stainless steel. **800-883-1123; www.satellitetruckxpress.com.**

### ELMIRA MACHINE INDUSTRIES / WALLENSTEIN VACUUM MODEL 151

The Model 151 from Elmira Machine Industries / Wallenstein Vacuum can be used on portable sanitation tanks, slide-in units, campgrounds and marinas that require a compact package. It offers 80 cfm at 15 inches Hg, with a 2-inch vacuum/pressure valve, swivel elbows for easy hookup, air pressure or mechanical lubrication, and clockwise or counterclockwise operation. It can be direct, hydraulic, pulley or clutch driven. **800-801-6663; www.wallenstein.com.**



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The **Eliminator 250PT** from **Fruitland** was designed with a smaller mount and accessories, allowing it to fit on almost all portable restroom service trucks while still allowing for big-truck, continuous-duty performance. The package includes an RCF250 180 cfm vacuum pump with an integral heavy-duty secondary shut-off and oil-catch muffler. The compact design is 26 inches wide and 19 inches high, taking up minimum frame-rail space. The package comes with hydraulic or gearbox drive options; the gearbox drive allows for five distance options for alignment to the PTO shaft (8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 inches). The mount has two emergency brake cable slots, allowing for quick and easy installation. It offers low oil consumption, including an automated oiling system with all-steel oil lines, pump oil-level sight gauge, vane gauging ports and anti-shock design. **800-663-9003; www.fruitlandmanufacturing.com.**



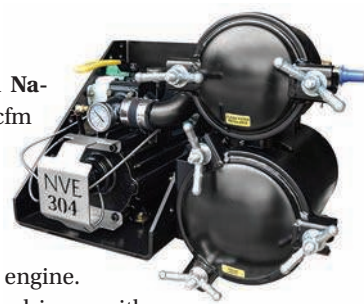
**MORO USA DC**

Heavy-duty **Moro USA DC** water pumps offer 20 gpm maximum flow to provide quick restroom fills, while 42 psi maximum pressure makes for quick high-pressure cleaning. Available with cast iron or stainless steel pump body, both models offer a stainless steel impeller and Viton elastomers. Its 12-volt (83-amp maximum draw) fan-cooled motors are epoxy-coated for durability. These continuous duty pumps come solenoid- and pressure-switch standard for easy installation. They have 1 1/4-inch suction and 1-inch discharge ports. The discharge can be mounted in four positions. **800-383-6304; www.morousa.com.**



**NATIONAL VACUUM EQUIPMENT CHALLENGER 304**

The **Challenger 304** vacuum pump from **National Vacuum Equipment** delivers 210 cfm in a number of compact packages that include a pump with a pump stand; a pump with a stand, prefilter and moisture trap in two variations; and an engine drive unit with a 13 hp electric-start engine. Standard packages are available in gearbox drive or with a hydraulic drive adapter. The package is designed with a ductile iron housing and stainless steel braided oil lines for durability. Routine maintenance, such as vane inspection and replacement, can be done without removing the pump from the truck. **800-253-5500; www.natvac.com. ■**



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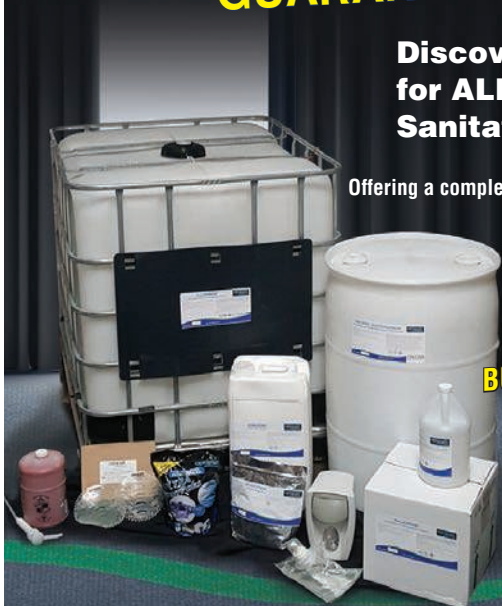
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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Imperial Industries promotes Mannel to president

Kurt Mannel was announced as the new president of Imperial Industries. Formerly the vice president of Imperial Industries, he brings more than 27 years' septic hauling experience to the role. Prior to becoming vice president, he served as the company's plant manager and ran his own business, Mannel's Septic Cleaning. He also served as the welding instructor at Northcentral Technical College. ■



Kurt Mannel

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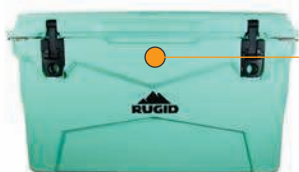


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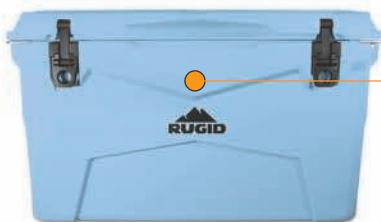


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Satellite MAL-450 - Aluminum 300/150 with Conde pump and 5hp Honda. Bought new from satellite in July of 2015. \$6,000 OBO. Also have a MAL-300 aluminum 200/100 - tank only, no pump. Located in Tampa, FL. Call or text Shane for more info and pics 813-376-4354. (T03)

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