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# HE'S MAGIC MIKE

Showman Mike Benson  
is a nonstop promoter  
for the value of quality  
portable sanitation  
service **PAGE 16**

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## FLYIN' HIGH

Airshow featuring the Blue Angels  
is a signature service event for  
California's Area Restrooms

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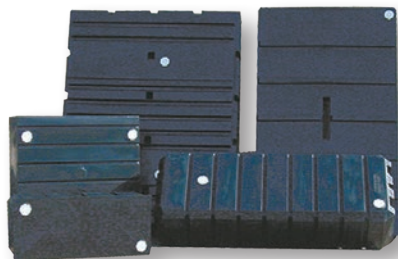
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Showman and Louisville-area DJ Mike Benson is a nonstop promoter for the value of quality portable sanitation service.

- Steve Lund

**ON THE COVER:** "Magic" Mike Benson used his promotional skills to build a successful restroom business in greater Louisville, Kentucky. He is shown with one of his restroom trailers from A Restroom Trailer Co. (ART Co.).  
(Photo by Nathan Cornet)

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# A PRO's Guide to the 2020 WWETT Show

**FOLLOW THESE SMALL-BUSINESS EXERCISES ON THE EXHIBIT FLOOR AND CAREFULLY CHOOSE SEMINARS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TRADE SHOW EXPERIENCE**

By Jim Kneiszel

**D**uring most of the year, you're engaged in physical labor, all day, every day. There are routes to be run, equipment to maintain and not enough hours in the day to get everything done. Then the winter hits, and there's more time for the mental labor necessary to keep your company up to date and running smoothly.

This is the time you can chart a course for the future, learn new tricks and techniques to improve efficiency throughout the year, and invest in education that will pay dividends next week, next year and for the next generation of owners of your business. One of those wintertime investments should be attending industry trade events, and one of those events is the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show, coming up Feb. 17-20 at the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis.

For 40 years, the WWETT Show, formerly called the Pumper & Cleaner Environmental Expo, has been a vital touch point for wastewater professionals. WWETT week is considered many things to many portable sanitation contractors. It is a place for networking with friends and forging new long-term relationships with peers in the industry. It's a shopping spree where companies enjoy an annual face-to-face visit with their trusted vendors and plan to stock up on supplies such as chemicals, accessories and equipment replacement parts. It is where you kick tires, literally, looking for that next great vacuum truck.

The WWETT Show is the largest annual exhibit of equipment and services for the environmental services industries, including portable sanitation. And outside of the exhibit hall, it offers dozens of education and training opportunities every day, spanning the convention center and inside the nearby Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts.

I have attended the last 15 Pumper & Cleaner/WWETT Show events, going back to the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky. Change is constant for the WWETT Show, and I am ready to make a few suggestions about how you can spend your valuable — and often too-limited — time in Indy. If you can accomplish only a few of these goals for the show, I'm sure you'll bring back plenty of benefits to your portable sanitation business:

## **Find out what's new in standard portable restrooms**

All of the portable restroom manufacturers will have extensive displays of their products on hand in Indy. So it will be a quick and easy task to visit each company's booth and meet with a seasoned representative who knows the products inside out. Quiz them on the aspects of the units that matter

**Who knows, a chance encounter with another PRO who uses similar equipment could lead to a mutually beneficial professional relationship for years to come.**

most to you in your individual business environment. What parts have a tendency to wear out and need replacement most often? What features do your customers tell you they want to see in a restroom they rent? Look at details like the design of springs and hinges, the sturdiness of the skid bases and the methods used to secure panels for durability. Are the units easy to handle with well-thought-out ergonomics and functional grab handles? Think about whether you want to bring a new type of restroom into your inventory or choose an alternative color for the units you use.

## **Perform your own restroom trailer shootout**

Restroom trailers are growing in popularity and being requested by more customers, both commercial and industrial clients, as well as for small events and outdoor weddings. They also represent a huge investment for a growing portable sanitation company. It is getting more difficult to say yes to customers every time without having a few trailers in your yard. All that said, the WWETT Show is the perfect opportunity to compare the growing number of restroom trailers being offered by manufacturers.

Start by putting a list together of the most important criteria for your first or newest restroom trailer addition. Give this some serious thought, and compile the list before you arrive in Indy. When you get to the show, map out the trailer manufacturers you want to visit. If you brought the whole crew, be sure to get their impressions of every unit that rates serious consideration. You could even take your criteria list and have each member of your team rate each unit on a scale of 1-5 for each of the must-have features. Narrow the field and visit each display again. Talk to the vendors and get their insights on your needs. Now you should feel more confident about pulling the trigger on a new trailer.

## **Hang out awhile with your favorite truck and tank supplier**

It's one thing to have a brief catch-up with a representative of the company you usually hire to build your trucks. They will certainly give you great information about trends in the vacuum truck industry and specifically about technical details of their products. But if you linger in the booth for an



hour and talk to other PROs who trust the same truck builder, you'll learn a lot of ideas about the best ways to spec a truck for the portable sanitation industry. This type of networking at a trade show can be a game-changer for your company. Learning just a few new tips about where to place a hose hanger or tool rack can save your drivers a great deal of time and frustration over the course of a year. Comparing notes on tank size, pump brands and cubic-feet-per-minute output could lead you to try another accessory that works out well for you. Who knows, a chance encounter with another PRO who uses similar equipment could lead to a mutually beneficial professional relationship for years to come.

### HITTING THE BOOKS

I've reviewed the full seminar schedule for the WWETT Show with the portable restroom contractor in mind and have the following suggestions for how to spend your time in the classroom. The talks are spread throughout the four-day event, so you can knock off a few every day between the time you spend wearing out your shoes in the exhibit hall. Mark these on your calendar:

MONDAY, FEB. 17

#### • PSAI New Service Tech Training for Portable Sanitation Professionals

Speaker Karleen Kos, executive director of the Portable Sanitation Association International, shares the newly revised basic training course for technicians that covers transportation and logistics, cleaning and maintaining equipment, health safety, and professional excellence. Kos is backed up by a panel of experts; this is the perfect opportunity to get your new drivers valuable training and show them everything the industry has to offer.

TUESDAY, FEB. 18

#### • Putting Your Best Face Forward on Facebook in the Portable Sanitation Industry

As owner of Crossroads Portables in Belding, Michigan, presenter Andrea Booker knows what it's like to keep up with social media for her company while also running service routes all day. And her perspective is just what is needed by busy PROs. Attendees will leave with an action plan for social media, and Booker promises to help you get more impact from your social media posts and generate more sales through platforms like Facebook.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19

#### • Hard Won Knowledge; Small-Business Guidance From Practical Experience

Jim Aanderud, consultant and former wastewater-related contracting company own-

er will discuss several topics aimed at building your business. They include leadership, hiring workers, training programs, and purchasing new equipment and planning for equipment replacement.

#### • Preparing for Extremes in Portable Sanitation

Supported by a panel of experts, Kos returns with an interesting presentation on handling the extreme conditions you may find in the portable sanitation industry. Among the situations you may encounter are servicing units in extreme cold or hot temperatures and securing units in

windy conditions. The group will discuss steps to create a hazard preparedness plan and provide portable sanitation during a natural disaster.

#### • Business Exit Strategies: Selling Your Company on Your Terms

Financial expert A. Rhodes Wilson will discuss the best way to sell or leave your small business. He will share advice on strategies to get the best price for your business while also developing favorable payment terms for the buyer. He will talk about deciding when you want to sell the business and how to identify different paths to exit. ■

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### OVERHEARD ONLINE

“The content you share on social media can be informal and fun — maybe some behind-the-scenes, candid photos of your team to help humanize your company and develop stronger emotional attachments.”

— New Year's Resolutions for Portable Restroom Operators  
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**YOU'RE SO PLAIN**

## Amp Up Your Website's 'About Me' Section

Marketing pros Carter Harkins and Taylor Hill walk portable restroom operators through the process of writing an effective website bio. Read the article and put their advice to work.

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### EVOLVING BLUEPRINTS

## Retool Your Business Plan

The belief that a business plan is a one-and-done outline of goals is a disservice to your portable restroom operation. A business plan can be a living document that guides you and your employees on the path to success; read more here.

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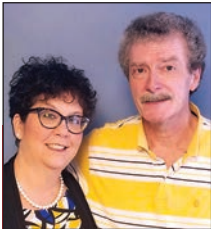
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# Do You Follow OSHA Safety Log Regulations?

**PROS WITH 10 EMPLOYEES OR MORE ARE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE FEDERAL SAFETY LOGS AND POST THE RESULTS EVERY FEBRUARY**

**By Jeff and Terri Wigley**

**Question:** Could you please provide some clarity around the OSHA 300 (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) Safety Log process? I have heard bits and pieces about the process and have never really understood the purpose or the requirements.

**Answer:** This is a very timely topic. The bottom line is that all portable restroom companies with more than 10 employees are to complete and post the OSHA 300A Log for the previous year in a visible location in the office from Feb. 1 to April 30 each year. Is your log posted now as you read this February column?

We hope this is not a surprise to most PROs. If this is “new news,” please continue to read and we will do our best to describe the program and to simplify these rather complex procedures.

## **What is this OSHA program?**

The OSHA Form 300 Log is a federal requirement designed to report safety in the workplace. In 2002, OSHA established the current posting dates for Form 300A in the workplace. This form along with Form 300 and 301 compose this program.

## **What are the required forms?**

- OSHA Form 300 is entitled “Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.” This document lists each job-related injury by employee name, job title, where the injury or illness occurred, description of the injury or fatality, and total days away from work. This listing is maintained in a file, and the records are to be kept for a minimum of five years. Our recommendation is to retain all of these files for a longer period of time and to store them with the company’s personnel records.

- OSHA Form 300A is entitled “Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.” This is the form that must be posted annually. This document provides only three areas of summary information, which protects individual confidentiality. The first section summarizes the number of cases from the previous year, total number of cases with days away from work and total number of cases with job transfer or restriction. The second section provides a total number of days away from work for all cases, as well as total number of days of job transfer or restriction. The final section provides summary-only information concerning types of injury and illness types. If the company has no incidents, “zero” must be recorded and the summary form is still to be posted for the required three-month period.

- OSHA Form 301 is entitled “Injury and Illness Incident Report.” This provides the details of each incident, the employee involved, the diagnosis, physician(s) involved, hospitalization details (if applicable) and all other pertinent information concerning the incident.

**Safety is one of the cornerstones of a successful company. The OSHA Safety Reporting Program allows PROs to monitor safety in the workplace, identify possible safety issues and create an atmosphere where safety and safe working conditions are paramount in importance.**

## **How does one obtain these forms?**

The OSHA website is [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov). All three forms may be downloaded from this site, and questions and answers can be accessed.

## **What is reported to OSHA and when?**

Effective in 2015, the following timelines must be observed:

- Work-related fatalities must be reported to OSHA within eight hours.
- Work-related hospitalizations must be reported within 24 hours.
- Work-related amputations, loss of an eye or other serious injury must be reported to OSHA within 24 hours.

## **Is there an electronic reporting requirement for Form 300A?**

Yes. Two categories of companies must electronically report to OSHA: Companies with 250 or more employees, and companies with certain NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes with more than 20 and less than 250 employees are to electronically submit their reports on a designated annual schedule. Our research revealed that NAICS Code 5621 – Waste Collection – is one of the designated categories, but our specific NAICS Code 562991 – Septic Tank and Related Services – is not. We mention this only for PROs who may have other types of businesses in the Waste Collection industry.

## **Are there penalties for not maintaining an OSHA 300A Log?**

Yes. In the event of an OSHA inspection, failure to maintain and present the 300A Log can result in a fine of up to \$8,000 for each year of violation.

## **What are the most common mistakes when completing the OSHA Log?**

According to OSHA, the top five errors are:

- Assuming that light duty is not a work restriction
- Dismissing the employee statement as not accurate or not usable as a reference



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- Failing to report the injury because the employee did not report it in a timely manner
- Failing to record medical treatment
- Forgetting to keep track of lost workdays during lengthy, long-term treatments

## What are the benefits of this program?

Safety is one of the cornerstones of a successful company. The OSHA Safety Reporting Program allows PROs to monitor safety in the workplace, identify possible safety issues and create an atmosphere where safety and safe working conditions are paramount in importance.

## Are there programs to voluntarily become involved with OSHA in order to further improve safety?

OSHA does make programs available to businesses that would like to work cooperatively with the agency to help prevent accidents and injuries in the workplace. Please consult your local OSHA office about these opportunities. Finally, some states have OSHA-approved State Plans where cooperative assistance is also available.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

OSHA and its rules and regulations are the ultimate arbiter of this program. Please consult the OSHA website for specific questions or concerns. In addition, if you would like to share any further information about this rather complex topic or to add your own experiences about OSHA Safety Reporting, please let us know and we will include the information in a future column.

If you haven't already, get those 300A Logs posted now! ■

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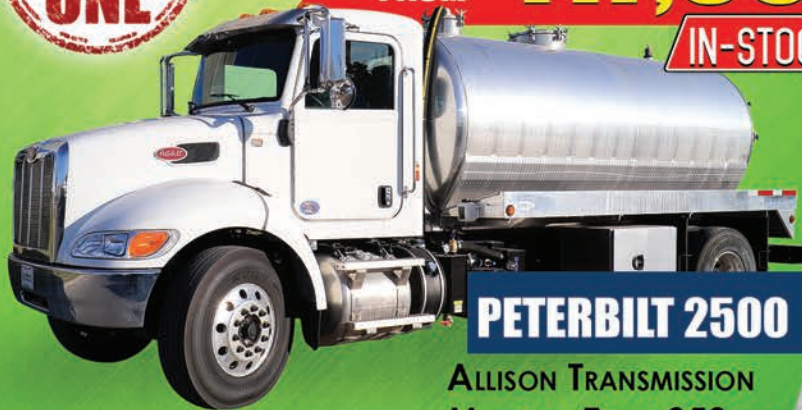
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Mike Benson is shown on the grounds at A1 Porta Potty with a trailer from A Restroom Trailer Co. (ART Co.). (Photos by Nathan Cornetet)

# HE'S MAGIC MIKE

Showman and Louisville-area DJ Mike Benson is a nonstop promoter for the value of quality portable sanitation service

BY STEVE LUND

**M**ike Benson worked as a master of ceremonies for events and as a wedding DJ for years before he became a portable restroom operator. Two skills from his previous career have served him well in his new venture: showmanship and the ability to make people feel at ease.

In four years, A1 Porta Potty has grown from 60 units and one truck to more than 1,000 restrooms, seven trucks and six restroom trailers, plus 76 trash containers, 24 storage containers and 2,500 feet of temporary fencing. The company is located in Floyds Knobs, Indiana, just north of Louisville, Kentucky.

## HE'S MAGIC MIKE

His showmanship is apparent in the promotional videos he posts to Facebook, where he uses his DJ name of Magic Mike. He says he started using the name Magic Mike long before the movie of that name came out. In his Facebook videos, he's a Southern character in the style of Larry the Cable Guy. He starts with, "Hey folks, it's your old pal Magic Mike right here," and he shows off how clean his portable restrooms are or perhaps shows where they are going to be in the coming weekend. If he buys new units, he'll make a video to introduce them. The videos are short and funny, and they get shared.

(continued)

## A1 Porta Potty Floyds Knobs, Indiana

Owner: Mike Benson

Founded: 2015

Employees: 9

Services: Portable sanitation, septic service, trash and storage containers, temporary fencing

Service area: 50-mile radius from Louisville, Kentucky





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"More or less people follow me personally as a character," says Benson, 50. "Magic Mike is like the marketing guru for A1 Porta Potty."

He had a substantial Facebook following when he was a DJ, so of course he shares the A1 Porta Potty posts with that audience. But he has also built his following by encouraging other businesses, especially local wedding-service vendors, to use Facebook. He shares their posts, and they share his.

Benson started his company in 2015, about the same time that President Donald Trump started his presidential campaign.

"He said, 'Let's make America great again.' So I said, 'Let Magic Mike make portable restrooms great again,'" Benson recalls. "Then I started doing little videos, little snippets about it, tag lines, things like that. The public grasped hold of it. Festivals started coming to me, and everyone wanted a better service. That's how it took off."

Benson uses his Facebook posts to help make people comfortable about using a portable restroom. It's a skill he developed as a host for wedding receptions, which can be high-anxiety events for the families.

*Michael Jenkins and Andy Devore set up units for a local festival. The truck they're using carries a KeeVac Industries slide-in vacuum unit up front and a flatbed for restroom delivery.*

## CLEANLINESS COUNTS

"People get really nervous on their wedding day. I would tell them, 'Hey, you're in my sandbox now. Let me show you how to make this a great day,'" Benson says. "After learning how to put people at ease, it was so much easier for me to do restrooms. I took a more positive approach to it. I'd say, see the A1 Porta Potty logo? It's OK to use these."

Benson thinks promoting cleanliness is important to making people comfortable about using portable restrooms. All his service trucks are equipped with pressure washers, and he wants his customers to notice that his crews use them.

"If there are any dirt stains, they scrub them with a brush. Then they hit it with a pressure washer to wash everything out. It may take a couple of extra minutes, but your customer is also standing there, maybe watching through the window."

"They spray the unit down with a bleach-soap washdown mixture, then they go right behind it and scrub. If there are any dirt stains, they scrub them with a brush. Then they hit it with a pressure washer to wash everything out. It may take a couple of extra minutes, but your customer is also standing there, maybe watching through the window. They see the time that it takes, too, and they're going to go right behind you when you leave. They're going to see how fresh it smells and how nice it looks."

**MIKE BENSON**

He also makes sure all of his route drivers have a book listing all chemicals used in their cleaning products.

That way if anyone questions what's being used, or if there is a spill or other emergency, the information will be handy.

## BRAND LOYAL

Benson likes to stick with one brand in almost every aspect of his business.

A1 Porta Potty has more than 1,000 portable restrooms, and all of them are made by PolyJohn Enterprises. Benson uses the PJN3 standard model,

*(continued)*



*The A1 Porta Potty team includes (from left) Michael Jenkins, Jessie Cain, Shaun Dolbeare, Mike Benson, James Swartz and Andy Devore.*





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**Right:** Technician Andy Devore cleans a restroom from PolyJohn Enterprises. The truck he's using is outfitted with a slide-in unit from KeeVac Industries.

**Below:** Technicians Michael Jenkins, left, and Andy Devore prepare PolyJohn Enterprises restrooms for use at a special event in Jeffersonville, Indiana.



the Comfort XL handicapped-accessible model and PJN3 models with sinks replacing urinals.

His restroom trailers, which include two- and three-station trailers, a four-station unit, a six-station unit and a nine-station trailer, are all made by A Restroom Trailer Co. (ART Co.).

He also uses only one brand of cleaning product — Walex.

“Every chemical I get has the same scent, even the scent rings that you hang in the windows. All the scents match, so it’s not offsetting,” he says.

Almost all of his trucks use Masport pumps.

His truck fleet includes the first truck he bought, a 1997 International with a steel 600-gallon waste and 200-gallon freshwater tank and Masport pump. The cab has severe rust damage on the underside, and the crew refers to that truck as Grandpa. “If your truck breaks down, you’ve got to use Grandpa, so they always try to keep their trucks from breaking down,” Benson says.

The company has two larger vacuum trucks: a 2014 Kenworth with a 1,600-gallon waste, 300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and a 2012 Ford with a 2,000-gallon waste, 200-gallon freshwater aluminum tank. Both trucks have Masport pumps, and both are able to haul a couple of portable restrooms on the back. A1 Porta Potty uses both trucks for portable restroom servicing and septic pumping. Both trucks were bought used.

A1 Porta Potty also has a KeeVac Industries 300-gallon waste and 150-gallon freshwater aluminum slide-in unit with a Honda power plant. The unit has been mounted on several trucks over the years and is currently on an older Dodge. It’s not in regular use but is outfitted with a gas-heated pressure washer, so it gets sent out when there is an especially dirty restroom to be retrieved.

## In the air for charity

Every year just before Thanksgiving, Mike Benson, the owner of A1 Porta Potty in Floyds Knobs, Indiana, spends five days and four nights living on a platform hoisted 60 feet in the air on a scissor lift. He basically lives in a box and drops a bucket down on a rope for food and beverages. Of course, he also has a portable restroom from A1 Porta Potty on the platform.

The point is to generate excitement for a charity known as Bikes or Bust, which provides bicycles to local children for Christmas. It was started by a Louisville, Kentucky, radio personality known as Dingo, and he challenged Benson — a well-known personality from his former career as a wedding DJ and stage host — to get involved.

Benson was all-in from the beginning. The first year, he helped out on the ground. The second year, and every year since, he’s been up in the air and talking on the radio every 15 minutes to encourage people to donate bicycles or money. They’d rather have bicycles.

“The idea is to bring a physical bicycle,” Benson says. “You don’t want to give a child money on Christmas Day. You want him or her to see a bicycle. You want them to have a smile on their face, because there’s a shiny new bicycle that they weren’t expecting.”

The bicycles Benson collects on the Indiana side of the Ohio River get distributed by The Salvation Army. The bicycles Dingo collects on the Louisville side of the river are distributed by the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign. The first year, they brought in 650 bikes. In 2018, it rose to 2,541 bikes.

Benson and his counterpart go up on the platform at 5 a.m. on a Thursday, and they don’t come down until 8 a.m. Monday.

“The morning that we go up, there’s nothing on the ground beneath us,” Benson says. “And when we come down, there’s a mass of bicycles.”

Benson says living on the platform is exciting because of what’s happening below, but it isn’t fun. “There’s very limited space where you can actually move around up there, and with the weather around here, you never know what’s going to happen,” Benson says.

One year there was a tornado warning. That prompted a lowering of the platform to about 10 feet off the ground so he could get down if necessary. Last winter there was an ice storm the first day Benson went up.

Benson is proud of the way the community has responded to the charity drive.

“Families would buy a bike and bring it to us. They would tell their children what the purpose of doing this is, the gift of giving. On my side, some builders and some charitable groups would start challenging people. Police would challenge firefighters.”



The last couple years, Benson has been buying new models, all from Ram. Two of them, a 2017 and 2019 were outfitted by PortaLogix. They have 950-gallon aluminum waste tanks and 350-gallon freshwater tanks in the bed of the truck. They both have Masport pumps.

A 2018 Ram was outfitted by Bruder Tank with a 950-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and a Masport pump.

The company also has three trailers to haul restrooms, two of them made by Liquid Waste Industries.

## FINDING NEW MARKETS

Benson has a knack for finding new places to put portable restrooms. For example, he approached local campgrounds and RV parks and offered restrooms to individual campers for occasions when they might have a lot of visitors.

"My approach would be: If people are coming over for the weekend, why use your trailer? Why not get a port-a-potty? We can pump the port-a-potty, and you can save the trailer." Or, let's say it's a Memorial Day weekend and there are a lot of people. Don't let them run in and out of the camper. Let them use a port-a-potty. Campgrounds liked it because it cut down the use of their facilities. We eventually grew into pumping their septic."

For another example, A1 Porta Potty was placing restrooms at parking lots where many RVs would set up for Thunder Over Louisville, a big air show and fireworks display. It's one of the preliminary events before the Kentucky Derby.

"Thousands of people come to town," Benson says. "They go to lots on both sides of the river, and they just stay. We went to these parking lots and set up port-a-potty rentals. Then we took that to another level. We would go back on Sunday and park at the parking lot exits to pump their campers before they left. We charged \$25. It saved them a lot of time waiting to dump. This past Thunder, we probably pumped 60 to 75 campers in one lot."

He also promotes putting portable restrooms at home swimming pools so people don't have to run in and out of the house so much.

Most of his business, though, is at construction sites, plus festivals and weddings. The local economy is booming, and one of his investors had a landscaping company and knew a lot of builders.

"We approached the builders and said, 'What if we could do this and make a better restroom?' All the builders jumped on board right away," Benson says. "That's where it started to take off. Then I took it to the next level by changing the word 'party' to 'potty' in my marketing. Have a barbecue potty, a birthday potty, wedding potty, pool potty. We're not having a party, we're having a potty."

It's the social media activity, Benson says, that spurred his company's growth.

"It was the voice. People laughed, and people grasped ahold of it," he says. "The concept of selling the merchandise went right along with it."

## TO THE WWETT SHOW

Benson makes a point of going to the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show every year. He bought his company's first truck from a posting on the sales bulletin board there. He likes to make contact with the companies that make the products he uses.

"I started doing little videos, little snippets about it, tag lines, things like that. The public grasped hold of it. Festivals started coming to me, and everyone wanted a better service. That's how it took off."

**MIKE BENSON**

## MORE INFO

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"I love going to talk to them, and actually they love talking to me, just because of the entrepreneurial part of taking a restroom and making it great again and being the positive guy," Benson says. His vendors get him together with newcomers to the industry.



"They want to introduce me to people who have just started in the restroom business and talk to them about being positive in it," he says. "I tell them, don't think its negative and that it's the worst thing out there. That's what (the public sometimes) thinks, but do things to make it better."

That's Benson's philosophy about portable restroom business in a nutshell: Make it better.


"Make people not scared to use them," he says. "Doing the fun videos was to get in front of people saying, 'They're OK to use. They're going to be clean.' It was a great concept, and it took off." ■

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**THE JOB:** California Capital Airshow  
**LOCATION:** Mather Airport, Sacramento  
**THE PRO:** Area Portable Services

*The U.S. Navy Blue Angels fly in close formation at the California Capital Airshow. (Photos by Lezlie Sterling)*

# Flyin' High

An awe-inspiring California air show featuring the Blue Angels is a signature service event for Area Portable Services **BY BETTY DAGEFORDE**

## THE TEAM

Area Portable Services in Rancho Cordova, California, provides portable restrooms and temporary fencing for events and construction sites within a 45-mile radius around nearby Sacramento. The company is owned by Doug Gredvig. Jason Klapper, sales manager, oversaw the California Capital Airshow project along with J.J. Rengstorff, operations manager, who tapped about 10 of the company's 35 employees for the event.

## COMPANY HISTORY

Gredvig enjoyed a successful minor league baseball career, but after seven years and a couple of back surgeries, he retired in 2006. He thought he might have a knack for business, so he decided to give entrepreneurship a try. A curiosity about the sanitation industry had been piqued during his travels, which led to helping out a Maryland PRO in the offseason — so that industry seemed a natural fit.

Gredvig bought a load of portable restrooms and a vacuum truck and, with a competitive spirit and determination, started knocking on doors. Within a short period of time, he brought on help and has been growing ever since.

*(continued)*

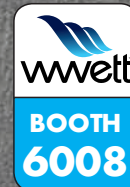
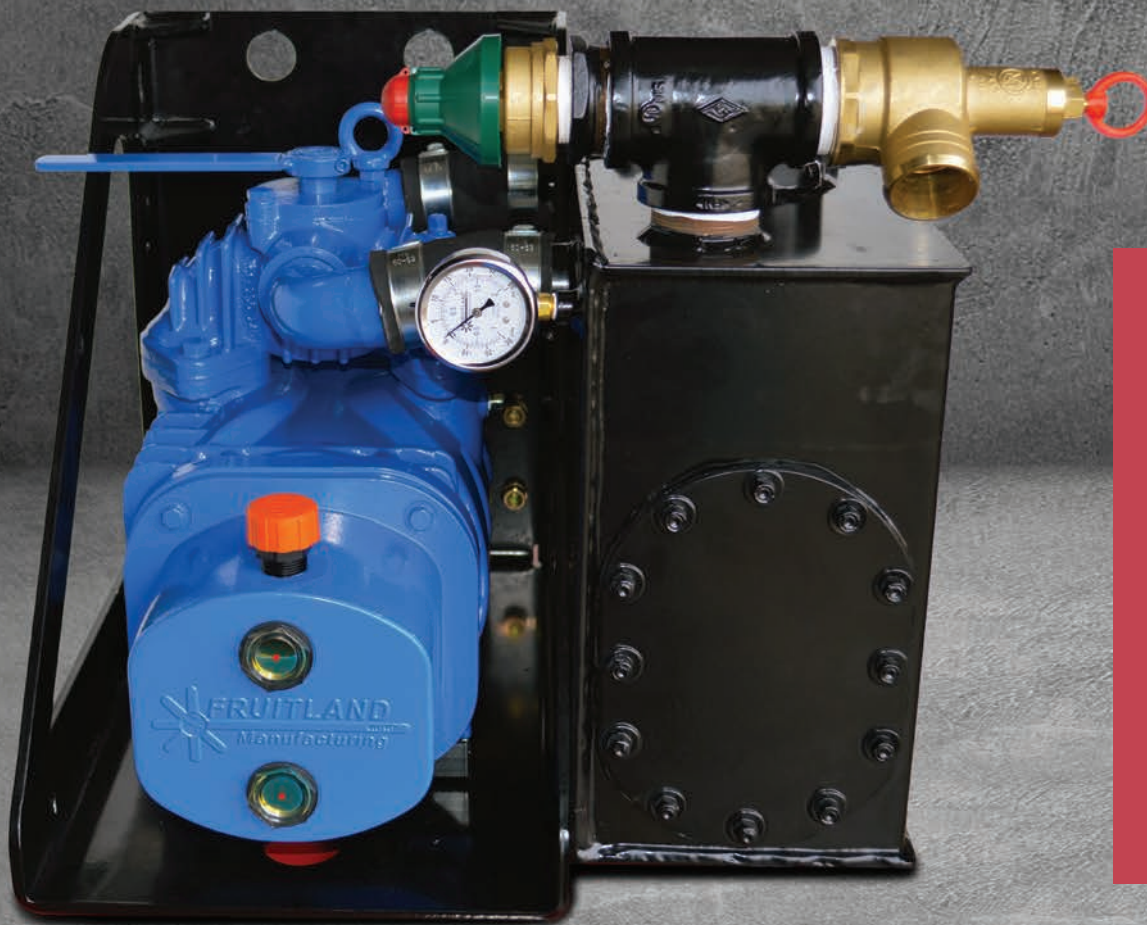
*The Area Portable Services leadership team includes, from left, Jason Klapper, sales manager; Doug Gredvig, owner; and J.J. Rengstorff, operations manager. They are shown with one of several service trucks on hand, built out by Davidson Tank, Crescent Tank and Tank World, all carrying Masport pumps.*





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**Left:** Technicians Josh Bridges, left, and Jermaine Felton restock paper supplies as they service restrooms at Mather Airport in Sacramento, California.

**Below:** Operations manager J.J. Rengstorff, right, and drivers David Fuentes, left, and Jermaine Felton, center, service a hand-wash station from Satellite | PolyPortables.



## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Klapper started with the company in May 2017 and landed the contract for the air show, now their largest event. Klapper shepherded it through the bidding process, but he says it wasn't just about the numbers. "It was more about being service-oriented and able to take care of such a large event in a short amount of time," he says, "and making the experience positive for the guests." The company has had the job every year since.

## THE MAIN EVENT

The U.S. Navy Blue Angels' precision flight demonstration team was a highlight of the California Capital Airshow held at Mather Airport in Sacramento the weekend of Oct. 5-6, 2019. The event drew more than 120,000 attendees. The price of admission covered aerial performances including parachuting, barnstorming and a D-Day tribute; on-ground military and civilian aircraft displays; interactive informational activities; and the Kiddie Hawk children's activity area.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Klapper and Rengstorff began the planning process by taking the previous year's numbers, factoring in the organizers' preliminary attendance

guesstimate, which assumed larger crowds because of the Blue Angels, and adjusting for the fact that it was reduced from a three-day event in 2018 to two days. For 2019, they provided 175 gray Maxim 3000 standard units, 27 Freedom, three ADA-compliant units, 50 double-station Breeze hand-wash units and a few 300-gallon holding tanks for food vendors, all from Satellite | PolyPortables. They also brought in seven restroom trailers from JAG Mobile Solutions and NuConcepts, ranging in size from two to eight stalls.

## LET'S ROLL

Proper layout for the event is critical, Klapper says. "We don't want them [units] blocking views or aircraft," he says. "And planes might come in later than expected so we can't have certain banks set up because they'd get blown over by the jet blast. When they bring in a big C-5, it needs a lot of space, so there are some units that wait until all the planes are there to get into their fi-

*(continued)*



*About 120,000 people attended the air show, which included the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, seen here on the tarmac.*





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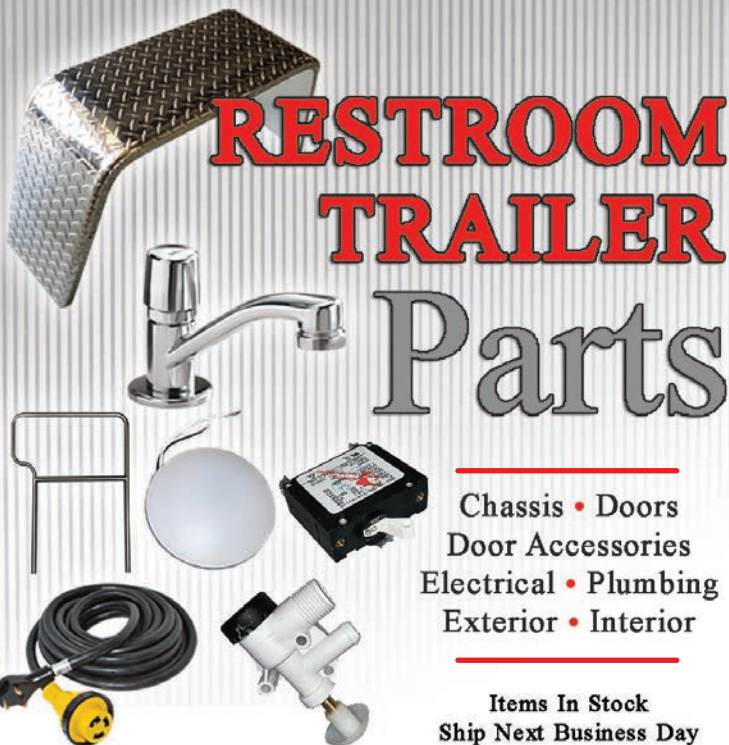
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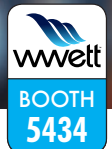
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**Right:** Air show visitors utilize one of the restroom trailers on hand, this one from JAG Mobile Solutions.

**Below:** Spectators use some of the 175 Satellite | PolyPortables restrooms and hand-wash stations during the run of the air show.



nal position.” Five or six months out, Area Portable Services got together with event organizers to review the preliminary layout and quantities. Fine-tuning the plan started about a month out and continued right up until showtime.

On Wednesday, the team started transporting equipment to the airfield 5 miles away using eight-unit, 12-unit and 16-unit trailers (McKee Technologies - Explorer Trailers). Units were set up in a dozen locations. Large banks of about 12 were placed throughout the facility including major walkways, the grandstand and the food court. Smaller banks or singles were set up at entrance gates, parking lots, the fire department compound and first-aid stations. Restroom trailers were stationed at private VIP chalets.

**“Being at the air show and seeing the planes flying, that’s a lot of fun. But taking care of such a large crowd, that’s the most fulfilling part for me — seeing our team working together, making it as seamless as possible.”**

**JASON KLAPPER**

## KEEPIN’ IT CLEAN

On Saturday morning, the uniformed crew headed out to the airfield in six of the company’s vacuum trucks. The trucks weren’t used until evening but remained on site throughout the day at the company’s base camp. “It gives us a nice presence — our nice shiny trucks lined up in a row,” Klapper says. The crew spent the day restocking and wiping down units. They were mostly feet on the street, but they also had access to facility-provided golf carts. The air show’s volunteer staff was also on hand to help, particularly for the restroom trailers, so there was no chance for cleanliness problems.

Base camp was also where the crew took their breaks. “We put up [a canopy] and some chairs and had plenty of water and Gatorade and snacks on hand,” Klapper says. “I brought donuts in the morning, and we provided lunch. We keep them well hydrated and well fed.”

On Sunday morning, the crew repeated the process, also bringing in a few hauling trailers so they could begin removal that night, finishing by Tuesday.

Pumping took place Saturday night shortly after the show ended at 5 p.m. and again Sunday night when the event concluded using a 2015 Ford F-550 with a 750-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank from Crescent Tank, a 2017 Hino with a 1,000-gallon waste and 300-gallon freshwater tank from Crescent Tank, a 2017 Hino with a 1,500-gallon waste and 600-gallon freshwater tank from Davidson Tank, two 2019 Hino 268As with 1,100-gallon waste and 500-gallon freshwater tanks from Davidson Tank, and a 2019 Ford F-550 with a 900-gallon waste and 400-gallon freshwater tank from Tank World. All have steel tanks and Masport pumps. The company uses deodorant products from Walex Products. Waste was taken to the nearby 24-hour Sacramento County wastewater treatment plant.

## THINKING AHEAD

Other than a few hand-wash stations running out of water — quickly swapped out with extras on hand — the event went smoothly, Klapper reports. He and Rengstorff were on site the entire time, already thinking about next year. “We always take notes,” he says. “Then we go through how the event went and where banks were, and we consider if we want to add more in certain areas because of traffic flow.”

In addition to a lot of planning, Klapper gives credit to the team for a smooth-running operation. “Being at the air show and seeing the planes flying, that’s a lot of fun. But taking care of such a large crowd, that’s the most fulfilling part for me — seeing our team working together, making it as seamless as possible. It’s a credit to all the guys who put in the time and hard work. It really makes this thing shine.” ■

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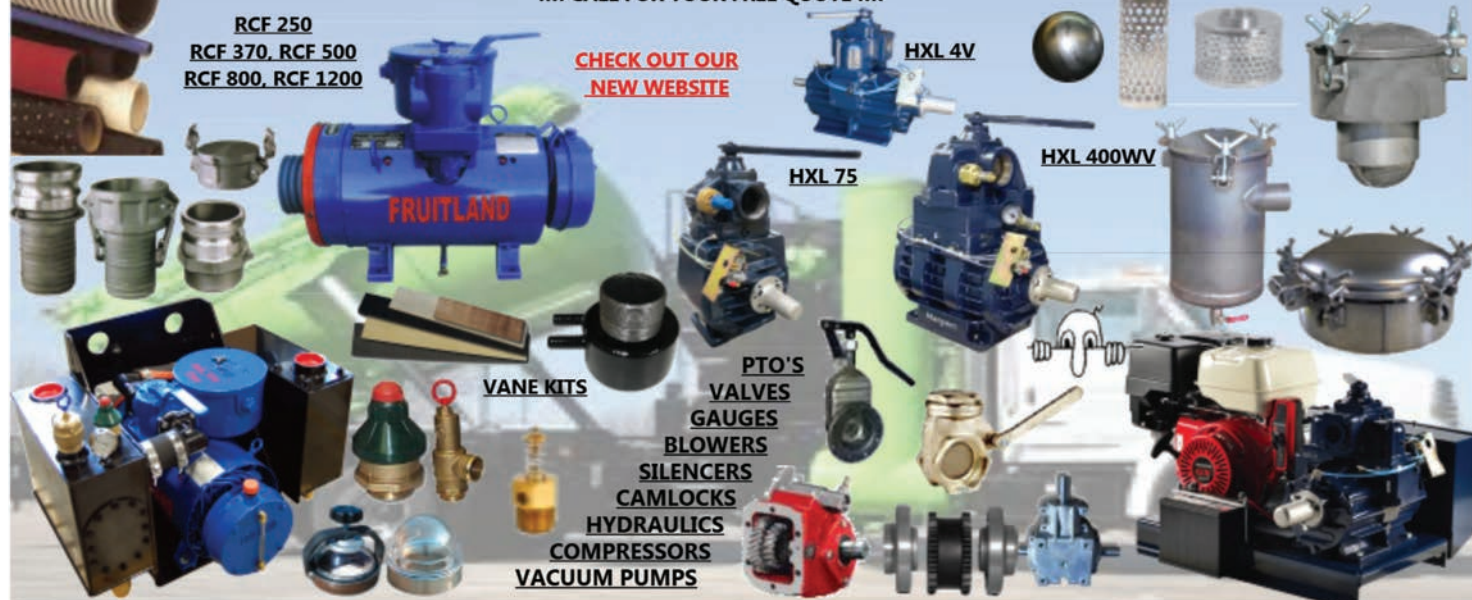


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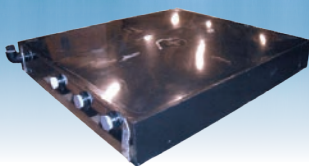
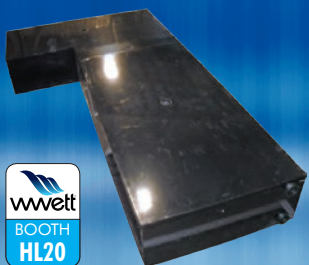
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# 5 Signs It's Time to Say Goodbye to Your Customer

**SOMETIMES LONG-TERM CUSTOMERS JUST DON'T SERVE YOUR COMPANY'S BEST INTERESTS. HERE'S HOW TO BREAK UP WITH THEM THE RIGHT WAY.**

By Kate Zabriskie

**G**oodbye customer! It's nothing personal (at least not usually). Sometimes customers' expectations can't be met, other times customers require an inordinate amount of time, and on rare occasions, a customer's behavior may expose an organization to undue peril. When any of those situations occur, it's best to say goodbye and to do so quickly in a way that creates the least resentment on both sides.

Here are five signs it's time to part company and how to say, "So long!"

## 1. They cause 80% of your problems and don't contribute even close to 80% of your revenue.

From time to time, any customer could require more energy than others. Those high-demand situations are normal. What isn't normal, however, is the perpetual squeaky wheel that routinely disrupts normal business operations.

Customers who buy very little and cost a lot of time, personnel or mental energy to service may not be the customers you want to keep — especially if serving them prevents you from taking care of customers or clients who are more profitable and easier to help.

**Goodbye Move:** When a customer is more work than it's worth, the easiest way to say goodbye is to rely on the classic "It's not you, it's me" approach. For example: *"Brad, I'm concerned. I've reviewed your account and have discovered that we're doing a lot of rework and revisions to the projects we have with your firm. I've concluded that there has got to be someone who is a better fit for you. We're not hitting the mark with you the way we do with our other clients. This isn't good for you or us."* If after that they insist on staying anyway, consider raising your rates accordingly.

## 2. They are abusive to your employees.

When management allows customers to abuse employees, it's the same as perpetrating the abuse directly. Do customers swear, yell, demean or harass your employees? If so, it's time to draw a line in the sand and let them know what behavior is and isn't acceptable. *"Julie, we have a no-profanity rule here. Respect is one of our core values, and we've agreed that we don't yell and swear at our clients or each other."*

If the bad behavior continues, the relationship should stop. *"But she's our best customer. She has a lot of sway."* Maybe so. She's also the poison that potentially exposes the organization to a lawsuit, erodes morale and negatively affects the culture.

**Goodbye Move:** When someone is abusive, again, it's best to say goodbye and to do so in a calm and professional manner. *"Julie, you're obviously*

*Customers who buy very little and cost a lot of time, personnel or mental energy to service may not be the customers you want to keep — especially if serving them prevents you from taking care of customers or clients who are more profitable and easier to help.*

*unhappy, and my employees are too. For the benefit of everyone, at this point I think it's best that we part company. We both deserve better."*

## 3. Their behavior is out of touch with your ethics policies and practices.

You are the company you keep. If you are enabling customers to act in a way that is in disagreement with your organization's values or the law, it may be time to say goodbye. Do you really want to associate yourself and your organization with those whose business practices are illegal, immoral or routinely questionable? When you like the people on a personal level, it can feel like a tough decision when you're making it. The good news is once you do, you won't look back.

**Goodbye Move:** When someone or an organization exposes you to unneeded risk, it's prudent to disassociate yourself and your organization from them pronto. *"We're a very conservative organization. While we understand others have a more robust appetite for risk, it's typically something we avoid. For that reason, another vendor is probably going to better meet your needs. At this point, we're really just not a good fit."*

## 4. They expose you to unneeded financial risk.

If you spend more time chasing payments than performing work, it's time to consider a new payment plan at a minimum or a permanent breakup if that step doesn't solve the problem.

**Goodbye Move:** Just as it doesn't make sense to stay involved with someone who exposes you to ethical and legal risks, an organization that puts your pocketbook on the line is probably best avoided. *"Janet, I know we've tried a range of payment options to make this relationship work. At this point, we simply don't have the financial appetite to accommodate your payment schedule. For that reason, I'm asking you to find another vendor. We can't accommodate the work."*





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#### 5. You're no longer a good fit.

Sometimes people and organizations grow apart. Nobody has done anything wrong; the two parties are just in different places and it's time to say goodbye.

**Goodbye Move:** This last goodbye is the hardest. When you find you and your customer are no longer compatible, it's a good idea to start the conversation with something open-ended. *"Bill, tell me a little bit about how you see your business growing in the next few years."*

Assuming Bill isn't planning for growth, you might continue with: *"It's good to hear that you're comfortable where you are. That's a nice place and a future goal of ours. As you may know, we're on a growth strategy and have been for a couple of years. What concerns me is our ability to give you the attention in the future that we've been able to give you in the past. I think you deserve to work with a partner company that can make your work priority No. 1, and right now I don't think that's us."*

#### DO IT NOW

No matter the reason, prolonging a relationship that isn't working does no one any favors. It's usually not fun to say goodbye, but once you do, you'll have more time to say hello to customers who should conduct business with you. ■

Kate Zabriskie is president of Business Training Works, a Maryland-based talent development firm. Reach her at [www.businesstrainingworks.com](http://www.businesstrainingworks.com).

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## Where's the Restroom?

February 2020



## This Roadside Attraction Is Dedicated to a Super Food

OUR *PRO* T-SHIRT TRAVELED FAR AND WIDE TO END UP AT THIS MYSTERY LOCATION. CAN YOU NAME IT?

By Jim Kneiszel

**T**his past winner of the Where's the Restroom? contest, Elliot Dill of Kansas City, Missouri, wore the *Portable Restroom Operator* T-shirt he won when he ventured out on vacation, then submitted a photo of himself at a tourist attraction. Now it's your turn to guess where he was found standing next to a Five Peaks restroom.

We're looking for the name of the attraction, the city and state, and the intersection where it is found. Here are a few clues to help you guess where the gentleman is visiting.

1. The town, population 567, was settled soon after the Revolutionary War.
2. The slogan for the attraction, founded in 2001, is "Engineered By Nature."
3. The world's largest recreation of a Native American fruit, not Concord grapes, raspberries or cranberries.
4. Also home to a national organization that promotes patriotism.
5. From this location, you can see a large mountain in a national park.
6. On the 44th parallel.
7. Home to a baseball notable, one of only two pitchers in Major League history to win 20 games for a team that lost 100 games.

To win the contest, be the first person to respond with the correct location where the restroom trailer is located. The winner will receive a *PRO* T-shirt and recognition as a geographical whiz. Send your responses to [editor@promonthly.com](mailto:editor@promonthly.com). The winner will be announced at [PROmonthly.com](http://PROmonthly.com) and through the *PRO* Facebook page. ■

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

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*Karleen Kos is executive director of the Portable Sanitation Association International. She may be reached at [karleenk@psai.org](mailto:karleenk@psai.org) or 952-854-8300.*



# Winter Brings Industry Exhibition and Education Options for PROs

By Karleen Kos

Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between things that seem very alike. If you are a Harry Potter fan, you know that even Mrs. Weasley had trouble sorting out Fred and George. If you are older, you might recall the challenges — at least from a distance — of separating the Pontiac, Chevrolet and Oldsmobile “cookie-cutter cars” of the 1980s. And who can say whether there is any meaningful distinction between an Oreo and a Hydro cookie in a blind taste test?

So it is with the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show and the Portable Sanitation Association International's Convention and Trade Show. In some ways they seem very similar, yet

there are some clear differences. The WWETT Show is larger and located in Indianapolis, while the PSAI event is smaller and moves around the country. But there are more meaningful differences too. So when you are considering which one to attend, it might be helpful to have the following things in mind:

- **Are you interested primarily in portable sanitation or a wide range of wastewater-related industries?** By its larger nature, the WWETT Show reaches into many aspects of the water and wastewater industries. The PSAI's event has been created by, and for, portable sanitation professionals, and that is its primary focus.
- **Do you want to blend into something big or have a personalized experience?** If you like to go to a huge show, walk the floor and “do your own thing,” the WWETT Show is a great fit for you. With its huge space and hundreds of vendors, you can spend days doing just that. The PSAI's event, by contrast, is more interactive with other attendees. You will meet and talk with people who do what you do. You'll pick topics that matter to you, share lessons you've learned and hear how others have solved some of the problems you've faced. You'll be drawn into dinners and discussions that will have an immediate impact on your business back home. When you leave, you'll be leaving folks who feel like family.
- **Do you want speakers with hands-on experience in your field?** No doubt about it, the WWETT Show offers some great educational opportunities across a lot of fields. Many of their speakers are experts in whatever they do. With its singular focus, the PSAI's programming drills down into both the “why” and “how” of various aspects of running a portable sanitation company or business line. From our roundtable discussions to our hands-on learning labs, most of the presenters and facilitators actually do what you do for a living.

The portable sanitation industry is lucky to have two great events to consider for continuing education and product display. We hope you will attend one or both of them. The WWETT Show will be held Feb. 17-20 at the Indiana Convention Center, and the PSAI's Annual Convention and Trade Show will be held March 24-28 at the Baltimore Convention Center. Next year, join the PSAI Feb. 2-5 in Memphis, Tennessee, and also check out WWETT Feb. 22-25, 2021, in Indianapolis. We'll see you there! ■

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2016 2-stall Rich restroom trailer with 120-gallon freshwater tank/350-gallon waste. \$14,900. Any questions or pictures please email info@expressportable.com or call 786-488-4276. (P02)

2004 15' Executive Restroom Trailer, white in color, one stall for ladies and one stall for men. Asking \$4,000. 410-795-2947 (P02)

2003 20' Olympia Executive Restroom Trailer, 2 stalls for women, 1 stall and 1 urinal for the men. \$5,000. 410-795-2947 (P02)

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**2005 F550 XL SuperDuty, 2WD.** Lely 700 waste/300 fresh, Masport pump, 12v Leeson water pump. 285,401 miles. Call for more information.

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**2000 International 4700 Series,** DT466 engine, automatic transmission, 262,244 miles, 23,119 hours. 1,100 waste, 400 freshwater, air on the water. PTO-driven Masport pump. Good tires and air brakes. .... \$22,000

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1999 International 4900 Series, DT466, manual transmission, 300k+ miles. 1,500-gallon tank, 1,100/400, dual work stations, PTO driven, Masport/pressure washer, great rubber. Ready to work. Great price \$15,000. Call 317-997-5600. (T03)

2012 Ford F550 cab and chassis with an Imperial 1,100 U.S. gallon tank, 3-compartment 150/600/350 aluminum portable toilet, service unit, with a Masport HXL4 vacuum pump. (Stock#4246V). [www.vacuumsalesinc.com](http://www.vacuumsalesinc.com) (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

2014 Hino 195 stainless steel pump truck, Best Enterprise built 1,050-gallon tank (300 water/750 waste), Conde PTO-driven pump. Runs perfect and dealer maintained, 185k miles. \$36,000. Call 718-634-2780. (T02)

2018 Hino 268A cab & chassis, 25,950 GVW with a new 1,600-gallon portable toilet service unit. (Stock# 13762) [www.VacuumSalesInc.com](http://www.VacuumSalesInc.com) (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648) (TBM)

2012 Chevy 3500 HD Extra Cab - Duramax 6.6 Allison transmission. 275-gallon waste, 125-gallon freshwater. New tank, new tires, Conde pump, Honda motor w/electric start. Hauls 2 units. \$19,500 OBO. Contact Mike 208-739-7151 or mike@portapros.com. (P02)

2006 Ford F750 vac truck, \$25,000 OBO. Contact us at 419-358-1936 or basi\_mm@yahoo.com for pictures or more information. (P02)

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Looking to buy slide-in units - any condition. 239-633-4766. (T05)

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In 1988 Satellite's rental and service division was sold in order for the company to focus on improving their design & supply of portable toilet equipment, service trucks, deodorizers and cleaning supplies to businesses around the world. Better equipment design and function was a significant driving force. Reducing minutes, even seconds, on service and repair times directly improved the operators' profitability and success.

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