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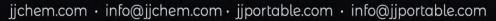








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We've Come a Long Way, Baby! And More Changes Are Coming



Bv Jim Kneiszel

Let's review the many positive changes for the portable sanitation industry over the last decade and forecast where the industry will be 10 years from now

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lot can happen in an industry over a decade. I looked back at my editor's column from the January 2011 issue of PRO, where I compared the portable sanitation industry to the late funnyman Rodney Dangerfield. Neither one got any respect.

At the time I was bothered by the way portable restroom operators were depicted in the media. Newspapers and TV news programs were dominated by "potty humor" whenever the industry came up, whether it was a restroom getting knocked over at a construction site or a traffic crash that involved a pump truck.

"Gotta watch out for those 'lavatory' retrievers," someone posted to a newspaper website after a restroom fell off a trailer. "I guess traffic isn't the only thing that backed up here."

That was tame. Many of the jokes were in poor taste, demeaning PROs and the work they do.

Flash forward 10 years and I don't hear quite so much belittling of our industry. In fact, I would say with all the natural disaster responses we've

seen and the recent COVID-19 pandemic response, PROs are gaining a lot of respect. The general public has come to realize the critical service you and your crews provide when times are tough.

Further, I think folks understand that without your restrooms, many a large event would be impossible. Think about the huge camping music festivals that have become so common in recent years. And major political events, such as presidential inaugurations. With many service innovations, PROs have learned to provide quality sanitation for these events.

PROGRESS MADE

This got me to thinking about other developments that have improved the world of portable sanitation in the past 10 years. As we embark on a new year of challenges for the industry, I'd like to reflect on some important changes we've lived through. Let me know if you have any other advances to add to my informal list.

THERE'S A NEW EXPECTATION OF CLEANLINESS

The pandemic underscored the importance of thorough service of restroom units, but that train was already headed down the track. Your customers have demanded more from you since 2011, and the expectations

were raised with every service improvement you've instituted. We talked about respect earlier; and I think you have built an excellent platform of good practices that fostered a growing respect from restroom users. Among those are definitive service protocols for your crews, pushing for use of hand sanitizers and hand-wash sinks, and continuing to offer equipment upgrades to show customers the way to cleaner restrooms.

YOU'RE ALWAYS ON THE JOB TODAY

I remember the days when a restroom wasn't a prerequisite on construction sites. Work crews would waste time driving to a convenience store to use the bathroom or, on residential job sites, ask the homeowner to use the indoor plumbing. Worst-case scenario, a carpenter would head for the nearest bushes for cover and go outside. Thankfully those cases are few and far between today. Health departments now demand restrooms on any work site. At the same time, restrooms have become the norm at small festivals, parties, running races and outdoor weddings. Your service

is no longer an afterthought but plays an integral role in the lives of millions of people every day.

YOU TAKE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY

Your continued promotion of environmental stewardship has been a winning message. You have promised to handle infectious human waste using best practices, solving an important problem for construction and event customers. You follow all proper disposal rules and work with wastewater treatment plants to effectively recycle a precious water resource. Many of you have started to take this responsibility a step further by developing your own dewatering plants as municipal treatment plants are

overwhelmed and land application opportunities disappear.

YOU'RE LOOKING GOOD

You have dramatically improved the professional appearance of your companies. You send uniformed crews out in the field with updated service vehicles and company policies aimed at raising the bar in service and the industry's reputation. Marketing has changed dramatically, as phone book advertising has virtually disappeared and websites and social media have allowed you to more effectively target your customers. A decade



Above: This is a graphic artist's rendering of what a Wisconsin company's mobile septage treatment system looks like. The working prototype is 6 feet wide by 12 feet long by 8 feet tall and removes all pathogens from human wastewater.

ago, some PROs were still skeptical of these new ways, but no more. One positive industry image change is taking the bathroom humor off trucks and company logos. Tired old one-liners about being No. 1 in the No. 2 business, etc., are thankfully disappearing. PROs have realized these jokes are no way to build value for portable sanitation.

TECHNOLOGY BOOSTS EFFICIENCY

In the past decade, we've nearly reached The Jetsons age in small-business technology. GPS routing and mobile communications have greatly improved, providing service efficiencies never before dreamed of. For a very small price, you can track every restroom unit, every trailer, every truck and therefore every driver to boost the profitability of every service stop. Reduced-emissions trucks are more reliable than they once were; tanks and accessories are lighter, sturdier and better. Direct deposit payroll, instant messaging and tablets in every vehicle are helping the industry go paperless. You are doing more with less and hopefully turning that into a revenue booster.

A LOOK AHEAD

What can we expect over the next 10 years? When we look back in 2031, what will we say moved the portable sanitation industry forward? Imagine for a moment the changes you will see. I'll share a few concepts that may be within reach. Let me know what other predictions you have for this industry that is still maturing and growing.

A NEW KIND OF RESTROOM UNIT

For starters, maybe the U.S. will follow other countries and require all restrooms to flush rather than use the traditional drop tank. What else could change? How about new lightweight and durable materials are developed to create a more rigid structure that can contain more bathroom amenities in the same footprint as a standard restroom? Will these restrooms adapt the features of today's restroom trailers to improve comfort and versatility? We could see a new type of urban restroom allowing restroom providers to build a new service specialty. Skid-mounted, heavy-duty restrooms could be dropped on busy street corners, fire camps and homeless areas, for example. They could perhaps offer the option of plugging into a power grid and sewer infrastructure to provide unlimited service without pumping.

SMART TRUCKS/ZERO-EMISSIONS VEHICLES

The advent of self-driving vehicles may dramatically change the way portable sanitation companies and other service-based businesses work. With this technology, PROs could program all stops on a service route and allow ride-along technicians to perform other administrative tasks between stops. Robotic cleaning devices may be deployed to change the role of technicians or allow more service calls on every daily route. Currently the first all-electric work trucks are being tested. If trucks have the torque to handle heavy liquid loads, they could greatly reduce necessary maintenance of your fleet and fuel costs, as well as enhance your message of environmental stewardship.

WASTE-TO-WATER DISPOSAL

A great deal of research and development effort is currently being put into compact wastewater processing equipment. Last year I had the opportunity to see a new unit in action that quickly converted septic tank waste into clear, pathogen-free water. Engineers on that project told me we were not far off from these units producing tap water. So if PROs choose to, in the not-too-distant future they could fully take over responsibility for wastewater treatment. Maybe the units will be the size of a small trash container, like the one I saw, installed in the restroom company's yard. How long until they will be reduced to the size of a vacuum tank that can recycle water during a service route? At the very least, the technology is here today for small-scale dewatering that could make PROs less reliant on overburdened municipal plants.







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Countdown the Top 10 Most-Read Articles

With the end of the year in sight, here's a roundup of our top portable sanitation stories. Don't fret that you missed out on our most-popular reads, kick back and enjoy the best of 2020.

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SWOT, PART 2

Evaluate Your Strengths and Weaknesses

In this column, Amanda Clark leads portable restroom operators through the process of assessing their strengths and weaknesses as part of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) grid analysis. Find out more in this online exclusive article.

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WINTER READY

Don't Get Caught Out in the Cold

Many portable restroom operators work steadily throughout the year and through hazardous cold, snowy weather, too. If this sounds like your portable sanitation business, read this online rundown of articles to help ensure you're safe and ready this winter.

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Let's Get Planning For a Successful (and More Predictable) 2021!

By Jeff and Terri Wigley

The weeks following the holidays are a great time to evaluate the business and set goals for financial, marketing and employee performance

UESTION: As new business owners, what advice can you give regarding end-of-year planning?

ANSWER: Last month we examined our suggested "year-end planning" for December. The major components and descriptions of this plan were:

Year-end planning encompasses the following major components:

- 1. Exploring tax planning strategies
- 2. Reviewing the company policy manual
- 3. Reviewing employee performance plans
- 4. Conducting employee reviews
- 5. Evaluating employee benefits
- 6. Reviewing all insurance plans
- **7.** Performing a physical inventory

This month we will discuss the items that can be addressed, analyzed and acted upon after the close of business on Dec. 31, 2020.

JANUARY BEGINNING OF THE YEAR PLANNING SUGGESTIONS:

- 1. Examining year-end financials
- 2. Assembling documents for tax preparation
- **3.** Comparing previous year's goals with expectations and results
- **4.** Creating goals for the coming year
- 5. Planning attendance at industry trade shows (in-person or virtual)
- 6. OSHA 300 log preparation for Feb. 1 posting
- **7.** Updating license renewal dates and certifications for the year (for the company and employees)
- **8.** Begin 2021 marketing and sales contacts for 2021 (particularly in the struggling event marketplace)

EXAMINING YEAR-END FINANCIALS — How did the company financially perform in the unprecedented and uncertain year of 2020? First, examine

the absolute bottom line of the business, "net income." Did the company make money or lose money for the year? If the company consists of different product lines, business units or services, examine the financial information of each unit as a standalone entity. Did one unit out-perform another? Did another underperform below expectations? This knowledge can help to identify areas of strength, areas of concern and, possibly, areas that could be downsized or eliminated. Use a Certified Public Accountant to help compare the financial goals with results. As an outside party, their analysis is purely numbers based but that is the information needed to make decisions and to set goals for 2021.

Obtaining the most current Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) from each driver in January is another way to ensure uniformity of record keeping and make sure all drivers are following governmental and insurance requirements.

ASSEMBLING DOCUMENTS FOR TAX PREPARATION — Some PROs will combine the previous year's financial interpretation CPA meeting with the opportunity to discuss the previous year's tax return, traditionally due on March 15, 2021 — COVID-19 notwithstanding. Employee W2, 1099 and other documents are due to be sent to employees, contractors and other appropriate entities by Jan. 31. Beginning this process in early to mid-January will ease the pressure of compiling this information in March when you should be concentrating on sales.

COMPARING PREVIOUS YEAR'S GOALS WITH EXPECTATIONS AND RESULTS —

Financial goals should be only a portion of the company's yearly goals. Employee growth and performance, customer satisfaction reviews, and marketing and sales goals are often established by PROs.

- Employee growth and performance How did employees perform amid the chaos, confusion, uncertainty and pressure of 2020? Should some employees be considered for additional responsibilities and possible promotion? Could certain company policies and procedures be altered to encourage improvement and employee satisfaction?
- Customer satisfaction Surveys, online reviews, phone calls (outgoing or incoming) or other customer comments are vital to the success of the business. Were your customers satisfied with the performance of the company in 2020 given the fact emergency orders, urgent deliveries and critical services were "the standard" thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. Did working from home satisfy your customers? Do any procedural or technological changes need to be made going forward?
- Marketing and sales Did particular strategies prove effective/ ineffective? Continue the successful strategies, perhaps social media advertising, and discontinue ineffective strategies, such as mass mailings or mass email blasts.

CREATING GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR — Once the previously described analysis is complete, what should the goals for 2021 include? Remember, these should be clearly defined and measurable. Employee involvement is a key element in this process as well. Employees will strive to achieve and to overachieve in goals that they have had input. Establish goals in the financial, employee, customer and marketing and sales areas.

PLANNING ATTENDANCE AT INDUSTRY TRADE SHOWS — These gatherings of industry experts and fellow PROs afford the opportunity to see new products, establish new business friendships and contacts, take advantage of educational opportunities, and present an accurate view of the state of the industry, both now and in the immediate future. Traditionally, the Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport (WWETT) Show in Indianapolis and the PSAI Convention and Trade Show are the major events that PROs should strongly consider. Please refer to their websites for additional information.

OSHA 300 LOG PREPARATION FOR FEB. 1 POSTING — The Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirement is sometimes overlooked by companies and the penalties can be rather severe. The 300 log is a listing of all reportable injuries and illnesses that were job related from the previous year. This document is posted in a "common area or prominent location" for employees and any licensing or other government personnel to view and to review. The OSHA 300 log is posted from Feb. 1 to April 30. Compiling and verifying this information in early January can also lead to possible safety goals for the new year.

UPDATING LICENSE RENEWAL DATES AND CERTIFICATIONS (FOR COMPANY AND EMPLOYEES) — With the focus on company evaluation in January, renewals and certifications should also be reviewed. When does your company's business license renew? When do applicable federal or state Department of Transportation annual inspections of vehicles expire? Are there renewals of waste hauler permits?

Employee individual renewals for drivers' licenses, CDL certification, DOT Medical Cards and other industry educational certificates should be reviewed with deadlines noted. Some PROs will make copies of the driver's license and CDLs to ensure all are valid and in compliance. Obtaining the

most current Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) from each driver in January is another way to ensure uniformity of record keeping and make sure all drivers are following governmental and insurance requirements. Furthermore, creating a log that lists the various deadlines for renewal is an effective way to avoid future fines and penalties.

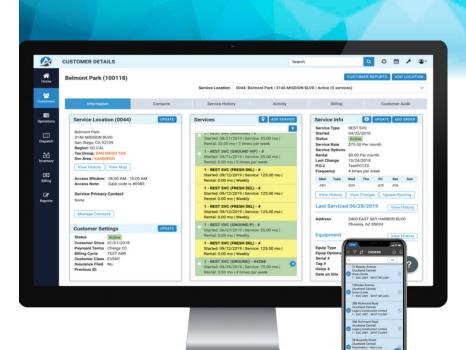
While route service technicians have the majority of individual permits and licenses, do not forget the administrative team! If you have a notary public on site, when does that need to renew? CPR training needs to be renewed on occasion. One last safety item to consider is the annual inspection of fire extinguishers and, in some instances, smoke alarms.

BEGIN 2021 MARKETING AND SALES CONTACTS FOR 2021 — Just as customer communication was vital in 2020, this year will most likely be similar. With virtually a nonexistent special events marketplace last year, begin to contact your customer base to ascertain their plans for 2021. By doing this, you expand the communication pathway with these customers and, hopefully, ensure a partnership with them that will lead to their future business.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

As with last month's column, we merely present suggestions based on best business practices in our industry. We wish everyone a happy 2021 as we seemed to have failed at that in 2020!







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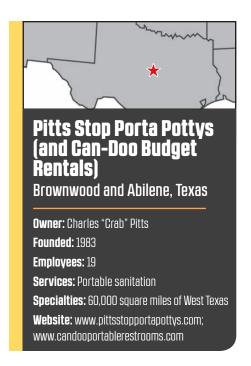
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With the addition of another established restroom company, the Pitts family provides a needed service over 60,000 square miles of open land

Bv Ken Wysocky



lmost a decade ago, J.C. Pitts came on board full-time at Pitts Stop Porta Pottys, the company his father, Charles "Crab" Pitts, founded in Brownwood, Texas, as a part-time gig back in 1983. By simply taking a different marketing approach — including establishing a Facebook page and developing a new website and company logo — revenue that year jumped by 15%.

"It gave us a little bit of a kick-start," says J.C., 28, company president. "At the time, it was like a new beginning for an almost-30-year-old company."

Now, after the April acquisition of a longtime friendly competitor, Can-Doo Budjet (now Budget) Rentals, located in Abilene (about 80 miles northwest of Brownwood), the company once again is jump-starting its business prospects. Buying the business, formerly owned by the late Lou Paulsen, will quadruple Pitts Stop's restroom inventory to about 1,400 from nearly 300 and its service footprint will expand to a whopping 60,000 square miles of remote West Texas territory.

"It's going to be a lot of work," J.C. says of the acquisition. "But it's a once-in-a-lifetime business opportunity. We figured it was better to buy Can-Doo than perhaps deal with another competitor who might not be as friendly."

Paulsen passed away in July 2019. Around two months later, the Paulsen family asked the Pitts family to consider purchasing Can-Doo. Paulsen and the elder Pitts started their businesses at about the same time (1981 and 1983, respectively) and were friends who respected the way each other did business, J.C. says.

"If someone called us and needed restrooms in or near Abilene, we'd send them to Can-Doo," he notes. "And if someone called them and needed restrooms in Brownwood (which is about 155 miles southwest of Fort Worth), Lou would send them down here.



Left: The Pitts Stop Porta Pottys crew includes, from left, Robert Freeman, Roderick Jones, Amelia Modest, Leopodo Miranda, Charles Pitts, Mona Pitts, Taylor and Blake Pitts, J.C. Pitts, Eric Renfro, Helene Davis, Boyd Coudel, Ricky Velez, Amparo Robles and Willie McLemore. They have several restroom trailers from makers JAG Mobile Solutions, Advanced Containment Systems, Comforts of Home Services and AmeriCan Engineering. (Photos by Jacie Gardner)

Below: From left are Charles Pitts, Mona Pitts, Blake Pitts, Taylor Pitts and J.C. Pitts. Most of the company's restrooms are from Satellite Industries and PolyJohn.



Below: Seth Ross, Austin Walker and J.C. Pitts are in the company yard with restrooms and a restroom trailer from JAG Mobile Solutions.

could be an all-day adventure. At the time, I handled phones, pickups and deliveries, and service routes."

J.C. PITTS

"When Lou started out, we were always very good friends," recalls Charles. "I respected Lou a bunch. He asked me several times to buy him out ... and after he passed, we worked out a deal with two of his boys.

"I believe it's going to work out real good," he continues. "It's going to provide a great future for my son and my family ... We're all thrilled about it."

(Can-Doo is owned by J.C. and his wife, Taylor, and Charles and his wife, Mona, and is a women-owned business enterprise.)

EMOTIONAL MERGER

The merger between two long-standing, family-owned companies (Can-Doo was established in 1981) has been an emotional experience for all involved. But it helped that the Pitts family made it clear right away that all of the 12 Can-Doo employees could remain on board.

"We couldn't be more blessed than to do business with the Paulsen family," says J.C., who will manage the Can-Doo office in Abilene. "The only thing that will change is we'll manage things a little differently ... and upgrade





Right: The office crew includes, from left, Amelia Modest, Helene Davis and Amparo Robles.

Below: Davis and Eric Renfro review the work schedule for the day in the company office.





equipment by slowly and steadily changing out old trucks and tanks."

"I recently told (Can-Doo employees) that I respect them so much because they kept running the company even though they didn't know who might buy it, or if they'd even have jobs," he adds. "They're all very hard workers."

Out of respect for Paulsen and the strong brand identity he built, the Pitts family plans to keep the Can-Doo name operational. Furthermore, an updated Can-Doo logo now includes the words, "In memory of Lou Paulsen."

"He built up that business for almost 40 years, so it's only fair to have his name there," J.C. explains. "Everybody knows the company name and loves it so we want to keep it Can-Doo."

Before the acquisition, 80% of Pitts Stop's revenue came from monthly rentals in the construction and oil and gas industries, plus military facilities; special events generated the balance. J.C. expects that balance to shift somewhat, but not dramatically.

"There are more safety regulations. The guys have to wear masks; gloves have to be changed out often. On every stop they have to check sanitizers to be refilled."

JENNY LONG

"Can-Doo presents us with a great opportunity," he explains. "We can take some time off routes at both companies because some of their farthest routes overlap in our territory and vice versa. So there are some efficiencies to be gained."

FROM THE GROUND UP

J.C. grew up in the portable sanitation industry. In 1983, the elder Pitts sold a septic service company he owned and bought eight portable restrooms on the

advice of a business friend. At the time, he also was a welder and held other jobs, too, so the restroom business was a part-time gig.

The company grew very slowly, largely because the long distances between communities made it difficult to expand geographically. "Most of the small towns around us are tiny — 200 to maybe 5,000 residents," J.C. explains. "It just didn't make sense to expand farther out, The customer base just wasn't big enough."

But all that changed in 2011 when Charles was diagnosed with Stage III pancreatic cancer. J.C., who was in his junior year at Howard Payne University working toward a business degree, left school to tend to the family business while his father recovered from surgery. A baptism by fire ensued, but it also gave the younger Pitts a chance to put to work what he'd learned in business school.

"It was a trip, I'll tell you that," J.C. recalls. "Trying to find job sites in this very rural area could be an all-day adventure. At the time, I handled phones, pickups and deliveries, and service routes.

"When dad got released from the hospital, I was pretty happy to give him the cellphone back," he continues. "After all that, I remained on board full-time and changed our marketing tactics, based on what I learned at college."



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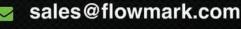




















Pitts says disagreements with his father and mother about taking the company in a different direction were rare. "If it made sense and we all agreed, we'd move forward with it," he says. "We all work together very well."

The company employs seven people, including Charles and Mona Pitts and J.C and Taylor Pitts. Three route drivers round out the crew: Mark Gordon, who's been with company for eight years; Brad Jones, a four-year employee; and Seth Ross, with two years under his belt.

"Seth is 22 — one of our young guns," J.C. notes. "He's been a real gold mine for us and will help maintain the Can-Doo office in San Angelo, Texas (about 95 miles southwest of Brownwood)."

MORE INFO

Advanced Containment Systems, Inc. 800-927-2271 www.acsi-us.com

Ameri-Can Engineering 574-892-5151 www.ameri-can.com

Best Enterprises, Inc. 800-288-2378 www.bestenterprises.net

Comforts of Home Services, Inc. 630-906-8002 www.cohsi.com

CRO Software Solutions 844-276-2467 www.crosoftware.net *See ad, page 37*

JAG Mobile Solutions

800-815-2557 www.jagmobilesolutions.com

Moro USA, Inc. 866-383-6304 www.morousa.com

PolyJohn 800-292-1305 www.polyjohn.com See ad, page 44

Satellite Industries 800-883-1123 www.satelliteindustries.com See ad, page 15

Westmoor Ltd. 800-367-0972 www.westmoorltd.com "We use slide-ins because we don't service as many restrooms as a lot of companies do and we travel so much farther than other companies, too. Plus, with a slide-in, we can remove the tank and use the truck for other things, such as farming."

J.C. PITTS

FLEET UPGRADES

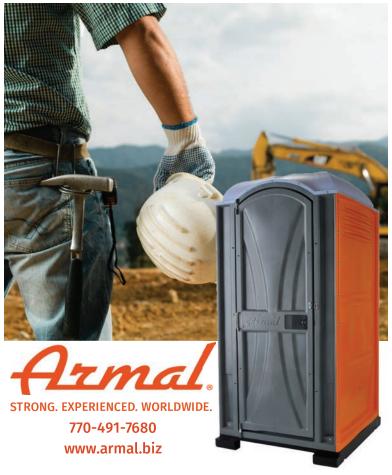
Aside from swapping out older vacuum trucks for newer vehicles, J.C. envisions no major changes at Can-Doo.

"We'll slowly change out the fleet," he explains. "Here at Pitts Stop, we swap out trucks about every two years, around 200,000 miles, while some of Can-Doo's trucks have 500,000 miles. We usually keep the tanks and mount them on new chassis, but some of the tanks on the Can-Doo trucks will probably have to be replaced. "Upgrading equipment is our No. 1 goal."

J.C. also plans to take the same marketing approach for Can-Doo that he implemented at Pitts Stop in 2011, including establishing Facebook pages for the Abilene and San Angelo offices, and using targeted Facebook ads, plus updating the Can-Doo website.

Pitts Stop currently relies on three restroom service trucks equipped with slide-in tanks and Conde vacuum pumps from Westmoor: a 2019 Chevrolet 3500 chassis equipped with a 300-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater aluminum tank; a 2016 Chevrolet 3500 with a 300-gallon waste/150-freshwater stainless-steel tank built out by Best Enterprises; and a 2013 Chevrolet 2500 equipped with a 200-gallon waste/80-gallon freshwater aluminum tank.







"We use slide-ins because we don't service as many restrooms as a lot of companies do and we travel so much farther than other companies, too," J.C. says. "Plus, with a slide-in, we can remove the tank and use the truck for other things, such as farming."

The company will gain 12 trucks (mostly GMC, Dodge and Isuzu chassis) via the acquisition. The trucks feature tanks ranging in size from 1,000 gallons waste/400 gallons freshwater to 200 gallons waste/80 gallons freshwater and vacuum pumps from Moro and Conde (a brand owned by Westmoor Ltd.)

For pickups and deliveries, Pitts Stop relies on a 2009 Chevrolet 3500 long-bed pickup and Can-Doo owns two 16-foot Isuzu flatbed trucks. Most of Pitts Stop's nearly 300 restrooms are from by PolyJohn and Satellite Industries; PolyJohn manufactured most of Can-Doo's restrooms.

By joining forces, the companies now can deploy seven restroom trailers manufactured by JAG Mobile Solutions, Advanced Containment Systems, Comforts of Home Services and Ameri-Can Engineering.

To help better manage the unusually long service routes, Pitts Stop invested in a new routing and dispatch system developed by CRO Software Solutions.

SLOW AND STEADY GROWTH

Looking forward, J.C. will eventually buy Pitts Stop. But that doesn't mean the elder Pitts will no longer be involved.

"Dad will work until the day he dies," J.C. observes. "He's the hardest working man I know and that's one of the many qualities I admire about him. I hope I can do even half of what he does when I'm his age. He loves what he's doing so he's here as long as he wants to be."

As for growth, J.C. says he's aiming for a happy medium between too much growth coming too fast and not growing at all.

"I think we can grow comfortably without making a big jump," he says. "Of course, if a big job presents itself that would require a lot of restrooms, we'll take it and run with it. But other than that, we're striving for slow but steady growth."

But one thing won't change at all: the company's commitment to quality service and clean restrooms, based on principles established by Charles almost four decades ago.

"That level of service is what's kept us going for nearly 40 years," J.C. says. \blacksquare





➤ PAYING TRIBUTE TO A LARGER-THAN-LIFE FATHER

Before Charles "Crab" Pitts entered the portable-restroom business back in 1983, he worked as a welder. Operated fireworks stands across Texas. Ran a Native American jewelry store. Toiled as a brakeman on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway. Managed sales for a beer distributorships. And pumped out septic tanks.

Along the way, Pitts — the owner of Pitts Stop Porta Pottys and Can-Doo Budget Rentals — also collected classic cars and was a competitive skeet shooter for years. In short, Pitts is a Texas character in the truest sense of the word — a tireless entrepreneur with a zest for life as big as the Texas plains.

"He's done it all, I can tell you that," says his son, J.C. "You name it and he's done it. He's the hardest-working man I know ... he's a very, very intelligent man and a great businessman. He's basically taught me just about everything I know."

"I just always was ready to try something different," says the elder Pitts, 70, about his zig-zag career. "So I was always going from one job to something else. I just enjoy working, so that's that."

Pitts gives his father, the late Groner Pitts, credit for his entrepreneurial streak and strong work ethic. Groner owned a funeral home and other businesses in Brownwood. He also was a notable community supporter and a founding member of the so-called Brownwood Mafia, a group of city promoters that put the city and Howard Payne University on the map.

While he no longer avidly collects cars, Charles still enjoys driving around town during summers in either a 1963 Chevrolet Stingray Corvette convertible or a 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air. He also makes time for his latest side hobby — growing and baling hay for local ranchers.

Does Charles ever relax? "Baling hay is relaxing," he asserts. "You get on that tractor and it takes your mind off everything else."

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TO BETTER SERVE CUSTOMERS DURING COVID-19, THIS NONPROFIT ATTRACTION BROUGHT IN PORTABLE RESTROOMS AND SHUT DOWN ITS PERMANENT BATHROOM FACILITIES

Jim Kneiszel



hese portable restrooms were put into service to offer easier maintenance for this attraction over the permanent bathroom facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The venue placed two wheelchair-accessible Liberty units from Satellite Industries, along with something you don't see too much anymore, a pristine Hampel Country Classic restroom. Those have not been manufactured for more than a decade and this green unit is in stellar condition. The sanitizing station is a SaniStand from PolyJohn.

A walk through this attraction is a feast for the senses. Around every corner you find bright colors and changing foliage, fresh, natural scents and hear the excitement and laughter of children. The nonprofit attraction draws 80,000 visitors a year, almost twice the population of the city where it is located.

Your job is to name the attraction and the city and state where it is located. Here are few clues to help you out: $\frac{1}{2}$

- **1.** The venue is open May to October and many schools "book" it as a favorite stop for school field trips.
- 2. The attraction is located adjacent to a state two-year higher education campus.
- 3. It boasts of celebrating "10 years of whimsy" on its website.
- 4. The city where it is located is known for its delightful pork sausages and hard rolls.
- 5. This is the top attraction in the area, according to Tripadvisor reviewers. It beat out a state park, a regional art center and the world's largest free-flying U.S. flag.
- 6. The freshwater surfing capital of the world.

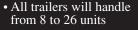
To win the contest, name the city and the street intersection where this restroom is located. The winner will be recognized as a geographical whiz on the *Portable Restroom Operator* Facebook page. Send your responses to editor@promonthly.com.

SEND YOUR MYSTERY PHOTOS! Do you have an interesting spot where you've been dropping and servicing restrooms? Send photos to editor@promonthly.com. We will credit you for submitting to Where's the Restroom?

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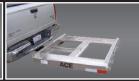
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Young GUN

Cole Leister is quick on the draw when changes are needed to promote and grow his restroom business

By Betty Dageforde

n 2016, when Cole Leister's father and grandmother bought a 65-year-old septic/portable restroom company from the retiring owner in Salina, Kansas, something about it just clicked with him and the high school graduate's college plans went out the window. He learned everything he could as fast as he could about the industry and within four months bought out his grandmother and took over day-to-day operations from his father.

The family renamed the company Salina Septic Service. Long-time employee Sheldon Crook stayed on and was a big help in getting them up to speed. Crook now works on the septic side, while Leister's younger brother, Jackson, and Scott Donaldson take care of portable restroom work. Leister's wife Calle handles the office, and his father, Randy, helps when needed.

Leister wasted no time making changes. He jettisoned about three-quarters of the old portable sanitation equipment and bought two truckloads of new. Inventory now stands at about 300 pieces of equipment (PolyJohn and Satellite Industries) including standard, wheelchair-accessible and flushable units, and hand-wash stations. He hauls units with a Laxi-Taxi 16-unit transport trailer from F.M. Manufacturing. He added septic installations, eventually buying a Bobcat E45 mini excavator and a John Deere track loader to round out their septic equipment, which includes a 1990 Chevrolet C-70 vacuum truck with a 2,000-gallon steel tank and Masport pump. And he replaced the paper-based information system with programs from QuickBooks and CRO Software Solutions.



EXPLORE FIVE ISSUES THAT AFFECT COLE LEISTER AND SALINA SEPTIC:

A BIG CUSTOMER WAKE-UP CALL THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

In the beginning, Leister continued to rent out the remaining older units. But in the summer of 2017 he got a call from his largest construction account. "He said, 'If we don't get some nicer units we're going with somebody else," Leister reports. Leister responded immediately. "We shut everything down that day and started loading up all our nice event units and sending them out to our construction sites and switched out all the older units." It took a week but when they were done, everything they had out was new and more units were ordered.





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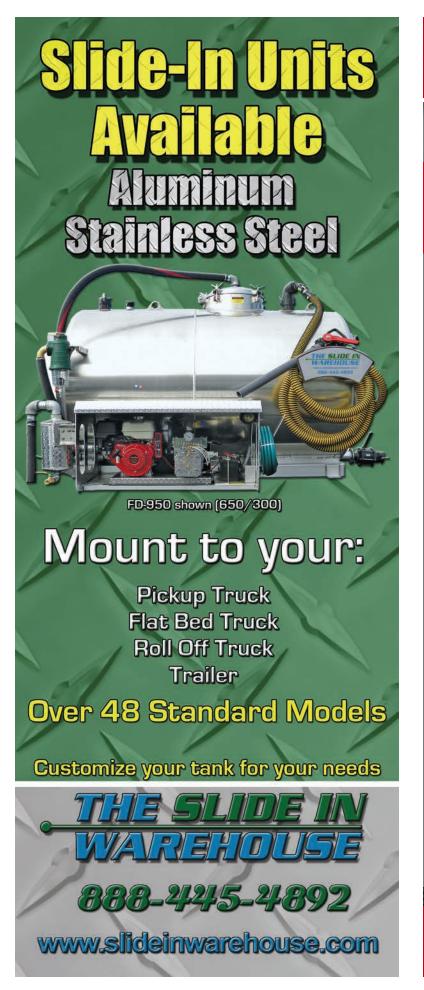
3,000 WORDS THAT LANDED HIS FIRST BIG EVENT CONTRACT

In 2017, Leister had the opportunity to bid on the Smoky Hill River Festival, a four-day art and music event requiring 90 pieces of equipment. "That was our first real contractual-based event going through a municipality," he says. "I really wanted the event and spent an exorbitant amount of time on the bid." The weighted grading system focused on quality and service, with price accounting for only 25%. Leister says they weren't given many guidelines for the proposal so it was up to bidders to describe what they had to offer.

"I laid out everything start to finish — time lines, how we would move around the park, pricing, chemicals. Procedures for cleaning and responsiveness were the two main things I outlined. I just basically put everything I could think of on a piece of paper. It ended up being about 3,000 words."

Leister won the bid. Next step — deliver on the promises. "It wasn't required but I stayed on site the entire time," he says. "And Sheldon and Scott came in on Saturday." Event coordinators were happy, gave them a positive Google review and have used the company every year since.

Left: Jackson Leister cleans a PolyJohn restroom in the company yard.







LEARNING THE BENEFITS OF NEW EQUIPMENT THE HARD WAY

The original vacuum trucks — 2005 and 2007 Chevy 3500s built out by Best Enterprises with stainless steel slide-in tanks (400-gallon waste/200-gallon freshwater and 350-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater) and Conde (Westmoor) pumps — are now only used for backup. The two trucks Leister bought to replace them — a Ford F-550 built out by Satellite Vacuum Trucks with a 650-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank and Conde pump and an International 4200 built out by Amthor International with a 1,500-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and Jurop pump — were both 2007s and he's had second thoughts about the decision.

"Looking back, we should have bought new from the get-go," he says. "That set us back a little bit. It would have put us in a little bit better position now where we need new trucks." Mechanical issues are costly, he says.

"If a truck goes down, we're losing fairly substantial amounts of money each day it's down. And we have to pay to keep the backup trucks working. There is a point where it's not worth it. There are times when a payment each month on a new truck would have been cheaper."

4 MANAGING EMPLOYEES IS A CHALLENGING PART OF THE JOB

Leister faces several employee management challenges. One is lack of formal training, which he feels is a disadvantage. But he has picked up ideas based on his own experiences — good and bad — with employers. "I just try to keep a positive atmosphere and I like team mentality," he says. He doesn't hold formal meetings but says the team is in constant communication with each other. On the fun side, he takes everyone to the last Kansas City Chiefs game of the season.

Another challenge is gaining credibility with an employee 10 years older and more experienced. Although he wants to put his own spin on the company and find ways to improve procedures, equipment and materials, Leister is grateful to Crook for helping him and now believes the frustrations they experienced in the beginning are behind them. A third challenge is working with family — a parent, a sibling and a spouse — as family dynamics inevitably carry over into the workplace.

Long term, Leister says he'd like to remove himself from people management and not be as involved in day-to-day operations. "I don't know where that point is where it's no longer possible for one person to manage everything," he says. "But it's difficult being a manager. I'm learning every day and I'll probably be learning that for the rest of my life."

MORE INFO

Amthor International 800-328-6633 www.amthorinternational.com

Best Enterprises, Inc. 800-288-2378 www.bestenterprises.net **Bobcat Corporate** 800-743-4340 www.bobcat.com

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John Deere 800-503-3373 www.johndeere.com Masport, Inc. 800-228-4510 www.masportpump.com See ad, page 35

PolyJohn 800-292-1305 www.polyjohn.com See ad, page 44 Satellite Industries 800-883-1123 www.satelliteindustries.com See ad, page 15

Westmoor Ltd. 800-367-0972 www.westmoorltd.com











BRINGING RESPECT TO THE PORTABLE SANITATION INDUSTRY

Leister is on a mission to change the negative view many people have of the portable sanitation industry. "It's a profession, we're professionals," he says. "It's a necessary service, it protects the environment. That's been a big focus of mine and translating that into who you are as a person, your service, your pricing." To that end, he has the team wear uniforms; he provides customers with educational information and welcomes questions. He's also working toward standardizing trucks, equipment and marketing materials to present one identifiable and professional image to the public, which he believes affects first impressions and perceptions of what they do.

"We try to set the standard in terms of service and equipment, having checklists and inspecting everything, and having good employees who agree and understand why," he says. "All the guys here understand it; my wife understands it when she's talking to somebody on the phone. Everyone here is very knowledgeable."

Nevertheless, he does face competitors who he believes undervalue and underprice their service. "It's a constant battle," he says. "I've never wanted to lower my price just to get a job because, at the end of the day, it doesn't really help anyone. My philosophy is that service is going to keep you in business."



Above: Sheldon Crook connects the F.M. Manufacturing Laxi-Taxi trailer to deliver restrooms. The truck is a Ford F-550 from Satellite Vacuum Trucks and carrying a Conde pump.



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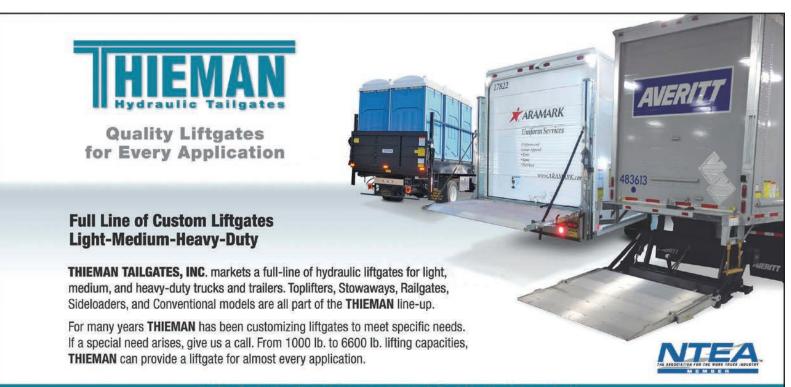
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PORTABLE RESTROOMS AND ACCESSORIES

By Craig Mandli

STANDARD PORTABLE RESTROOMS

AMERI-CAN ENGINEERING PRO 600

The **Pro 600** from **Ameri-Can Engineering** is a commercial-grade, self-contained restroom pod. It is designed for extreme use including lift points for high-rise crane use and forklift pockets for safe and easy transport. The 60 gallons of onboard freshwater feeds a china flushing toilet, urinal and stainless steel sink with hot water. Designed for year-round use, it has insulated walls and an Arctic Weather Package that includes a fan-forced electric wall heater and an insulated 100-gallon waste tank



with Thermon heat system. An optional air conditioner replaces the standard exhaust fan for warmer temperatures. LED interior lighting highlights the wipe-down walls and waterproof floor. An electric hand dryer is standard, reducing paper waste and extending service intervals. It is constructed for heavy-duty use with steel-grate steps, and a full-steel structure can be bolted to the site surface. **574-892-5151**; www.ameri-can.com.



ARMAL WAVE

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

J&J PORTABLE SANITATION PRODUCTS ECHO

The **Echo** portable restroom from **J&J Portable Sanitation Products** is a durable unit designed to withstand constant use and abuse. It is easy to clean and maintain, and includes a domed floor with drains in front of the tank top for easy



cleaning and no puddling. It includes an easy-to-clean deep-sump holding tank and a hover handle. The sides and roof have built-in handgrips for easy moving. **800-345-3303**; www.jjportable.com.



MANITU TRADERS MT 18 PARAMO

The MT 18 Paramo from Manitu Traders utilizes tough construction and enhanced security features to ensure unit longevity. It is produced using UV-resistant and durable resin with international certifications — ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and IATF 16949. To reduce vandalism, the hinge shaft is made from high-resistance plastic, in addition to embedded counterweights and metal single-springs. It includes a double-barrier filter and locking cup. It is designed to limit horizontal faces, simplifying cleaning and reducing dirt

accumulation. Rainwater guides ensure water will flow easily. Company logos can be molded into the wall of the restroom. www.manitu.com.co.

NUCONCEPTS VIP

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



POLYJOHN FLEET

The **PolyJohn Fleet** flush restroom offers more interior space, meaning more comfort for parents with young children, construction workers with bulky tool belts or users attired in formal wear. It's a versatile and attractive option for any high-end construction project or VIP event requiring a better experience. The unit is configured with additional ventilation and a corner tank that makes good use of interior space. There's sufficient room for a urinal or sink, and amenities like paper towel and hand sanitizer dispensers, and convenience shelves fit nicely and appeal

to multiple markets. It offers a full flush range, including recirculating flush, freshwater flush and a variety of units that tie into city mains. Its European design is aerodynamic, durable and easy to service and clean. **800-292-1305**; www.polyjohn.com.





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SANSOM INDUSTRIES ZENITH

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



SATELLITE INDUSTRIES AXXIS

The **Axxis** standard-size portable restroom from **Satellite Industries** has enhanced its overall durability and functionality with a smoother panel texture that improves adherence of decals and makes cleaning easier. Molded-in vent screens, new impact base, a blow-molded tank and increased wall thickness enhance the rigidity and appearance of the unit, according to the maker. Additional upgrades can include flush systems (hand and foot operated) and in-unit hand-wash stations. **800-883-1123**; www.satelliteindustries.com.

T BLUSTAR RAPIDLOO PRO

The **RapidLoo PRO** from **T blustar** can be assembled easily in less than three minutes without tools and may be transported and stored in a four-unit package, utilizing the space of one assembled restroom. By reassembling the four-pack, the three units packed inside are protected from ultraviolet light. It helps enable 75% transport cost-savings and 75% saved warehouse space. It includes a double door spring, an easy-slide handle for closing the door, three grab handles on each panel, extended skids in



the base with anchoring locations and a SkyScraper Kit for lifting. Available accessories include a solar-powered light, recirculating flush, freshwater flush and an internal hand-wash sink. **404-482-0736**; www.tblustar.com.



T.S.F. TUFF JON III

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

DECALS/MAGNETS/SIGNAGE

ALLIED GRAPHICS DECALS

Decals from **Allied Graphics** are designed to stand up to tough environments. Their adhesive is designed exclusively for the portable restroom industry to stick and stay put on units. The decals use premium, long-life vinyl and ultraviolet inks to



hold up and look good for years, according to the maker. The decals can also be applied to sinks and trailers. **763-428-8365**; www.allied-graphics.com.



ROEDA DECALS

Roeda decals include a tough, 4 mL permanent adhesive vinyl and UV fade-resistant inks that work suitably for many applications such as portable toilets, restroom trailers, hand sanitizer stands and outdoor sinks. They come in a wide variety of stock UV inks, but can also be printed with any custom Pantone match, so

brands are always looking their best. Decals can be cut to any size or shape, large or small, in any quantity. A UV clearcoat or lamination adds extra protection against the elements. A wide variety of options and adhesives are available. Customers can supply existing logos or have one designed. **800-829-3021**; www.roeda.com.

VENTING

LUNARGLO LUNARVENT SOLAR EXHAUST FAN

The **LunarVent** solar exhaust fan from **LunarGlo** has been improved in design and function. It is lighter, stronger, shorter and more aesthetically pleasing than the previous model, according to the maker. It has the same strong



solar cell and moisture-proof fan assembly as before. However, an outlet redesign with a larger exhaust area enhances the amount of fumes the unit will expel during daytime operation and provides greater natural airflow during nighttime hours. **574-294-2624**; www.lunarglo.com.





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PRODUCT NEWS





PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Heavy-duty Alltainer restrooms are built on shipping container platforms

By Tim Dobbins

The initial idea behind Alltainer's restroom facilities was to serve long-term industrial locations like mines, refineries and construction sites with minimal maintenance and repair costs when returned, and they say the latest addition to their line of portable restrooms, the Six Pack, is constructed to do just that.

"If you've ever had a restroom trailer on a long-term rental at something like a construction site, you know there are costly repairs to be made when it comes back," says Bob Earl, president of Premier Executive Trailers, the North American distributor of Alltainer. "The corten steel construction of the Six Pack makes the exterior pretty much maintenance free other than a coat of paint now and then."

The Alltainer Six Pack is built from a new 8-by-20-foot high-cube shipping container. "I have been renting restroom trailers for over 25 years, and my associates Per Johannsen and Tommy Nguyen have been building housing and other units from containers for years," Earl says. "After 18 months of discussions and numerous drawings, the first container was built. As with anything new, several changes were made and implemented on the next few builds."

Now, when customers buy the Alltainer Six Pack, they receive a container with six individual rooms each housing a flushing or Dometic RV toilet and a corner sink as the standard design.

Alltainer concentrated on designing each unit for optimum performance, long-term durability and efficient cleaning by hiding all connection within the walls, so surfaces are easy to access. "Our toilet containers are built to the highest standards and incorporate quality fixtures and fittings," Earl says.

A 635-gallon coated steel waste tank is pressure tested and installed under the restrooms inside the container, allowing them to be used off-grid if needed. The service area utilizes a 475-gallon freshwater tank and two Shurflo water pumps, but can also be hooked up and operated from a direct water source if accessible, and each container features a built-in 13-gallon water heater.

Other common applications for the Six Pack include parks, marinas and beaches. Alltainer builds the restrooms for all climates and heavy-duty use, Earl says. Daikin heat pumps are installed for heating and air conditioning, and each unit comes standard with two 110-volt, 20-amp breaker boxes for any additional electrical needs.

Alltainer restrooms are built in standard configurations, though specification changes can be made to fit the user's needs. **866-883-9538; www.premier-exec.com**

Royal Restrooms portable sink trailers

Royal Restrooms has created new sink trailers to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The sink trailers will contain both hand sanitizer and hand-washing stations. The portable sink trailers will come with water pumps, soap dispensers, mirrors, proper water



inlet and hose connection and optional electric- or propane-powered water heaters. Built onto a commercial-grade trailer chassis for easy towing, the sink trailers come with a custom painted steel frame with locking diamond plate utility doors, which house the water heater and pressure pump. The trailers have fully automated bright signs and 40-inch flat-screen monitors, which can promote brand advertising. **800-969-7434**; www.royalrestrooms.com



Puck Enterprises Boom Truck lead pump

Puck Enterprises's Boom Truck lead pump is manufactured for flexibility and reach, allowing better, easier access to tanks and lagoons. It's equipped with a CAT 13B engine that

can achieve maximum power at 577 hp. This translates to a 4,000 gpm pump capacity. The Boom Truck comes equipped with Puck's industry leading LightSpeed control system software. The truck's boom utilizes Puck's suite of hydraulic and electric control systems to ensure the boom can be placed where it needs to go. The wirelessly controlled boom has a 70-foot reach, which is supported by four outriggers. **712-653-3045**; www.puck.com

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INDUSTRY NEWS

ClearPath GPS expands management team

ClearPath GPS expanded its management team with several software-industry experts. Heather Burleson joins the company as vice president of sales. Jill Bender is the company's new director of marketing. Kelsey Jones joins as director of customer success.

Hino Trucks announces Project Z zero-emissions plan

Hino Trucks' Project Z outlines the company's development path to zero-emissions vehicles in class 4 to class 8. A live, virtual event showcased the line-up of zero-emissions trucks formed by partnerships with technology leaders in advanced electrification drive systems. Some of the ZEV products include a battery-electric class 7 tractor with Hexagon Purus' full electric drive system, and a Hino XL Series class 8 box truck powered by Xos Trucks' X-Pack battery and electric drive system. Over the coming months, Hino Trucks will unveil more details about the technologies and vehicles to come out of Project Z.

FlowMark Vacuum Trucks Launches New Website

FlowMark Vacuum Trucks has announced the launch of its new website at flowmark.com. The company's truck inventory and parts store are now only a click away. Individual pages for FlowMark's wide selection of vacuum trucks outline configuration options and a comprehensive list of each truck's standard features. In the FlowMark Parts Store, customers can quickly place orders for common equipment like hoses, vacuum pumps, valves, water pumps, bare pumps or rebuild/replacement parts. Users can simply add parts and equipment to their shopping cart and pay using an online e-commerce checkout process.

Industry veteran Hank Vanderveen passes away

Hendrik "Hank" Vanderveen, a nearly 50-year veteran on the manufacturing side of the liquid waste industry and 2016 winner of the Ralph Macchio Lifetime Achievement Award, from COLE Publishing, passed away Nov. 10. He was 83 years old.

Vanderveen had been employed as national vacuum tank product manager at Amthor International since 2007. Previously



he worked for Lely Mfg., Rovac Pump & Supply and Jay's Waste.

Vanderveen was known far and wide as one of the wastewater industry's nicest guys, according to COLE founder Bob Kendall. And he was a fixture at the Pumper & Cleaner Expo, now the WWETT Show, for generations.

"Everyone liked Hank. He was one of those guys you just enjoyed seeing," Kendall said. "Always with a friendly smile, something nice to say and a willingness to help in any way. His attitude toward the industry was the same, lending his knowledge and experience to help solve problems."

Vanderveen, of Wilson, North Carolina, is survived by his wife, Cheri Ridall Vanderveen, five children, 10 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be planned at a future date. \blacksquare

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Just in! 2020 Hino 195 Crescent Model 1100 Flat Tank. Crescent

Model 1100 Flat Tank Specs: (Overall tank length with lift gate 15'), carries 8 units total (6 on the bed and 2 on the lift gate). 750-gallon waste tank includes: 174" X 96" X 12" 1/4" mild steel construction, primary trap, secondary trap, pre-filter, oil catch muffler, 3" sight glass waste level indicators (2 each), 2" ball valve allowing vacuum from either side, 2" vacuum hose 25' with wand assembly, 3" discharge ball valve at rear driver side (gravity discharge), work light (driver side), 36" X 18" X 18" tool box (driver side), sub-frame, ladder, mudflaps. 350-gallon fresh water tank: 1/2" poly plastic construction, 12V water pump (5.5 gpm @ 60 psi), 50' retractable 1/2" hose reel, 1 & 1/2" fast fill (driver side), bucket holder (driver side). Masport HXL3F 112 CFM with oiler & flush kit, PTO Hot shift w/switch inside cab, work light & water pump switches inside cab, Theiman Bar Grate Rail Gate TVL-16 1,600 lbs electric/ hydraulic, LED marker light, LED ICC

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New Imperial 1,300 U.S. gallon, portable toilet service unit mounted on a 2020 Ford F550 cab and chassis with a Masport HXL4 pump package. (Stock #13933). www. VacuumSalesInc.com. (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

New Imperial 980 U.S. gallon, portable toilet service unit mounted on a 2020 Ford F550 cab and chassis with a Masport HXL4 pump package. (Stock #13916). www. VacuumSalesInc.com. (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

1,600-gallon portable toilet service unit (tank only). (Stock# 13762). www.Vacu-umSalesInc.com. (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

PORTABLE SINKS



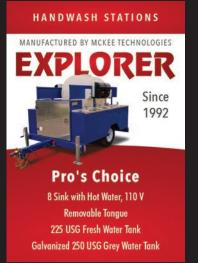
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