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The path to success follows a winding road for HHH Sanitation, but brothers Chris and Tim Hettich stay ahead of the curves

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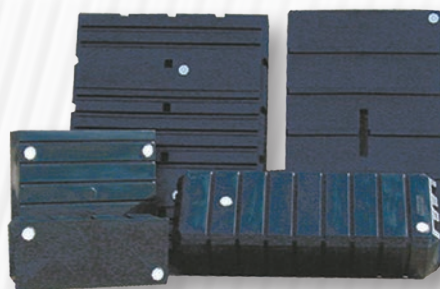
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ON THE COVER: Brothers Chris (left) and Tim Hettich own HHH Sanitation in Birmingham, Alabama. They are shown in the company yard with an Isuzu equipment delivery truck. (Photo by Meg McKinney)

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By Jim Kneiszel

You Didn't Need a Ticket for This Roller Coaster

2021 didn't exactly go like PROs may have hoped, but they deftly adapted to a wild ride.



If I had to come up with a word to describe the portable sanitation industry in 2021 it would be *uncertainty*.

Heading into the new year, we had a reason to be optimistic about a return to a normal, predictable business climate — well, as predictable as we could ever envision. There was the promise of a vaccine to bring an end to the COVID-19 pandemic. There was also the continuation of a surging economy that showed durability throughout the upheaval of 2020.

PROs had weathered a worldwide pandemic the likes of which hadn't been experienced in a century. The coronavirus had successfully shut down almost all of our traditional special event work for a year, but it couldn't kill our industry. To the contrary, PROs had just as many customers for their services, but they were just different customers. Construction was charging ahead and it appeared that long overdue infrastructure projects would be funded and require more from the portable sanitation community.

But then a lot of the promise shown early in the year went "poof" and disappeared. Event work never really took off as completely as PROs had hoped, and toward the end of the year, we were facing caution over large gatherings due to COVID variants said to be more easily transmissible.

Somehow PROs adjusted to a seesaw of conditions that continually challenged small and family businesses across North America. Many of you have shifted on the fly to preserve and even grow your businesses as the world looks for answers to finally eradicate COVID and its dangerous mutations.

TAKE A BOW

When I reflect on some of the issues you've faced this past year, I think it's time for PROs to take a bow for finding ways to provide services to keep people safe and the economy moving forward. Without portable sanitation, the world's problems would certainly be compounded.

Even a Harvard MBA degree could not have prepared a small-business owner for the challenges you faced and overcame:

THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE IN PLANS

Early in 2021 there was an expectation that special events would come roaring back as the COVID vaccines were rolled out. PROs were gearing up for county fairs and music festivals, signing contracts to provide service and

making plans to add equipment and technicians. While some of that work materialized, the revenue projections were muted at best as some events were postponed for a second year or scaled back in size to keep the crowds down.

Thankfully, restroom contractors were able to adjust to the changing landscape. There was no let-up in construction; homebuilders still needed restrooms on site, commercial building and roadwork went ahead as scheduled and sanitation resources were deftly reallocated. I didn't hear about family owned restroom companies failing along the way; surviving the pandemic hangover year is certainly a positive outcome.

YOU SCRAMBLED TO PROVIDE DISASTER RELIEF

Massive western wildfires, Hurricane Ida and other tropical storms, and serious flooding events in many regions kept PROs springing into action to serve frontline workers and residents devastated by natural disasters. Like the firefighters and rescue workers, your service technicians endured long days, safety dangers and long periods of time away from their families to provide a critical service.

As is always the case, logistics played an important role in these disaster service scenarios. Your office crew and managers had to reallocate equipment and routes to serve people in great need. Whether we're talking about keeping up with the fire line crews in British Columbia or homeowners in Louisiana who lost all sewer service in the aftermath of Ida, you had to stretch the limited capabilities of your restroom inventory and crew members.

YOU BATTLED RISING LABOR COSTS TO KEEP YOUR DRIVERS ON THE TRUCKS

There has been an unprecedented change in the labor market over the past year, and PROs have certainly been caught up in that. Many of you have had to reevaluate pay scales for drivers, yard workers and office staff and are finding ways to pay rising wages or risk losing good people.

From my conversations with many of you this year, I know this has been stressful and a hardship on your businesses. You have told me that it's become nearly impossible to recruit and retain workers who will deliver the level of service you promise to your customers. Maybe you've had to suddenly raise wages by dollars per hour and add costly benefits to attract

a loyal crew. And when that happens, you face a strong ripple effect that requires you to shave profit margins to unacceptable levels or radically increase your fees for service.

And I think these rising wage and benefit expectations are here to stay. In the past, politicians have clamored for a \$15 minimum wage, "living wages" for all full-time workers and employer-supported health insurance. The free market appears to have taken care of these longstanding debates. Higher wages are the new normal, and a silver lining may be that the industry is rewarding frontline workers in a way that matches those working in traditionally higher-paid trades.

YOU'RE COPING WITH DELAYS GETTING NEW EQUIPMENT

The early days of COVID brought on an obvious supply and demand issue: hand-wash stations were in short supply. Just as consumers faced toilet paper shortages at the big-box stores, you had a hard time fulfilling demand for hand-wash equipment and hand sanitizer units. Backorders were common. Some inventive contractors assembled makeshift units from

common plumbing supplies, while manufacturers ramped up production to meet orders.

Recently I have talked to wastewater contractors who are reevaluating just-in-time inventory practices adopted as a hedge on high overhead costs in recent years. Rather than shaving equipment reserves to a minimum, they tell me they are planning to warehouse more supplies so they are not caught short the next time an unanticipated event spikes demand. For example, some contractors have told me they expect more frequent weather-related disasters due to climate change. If that's the case, they would rather keep more inventory in stock, even though it ties up capital reserves.

COUNT ON CHANGE

As we look toward a new year, it pays to remember that old adage: The only thing constant in life is change. Everything you've experienced over the past 12 months proves this is true. Successful PROs have shown they can adapt well to ever-evolving business conditions, and I have no doubt that will continue to be the case as we prepare for what comes next. ■



PROs are always on the lookout for new techniques or new ways to build revenue. What sort of nontraditional pumping work do you perform? Or tell us about a unique way you got a job done. Send me the details at editor@promonthly.com and I will share them with readers in a future issue.

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TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY?

Pulling the Trigger on an Equipment Purchase

Equipment purchases are no small matter when the equipment is a vacuum truck or portable restroom trailer. In this online article, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers offers no-nonsense tips to determine when it's time to expand your service fleet or restroom inventory.

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Manage Stress Amongst Your Service Technicians

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SPEAKING UP

Take a Proactive Approach to Workplace Racism

It can be difficult to speak up when you see or hear a wrong and even harder to do so in the workplace. When the issue is racism, the stakes are even higher. In this online article, expert Dana Brownlee shares how you can foster a more open workplace for your employees.

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By Jeff and Terri Wigley

No Matter Your Age, Get a Retirement Plan Going and Stick To It!

PROs should always be thinking ahead to those “golden years.” We share our story and make some suggestions for your retirement path

QUESTION: I am coming up to retirement age soon. Jeff and Terri, can you share your thought process when you decided to sell Pit Stop, how the retirement transition is going, and how do you find fulfillment after so many years of running the business?

ANSWER: “You will know.”

We are sure that you are scratching your head, as were we, when we heard this response to the question of, “When and how did you decide to retire?” We are eager to share our thoughts about these words of wisdom.

A BRIEF BACKGROUND

We were both hired by IBM after graduation from college. We met at an IBM-sponsored “Dale Carnegie Class” in the summer of 1985. After 10 years I left to start Pit Stop in 1995, while Terri stayed with IBM for three more years as our new company was in its infancy. (We needed a steady paycheck and benefits as Pit Stop was merely a truck and 30 units at its inception.) Terri worked weekends at Pit Stop doing billing, collections, proposals and other necessary administrative tasks, while I ran the routes and did the pickups and deliveries.

In 1998, Terri said good-bye to Big Blue and came to work full time with our company. We slowly and steadily grew Pit Stop thanks, in great part, to actively participating in the PSAI as well as a regional spinoff, the Southeastern Portable Sanitation Association, more commonly known as the SPSA. This organization was active from the 1980s until roughly 2010. In addition, we also worked with the Small Business Development Center at our local college.

After 22 years of ownership, in 2017, we sold the company to our general manager and key employee, Brett Roques. Brett continues to shape and mold the company, his company, into one that is far more efficient and technologically advanced than the company he purchased four years ago.

START ON A PLAN

As with most major decisions in life, we feel that you should have a plan. Although it seemed odd at the time with a brand-new business, we were encouraged by our PSAI friends as well as our local SBDC to begin a retirement plan. We opted for a Simple IRA Plan. As we began to hire additional employees, this program was a benefit to them as well.

There was not a single event or revelation that made us proclaim “this is it!” We found deciding to retire was a slow process and one that we did not realize was beginning until we looked back upon it.

At home, we maintained a household budget with an allocation, no matter how small, for savings. We found that our household budget was far easier to manage than that of our company, so this task was done on a routine basis.

As Pit Stop grew and we were able to compensate ourselves at a more reasonable level, again, contributions to savings were also a factor in these decisions.

In 2012, we paid off our house which was another component of our financial and eventual retirement plan. We paid “a little bit extra each month” on our mortgage payments and paid off the 30-year note in 20 years. At this point, Pit Stop — as well as the rest of our industry — had survived the housing slump/financial collapse of 2008-2010.

MAKING THE DECISION

There was not a single event or revelation that made us proclaim “this is it!” We found deciding to retire was a slow process and one that we did not realize was beginning until we looked back upon it. There were, however, some influential factors in the 2010s that drove our decision:

FAMILY — Both of sets of parents were into their 70s and health issues began to arise. With no children of our own and living near our family, their welfare became a higher priority.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE — While always working long hours, the demand increased exponentially from 2012-14 as I became intimately involved in helping to run the PSAI. While spending roughly 120 days at the PSAI headquarters in Minneapolis during this period, Pit Stop still demanded the same amount of work and Terri was left to handle this arduous task.

Fortunately, Terri hired a young man named Brett Roques to join the company during my absence. Very soon he was promoted to general manager of the company.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE BUSINESS — As the economy began to grow in the Atlanta area in 2014-15, we had to decide about Pit Stop's future growth as well. Should we look at another loan to purchase more equipment? Hire more employees? Expand into other product lines such as temporary fencing?

FURTHER GROWTH AND POTENTIAL OF MANAGERS/KEY EMPLOYEES — Brett's responsibilities increased as did his desire to accept new challenges and to explore new business technologies. At this time — perhaps early 2015 — he expressed a desire to "explore the possibility of purchasing Pit Stop when the opportunity presented itself."

As you can see, this was a process that slowly evolved. In late 2016, Terri and I thought more and more about these factors and concluded "it is now time." Once the decision was made, we discussed it with our "key employee" — better known as our "work son" — Brett, who was eager to pursue this possibility.

Planning and executing the plan had worked since the company's founding in 1995 and we did not deviate from that strategy in terms of selling the company. We worked with our banker, CPA and attorney as did Brett and, together, an in-depth analysis of the company was conducted from both a financial as well as a business perspective. Due diligence was done in a methodical and organized fashion. There was no rush. We wanted Pit Stop to continue to succeed as we determined how our future retirement needs would be.

Finally, on June 30, 2017, after eight-nine months of analysis and planning, the sale was complete.

WHAT ARE WE UP TO?

After being in this amazing industry for 22 years, we amassed a large "extended family" and we wanted to stay in touch with that family.

I have remained a volunteer for the PSAI serving on committees and working where needed. I can still work with, talk with and interact with all our PSAI friends and that is a true blessing. My philosophy is that, in great part, because of the PSAI, we were able to run a successful business and retire. I want to share that knowledge with others.

Terri has remained consultant to Pit Stop and helps when called upon. During COVID, Terri has been invaluable in helping with various work-at-home projects as well as covering the phones at certain times.

The Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association has relied on Terri's board leadership for the past six years. Currently, she is serving as secretary and volunteers in other areas. In 2019, Terri was appointed to the State of Georgia Certification Review Committee where she works in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Environmental Health on educational requirements for our industry.

Those of you who know Terri know how much she loves greeting cards. She recently began working part time as a retail merchant for Hallmark.

We both eagerly accepted the opportunity to write this column for PRO and have done so since June 2018. It is yet another chance to share and learn from others in our industry.

Many of our weekends are spent in North Georgia working on renovating the family home and mountain property. We enjoy the woods, pond, lake and wildlife found there.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Our primary suggestion to all PROs — owners or employees — is to plan to retire. The old expression "fail to plan is to plan to fail" is certainly true from our perspective.

1. Pre-retirement financial planning? Consider investing in financial retirement tools such as 401Ks, SIMPLE IRAs and similar plans.
2. What about after retirement? If you are an owner, once you sell the company, will you find another job or career path? If you are an employee, will you find another job as well? Full time? Part time?
3. Interests? Will you stay involved in the industry or in business in some way? Besides industry associations such as the PSAI, there are other business organizations in need of volunteers such as SCORE (formerly Service Corps of Retired Executives), part of the U.S. Small Business Administration.
4. Hobbies? Consider joining clubs, nonprofit organizations and travel.

Make notes about your thoughts on retirement and share them with family members or others while reflecting upon them from time to time.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

We found it to be true. At a certain point, "we knew." Fortunately, we had planned and discussed this next phase of life and retirement has, and continues to be, enjoyable and fulfilling. We wish the same to you! ■



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The path to success follows a winding road for HHH Sanitation, but brothers Chris and Tim Hettich stay ahead of the curves

By Peter Kenter

Brothers Chris and Tim Hettich both came to co-ownership of HHH Sanitation by different paths, but together their individual skills are proving a formidable force in growing this portable restroom rental and service operation in Birmingham, Alabama. Their secret: Accept what you can't change, and make the best decisions to move forward.

More than 20 years ago their father, Randy Hettich — who was facing retirement — and his best friend, who ran a small portable restroom business, had been looking for a business to operate together. That opportunity arrived with a call from another restroom company offering to sell its Birmingham-area portable restroom division. A year later, they received a call from yet another company offering their area

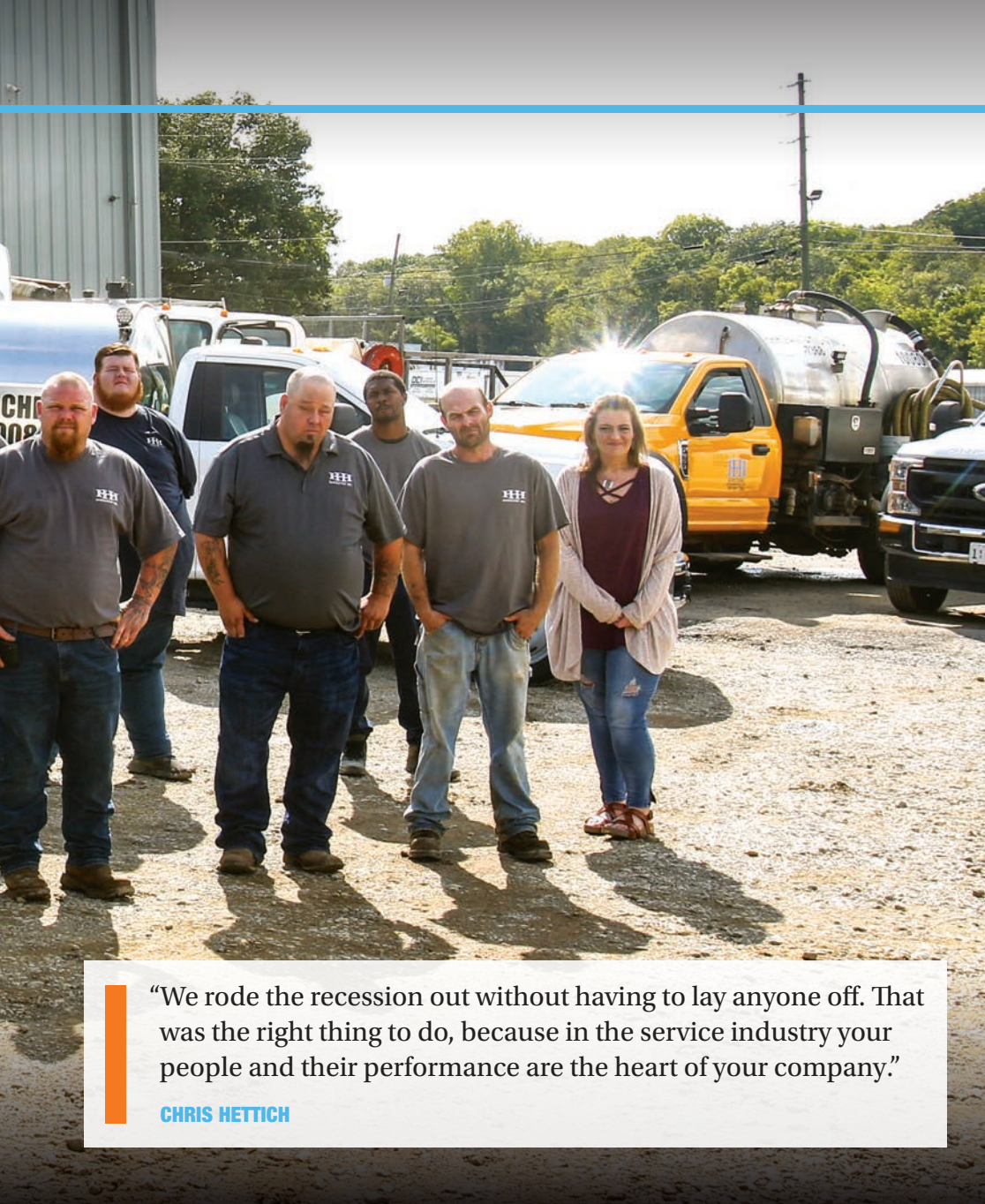
portable restroom operations for sale as well.

Tim joined the business in 2002 as a pickup and delivery driver.

"At that time I was working as a train conductor for Norfolk Southern between Birmingham and Atlanta," says Chris. "Shifts ran every eight hours and I wasn't happy with the time I was able to spend with family. My baby's first words were 'bye-bye daddy.' I came to my dad and told him I would do whatever job was open to see if I liked the business."

Chris was hired in 2003 and spent a year on the ground floor, maintaining the company's more than 500 restroom units and helping with transportation and delivery.

"I enjoyed having a regular schedule, and I enjoyed the work," he says. "Even though it



“We rode the recession out without having to lay anyone off. That was the right thing to do, because in the service industry your people and their performance are the heart of your company.”

CHRIS HETTICH

Left: The HHH Sanitation team includes (front row, from left) Chris Hettich, Tim Hettich; Donnel Ford, Jake Franklin, Andrew Heidenreich, Brandon Abbott; and (back row, from left) Perry Banks, DeArreone Cook, Marvin Caddel, Horace Richardson, Earnest Glass, Trent Sweatt, Anthony Jones, Brad Sweatt, Leeanne Jackson. (Photos by Meg McKinney)



HHH Sanitation Birmingham, Alabama

Owners: Chris and Tim Hettich

Founded: 2015

Employees: 18-24

Services: Portable sanitation, septic pumping, roll-off container rental

Service Area: 100-mile radius of Birmingham, Alabama

Affiliations: Alabama Onsite Wastewater Association, Greater Birmingham Association of Homebuilders

Website: www.hhhsanitationinc.com

Below: Tim (left) and Chris Hettich are shown with 2020 and 2021 Best of Birmingham awards presented to HHH Sanitation for portable restrooms.

involved a pay cut, I was at home with my family, which was more important than anything else.”

RECESSION-PROOF

In the years following, Chris moved into sales and then the role of general manager, as his brother was promoted to logistics manager.

Chris had also purchased a non-competing one-truck portable restroom business offering more than 200 units and serving contractors in the homebuilding industry, which he operated privately.

However, with the arrival of the 2008 financial crisis and a worsening economy, he considered going back to the railroad before committing permanently to his father’s business.

“My response to the recession was to become really creative,” he says. “I shifted our staff, cut overtime hours, and





Left: A bank of restrooms from Satellite Industries at Barber Motorsports Park is serviced by Earnest Glass.

Below: From left, Tim Hettich, general manager Brandon Abbott, shop superintendent Andrew Heidenreich and Chris Hettich are shown with their favorite personalized license plate, TOILET1, placed on a company truck.

reorganized our route schedules and timelines and we rode the recession out without having to lay anyone off. That was the right thing to do, because in the service industry your people and their performance are the heart of your company."

Chris merged his company with his father's business the following year, even as his father's business partner did the same with a business of equal size.

Following the recession, the business continued to grow. However, as Randy made plans to retire, he and his business partner agreed to divide the business between both families, so each could create its own legacy. That reorganization led to the establishment of HHH Sanitation in 2015.

"We still do business with each other and we've both prospered," says Chris. "HHH has doubled in size over the last six years and we've grown to the same size as the company was before we divided the assets."

THE INVENTORY

Today the company fields almost 2,000 portable restrooms: about 1,500 from PolyJohn; 260 from Satellite Industries; 120 from J&J Portable Sanitation Products; and 100 from Armal. Of those, 30 Satellites and 30 PolyJohns are ADA compliant.

They're transported by a 2020 Isuzu flatbed that can handle 10 units; an 18-unit trailer from Liquid Waste Industries; and a 10-unit trailer by Outback Trailers. HHH has also built two custom trailers, an eight-hauler and a 12-hauler.

Larger restroom-equipped trailers include two eight-unit, one four-unit and one two-unit model from Satellite. HHH also offers an eight-unit



model from Advanced Containment Systems and a seven-unit model from Comforts of Home Services.

HHH provides 85 hand-wash stations from PolyJohn, 10 from Satellite and 75 units designed and manufactured in its own shop. Deodorizers are supplied by Walex Products and J&J.

Among the company's 10 vacuum trucks, eight are self-built, including: a 2007 Isuzu with a 600-gallon waste/250-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and Condé pump by Westmoor; a 2008 Chevrolet 3500 with a 200-gallon waste/50-gallon freshwater steel tank and Jurop/Chandler pump; a 2011 Dodge 5500 with a 450-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater steel tank and Masport pump; a 2016 Dodge 5500, with a Lane's Vacuum Tank 900-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank and Masport pump; a 2016 Ford F-650, with a Lane's 900-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank and

(continued)



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Above: Earnest Glass finished work after servicing a bank of restrooms at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama. His truck was built out by FlowMark and uses an NVE pump.

Masport pump; a 2017 Ford F-550 with Lane's 1,100-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and Masport pump; a 2019 Ford F-750 with a Keith Huber (Hol-Mac Corporation) 1,100-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank and National Vacuum Equipment pump; and a 2020 Ford F-550 with a Lane's 1,100-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and Masport pump.

Additional vacuum trucks include a 2017 Ford F-550 built out by Lane's with a 900-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tank and NVE pump, and a 2019 Ford F-550 built out by FlowMark with a 1,200-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and NVE pump.

HHH also owns 80 300-gallon holding tanks from Satellite.

DO WHAT YOU DO BEST

The brothers have prospered by sticking to their areas of expertise: Tim to managing logistics and Chris to sales and marketing. Increasingly, they're relying on general superintendent Brandon Abbott, shop foreman Andrew Heidenreich, financial manager Melinda Hagood and coordinator Leanne Jackson to handle on-the-ground duties.

About 80% of the business is serving construction clients. A roll-off waste container and disposal business complements the portable restroom contracts.

"We see construction as the business that carries us from day to day," Chris says. "Our event money is used to grow the business and to invest in new equipment."

HHH headquarters is located on five acres, which includes a four-bay service shop with overhead crane and welding shop.

"We do 90% of our own service work," says Chris. "Anything that does not require a computer or HVAC is fair game. With the welding shop we can do anything from building tanks to assembling trucks. We tend to buy new trucks assembled, but typically a tank outlasts a truck, so we just set the tank on a new truck, put new PTOs and shafts on it, spec the truck the way we want and put it on the road."

Examples of the custom fabrication include installing freshwater tanks on all delivery vehicles, so the water can be used for anything, including office fills on construction sites.

The Hettichs attend the WWETT Show every year to meet with their suppliers, learn about new products and upgrade their skills through continuing education sessions.

Area PROs are part of a supportive professional community. They rent equipment to each other, pump each other's units and share event contracts, according to the brothers.

MORE INFO

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FlowMark Vacuum Trucks
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Keith Huber Corporation
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Lane's Vacuum Tank, Inc.
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Liquid Waste Industries, Inc.
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Masport, Inc.
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National Vacuum Equipment, Inc.
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PolyJohn
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WE'RE GOING TO GROW

The brothers reckon they still have at least 25 good working years apiece in them, and are primed to continue taking HHH on its growth trajectory, adjusting their plan to account for unforeseen conditions.

Chris enjoys Family Feud host Steve Harvey's analogy comparing the challenges of being successful to standing on the edge of a cliff, but never jumping off, using the parachute one has been given by education and experience.

"I think of business that way," he says. "But you not only have to know that the parachute is good, but that you've left enough room for the parachute to deploy before you hit bottom. Once I'm convinced, I'll jump." ■



Above: Earnest Glass pulls up to the Barber Motorsports Park on his service route. HHH Sanitation has a lot of construction-related customers, but it also serves events such as racing venues, professional golf tournaments and fairs and music festivals.

RACING AND GOLF LEAD THE WAY

HHH Sanitation of Birmingham, Alabama, counts on two event seasons each year, bookending the hottest summer months. The busiest times for events are March to May and September to early November, when most state fairs, carnivals, festivals and local sporting events are scheduled.

Although the COVID pandemic has put a squeeze on recent events, HHH has worked big local events over the years, including events at NASCAR's Talladega Super Speedway; The IndyCar Series' Grand Prix of Alabama and MotoAmerica Superbike Race at Barber Motorsports Park; the U.S. Women's Open Championship at Shoal Creek; the Oak Mountain State Fair at Pelham; and the Birmingham major on the PGA Tour Champions schedule. They've also fulfilled contracts at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in nearby Tennessee and smaller fairs and festivals around Alabama.

While owners Chris and Tim Hettich have become less involved in day-to-day delivery and service for their regular construction clients, the brothers continue to provide muscle during the event season. Having a good memory is an asset.

"We've done Talladega so many times that we don't need a map," says Chris. "My brother heads off in one direction and I head off in the other, and we just start setting down restrooms. I can even remember what was written on some of the graffiti I've cleaned off at certain locations."

While not officially "events," HHH has also worked tornado and hurricane contracts for companies providing storm response and logistics support following disasters and emergencies.

"The work pays well," says Chris. "But you have to commit to longer terms. Storm recovery could take a month or more, and you don't want to tie up equipment you use for regular clients."



Left: Technician Glass stocks supplies in his work truck before running a route. The truck is a Ford F-550 built out by FlowMark with a 1,200-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and National Vacuum Equipment pump.

Merry Christmas!



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Below: The Port-A-John crew serving the air show included, from left, Stacy Brown, Mike Ruby, Danny Hancock, James Olechowski, Ed Newhouse, Eric Harris, Guy Jackson, John Myers, Lori Dudzinsky and Vincent Dudzinsky. (Photos courtesy of Port-A-John Rental)

Below: Txxxxx



FLYING FIRST CLASS

Weather challenges don't stop this Pennsylvania crew from providing top-notch airshow service

By Betty Dageforde

ON LOCATION

- » **THE JOB:**
Westmoreland Air Show
- » **LOCATION:**
Arnold Palmer Regional Airport,
Latrobe, Pennsylvania
- » **THE PRO:**
Port-A-John Rental Co.

THE TEAM

Siblings Lori Dudzinsky and John Myers are the owners of Port-A-John Rental in Blairsville, Pennsylvania. About 85% of their work is portable sanitation, the rest septic service. Everyone on staff was involved in the Westmoreland Air Show event — Dudzinsky's 14-year-old son Vincent, administrative assistant Stacy Brown, delivery/service technicians James Olechowski and Eric Harris, route drivers Dan Hancock and Mike Ruby, septic service technician Guy Jackson and cleaning technician Ed Newhouse.

COMPANY HISTORY

Dudzinsky and Myers took over the business from their father, Jack Myers, when he retired in

2003. He purchased the company in 1978 after working as food service director at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. He had wanted to get back to Pennsylvania and his brother, Lloyd Myers, who owned a portable sanitation business, knew Port-A-John was for sale and suggested he buy it. Later, Myers also bought out his competitor and then the septic division of the original company. Current inventory stands at 1,000 units (Satellite Industries) and 13 vehicles.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Jack Myers provided units for the Westmoreland Air Show his first year in business and the company has had the account since. "I think our reputation speaks a lot," Dudzinsky



Above: Port-A-John set up these restrooms and hand-wash sinks from Satellite Industries along the taxiway for the Westmoreland Air Show.

Left: Attendance was limited for the 2021 air show as visitors found ample portable sanitation options on the taxiway.



says. “We’re bringing them nice units, all the same color; they’re clean. We set up and tear down in a timely manner. We’re professional. They know we’re dependable and go the extra mile.”

In October 2020, when the country was in the throes of the coronavirus pandemic, Dudzinsky got a call from the event organizer. “I was surprised,” she says, “because everything was basically shut down at that time. But when he started telling me what they were planning to do and how it could work, it made sense.”

The plan was for spectators to park on the old runway at the venue, the Arnold Palmer Regional Airport, and stay with their vehicles. There would be no vendors or exhibitors. Tickets would be sold only in advance with a reduced capacity limit of 1,000 vehicles each of the two days. Food trucks would drive around and portable restrooms would ring the perimeter.

There were numerous logistical details to work out before the Memorial Day weekend event and Dudzinsky was updated regularly.

THE MAIN EVENT

The theme of the 2021 air show was “A Heroes Tribute,” a dedication to COVID frontline workers. Scheduled activities included performances by the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, aerial acrobatics and parachuting demonstrations. By May, easing restrictions allowed organizers to add several kids’ activities and a few vendors.

“We have set up for thousands of special events but the Westmoreland County Air Show is by far our favorite ... When those jets fly over, it just gives me goose bumps.”

LORI DUDZINSKY

Unfortunately, after working through all the challenges associated with COVID, the main difficulty for the event ended up being outside of everyone’s control — the weather. Both days were cold with misty rain and low cloud cover. The first aerial performance on Saturday was delayed two hours and the situation only got worse. Most activities had to be canceled or scaled down, including the 100-mile Heroes Tribute flyover. The Blue Angels could not perform Saturday and did only a low altitude show on Sunday. Spectators took everything in stride and were just glad to be outside with people again.

BY THE NUMBERS

Despite the uncertainties, the company started preparing for the event in early 2021. Supplies had been hard to get during the pandemic, so they wanted to order everything in plenty of time. They also bought more portable restrooms and hand-wash stations. By six weeks out, everything was in stock. They provided the usual number of units for the event — 115 standard and 17 wheelchair-accessible, all with hand sanitizers — but organizers increased the number of hand-wash stations from 13 in years past to 60.

LET’S ROLL

Before taking equipment to the venue, everything was inspected, repaired if needed, and washed. “And we made sure they had sanitizer and toilet tissue so that setting up went smoothly because all we had to do was put the chemicals in and wipe them down,” Dudzinsky says. “Doing that here at the shop saved us a lot of time



Above: Eric Harris was one of the crew members who serviced the Westmoreland Air Show. He is shown loading restrooms onto a Ford F-350 flatbed truck for delivery.

Using 2015 and 2019 Ford F-350 flatbed trucks, equipment was delivered to the site 10 days before the event and stockpiled. Unseasonably hot weather caused some problems, though.

"Because of the heat we were having these pop-up thunderstorms," Dudzinsky says. "One day a bad storm came through before lunch time and knocked over a bunch of the units. Then the sun came out and we sat them all back up. Then around dinnertime, another storm came through and knocked them over again." Three hand-wash stations and two sanitizer dispensers were damaged.

Three days before the event equipment was set into place in nine groupings along the old runway. A few units were also set up at the announcer's stand and VIP tents.

KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

Dudzinsky, her brother and her son stayed on site both days, mostly just enjoying themselves. "Basically there wasn't anything for us to do because of the weather," she says. "The units weren't heavily used at all."

Equipment was cleaned Saturday at 5:30 p.m. after the event. It took six workers four hours. They used two Ford F-550s (2015, 2016) built out by Satellite Vacuum Trucks with 600-gallon waste/350-gallon freshwater steel tanks, a 2012 Dodge 5500 from Imperial Industries with a 900-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater aluminum tank, and a 2019 Ford F-350 with an Imperial 300-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater aluminum slide-in tank, all with Masport pumps. Waste was transferred to their



Below: John Myers, left, and Vincent Dudzinsky maintain hand-wash stations from Satellite Industries.

septic truck, a 2016 International 4300 built out by Amthor International with a 2,500-gallon aluminum tank and National Vacuum Equipment 607 pump, and later taken to a treatment plant in Johnstown, 35 miles from the shop. The company uses Walex supplies for service.

Units were pumped out Sunday night after the event, then picked up over the next couple days and cleaned at the shop.

A SUCCESS STORY

Ironically, on Monday the weather was beautiful — and all COVID restrictions were lifted. In spite of

(continued)

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PRO

Right: The U.S. Navy Blue Angels demonstration team is seen lined up on the taxiway with the Port-A-John restrooms in the foreground.

Below: A pop-up thunderstorm creating high winds tipped over Port-A-John equipment at the air show, requiring extra cleanup.



everything, Dudzinsky says they were happy with the event, the organizers thought it was a success, and people enjoyed themselves whether watching the few remaining acts, throwing Frisbees or holding tailgate parties. An additional thrill for the company occurred on Sunday when Dudzinsky was interviewed by a local TV station. The interview aired during the 6 p.m. news.

As she does with all their large events, Dudzinsky provided a post-event assessment for the organizers to help them plan for the future. "I let them know if they needed more units, where the units were heavily used, where they weren't heavily used."

The company always enjoys the air show, Dudzinsky says. "We have set up for thousands of special events but the Westmoreland County Air Show is by far our favorite. I love it. When those jets fly over, it just gives me goose bumps." ■

Right: Lori Dudzinsky and Vincent Dudzinsky are shown in the company office with photos of the Blue Angels in action.





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PSAI Chooses a Consulting Firm for Association Management

By Ross Ambrose

The Portable Sanitation Association International has partnered with Ewald Consulting to expand its reach and its work for the advancement of the industry. The PSAI board of directors chose this path upon the recommendation of executive director Karleen Kos, who stepped aside to facilitate additional organizational growth. Karleen did an incredible job for the PSAI and with a staff of two plus several volunteers, the association needed more personnel to reach its goals of further advancing the portable sanitation industry.



Ross Ambrose

The transition between Ewald Consulting and the PSAI board of directors, committee chairpersons and volunteers has been smooth and is ongoing. An executive director will be announced soon, and the work of the association will continue at an even more rapid pace. The PSAI Convention and Trade Show is set for Reno, Nevada, Feb. 1-4, 2022, and planning is well underway with several new ideas being evaluated.

The PSAI's resource partner has almost 40 years of experience in working with and contributing to furthering the goals of trade associations. Located in Minnesota's Twin Cities, the long-time headquarters of the PSAI, the physical transition of files and equipment is going smoothly. With Karleen's two-month advance notice of leaving, she was able to provide an inordinate amount of knowledge and assistance in the transition process.

As the PSAI is in the midst of celebrating its 50th anniversary, we are not only looking back, but we are also looking ahead. The need for PSAI volunteers is as strong as ever. If you are not a member, please consider joining and contributing as the association is looking forward to further recognition of portable sanitation as an "essential industry," to higher standards, and to increased acceptance by the public.

Stay informed with all the ever-changing industry and PSAI News at www.psa.org. ■

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HOLDING TANKS, TRANSPORT TRAILERS AND ACCESSORIES

By Craig Mandli

DECALS



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Decals from **Allied Graphics** are designed exclusively for the portable restroom industry to stick and stay on units and in tough environments. The long-life vinyl decals use ultraviolet inks to 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**

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Roeda decals utilize 4 mil permanent adhesive vinyl and UV fade-resistant inks for many applications such as portable restrooms, 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. Decals can be cut to any size or shape. A UV clearcoat or lamination adds extra protection against the elements. A wide variety of options and adhesives are available using existing logos or having new designs made. **800-829-3021; www.roeda.com**



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The 300-gallon holding tank from **Satellite Industries** is a strong, impact-resistant polyethylene tank designed to provide years of dependable service. With two internal pillars and thickened corners, the tanks stack high, resist cracking and decrease wear-through from sliding and dragging, according to the maker. Fittings are molded, not spin-welded, for greater strength, and all ports and connectors are recessed to guard against breakage. Also, tanks can be connected end-to-end with standard rubber fittings to increase waste storage when needed. Though a variety of sizes and styles are available, the 300-gallon holding tank offers interlocking stacking posts/pockets on all four corners, recessed ports and connections, optional 5- and 10-inch manways, and molded fittings. **800-883-1123; www.satelliteindustries.com**



HOLDING TANK TREATMENT



WALEX PRODUCTS COMMANDO BLACK HOLDING TANK CLEANER

Black holding tanks can be difficult to clean and sanitize, and cleaning these tanks manually is an unpleasant task. **Commando Black Holding Tank Cleaner** from **Walex Products** is a safe and natural cleaning product for portable restroom trailer holding tanks. The eco-friendly product disperses billions of healthy bacteria to break down waste buildup that causes odors.

The portion-controlled packs are formaldehyde-free, safe for septic systems and dissolvable. Drop a few packs into the tank, fill with water, and in 24 hours the tank will be clean and sanitized, according to the maker. **910-371-2242; www.walex.com**

LIGHTING

J&J CHEMICAL J-LIGHT

J&J Chemical offers two solar-powered motion-sensor lights designed for portable restrooms. **J-Light 45** offers five bright, cool-white LEDs emitting 45 lumens with a 3.2-volt, 600 mAh rechargeable battery. **J-Light 65** has 10 bright, cool-white LEDs emitting 65 lumens with a 3.2-volt, 1,200 mAh rechargeable battery. Both are easy to install and fitted with a motion sensor to activate the light and day/night sensor so they will not activate in the daylight. They switch off after 45 seconds of inactivity. J-Light 45 requires a 1.5-inch hole, while J-Light 65 requires a 2-inch hole. **800-345-3303; www.jjchem.com**



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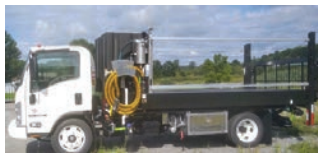


AMERI-CAN ENGINEERING TOTER

Toter portable restroom transport trailers from **Ameri-Can Engineering** are available in lengths of 16 to 40 feet and carrying up to 20 restrooms. A drop bar enables transport of large units, such as ADA-compliant and handicapped-accessible restrooms. An easy-load design saves time, and trailers are made of steel for strength and years of dependable service, according to the manufacturer. **574-892-5151; www.ameri-can.com**

CRESCENT TANK VACUUM TANK

The **Crescent Tank** vacuum tank is flat inside and out. It can carry up to 10 portable restrooms, and the weight capacity is the same as a flatbed truck. It has no baffles, allowing it to be emptied completely to avoid internal corrosion. With the included pump at specified cubic feet per minute, unnecessary structural fatigue is eliminated. It is fabricated from 1/4-inch steel for structural strength. Its workstation is designed for the portable restroom industry. The liftgate rail width allows units to fit, and multiple liftgate decks and rail options are available. Freshwater is held inside the external 1/2-inch-thick poly tank. It can be installed on any chassis within the specifications required for each model based on axle ratings and maximum load capacity. **585-657-4104; www.crescenttank.com**



F.M. MANUFACTURING 30-FOOT TRAILER

The 30-foot flatbed trailer from **F.M. Manufacturing** has three 3,700-pound torsion bar axles, side

roller for easy loading, low-profile tires, solid front header and tie-downs on both sides. The customizable trailer has electric brakes on all axles and LED lights. **877-889-2246; www.fmmfg.com**

IMPERIAL INDUSTRIES FLATVAC

The 1,000-gallon stainless steel **Flatvac** from **Imperial Industries** can carry up to six portable restroom units on top of the unit's 1,000-gallon stainless steel flat vacuum tank. The baffled, internally divided tank offers 700 gallons of waste capacity and 300 gallons of freshwater capacity. In addition, the unit offers dual-sided bucket fill, dual Hannay hose reels with 50 feet of hose, a Pumptec X-5 washdown pump, Masport HXL4 plug-and-play vacuum pump system, Thieman liftgate, and a 3-inch stainless steel boom with 30 feet of 2-inch intake hose and a suction nozzle. **800-558-2945; www.imperialind.com**



JOHNNY MOVER TRAILER SALES TRAILER

Portable restroom transport trailers from **Johnny Mover Trailer Sales** have skid-locking, using an iron bar with a chain-binding system to secure multiple units. Models are available to handle six to 20 restrooms, and all feature brakes, paint options, lighting, leaf-spring suspension, front deflectors to protect units from road spray and debris, and optional powder-coating and chrome wheels. **800-498-3000; www.cesspoolcleaners.com**

LIQUID WASTE INDUSTRIES TRAILER

Custom-built portable restroom delivery trailers from **Liquid Waste Industries** carry six to 24 restrooms and come with or without sides. They are built with heavy-duty steel and come standard with torsion axles, electric brakes, flush-mounted lights, and 10- or 13-inch wheels and tires. Custom upgrades include gates, leaf-spring axles, fold-down ramps, LED lights and choice of hitch. **877-445-5511; www.lwiinc.com**



MCKEE TECHNOLOGIES-EXPLORER TRAILERS TRANSPORTER

The **Transporter** from **McKee Technologies - Explorer Trailers** has easy-to-adjust carrier slats that box in any size restroom skid. Multiple-size skids can be configured securely in the same load, providing safe, flexible transportation for many styles of portable restrooms. Models range from 8 to 48 feet, accommodating up to 24 units. All include fully independent suspension axles designed to eliminate side-to-side shock transfer. An optional front wind deflector protects units from road spray, stones and wind loading. Hot-dip galvanizing is available for corrosion protection. **866-457-5425; www.explorertrailers.com**

(continued)



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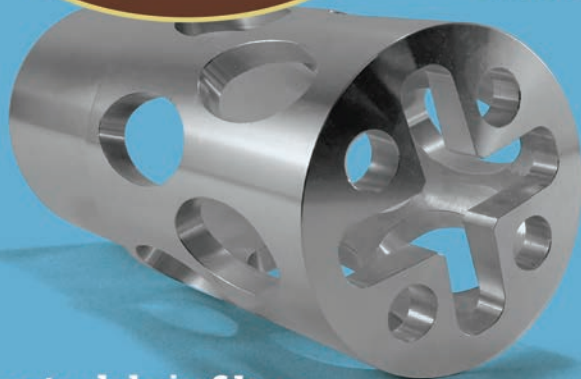
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**PIK RITE FLATBED
RESTROOM HAULER**

The **Flatbed Restroom Hauler** from **Pik Rite** has a 650-gallon tank, flatbed and liftgate. The tank has a 400-gallon waste compartment and internal 250-gallon freshwater compartment for even weight distribution. The truck includes a National Vacuum Equipment 304 vacuum pump, dual 2-inch fill hoses, 20 gpm washdown system, dual-spring return freshwater hose reels and dual 2-inch bucket fills. A 20-inch top manway, 5-inch sight eyes and clear-hose sight tube are included. The truck is equipped with a 98-by-102-inch aluminum flatbed and Thieman TVL liftgate. Two diamond plate toolboxes are mounted on the passenger side. The truck has an LED running light kit with a durable, fully molded wiring harness. **800-326-9763; www.pikrite.com**



Senecal named president of Satellite Suites

Satellite Industries announced the promotion of Charlie Senecal to president of Satellite Suites, the company's Bristol, Indiana-based restroom trailer division. Senecal, previously vice president of Satellite Suites, joined Satellite Industries in 2005, then worked for another portable sanitation industry company for several years. He rejoined Satellite in 2013 to launch its newest restroom trailer division under the brand of Satellite Suites. ■



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➤ **PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

AirVote mobile review system provides instant customer feedback

By Tim Dobbins

A negative review could prompt a company to make adjustments and improve customer satisfaction. A representative of AirVote says that if delivered constructively, privately and in real time, a customer's complaint is a gift to business owners and operators.

"Far too many reviews on social media reflect customer's frustration with something a business was simply unaware of," says Dmitri Poukhovski, co-founder and co-owner of AirVote. "All the company needed was a signal, not an angry review that would hurt its reputation for years."

That thought led to the development of AirVote QR smileys. The company wanted to create a convenient way for people to leave positive or negative reviews that could help businesses instead of tarnishing their name. "With customer reviews at every social corner, we felt there still isn't a good way for most people to express themselves simply, honestly and on the spot," Poukhovski says.

AirVote QR smileys open a new connection for operators and their service staff. Providing the means to easily communicate with actual customers helps get answers to questions that are otherwise hard to know. "What happens with the unit between scheduled maintenance periods? Does the unit checked off as serviced every Tuesday keep becoming messy on Friday by simply being overused?" Poukhovski asks. "AirVote gives the 'outside looking in' perspective by adding a continuous private and direct feedback channel to PROs from the actual users."

The smileys work by displaying QR codes below a question of the operator's choosing in the portable restrooms. Users scan the code corresponding to their desired answer, which submits their vote with only one click. No additional phone applications are needed, and votes are anonymous. The AirVote dashboard provides the analytic feedback instantly to the subscriber.

Every QR smiley is specific to a restroom, so alerts notify operators of the exact location where each vote is reported. According to AirVote, operators report the QR smileys have helped prompt more positive social media reviews and alerts on issues in real time, making for faster response.

"Among all of the benefits, it helps PROs upsell to their customers," Poukhovski says. "If feedback shows that once-a-week service is just not enough, the customer is more receptive to adding additional units or services." Setup costs are limited to providing the sticker, as there are no electronics to buy or maintain. QR codes require a smartphone with internet connection. **425-652-7637; www.air-vote.com**

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