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January 2022

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THE
T.S.F. COMPANY Inc.
Evansville, Indiana



Always Say “YES”

For three generations, T.S.F. Inc. has taken pride in a can-do attitude and customer service that stresses cleanliness

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Take 5

A successful Arkansas-based trash company adds portable sanitation to roll up additional profits from its construction clientele - Page 24





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PROfile: Always Say "Yes"
For three generations, T.S.F. Inc. has taken pride in a can-do attitude and customer service that stresses cleanliness.
- Ken Wysocky

ON THE COVER: T.S.F. Company Inc. has been serving portable restroom customers around Evansville, Indiana, since 1959. Mat and Ashley Schenk are shown with a Kenworth T270 that was built out using a tank shell and ends from Abernethy Welding & Repair and a Masport pump. (Photo by Marc Lebryk)

COMING NEXT MONTH — FEBRUARY 2022

- **On Location:** Serving up country music
- **PROfile:** The team comes first



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By Jim Kneiszel

Let's Start 2022 With Safety at the Forefront



Use of PPE and effective communication about safety issues among co-workers are important topics explored in this issue

We all want to start the new year out on the right foot. And coincidentally, two of the stories in this issue of *PRO* offer suggestions on how we can do just that. Our At Your Service and PRO Business columns blend two important topics — safety and effective communication — in an interesting way that should benefit our contractor readers in many ways in 2022.

First, Jeff and Terri Wigley, our portable sanitation experts, talk about common safety violations seen in the industry and make suggestions for restroom companies to better encourage their crews to use the required and recommended PPE, or personal protective equipment, when servicing portable restrooms.

Secondly, writer Ken Wysocky has a conversation with leadership training guru Joseph Grenny about how co-workers can bring clarity to communication when pointing out safety or other transgressions in the workplace. The gist of his advice is to correct behaviors in the workplace in a constructive and respectful way.

The message in both columns is of timeless importance and should prompt necessary discussions in offices and yards of portable restroom operators everywhere. At the risk of offending any of our readers, I'll start an uncomfortable discussion that will hopefully lead to healthier and safer conditions for frontline workers in our industry.

HE WON'T WEAR GLOVES

Since I became the editor of *PRO* 18 years ago, I have had frequent reminders of lax safety procedures among service providers. A lot of them have come in the form of photography for the magazine that shows workers not following established rules set forth by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, as most people know the federal agency.

Mind you, the stories I am about to share do not, in my opinion, represent the safety record of a majority of our restroom companies. But even if these types of violations are only exhibited by a small number of PROs, they are worthy of an industry-wide discussion in an effort to stop them.

As recently as a few weeks ago, one of our photographers following a PRO on a route put his camera down at one point and asked the driver to don protective gloves while servicing a restroom. The driver told the photographer that he doesn't wear gloves when holding a wand extension from the suction hose. However, the wand would be considered an extension of the hose and should be at all times handled with gloved hands.

Years ago, we encountered a PRO who had refused to wear gloves for any of the photos for a story, telling the photographer it would be dishonest to portray him with gloves because he never wears them on his routes. I recall this distinctly because I called the driver to hear his side of the story. "I'll eat my lunch with a sandwich in one hand and the hose in the other," he said, noting that he didn't believe contact with waste was unhealthy.

Also, more often than I would hope to see, I receive photos showing workers on construction sites without hard hats, reflective vests or other recommended gear. This brings to mind a few construction site tragedies over the years that could have been avoided if all workers were dedicated to safely navigating these dangerous areas. One frightening example was a

I enjoy riding along with a PRO while I'm shooting photos for the magazine. I have found it disheartening when my request for the technicians to wear safety gear sent them scrambling to find a pair of gloves or safety glasses.



worker who was only walking from one pickup truck to another to talk to another worker, so he decided to leave his hard hat behind. A construction worker several stories up in a high-rise building dropped a wrench, which struck the worker below in the head, killing him.

When I have the opportunity, I enjoy riding along with a PRO while I'm shooting photos for the magazine. I have found it disheartening when my request for the technicians to wear safety gear sent them scrambling to find a pair of gloves or safety glasses, obviously showing this was not part of their daily routine.

PPE BAG

The Wigleys, who operated an Atlanta-based restroom company for more than 20 years and who have been involved with the Portable Sanitation Association International, are keenly aware of safety requirements for service providers. Turn inside and you'll see their comprehensive advice on proper use of PPE and tips on how to ensure your crew follows the safety procedures you set out for them.

One excellent suggestion they make is to prepare a PPE storage bag outfitted for the needs of each worker. They say a zippered gym bag is a great choice to hold the hard hat, safety goggles, ear plugs and various types of gloves and other gear they may need. Then the workers are responsible for keeping the bag stocked with everything they need and moving the bag with them as they switch service vehicles. This seems to work better than having shared PPE somewhere in the truck, they say.

Setting up the procedures promoted by the Wigleys is one thing, but getting them to follow through with all the safety measures is another. That's

where the advice from training expert Grenny comes in. In the PRO Business story, Grenny stresses the importance of field workers holding each other accountable where safety is concerned.

Easier said than done, right? It's not always a comfortable conversation to correct a co-worker. And often, that co-worker might not take kindly to being corrected. Grenny shares a roadmap to start these uncomfortable conversations ... and stresses that changes in unsafe behavior are crucial to everyone coming home safe and sound at the end of the day. And isn't that what it's all about?

Bottom line, companies, even the smallest portable sanitation business, need to create a culture where it's easy and nonthreatening to talk to each other about safety or how people treat each other in the workplace. He talks about delivering criticism politely and adopting an "attitude of gratitude" when someone fairly points out when you are in the wrong.

"When such a response becomes a cultural norm, it reduces the emotional stakes involved," he says, boiling it down to a railroad analogy. "It's kind of like getting a train started. It requires enormous energy at the beginning to get it started. But after that, it's easy to sustain."

I MEAN NO OFFENSE

If any of the PROs I've talked to about wearing gloves or hard hats on job sites are reading this, I'll ask you to understand my questions are only meant to help you create a safer work environment and allow us to depict working conditions that meet guidelines set forth by OSHA. Just like you would do with coworkers, I bring up these topics out of concern for your well-being and to promote safety throughout the industry. ■



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TOP 10

OF 2021 THE YEAR IN REVIEW:
OUR MOST POPULAR ARTICLES

A LOOK BACK

Countdown the Top 10 Most-Read Articles of 2021

With the start of a new year, take a look back at the best of 2021 from PROMonthly.com. Read this online list to see which reads made the cut.
promonthly.com/featured

OVERHEARD ONLINE

“Small businesses are the primary target of cyberattacks, and the average toll of a cyberattack exceeds \$25,000. It’s also worth noting that service companies are uniquely vulnerable to cyberattacks, as many technicians operate phones and tablets on unsecured networks.”

Why More Small Businesses Need Cyber Insurance
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RETHINK HIRING

Maybe Offering the Job to Family Isn't a Good Idea

Chris and Tim Hettich, the co-owners of Alabama's HHH Sanitation, love their families but won't hire them. Find out why — and if scrapping the practice is right for you — in this article featuring *PRO*'s December cover stars.

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WORKWEAR CARE

Make Personal Protective Equipment Last

PPE can get expensive, especially when talking about single-use items. However, portable sanitarians can find ways to cut cost by taking better care of reusables and paying better attention to employee needs and gripes. Read more in this exclusive online article.

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It's you the customer many who have become very close friends that makes coming to work each day exciting. I would like to thank everyone for their support and friendship and must importantly trusting me and the entire Walex staff to be part of your team. I'm very honored to work with you.

I would like to thank all my customers and let you know how much I truly care and enjoy being able to help daily about you and every aspect of your business. I am genuinely grateful for the relationship we have!



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Your business, I want you to know I truly appreciate your loyalty, and your friendship. I look forward to many more years of working with you, and wish your company the success that it deserves.

Thank you for your continued support and loyalty throughout my 16 years at Walex. I'm very humbled and appreciate the relationships developed over the years. As always I'm here to help if there is anything you need.



By Jeff and Terri Wigley

There Are No Excuses for Ignoring Safety Gear

Tell your crew there is no alternative to following OSHA rules and find ways to make it more convenient to follow through with PPE requirements

QUESTION: As we begin a New Year, we would like some suggestions to encourage a higher rate of PPE usage in our company. Could you please help?

ANSWER: Personal Protective Equipment, while mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, monitored by health inspectors on job sites and managed by the company, depends on each company employee to be used effectively.

The basics of PPE for our industry, and the most common violations that are cited when not followed include the following:

1. Always wearing rubber gloves when using a hose for either pumping or disposing of waste.
2. Protective eyewear when servicing units as well as disposing of waste. In fact, in some areas, protective face shields are required when disposing of waste.
3. Steel-toed boots, preferable waterproof, should be worn at all times. Although not as obvious as failure to wear gloves or eye protection, boots prevent or minimize a significant number of safety incidents in our industry.
4. Hard hats, mandatory on all construction sites, and a situation in which the contractor can be cited as well as the PRO, are an extremely important piece of protective equipment.
5. Reflective vests allow for the wearer to be more easily seen among the multitude of activities going on a job site or when the PRO is working in high traffic areas.
6. Other PPE as required by the customer such as hearing protection.
7. Not a specific PPE violation; however, in our "Age of COVID," face masks where required by customers on their site, at their event, or in their place of business.

The goal of establishing a PPE usage strategy is to make employees feel comfortable wearing this safety equipment. A dear friend and a legend in our industry, Barry Gump, with Andy Gump Temporary Site Services, had a saying that is appropriate to this topic: "Are you a have to, a will or a want to? We need the want to's."

An excellent option we have found is to create a "PPE storage bag." A personalized zippered gym bag is an ideal size to house a hard hat, a clear bag with safety goggles, a small bag with ear plugs, and separate bags for plastic gloves, rubber gloves and leather gloves.

DISCUSS OSHA WITH EMPLOYEES

Provide background to your employees as to the importance and the history of OSHA. Convey the fact that this is a federal program and not a company program. As an entity in the U.S. Department of Labor, OSHA is responsible for assisting employers in "their responsibility for providing a safe and healthy workplace for their employees."

Management and supervisors should become familiar with the "OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Guide." Found at www.osha.gov, this manual provides a general overview of basic safety standards and equipment needed for compliance.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 establishes four categories of safety concerns:

1. Eye and face protection
2. Head protection
3. Foot and leg protection
4. Head and arm protection

PRESENT PPE EQUIPMENT INDUSTRY STANDARDS TO EMPLOYEES

The PSAI Training and Certification Program, founded in 1992, has established the minimum PPE standards for portable sanitation:

1. Hard hats
2. Eye protection
3. Steel-toed boots – preferably waterproof
4. Waterproof gloves

The PSAI also established additional suggestions:

1. Reflective vests
2. Face shields
3. Face masks
4. Headlamps
5. Hearing protection

In the era of COVID-19, additional PPE should also include the following:

1. Disposable face masks
2. Plastic gloves
3. Hand sanitizer
4. Cleaning wipes

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IS NECESSARY

Are there other pieces of PPE you feel would be necessary in our company? Particularly where COVID is concerned, elicit employees' thoughts and opinions.

Concerning the specific equipment itself, solicit employee input and feedback:

1. Is the PPE comfortable and easy to wear?
2. Are there better alternatives? Perhaps noise canceling headphones worn under a hard hat are more desirable than ear plugs.
3. Consider brands, colors and styles. Is certain equipment better fitted for female route service technicians?
4. Will the PPE be durable in your climate? Are there options that will not be as hot to wear on warm summer days?
5. Conduct wear trials where employees can give feedback about how certain pieces of PPE performed on the job.

If your employees assist in this process, they will have a personal stake and will more actively participate in wearing PPE when needed.

CONDUCT PROPER TRAINING

As part of the new employee training program, discussing and demonstrating the proper use and care of all PPE emphasizes the importance of all of this safety equipment. Often, PPE is not mentioned or discussed until on-the-job training begins. If properly wearing, cleaning and maintaining PPE is included with the basic job description, this responsibility has a greater impact on new employees.

Another tip is to not exclusively use the abbreviation PPE in meetings, training sessions or in conversations. Using the phrases "personal protective equipment," "protective equipment" or "safety gear" is another method of emphasizing the importance of this concept.

Showing the proper use and fit of PPE should not only be reserved for new employee training but also for periodic reviews at company safety meetings.

Remind employees that once on the job site or at the customer's location, their safety requirements must be followed. If any additional PPE is required, your company should purchase it for that job and this information should be properly documented if other drivers will service this site.

CONVENIENCE OF PPE MAKES USAGE EASIER

Throughout the years, we have heard of many instances where employees did not use the necessary personal protective equipment:

1. "I couldn't find it."
2. "I could not easily get to it."
3. "Some items were in the cab and some in the storage cabinets."
4. "I haven't used it in a while."
5. "I know where it is on my truck, but I was using another truck today."

The list goes on and on.

An excellent option we have found is to create a "PPE storage bag." A personalized zippered gym bag is an ideal size to house a hard hat, a clear bag with safety goggles, a small bag with ear plugs, and separate bags for plastic gloves, rubber gloves and leather gloves. The zippered bag can be secured in the passenger seat with the seat belt, and it is convenient, consolidated, and not exposed to the weather.

More importantly, that gym bag is the property of that particular driver. The driver can have each piece of equipment adjusted to meet their needs. Each driver's gym bag is easily transported from vehicle to vehicle. Since all the PPE is the responsibility of that employee, the motivation to keep it clean and in good repair is significantly higher than using "community equipment."

MAINTENANCE AND CLEANING

Management should ensure that proper supplies are available for cleaning all PPE items. Extra PPE should always be available for replacement when needed. The various procedures to clean and maintain these items should also be covered in the new employee training sessions and periodically reviewed in safety meetings.

REMINDERS

Safety signs with catchy slogans, pictures of safety equipment or progress charts showing numbers of days that are "incident free," are excellent reminders that can be posted throughout the office and in the route service driver areas in particular.

INSPECTIONS

As with either random or scheduled truck inspections, PPE should be included as an item for evaluation. Ensure all the items are on hand, in good repair and clean. This is yet another method of stressing the importance of PPE.

ENFORCE POLICIES

These policies and procedures are just as important as customer satisfaction, service quality and all other performance measurement.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

"Establish a culture of safety" is a phrase that we heard long ago, and it is pertinent today. By emphasizing the importance of safety while encouraging employee input and ownership, success is more easily attained. ■



Right: The T.S.F. team includes four generations of Schenks, from left, Mat, Ashley, Hunter, Fischer, Ella, Patty and Bob. (Photos by Marc Lebryk)

Always Say “YES”

For three generations, T.S.F. Inc. has taken pride in a can-do attitude and customer service that stresses cleanliness

By Ken Wysocky



After more than six decades in business, the T.S.F. Company — now in its third generation of family ownership — has established itself as a portable sanitation fixture in rural Southwest Indiana. And Mat Schenk, the grandson of the company's founder, is working to keep that legacy alive for decades to come.

“I was born into the business,” says Schenk, 42, who co-owns the business with his mother and father, Patty and Bob Schenk. “I started working here when I was about 10 years old ... and I never left.

“I still enjoy it,” he adds. “It’s something different every day. You never know what’s going to happen.”

Schenk’s grandparents, Jeanetta, and the late Gene Barnhart, started the company in 1959. An industry pioneer, Gene Barnhart built and rented restrooms made out of plywood. That gradually evolved into a restroom-manufacturing business that today is known for its line of Tuff Jon restrooms.

As such, the business, located in Evansville, Indiana, is an outlier in the industry because it both builds restrooms and related items while also renting and servicing restrooms, as well as pumping out septic tanks.

DIVISION OF LABOR

Schenk handles the rental and service side of the business, while his wife, Ashley, handles restroom sales and routing for rental-restroom deliveries and service calls, he says. Schenk’s parents remain involved in the business, too; Bob still comes in daily while Patty serves as office manager.

“Dad turned 70 a little while ago and told me he’s going to start taking Wednesdays off,” Schenk says. “But he still hasn’t missed a Wednesday yet. He’d be bored if he ever stopped working.”

Interestingly, the company’s name refers to a product it hasn’t made for decades. T.S.F. stands for Tri-State



The T.S.F. Company Inc. Evansville, Indiana

Owners: Bob, Patty and Mat Schenk

Founded: 1959

Employees: 25

Services: Restroom rentals and service,
septic tank pumping

Service Area: 75-mile radius around Evansville

Website: www.tuff-jon.com



"All you have to do is do what customers pay you to do — take a little pride in everything you do ... everything [employees] do reflects on the company, so going the extra yard for customers is the most important thing they can do."

MAT SCHENK

Above: Company secretary Ashley Schenk plans service routes in the office.

Left: Co-owner Mat Schenk, 42, started working at the family company at age 10. He is shown with T.S.F. restrooms in the background.

"Our business philosophy is simple: Never say no to customers," Schenk says. "Instead, we just say, 'Yup, we can do that.' Then we hang up the phone and figure out how to actually do what the customer wants. You can never afford to let a business opportunity pass you by."

The resourcefulness factor dates back to Gene Barnhart's restroom-building days, which started when sign-and-barricade customers asked him if he'd build and rent out restrooms, too. Barnhart used 55-gallon drums as restroom tanks, Schenk says.

"He'd change out the barrels for customers," he says. "He was a real entrepreneur."

In the early 1990s, customers began asking the company to also provide septic-pumping services, and Barnhart obliged, reflecting the company's never-say-no philosophy. He used an old restroom service truck to pump out tanks and soon was so busy he fabricated his own septic vacuum truck.

"It was a logical add-on service to restroom rentals," Schenk observes. "It also allowed us to cross-market the restroom and septic services. There's definitely value to offering more than one service. You don't want all your eggs in one basket."

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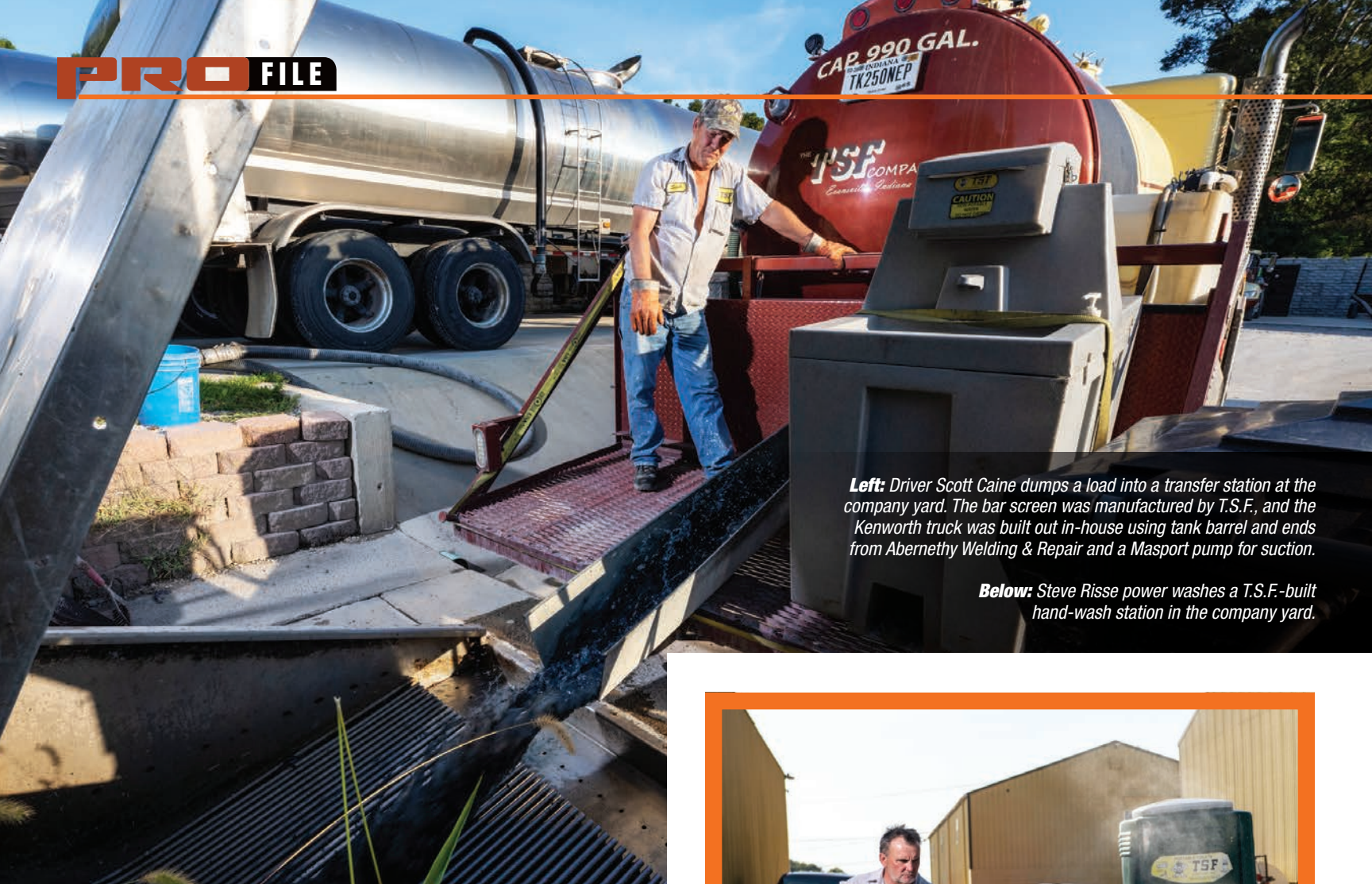
The company's can-do attitude is reflected in its fleet of restroom service trucks, fabricated by employees. Six of the trucks are built on International 4300 chassis and feature Masport pumps and self-fabricated tanks, using rolled steel shells and tank ends manufactured by

Flasher, a reference to the road signs and traffic barricades with flashing warning lights that Barnhart used to make and rent, Schenk explains.

Restroom rentals generate about 75% of the service end of the business, with septic tank pumping contributing the remaining 25%. Construction restroom rentals produce about 75% of the restroom-rental volume with special events kicking in the balance.

NEVER SAY NO

What key factors have contributed to the company longevity? Schenk says it all boils down to providing strong customer service, some commonsense business savvy and the resourcefulness and strong work ethic of its founders and the generations that followed.



Left: Driver Scott Caine dumps a load into a transfer station at the company yard. The bar screen was manufactured by T.S.F., and the Kenworth truck was built out in-house using tank barrel and ends from Abernethy Welding & Repair and a Masport pump for suction.

Below: Steve Risse power washes a T.S.F.-built hand-wash station in the company yard.

Kennedy Tank and Mfg. The tanks can carry up to 380 gallons of freshwater and 1,000 gallons of waste.

The company also owns three more used restroom service trucks built on Kenworth T270 chassis, Masport pumps and 1,100-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater steel tanks made by Abernethy Welding & Repair.

In addition, the company recently outfitted a Kenworth T270 and an International 4300 for restroom service, using rolled steel shells and tank ends made by LMT and pumps built by Masport. The tanks can carry up to 400 gallons of freshwater and 1,100 gallons of waste.

To deliver and pick up an inventory of about 3,000 Tuff-Jon restrooms, employees use an International 4700, a Ford F-350 and a Ford F-450; each carrying up to six restrooms.

The company also owns handicapped restrooms from Satellite Industries and two restroom trailers, one self-fabricated and one built by Ameri-Can Engineering.

To pump septic tanks, TSF relies on an International 4700, a Kenworth T600, a Ford LN8000 and a Ford Aeromax. Three of the trucks are equipped with self-fabricated steel cylinders and tank ends made by Kennedy Tank (3,500-, 2,500- and 2,000-gallon capacities) and one steel tank made by LMT (3,500 gallons). All the trucks have Masport pumps.

The company also owns two stainless steel tanker trailers, one 5,000-gallon unit made by Walker Transport (a brand owned by Wabash National) and the other built by Tremcar that holds 6,500 gallons. They're used to transport waste from the T.S.F. yard to a local treatment plant, Schenk says.



CLEAN SERVICE

While the company doesn't do anything unusual to market its services, Schenk says servicing customers with clean, nicely lettered trucks and thoroughly cleaning restrooms goes a long way toward generating word-of-mouth referrals, the most effective form of advertising.

"All you have to do is do what customers pay you to do — take a little pride in everything you do," he says of the company's no-nonsense take on customer service. "We tell our route drivers that when they pull into a customer's driveway, they're representing themselves ... the customers usually don't know me, my dad or the history of the company."

(continued)

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Above: Driver Phil Miley services a row of T.S.F. restrooms.

Below: Steve Risse loads portable T.S.F. toilets for delivery to a special event.



"But everything they do reflects on the company, so going the extra yard for customers is the most important thing they can do."

That's especially true since more and more companies seem to pop up lately and try to gain market share by low-balling prices. While T.S.F. may periodically lose customers to this tactic, most tend to come back eventually when they realize they get what they pay for, Schenk says.

"As long as we provide quality service and go the extra mile for customers, it works out in the long run," he says. "You have to play the long game in all of this."

MAINTAINING A LEGACY

As the years go by, Schenk says he feels more pressure to ensure the family-owned company remains successful. He knows full well that according to federal government statistics, the third generation of ownership generally doesn't fare very well. In fact, statistics show about 70% of businesses fail to last longer than 10 years.

"Our lawyer always reminds us that it's the third generation that usually messes things up," he says. As such, Schenk is focused on keeping the company sustainable, while maintaining its family culture that makes it a great place to work and, for family members, a home away from home.

"Ashley and I live a block away from the shop," Schenk says. "My mom and dad live a block and a half away and my grandma lives a half-block away. So everyone is just right here ... we've lived this way for so long that we're accustomed to having all that family around all the time."

(continued)



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DUMP STATION BOOSTS PRODUCTIVITY

A business doesn't survive and thrive for more than 60 years if it doesn't adapt to changes and challenges. So it comes as no surprise that The T.S.F. Company established a new strategy when dumping protocols changed at a local treatment plant — costing the company time and money.

Before the change, trucks dumped their loads by backing down a slope and off-loading into a manhole, using gravity and a supplied wash-down hose to clean out the tank. The process took about 10 to 15 minutes, says co-owner Mat Schenk.

But plant officials changed the process because too many contractors weren't properly recording how much waste they were dumping. The city invested in a Muffin Monster system, built by JWC Environmental (a brand owned by Sulzer). The machine grinds solid waste and automatically records the amount of waste dumped.

One problem, though: Trucks now dump waste from a pad that's nearly level, so gravity can't do its work. Furthermore, when the flow of waste slows down to a certain level, the Muffin Monster shuts down — usually with about 50 to 100 gallons of waste still in the truck tank.

"The Muffin Monster's flowmeter thinks the truck is empty, so it shuts off," Schenk says.

As a result, it took 30 to 45 minutes to clean out the company's vacuum trucks. And with 11 service trucks, that consumed a lot of time every day, Schenk explains.

In addition, the treatment plant charges users for a minimum of 1,000 gallons of waste, whether the truck is carrying that much or not.

The solution? In 2018, TSF built what amounts to a waste transfer station in its yard. The system consists of four 1,500-gallon buried septic tanks connected by 10-inch-diameter PVC pipes.

"We dump waste through a bar screen, which catches about 90% of the trash," he explains. "Then we use a high-pressure water hose to wash down the inside of the tank. In 5 or 10 minutes, the truck is cleaned out and ready for the next day."

When the tanks are full enough, the waste is pumped into one of the company's two tanker trailers, then transported to the disposal plant about 10 miles away, he says.

Schenk estimates the transfer station paid for itself in roughly 2-1/2 years, largely through time savings that increased productivity by enabling route drivers to do more service calls per day, he says.

"Last year we disposed of 1.4 million gallons of waste," he notes. "So with that kind of volume, it's much more cost-effective if we can better control the process ... we never go in any more with trucks under the minimum and we're not paying guys to wait in line."

"And quite honestly, the peace of mind just knowing the trucks are cleaned out well every night was worth the money."

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Schenk is the only one of a dozen or so grandchildren who works for the company. But he's not at all resentful about that.

"I'm really glad I stayed around to carry on the family business," he says. "It's all I've ever known."

Looking ahead, Schenk is hopeful some of his children eventually take over the business. His 18-year-old son, Hunter, has been working full time for T.S.F. since graduating from high school in 2021, but has been helping out part-time since he was about 9 years old. His 10-year-old son Fischer, rides with Schenk almost every day and helps out in the shop, too.

Schenk's 13-year-old daughter, Ella, hasn't expressed much interest in the family business, but he notes that could change, too.

"I'd love nothing more than for a fourth generation to come in and say, 'Dad, you're no longer needed,'" he says. "Then I could just fade away. But I'd probably keep hanging around the place, just like my dad does. I'd do it just to aggravate them." ■



Above: Mat Schenk services a portable restroom.



Below: Inventory of T.S.F. restrooms at the company yard show a variety of colors manufactured and stocked for the company's service customers.

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Mastering Difficult Workplace Conversations Will Dampen Conflict

Learn how to point out co-worker safety violations in a constructive way and everyone will be healthier and happier

By Ken Wysocky

So you see a colleague violating a safety procedure while operating equipment, or breaking office ethics protocol.

Given most people's propensity for avoiding conflict, it's undoubtedly tempting to just let things slide. After all, who wants to be perceived as that person on the office team or field crew — the one who thinks they're perfect and always calls out other people on the error of their ways?

Fortunately, you can have it both ways — as in, speak out and hold people accountable while still maintaining good workplace relationships. The trick is to do it with the right motivation and attitude, and to hopefully work at a place where management builds a culture where accountability is prized, says Joseph Grenny, the co-founder and co-chairman of VitalSmarts, a national leadership training organization.

If you're one of those people who finds speaking out very difficult, you're not alone, notes Grenny, who's also a four-time *New York Times* bestselling co-author of business books. (Titles include *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*; *Crucial Accountability: Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior*; and *Influencer: The New Science of Leading Change*.)

"We've spent more than 30 years talking about the consequences of avoiding crucial conversations, which is absolutely ubiquitous in the workplace," he observes. "So many of the common complaints in our lives have roots in our inability to handle these crucial conversations."

IT'S NOT EASY

Why is speaking out so hard to do? Part of it stems from the way we've been hard-wired to think pessimistically about outcomes from confrontations. "That mentality served us well in prehistoric days when we were constantly faced with physical threats," he says. "But it doesn't serve us as well now, when we have to deal more with social challenges."

Moreover, the worst outcomes we can imagine rarely ever happen, he adds.

In other instances, employees feel like it's not their place to tell others what to do or how to act. Or they figure it won't do any good. Or they don't know what to say or how to say it without being offensive.

But in the long run, there are obvious downsides to ignoring such transgressions. For starters, if you don't talk things out, you'll probably act it out, creating a downward spiral of trust and repressed anger that can destroy team morale. "It all gets expressed one way or another through things like sarcasm and resentment," he says.

"Most of us in those moments attach our self-worth to whether or not the other person agrees with us or complies. But we don't need to do that. Just do what you're supposed to do in a graceful way and let them handle it how they handle it."

Second, problems avoided typically turn into recurring issues that can create damaging ripple effects in the workplace — which puts everyone's safety at risk. "It becomes a chronic problem through the unwitting consent of people around them who don't say anything," he notes.

Of course, there's always a chance things can go sideways when someone speaks out about something in the workplace. "But if you don't say anything at all, it never goes well either," Grenny says. "Things such as employee retention and strong engagement are all strongly tied to workplaces where people speak up about emotionally and politically risky things."

KIND REMINDERS

So how does one go about handling these delicate situations? First of all, don't wait and don't go to your boss first. Research performed by VitalSmarts shows that in high-performance organizations, issues get handled between peers and at the moment they occur, Grenny says.

"Escalations [going to a supervisor] almost always end in failure," he explains. "They're unnecessary political and social behaviors that drag down the process of managing a fairly straightforward and logical process."

Also keep in mind that to achieve good results, it pays to ensure your motives are right — a mindset Grenny calls "kind to remind." In fact, Grenny says the best indicator of how a crucial conversation will go is the reason you want to have it in the first place. If you want to punish, belittle or prove you're right, expect it to go badly.

"Too often we behave in ways that prevent the outcome we want," he says.

On the other hand, good things happen when you speak from a sense of kindness. "Positive intent is a huge indicator of how well things will go," he explains. "Before you open your mouth, you need to pause and think about what you really want. If it's a legitimate concern, ask yourself what you want for the other person so you're not coming from a selfish place."



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ACCEPT REMINDERS GRACEFULLY

If you're on the receiving end of the criticism, it's crucial to assume what Grenny calls an "attitude of gratitude." In other words, politely accept any reminders to follow certain safety rules and assume they're being expressed with good intent.

Companies can help enforce this mindset by creating a culture of accountability — a place where it's the norm to say, "OK, thanks for the reminder," whenever someone speaks out about a safety violation.

"When such a response becomes a cultural norm, it reduces the emotional stakes involved," Grenny explains. "It's not hard to create such a social contract, but very few organizations do it. It takes training and presentations and leaders who are willing to reinforce and model it.

"It's kind of like getting a train started. It requires enormous energy at the beginning to get it started. But after that, it's easy to sustain."

Last but not least, after people speak up, they then need to let things go, understanding that they cannot control the colleague's response. "Don't turn it into an ego match or a test of wills," he advises. "Deliver the message, and then look out for your own safety.

"Most of us in those moments attach our self-worth to whether or not the other person agrees with us or complies. But we don't need to do that. Just do what you're supposed to do in a graceful way and let them handle it how they handle it."

If this approach doesn't work, then it's OK to take the matter up the ladder to a supervisor or someone in human resources or a safety department — whoever has responsibility for the respective issue.

In the long run, inaction is not the best option. When handled the right way, speaking out trumps silence. As Grenny points out, "The inability to do so adversely affects every workplace outcome we care about." ■



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TAKE 5... with CARDS Recycling

Right: Jason Fitzgerald, vice president of business development for CARDS Recycling, is shown in the company office. (Photos by Denny Medley)

CARDS Recycling, based in Springdale, Arkansas, isn't a typical portable sanitation company. It started as a landfill operator and trash service company, but Jason Fitzgerald, the vice president of business development, saw that many customers for their trash containers were also using portable restrooms. CARDS tried to see if it could be the provider of those restrooms, and the results have exceeded the company's original expectations.

The portable restroom division is still small compared to the rest of the company. CARDS Recycling, serving a broad area including parts of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas, has more than 200 trucks and only two of them are vacuum trucks for servicing portable restrooms, but the portables division is growing rapidly. The COVID-19 pandemic struck just as CARDS acquired its first shipment of 120 Satellite Industries Global 2 restrooms. The company continued to add inventory and expects to have 500 units at the end of the year.

CARDS jumped into portable sanitation in a serious way, even though none of its employees had restroom or wastewater experience.

"It was a learning experience for sure," Fitzgerald says. "Four of us went and took the test for pumper trucks and septic pumping and toilet pumping together down at the state testing facility. It is a requirement to be licensed in the state of Arkansas. Come to find out, we only needed one person to do it, not four of us, but it was good practice for all of us."

So far, CARDS has not added luxury restroom trailers to its inventory, but that may be on the horizon. The company was considering adding some special event trailers early in 2020, but hit the pause button because of the pandemic.

"When COVID hit, we had 120 units sitting on the ground, and we were wondering if we made the right decision on starting this division at this time," Fitzgerald says. It appears that the decision worked out just fine. In addition to the growing number of restrooms, another truck and driver were also in the plans by year-end.

Many of CARDS' portable restroom customers are homebuilders, some of which keep the units on site for years as they build out subdivisions. There is a lot of homebuilding going on in Northwest Arkansas. CARDS also is working with two of the contractors at the new Walmart corporate headquarters under construction in nearby Bentonville, and that project could require numerous restroom units for a long time.



A successful Arkansas-based trash company adds portable sanitation to roll up additional profits from its construction clientele

By Steve Lund

EXPLORE FIVE FACTORS THAT FORGED GROWTH FOR THE PORTABLE SANITATION DIVISION AT CARDS RECYCLING:

1

THE VACUUM TRUCK CAME FIRST

Before CARDS Recycling had any portable restrooms, the company bought a vacuum truck. Fitzgerald and some colleagues were on their way back from a meeting when they saw a new service truck sitting on a truck dealer's lot. The truck was a 2020 Hino 268a built out with a 1,500-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater steel tank and a Masport pump. "We said let's go see what they want for that," Fitzgerald says. "We pulled in and made a deal." The truck was already white over black, so it didn't need to be painted to fit into the CARDS color scheme. "We just added our decal to the side," Fitzgerald says. The company recently picked up a 2021 Ford F-550 4x4 built out by Imperial Industries with a 900-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater aluminum tank and Masport pump.

(continued)

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Above: The crew of CARDS Recycling, Springdale, Arkansas.



Above: Operations supervisor Brian Cheatham, left, and Jason Fitzgerald assemble a load of new restrooms from Satellite Industries.

2 EXPERIENCED EMPLOYEE BOOSTS NEW DIVISION

As CARDS added equipment for its new division, it also added an employee with experience in the portable sanitation business, Brian Cheatham.

"Brian is one of the guys that is really the catalyst for this division," Fitzgerald says. "He's not only helping sell the products, but he's also the one that's out there servicing the units. He's our PR on the ground. You're not going to find anyone that's as committed to doing what he does and knows as much as he does about his craft as Brian. He's just been a great addition to our team, and we're very thankful to have him."

"We are growing as a company but still want to keep our focus on the customer. We make sure they know that service is our primary mission. If they call us, we'll take care of them, no matter what."

JASON FITZGERALD



3 CUSTOMER SERVICE IS CRUCIAL

Fitzgerald is keenly aware that customer service is the key to the portable restroom operation. "We are growing as a company but still want to keep our focus on the customer," he says. "We make sure they know that service is our primary mission. If they call us, we'll take care of them, no matter what. They have a number that they can call and reach Brian or myself at all times."

Fitzgerald has evidence that customers appreciate the CARDs Recycling customer service. One customer called and said that after several employees

commented on the cleanliness of the portable restrooms, he watched as Cheatham serviced one of their units. "He said, 'I watched your gentleman clean the toilet, and it was like he was taking an outside dog and bathing it to make it an inside dog.'"

Fitzgerald says Cheatham even scrubs down brand-new units when they are placed on a job site for the first time. "He takes a scrub brush and sprays it down and brushes everything inside the unit, even though it hasn't been used. He not only does that the first time, but each time to each toilet every day. We're very appreciative of what he does for us," Fitzgerald says.

(continued)

Below: An employee washes equipment in a CARDs Recycling yard. The company serves customers in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas.





Above: Brian Cheatham services a restroom at a residential construction site.





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4 THE PRODUCT IS THE BILLBOARD

CARDS doesn't do a lot of advertising, but its services are well known thanks to its distinctive and consistent color scheme. The company will put up banners for special events in the cities where it has contracts, and it has a website and a Facebook page, but it doesn't advertise in local media or on billboards.

"Our units and [containers] are like billboards," Fitzgerald says. "Our branding has just been our units. You definitely can't miss us. We're big and orange and with a big CARDS on the side. We have a couple of customers that are homebuilders, and if you pull into their subdivisions, it looks like a sea of orange."

5 LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS LEAD TO SUCCESS

Fitzgerald had relationships with many homebuilders because of his previous experience in the waste disposal business, and those relationships have helped as CARDS ventured into the portable restroom business. "You do business with people, not companies, right? No matter who I've worked for, the customers understand that we're going to be able to service them. That's the key. Standing behind what you say you're going to be able to do."

The move into providing portable restrooms has expanded CARDS' relationships with existing customers, but the company is also regularly adding new customers. "We're successful because of our people and our customers," Fitzgerald says. "We want to stay humble and keep growing. We know that if we can just get people to use us, they will never stop." ■

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PORTABLE RESTROOMS AND ACCESSORIES

By Craig Mandli

PORTABLE RESTROOMS



THERMOFORM MT 18 PARAMO

The **MT 18 Paramo** from **Thermoform** 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.thermoform.com.co

T.S.F. TUFF JON III

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



T BLUSTAR RAPIDLOO PRO

The **RapidLoo PRO** from **T blustar** can be assembled in less than three minutes without tools and may be transported and stored in a four-unit package that takes the space of one assembled restroom. By reassembling the four-pack, the three units packed inside are protected from ultraviolet light. 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**



SATELLITE INDUSTRIES ASPEN

The **Aspen** from **Satellite Industries** offers a new streamlined design for a sleek and modern feel. Upgrades include a more durable roof, larger tank, large splash-resistant urinal, private molded-in vent screens, coat hook, enclosed door springs and closure, large hover handle, hands-free latch, impact base and the new universal shelf. **800-883-1123; www.satelliteindustries.com**



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**

POLYJOHN PJN3

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



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**

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 it 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**



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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, color fading and parts durability at extreme temperatures. Curved corners make it easy to handle, and smooth surfaces make it easy to clean, according to the maker. The unit can be configured with several options. **866-873-7796; www.armal.biz**

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 applications 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. 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**



DECALS/MAGNETS/SIGNAGE



ALLIED GRAPHICS DECALS

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**

ROEDA DECALS

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**



LIGHTING

LUNARGLO SOLAR LIGHTS

LunarGlo solar lights are designed to improve the experience for the user and make units easier to clean after dark. Normal life expectancy is 3-5 years. Lights provide consistent brightness from dusk to dawn and the ability to take a pressure washing day after day with no impact on the performance. **574-294-2624; www.lunarglo.com**



SOLAR LED INNOVATIONS SOLAR POD LIGHTS

Solar Pod Lights from **Solar LED Innovations** are available in three versions that

provide 30, 50 and 65 lumens of light to fully illuminate portable restrooms for special events and nighttime use. Low-profile units install in minutes and double lock securely through the roof. Automatic darkness sensors and motion sensors control lighting as well as a manual on/off option. Up to 30 hours of light are provided from a single day charge in the sun. **484-639-4833; www.solargoose.com** ■



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➤ **PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

Restroom trailer designed for special event use

By Tim Dobbins

The story of Ameri-Can's Veranda restroom trailers dates back more than two decades, and since its inception, it has progressed into a line of luxury trailers popular for special events.

"It's a very appealing trailer to many of our special event customers, especially weddings and VIP sections," says Keegan Campbell, COO of Ameri-Can. "We originally built the predecessor to the Veranda back in 1996 as a special request for a national forest project. Early in the 2000s, we redesigned their model to have private women's restrooms and a men's common room with toilets and urinals. Then, in 2016 we created the third generation as a solution for Caribbean Carnival and it's been a popular trailer for unique events ever since."

The Veranda line is offered in 10 variations, allowing customers to choose from a two to six-stall arrangement in either Ameri-Can's Traditional or Royale package and features easy setup with two self-leveling step assemblies that are designed to promote streamlined use for smaller waiting lines.

The exterior design is especially popular with users, according to Campbell. "The Ameri-Can Veranda Series of luxury restroom trailers offers a unique porch assembly," Campbell says. "This integrated covered landing features lights and speakers and adds easy access to the private unisex floor plan with European styling."

Once through the covered walkway, the privacy of individual stalls featuring accent panels with LED backlighting is another thing he says customers appreciate. "It's unique due to, not only its exterior look, but the interior as well," he says. "Inside users will find pop-out accent panels in a complimenting color, vessel sinks and on-board freshwater."

Along with building each Veranda with luxury visual features, Ameri-Can concentrated on making sure the trailers were built to withstand heavy use. "We build the trailer in a commercial grade that's generally geared more toward fairs, outdoor sports venues and construction sites," Campbell says.

"It's popular for the shaded overhang that protects from the sun and tropical rains alike," he says. "It's a huge hit for wedding venues and even a special request from construction workers on mine sites in Mexico." **574-892-5151; www.ameri-can.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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POLYJOHN DAILY TIMES

JANUARY 2022

BREAKING NEWS: POLYJOHN NOT ATTENDING WWETT SHOW 2022

Leading Manufacturer Focusing on Internal Improvements



The team at PolyJohn identified the following reasons for not having a booth this year:

- Keeping focus on overcoming supply chain and order fulfillment challenges
- Logistical challenges and manpower shortages caused by having a booth
- Desire to focus on smaller, regional tradeshows and events that better cater to the specific needs of portable restroom operators
- Health and safety concerns as a result of COVID-19

To read the full statement from PolyJohn, visit: PolyJohnNoWWETT.com

New Year, New Us: PolyJohn is doing things differently this year as a result of the current industry status. However, the ultimate goal of helping PROs succeed remains.

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