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The TEAM COMES FIRST

A contented and committed crew has fueled quick growth and diversification for Georgia's Express Disposal

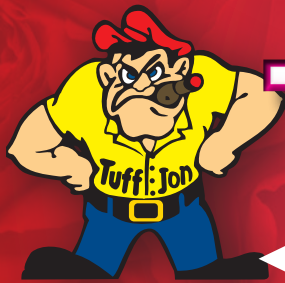
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A Wisconsin PRO turned up the volume on quality service for a country music festival returning after COVID cancellation

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ON THE COVER: Clint Eudy is the general manager for Express Disposal, a Leesburg, Georgia, company owned by Jason Wiggins and country singer Luke Bryan. Eudy is shown in the company yard with an inventory of Armal restrooms. (Photo by Matt Odom)

- Betty Dageforde

ON THE COVER: Clint Eudy is the general manager for Express Disposal, a Leesburg, Georgia, company owned by Jason Wiggins and country singer Luke Bryan. Eudy is shown in the company yard with an inventory of Armal restrooms. (Photo by Matt Odom)

COMING NEXT MONTH — MARCH 2022

- **PRO Business:** Dealing with deadbeat customers
- **Profile:** Piling up miles in North Dakota



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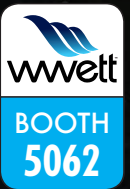


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By Jim Kneiszel

Portable Sanitation Products Are Key to Keeping Seattle Streets Clean



Restrooms and shower trailers employed in the Pacific Northwest target homeless encampments in dire need of service

You might think a large urban city like would have ample access to permanent public bathrooms. But you would be wrong. Many of the existing facilities are connected to private businesses like restaurants and retailers that provide limited public access. So when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, many shelters serving a large homeless population closed their doors, sending users into the streets with no place to relieve themselves.

To ease this crisis, city officials appointed the Seattle Public Utilities Department to find a solution. And the utility turned to portable sanitation as an efficient way to serve many homeless encampments that would pop up and move around to a variety of locations across the city.

Urban areas in the temperate Pacific Northwest have long been a magnet for the transient poor, and restrooms and shower trailers employed by Seattle have provided much-needed hygiene options, according to Gavin Patterson, a project manager for the public utilities.

The city budgeted \$6.3 million in 2021 to fund the program, with money spent to purchase shower trailers and hand-wash stations, rent, service and repair portable sanitation equipment and cover labor costs.

Portable sanitation is playing a critical role in serving people in need and keeping the city sidewalks and public places clean and safe for everyone, according to Patterson. And while the city looks for a longer-term solution to

providing adequate permanent sanitation facilities, the city program will offer much-needed relief for a long time to come.

STRATEGIC PLACEMENT

“Everyone would like for there not to be a homelessness problem, but in the interim we at least need to provide some hygiene facilities for them or they will go all over the place and it gets pretty disgusting,” Patterson said. The city has purchased a few of the self-contained, sewerless stainless steel Portland Loo bathrooms that are becoming popular in public locations in larger cities. But portable restrooms appear to give places like Seattle more bang for their buck and greater flexibility at this time.

“The broader question of public restrooms is being talked about,” Patterson explained. But in the meantime, the public utilities effort is to place and service the portable sanitation equipment effectively while also dealing with a growing vandalism problem.

The utilities are strategically placing 15-18 “hygiene stations” throughout the city. These consist of a pair of standard and ADA-compliant restrooms and an ADA-compliant hand-wash station. The restrooms are provided and serviced by a subcontracting portable restroom operator, while the city purchases and maintains sinks that do not use foot pumps so they can be operated by disabled persons in wheelchairs.

The hygiene stations are typically placed where encampments emerge, usually in open public areas. The encampments typically have up to 30-50 tents as well as homeless using cars, RVs and camping in the open. Seattle has many hills, and one challenge is finding enough flat space to place the units and sinks on level ground for safety. They also try to put the restrooms in lighted areas for added security.

“Burning is a big thing and it used to be started off the hand sanitizers; that stuff burns really well. ... There have been several times where restrooms were completely burned to the ground and we find just a pancake of molten plastic.”

- Gavin Patterson



Left: A worker for Seattle Public Utilities is shown with a sink purchased for the city's hygiene stations. The unit is manufactured by University Mechanical Contractors and includes 100-gallon fresh and graywater tanks and 12-volt marine batteries to power push-button faucets and prevent freezing in winter.

(Photos courtesy of Seattle Public Utilities)



SHOWER SERVICE

The strategy for the city's dual shower trailers is different. They currently own two shower trailers manufactured by Comforts of Home Services, each with three individual rooms with a shower, toilet and sink, as well as a matching attached ADA unit. One trailer is stationed permanently in the downtown area near an Amtrak station and several homeless shelters, while the other one moves around the city and its location can be tracked at a map of all sanitation facilities at a city website: seattlecitygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=311fcaa38e1c45328ade2de388cefcc6.

Currently the hygiene stations are available for use 24/7 and are unsupervised. The trailers, which had provided more than 40,000 showers near the end of 2021, are a different story.

The trailers operate 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. most days and are staffed by 4-5 attendants at all times. The city contracts with nonprofit Northwest Uplift to provide the workforce, which are homeless or recently homeless individuals getting back on their feet. The workers monitor users, hand out fresh towels and clean and restock each shower room between users. Users are given up to 30 minutes at a time.

The city looks for trailer locations with easy access to utilities. That's typically not a problem for electricity or fresh water, but there is little access to sewers for disposal of gray and black water. So a pumping subcontractor is hired to empty the 400- to 500-gallon holding tanks twice a day, Patterson explained.

VANDALISM A PROBLEM

As we have reported in past stories about this type of urban sanitation program, vandalism is a problem in Seattle. Some of it is caused by the homeless community, which includes many people suffering from mental health issues, Patterson said. But he believes more of it is caused by passersby who don't appreciate seeing the encampments or restrooms in the neighborhood.

Most of the vandalism is to the portable restrooms and sinks, and there is really no damage being done to the trailers. Patterson says that's because of the limited hours of operation, the supervision by Uplift employees and because each trailer is fenced off and watched through the night.

At first, much of the restroom vandalism could be traced to the hand sanitizers placed inside each unit. Those were often being pulled off the walls and stolen or used for an arson accelerant.

"Burning is a big thing and it used to be started off the hand sanitizers; that stuff burns really well. We'd see burn marks in the melted plastic right above the dispensers," Patterson said. "There have been several times where

restrooms were completely burned to the ground and we find just a pancake of molten plastic."

Unfortunately the damage can eat up a significant part of the budget and limit the number of restroom placements, he said.

The vandalism also raises concerns about the safety of those who service the portable restrooms. The city does not provide security for the PROs or pumpers who care for the facilities, but there are measures the subcontractors can take to improve safety on the service routes. The contractors could send teams of two workers rather than have lone drivers. And Patterson said for a number of sinks maintained by the city, workers now bring damaged units back to a garage rather than repair them in the field.

IMPROVING RESTROOM AVAILABILITY

Patterson grew up in Scotland and said public restrooms are more common throughout Europe than he sees in the U.S. He said the governments in his homeland and other European countries take responsibility for providing ample basic sanitation while in the U.S. governments rely more on private business for that service.

"When I came to this country, it's not something you do so well. Everybody goes and providing that service makes for a more livable city," he said. But in Seattle today, he said, the government had to step in and provide bathrooms to keep the streets safe and clean for all.

This is a critical issue, Patterson said, and one where portable restroom operators can play an important role in preventing disease and helping an underserved population seeking relief.

"Any place that has similar problems, and wherever there are people living in the streets, it's a public health problem," he said, adding that PROs in medium to large cities should reach out to local governments, social service agencies and food banks, and offer to become a partner to provide sanitation services.

It's quite possible that officials in many cities served by PROs have no idea how to go about providing these targeted sanitation services, Patterson said. "If you're suggesting that people like me don't know what to do about (portable sanitation), you're right. I know a lot more now than I did before."

What Patterson said is important. Just as he was thrust into trying to solve a sanitation problem, officials in many parts of the country must be facing the same learning curve regarding portable sanitation. Reaching out, you might just provide a helping hand to your community and gaining new customers at the same time. ■



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The Basics of Engaging With Customers on Social Media
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GPS TROUBLESHOOTING

A Little Care and Patience Optimizes Equipment Capabilities

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TRUCK MAINTENANCE

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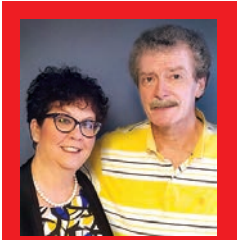
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By Jeff and Terri Wigley

Retaining a Customer's Love Sometimes Means Saying You're Sorry

Cross-train, listen carefully and show concern to convert an angry customer your friend for life

QUESTION: As the COVID pandemic is approaching the two-year mark, we are finding the overall stress level among our customers seems to be increasing. Do you have any suggestions as to how our company can better handle angry customers?

ANSWER: As this article publishes in February, we should reflect upon Valentine's Day and the love of customers and employees!

We received some valuable advice with regard to angry customers at one of our first PSAI Nuts & Bolts educational conferences in the late 1990s. It was to "develop a company plan to handle all aspects of your business, including unhappy customers." Here are some suggestions shared with us and that we are happy to pass along:

CROSS TRAINING

Each employee should have general knowledge of other employees' jobs. Knowing all the job tasks your company performs is important for teamwork and to provide outstanding customer support. Becoming familiar with all aspects of your company, all employees can better serve customers, especially when they are upset.

Our experience shows that having administrative and sales personnel spend a day riding with a route service technician is extremely beneficial. Observing proper servicing of restrooms, holding tanks, sinks and other rental equipment is invaluable in providing good customer service.

Equally important is experiencing the many challenges technicians face in the field. These include traffic delays to finding units that may have been relocated on site, dealing with units that may be blocked to meeting and communicating with construction superintendents, homebuilders and other contacts on a variety of customer job locations. These experiences are valuable for office personnel to further excel in their own job responsibilities. Office and sales personnel spending time with yard personnel and pickup and delivery drivers is also advisable.

Route service technicians spending time in the office is beneficial, especially if confronted with a customer issue or complaint while on route. Having familiarity with both the volume and the wide range of customer inquiries that come through the office can provide the route service technician with information that may help in a complaint situation.

Concentrate on everything the customer is saying. Human nature is to hear some of what the person is saying and to begin formulating your response before they are finished with their thoughts. ... Only by absorbing the complete nature of the complaint can you begin to work together on a solution.

THE VALUE OF COMPLAINTS

Becoming aware of, and eventually resolving, customer complaints further strengthen your company's level of customer service. In addition, for every customer that angrily complains, there may be others who may have the same issue but merely choose to silently leave your company as a provider and to move their business to a competitor. Always keep in mind that it's better to be informed about a problem and have a chance to rectify it rather than never hear from an angry customer and lose an account.

DEVELOP, ADOPT AND CONSTANTLY REVIEW YOUR COMPANY "COMPLAINT PROCEDURES"

With all employees having basic knowledge of all positions and responsibilities in the company, basic guidelines and procedures can be established. Here are some suggestions that to incorporate into company training:

1. EMPLOY ACTIVE LISTENING

Concentrate on everything the customer is saying. Human nature is to hear some of what the person is saying and to begin formulating your response before they are finished with their thoughts.

We completed the Steven Covey *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* class several years ago and Covey has a statement that had a profound influence on us personally and professionally: "Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply." Only by absorbing the complete nature of the complaint can you begin to work together on a solution.

2. APOLOGIZE AND EMPATHIZE

“I am sorry you had this problem. We will do everything that we can to help.” Phrases like this can let the unhappy customer know you and your company take their problem seriously and that the goal is to successfully resolve the issue.

3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

“It’s not my job” is a phrase that can make an angry customer even angrier. As a result of cross training, each employee can put forth some information, even though it may be general in nature, to begin the path to resolution.

As an example, a route service technician could say “I do know that our billing department confirms that all new deliveries are made before sending the initial invoice. The billing department can provide more details and I will let them know of your concern right now.”

4. DO NOT BE CONFRONTATIONAL

Your company’s goal is to make an angry customer a happy customer. We tried to use phrases such as “we will work together to resolve this situation” and “we appreciate you bringing this to our attention.”

Even if we knew that the customer was mistaken in some part of the complaint, we did not come back at them with “that could not possibly happen” or “you are wrong.” Letting the angry customer convey all their concerns gives them a sense of accomplishment in being able to fully express themselves.

5. WORK WITHIN THE COMPANY TO RESOLVE IN A TIMELY FASHION

Have the appropriate company personnel work together to explore practical options and decide on a course of action. Communicate this to the customer in a timely manner and, if possible, in person.

6. UPON RESOLUTION, FOLLOW-UP LATER

This simple action demonstrates a commitment to the previously angry customer that your company values their business and their satisfaction with your company.

7. ANALYZE THE COMPLAINT

Upon the successful resolution of a customer issue, are there any “lessons learned” in terms of new procedures or policies to implement within your company? We believed in the old adage, “learn from your mistakes and don’t make the same one again.”

While all these suggestions were made from the perspective of either in-person or phone communication, written complaints via social media are prevalent. We would recommend the same general principles be implemented in those cases.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Our business is to provide a necessary service to our customers. The overwhelming majority of our customers are satisfied, and we constantly work hard every day to maintain and to improve upon that standard. When we do have angry customers, our objective is to make these accounts as satisfied as the rest. Often, we will find that these once unsatisfied customers become some of our most loyal customers. ■

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The TEAM COMES FIRST

A contented and committed crew has fueled quick growth and diversification for Georgia's Express Disposal

By Betty Dageforde

Left: Clint Eudy, center, is shown with Express Disposal team members Oneal Barge, left, and Robert Watson. (Photos by Matt Odom)

In 2015, while working for a real estate auction company selling land and commercial property, Jason Wiggins came across a ready-mix concrete business for sale and saw an opportunity to do something different. He contacted his childhood buddy, Luke Bryan, and the pair bought the Albany, Georgia, company. While Bryan operated as a silent partner — busy with his career as the 2021 Country Music Association Entertainer of the Year — Wiggins took on the role of chief executive officer running day-to-day operations.

Although Concrete Enterprises had been successful, Wiggins saw the potential to make improvements, grow the company and expand services. Within a couple years, Wiggins added portable restrooms and then roll-off containers in order to provide more services for their construction customers.

“He started seeing these other things,” explains general manager Clint Eudy. “His thought was that concrete is one of the first things on the job and so are portable restrooms, so why wouldn’t we be in that as well?”

Wiggins started with 28 Armal restrooms and a pickup truck carrying a KeeVac Industries slide-in tank. The new service lines quickly grew, and he soon separated the division from the concrete company and formed a new company, Express Disposal.

In the fall of 2020, during the depths of the coronavirus pandemic, the company quadrupled in size when it entered into the trash collection business. Outstanding employees were a key factor in managing the explosive growth, Eudy says. “This has all been done within the last four years — from zero portable restrooms to 685, zero roll-offs to 550, zero

garbage cans to 25,000. The biggest thing in how we’ve been able to make all this go and grow is we do put the employees first.”

Express Disposal operates out of a 5,000-square-foot warehouse/office building on five acres in Leesburg, Georgia, 15 miles north of Albany. The team includes 11 office staff, 3 salespeople, 19 technicians handling portable restrooms and roll-offs, and 45 working trash collection. The company’s service territory encompasses all of Southwest Georgia.

PORTABLE SANITATION

In addition to its 685 Armal Wave standard units, the company has five ADA-compliant units and 200 hand-wash stations, also from Armal, and 25 TOICO Industries 250-gallon holding tanks. Equipment is hauled with an Isuzu flatbed truck that carries 10 units. Their three vacuum trucks were built by FlowMark — two 2020 Ram 5500s with 1,100-gallon waste/400-

“It’s been a struggle for everyone to take on this kind of growth. But we’re still a relatively small business and still have that mom-and-pop feel. And we know in our hearts and minds that we cannot do this without our people.”

CLINT EUDY



Above: An Express Disposal truck — built out by FlowMark with a NVE pump — is parked next to an Armal restroom on a construction site.



Left: Johnny Cobb returns a sprayer to his truck after cleaning the floor of an Armal restroom.

Below: Cobb prepares to empty the holding tank on a restroom during his daily service route.

gallon freshwater aluminum tanks and National Vacuum Equipment pumps, and a 2018 Isuzu with a 900-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater aluminum tank. They use J&J Chemical deodorizer products. Waste is taken to the Albany wastewater treatment plant.

The company does not focus on events, but is active in the community. They provide units for local parades and charity fundraisers, Albany State University's homecoming activities and events at the Albany fairgrounds such as the Southwest Georgia Car Show. They also keep units at area high schools for softball and football games and other activities.

Construction accounts for about 30% of their portable sanitation work. "We've got a lot of homes being built here right now, and commercial is going well, everything from new construction to renovations," Eudy says. They also supply units for boat landings and at some of the plants and factories in the area such as a Georgia Pacific lumber plant.

About 35% of their portable sanitation work is for agriculture and 25% solar fields. Both industries have a need for trailered units that can be moved around by the customer as work progresses through fields. A local fabrication shop made their 35 trailers that carry two restrooms and a hand-wash station. The trailers are provided for the laborers at the farms that grow blueberries, watermelons, cabbage, squash and peanuts. The company also provides standalone units for seasonal workers at peanut shelling plants.

"His thought was that concrete is one of the first things on the job and so are portable restrooms, so why wouldn't we be in that as well?"

CLINT EUDY



Drivers have a list of equipment at each farm, but locate the mobile units through constant communication with on-site contacts.

Solar fields are handled a little differently. For security purposes, technicians are met at the main entrance to the field and escorted through the property. These construction projects typically last from four months to a year-and-a-half and require from 10 to 75 units depending on the size of the field. Permanent units are placed around office trailers, while the construction work requires trailered units. Equipment is serviced two or three times per week. Customers often keep a few units on site after construction for maintenance and upkeep personnel. The company has been involved in five solar field construction projects to date and are currently working on three.

(continued)

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TALKING TRASH

Express Disposal owners Jason Wiggins and Luke Bryan considered getting into the trash collection business when they heard there were problems with the existing residential and commercial service in Albany, Georgia. They saw an opportunity to solve a problem for the city and grow their business at the same time.

“The same need we saw in portable restrooms and roll-offs — to provide people with good customer service and taking care of their needs — we saw in residential and commercial garbage,” general manager Clint Eudy says. “We always heard people complaining and saw an avenue.”

The company put in a bid to provide the service for the city. To get a head start on what would be required should they win the bid, they began securing options to buy trucks and equipment.

“We were just trying to stay ahead of the game for the day, whether we were awarded the bid or not, it was going to be a phone call that we do or don’t need this equipment,” Eudy says. When the award came through they had 120 days to make it all happen — procuring the equipment and hiring and training people. The planning and transition processes took all hands on deck.

At a little over a year into it, every day is still a learning curve, Eudy says, and processes change daily as they make adjustments. But with the help and cooperation of everyone on staff, the new division has been a success.

“The only thing that really brought it all together was the teamwork,” Eudy says. “Everybody from management to the boots-on-the-ground spent countless hours getting geared up and ready for it, pitching different ideas daily, some that stuck, some that didn’t, and figuring out a game plan that would work for us.”



TRASH COLLECTION

Express Disposal has a contract with the city of Albany to provide trash pickup for residents and also offers subscription services to individuals. They have eight Peterbilt garbage trucks and 12 Freightliner grapple trucks with Pac-Mac bodies for hauling yard debris and junk waste. Residential customers are given 96-gallon waste carts (SSI Schaefer).

For commercial customers they provide 4-, 6- and 8-yard front-loading bins and 20-, 30- and 40-yard roll-off containers (both from Lewis Steel Works). Their nine Mack, International and Kenworth trucks with Galbreath hoists are used to transport roll-offs and 20-foot storage containers used at construction sites and solar fields.

For routing, billing and service verification the company uses EZTrakR software for portable restrooms and WISTAR ONE from SSI Schaefer for trash collection. They also have a fleet-tracking system from Samsara. Vehicles are outfitted with internal and external cameras. “It helps us keep accountability on our drivers as well as keeping track of other drivers around us,” Eudy says. “When a wreck happens, the blame will always be on the big truck, not the little car. But that little car pulling out in front of the big truck is not always in the right, so the camera helps us stop some of that.”

EMPLOYEES ARE KEY

Because of a good reputation, high visibility and excellent pay and benefits, Eudy says the company generally doesn’t have trouble attracting prospective employees. In fact, a lot of people contact them. “We provide



Above: Technician Johnny Cobb performs maintenance on an Armal restroom during a service stop.



Left: Technician Oneal Barge returns the suction hose to his truck, built out by FlowMark and carrying a National Vacuum Equipment pump.

Below: Barge services a restroom on a construction site.



a great salary or hourly rate, great health insurance and a 401k,” he says. “We’ve grown from 18 to 78 employees in the last year without having to use temporary labor. We have hired every employee full time and provided full benefits to every one of them. We pride ourselves on finding the best employees, providing a good wage and taking good care of them.”

New hires ride along with a driver for a few weeks learning routes, procedures and policies. The company likes to provide opportunities to promote its people. “We make a lot of decisions with our gut of people who really put their time and effort into us and try to work them up the ladder if we’re able to,” Eudy says. “I like to watch these employees grow from what I knew they came here doing. Employees are the backbone of what keeps this all growing and we want to invest our time and money in helping them grow, as well.”

Each division holds weekly safety meetings and the whole company has a monthly meeting held early in the morning before everybody heads out. “We always bring in something,” Eudy says, “whether it’s biscuits or donuts. Sometimes we’ll cook sausage dogs on the grill.” They also enjoy more casual get-togethers that might include a fish fry or catered lunch.

SETTLING IN

The company has no immediate plans for further drastic changes while they catch their breath, but they hope to continue expanding geographically and are always looking for opportunities. Wiggins, whose office is at the concrete plant 10 miles away, comes in daily to work with Eudy on plans and procedures.

Eudy admits it’s been a hectic past few years and challenging to keep up with the growth, but everyone has stepped up to the plate and successfully navigated the transitions.

“It’s been a struggle for everyone to take on this kind of growth,” he says. “But we’re still a relatively small business and still have that mom-and-pop feel. And we know in our hearts and minds that we can’t do this without our people.” ■

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Reflecting on Yesterday, Planning for Tomorrow

The PSAI Celebrates 50 years with new faces and many opportunities to grow in the portable sanitation industry

By **Veronica Crosier**



Veronica Crosier

I'm proud to come aboard to serve as executive director for the Portable Sanitation Association International replacing outgoing director Karleen Kos. I come from southern West Virginia, where my family has operated Crosier's Sanitary Service for over 50 years. Serving the PSAI membership is an incredible opportunity to honor the industry that's sustained families like mine for generations.

We'll also be welcoming new faces in leadership positions at the PSAI. Members of the association board of directors will be named

in early February at the annual PSAI tradeshow and convention in Reno, Nevada. The event marks the 50th anniversary of the association with the theme "Reflecting on yesterday, planning for tomorrow." Every year it offers extensive educational programs, networking opportunities and ample time to meet leading industry suppliers in one place and get an up-close look at the latest products and technologies available to operators.

This year, the PSAI takes special time to acknowledge longtime members, some who have been members since the association's founding. However, the association also looks to the future, recognizing new members. It is a goal of the PSAI to intertwine these two groups to increase industry mentorship and camaraderie going forward.

Whether they have just joined or been members for many years, all members bring value to the table. When you become a member of PSAI, you have the opportunity to influence your industry, from participating at the popular roundtable discussions to joining a committee, or even running for a seat on the board of directors. The PSAI works to elevate the education, standards and image associated with the portable sanitation industry. It is through our growing membership that this work can expand, benefiting the entire industry.

If you've been contemplating joining PSAI, we invite you to join us for the annual PSAI Nuts & Bolts Education Conference later this fall. There will be several opportunities to receive continuing education credits, participate in the Basic Service Technician training, or if you're already PSAI-certified, you may be ready to become a certified trainer of this course through our new Train the Trainer program.

We will offer several formal and informal networking opportunities, and a visit to an outstanding member site in the area. Becoming a member before the event can open you to registration discounts as well. To learn more about becoming a member and how you can become an industry influencer, visit www.pesai.org. ■

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Below: Many attendees at the Hodag Country Festival stay on the grounds in campers that surround the main entertainment area.

Below Right: Country singer Trace Adkins gets the crowd excited at the Hodag Country Festival in Rhinelander, Wisconsin.
(Photos by Cory Dellenbach)



Face the MUSIC

A Wisconsin PRO turned up the volume on quality service for a country music festival returning after COVID cancellation

By Kyle Rogers

ON LOCATION

- » **THE JOB:**
Hodag Country Festival
- » **LOCATION:**
Rhinelander, Wisconsin
- » **THE PRO:**
Oh Jay Services

THE TEAM

Jason Schulz operates Oh Jay Services out of Tomahawk, Wisconsin. His typical crew includes his girlfriend Ann Johnson, Nick Krutke and Jeff Darrin. But to tackle the Hodag Country Festival, the company needed reinforcements. Family and friends provided an assist, making up an Oh Jay Services team of about 25 people. Many had helped out at the festival in prior years working for other portable sanitation providers.

COMPANY HISTORY

Schulz started Oh Jay Services in 2016. He was performing auto mechanic work out of his garage when an opportunity arose to purchase a restroom business that had split off of a septic

service company. His friend who had purchased the restrooms when that company split up was looking to get out of the business. Schulz bought the company with 75 restrooms and four hand-wash stations, and now has 300 restrooms and 17 hand-wash stations, all from Satellite Industries. Vacuum trucks come from Imperial Industries and carry either National Vacuum Equipment or Condé pumps.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Although it was the first year that Oh Jay Services served at Hodag Country, Schulz had prior experience working the event. For a few years in the early 2000s, he assisted Pete's Pump, which had handled restrooms for the event

(continued)



Above: While the regular staff of Oh Jay Services is owner Jay Schulz, Ann Johnson, Nick Krutke and Jeff Darrin, for an event the size of the Hodag Country Festival, they depend on many family and friends to help with the restroom cleaning and pumping out.

Right: Standing in front of the company's new 2020 Freightliner service truck (Imperial Industries) are Oh Jay Services owner Schulz, right, and girlfriend Johnson. Oh Jay Services handled portable sanitation duties at the Hodag Country Festival in Rhineland, Wis.

for decades, from the inaugural year of 1978 until the company founder passed away about 10 years ago.

Other companies have filled the void since, but for 2021, Hodag Country Festival organizers were looking for a new contractor. "I have a lot of friends who go to the festival and they encouraged me to bid it," Schulz says. "We just figured out what it takes as far as time to service a restroom and looked at how many restrooms and what our fuel usage is from other events we've done. We threw a number at them and it worked."

THE MAIN EVENT

For more than four decades, the Hodag Country Festival has taken place in early July in Rhineland, Wisconsin, typically attracting about 30,000 attendees, many of them camping on site for the entire week. The main music lineup runs four days from Thursday through Sunday, but campers begin arriving the previous weekend. The 2020 event was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for 2021 everything was back on its usual schedule.

"I would have to think they were at normal numbers because there wasn't much for vacant campsites," Schulz says. "I know when we ventured out a few times at night there was a good crowd."

LET'S ROLL

Oh Jay Services had never handled an event so large. Fortunately, the music festival owns 420 restroom units and Oh Jay only had to provide minimal equipment. "They're all set up on wooden skids and they just leave them out and hire a company before we come out to charge them up and power-wash them," Schulz says. "We just had to do a final wipedown to make sure they were decent and put the toilet paper and chemical in to start. We did end up dragging our power washer out there a little because it was quicker than scrubbing all the units since they had sat for two years. That was an unforeseen thing, but I did want the toilets to be decent. It's our name on the side of the trucks servicing them so we get the blame if they're not."



"They set us up in an area on the main grounds where contractors are allowed to stay. We had access to power and water. And I had a friend who helped out with the cooking, which was very nice."

JAY SCHULZ

Because the units were owned by the festival, Oh Jay Services also didn't need to worry too much about repairs. "They supplied us with whatever parts we needed," Schulz says. "There were a few broken seats because of rowdy people and the general nature of the festival. But otherwise it was just broken door springs and stuff of that nature."

In addition to the units already on site, Oh Jay Services provided two handicap-accessible units, four extra regular units for high-traffic areas, and six hand-wash stations. About 35 units were rented to festival attendees for their personal campsites. Schulz also bought some new equipment — a Kubota tractor and trailer to serve as a chemical cart and complement what he already owned and two 1,100-gallon water storage tanks so that water could be transferred quickly.

(continued)

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Right: Nick Krutke prepares to pump out a portable restroom unit while Danielle Seltzer stands nearby. When Krutke is done pumping it out, Danielle will come in behind and wipe down the doors and interior and restock the unit. Helping at the truck is owner Jason Schulz.

Below: Ann Johnson services restrooms in the overflow camping area using the company's GMC 2,500-gallon vacuum truck, built out by Imperial Industries.



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KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

After doing the necessary prep work, cleaning service routes kicked off on Monday, a couple days after campers began arriving but still a few days before the start of the musical acts. Oh Jay Services did a single route on Monday and Tuesday, then gradually picked it up as festival attendance increased. By Thursday and through the end of the festival on Sunday, crews did two four-hour routes daily, one at 7 a.m. and the second at 3 p.m.

"And then we just had to watch, because by the main stage, the units sometimes got a little heavier use.

There were a couple times we had to go and do an extra service on a few of them," Schulz says.

The Oh Jay Services team operated with three crews. A 2020 Freightliner service truck, completely self-contained with its own chemical supply, would run with a crew of three or four people and tackle an area of the main grounds containing 125 units. On the other end of the main grounds, a 2,000-gallon vacuum truck owned by the festival would pump units while a chemical tractor and trailer with a crew of four or five would follow to do the cleaning and restocking.

Outside of the main grounds in the overflow camping area, which contained about half of the festival's units, Oh Jay Services' 2000 GMC 2,500-gallon vacuum truck would do the same — pump out with a chemical tractor and trailer following to take care of the finishing touches. Once the routes on the main grounds were finished, crews headed out to overflow camping to help wrap up that final route.

"On the pumper trucks we'd try to have two people so that one person could be the door person and just hold doors for the other," Schulz says. "Then we'd have four to five per chemical trailer."

There were large, on-site storage tanks for the trucks to offload. Another septic service contractor handled those and hauled loads to the Rhinelander treatment plant.

The days were long. Although the final cleaning route would be finished by 7 p.m. Schulz, Johnson and Krutke would often be working a couple hours more to prep everything for the next day. It helped that

(continued)





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Right: One of the many banks of festival-owned portable restrooms that sit on the grounds at the Hodag Country Festival. Oh Jay's Services pumped out the restrooms twice a day. A third service was added if crews saw a need.

Below: Fans try to get the perfect photo of country music singer Trace Adkins as he performs on stage at the Hodag Country Music Festival.



nearly the entire Oh Jay Services team camped on site alongside the festival attendees they were providing restroom service for.

"Some had campers, some had tents. I ended up just sleeping in one of the pickups because it was more comfortable than laying on the ground in a tent," Schulz says. "They set us up in an area on the main grounds where contractors are allowed to stay. We had access to power and water. And I had a friend who helped out with the cooking, which was very nice."

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS BACK HOME

One significant challenge had to do with Oh Jay Services' weekly routes for regular clients. Schulz says the employee who was going to be keeping up on that work during the week quit on the Wednesday of the festival. "I ended up going back and forth quite a bit," Schulz says. "The good thing is we have a decent crew of people so I was able to leave. After the first day and the first round of service that was kind of a learning curve, we pretty much had it down to what it needed to be."

Schulz was also able to call on his cousin to come for the weekend and assist with the work. "Normally we have two people run our normal route and try to bust it out on Wednesday and Thursday," Schulz says. "So I started servicing and then my cousin went around servicing on Friday, Saturday and part of Sunday just to keep up with our weekly clients."

PROVIDING RV SERVICE

Oh Jay Services also had to pump out festival attendees' RVs. It was a task Schulz says he'd approach differently in the future. The week began with calls for RV pumpouts coming to Schulz's cellphone, but it didn't take long for it to become difficult to keep up with the phone traffic, not to mention that cellphone service was somewhat spotty at the festival grounds.

"You'd tell someone that we'd be there and then on your way you'd get flagged down by 10 people," Schulz says. "It wasn't working well, so we shifted to just having people flag us down as we were coming through an area." Oh Jay Services pumped out at least 50 RVs a day, which Schulz says wasn't necessarily more than anticipated but it was still challenging to keep up.

"There's just not enough hours in the day," Schulz says. "I feel like we handled it fairly well in that there weren't too many people who got missed, but we have to figure out something better. I think we're going to solve that by just having a service truck do nothing but RVs." Oh Jay Services will hopefully have that opportunity at next year's Hodag Country Festival. ■



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Music City Mojo

By Patrick Durkin | Cover Story | Nov 2012

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There is a big event afoot in these photos. But unlike many special events, the visitors do not linger in this area, but quickly pass on by, leaving the portable restroom operators to pick up the many units only after a few early morning hours of service. When it started 50 years ago, this happening drew only 127 participants, but now it is the biggest event of its kind in the world. Today, more than a million spectators show up every fall, but very few will use these restrooms. In fact, a great number of them never saw this location and were several miles away from these restrooms.

Where are the restrooms? Here are a few clues:

- Fred Lebow spent \$300 to get it started. Some people pay \$300 to participate in the event today, while spectators pay nothing.
- A national park monument is near where these restrooms are located. The site was the longest-serving military installation named for a general who was killed in the U.S. Civil War.
- Albert Korir was an important figure on the day the photo was taken.
- 2 hours, 8 minutes, 22 seconds.
- The suspension bridge in the background was named for a 1524 explorer named Giovanni.
- A number one, top of the list, king of the hill. A number one.

To win the contest, name the event, the city and the landmark location of the restrooms shown. The winner will be recognized as a geographical whiz on the *PRO* Facebook page. Send your responses to editor@promonthly.com. ■

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



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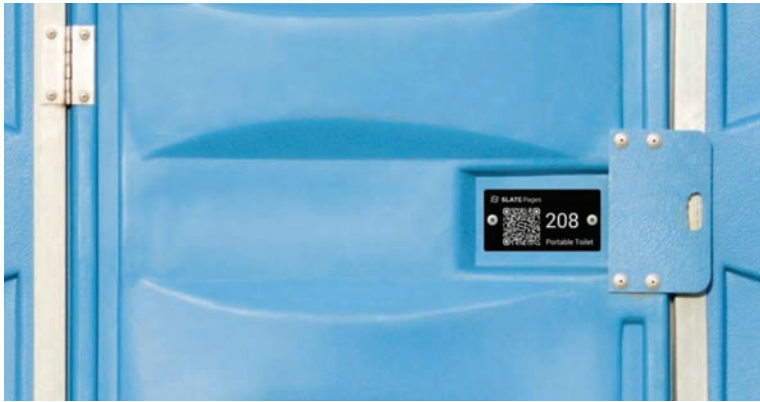
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PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Slate Pages app aids asset management

By Tim Dobbins

Slate Pages was created to keep track of the manufacturing stages of its parent company, Thermaxx. It didn't take long for the company to realize the app would mesh perfectly with numerous businesses, specifically the portable restroom industry.

"We are perfect for small businesses who just need a quick and simple solution to their asset management," says Joey Bannon, vice president of sales for Slate Pages. "We found that every company had their own unique needs, and our app works for that because you can design the slate to address those needs specifically."

The Slate Pages app uses a QR code scanner to scan tags for recording, storing and organizing any information the company chooses. The user attaches QR tags to each portable restroom, scans the tag and enters the desired information. Once data has been entered, it can be viewed using Slate's online dashboard.

"Each slate is designed by adding a variety of fields to build a template for tracking whatever data is important to you," Bannon says. "Our main goals when designing was making the app customizable and user-friendly so we can cater to everyone's unique needs as well as help those who aren't very tech-savvy. We don't want to create more work for our customers."

To keep Slate Pages user-friendly, the company also uses the feedback and communication from customers to improve and update the app. "We allow them to suggest ideas for features or even functionality that would improve their experience," Bannon says. "The end user can improve our app much better than we can."

Bannon says the GPS field is a popular feature of the app among portable restroom operators. "It's been crucial to every company we have worked with," he says. "It tracks the last known location of the unit and displays that location on our online dashboard so managers can view where all of their toilets are."

He also mentions the journal and record fields are well liked because they provide tracking history and records of when restrooms were last serviced, by which operator, and reports if anything was damaged or replaced.

Bannon says their strategy of using customer feedback and keeping things simple is well received. "Our customers find our app extremely easy to use," Bannon says. "One of our favorite comments from one of our customers called Slate Pages 'the working man's product.'" **515-758-5463; www.slatepages.com** ■

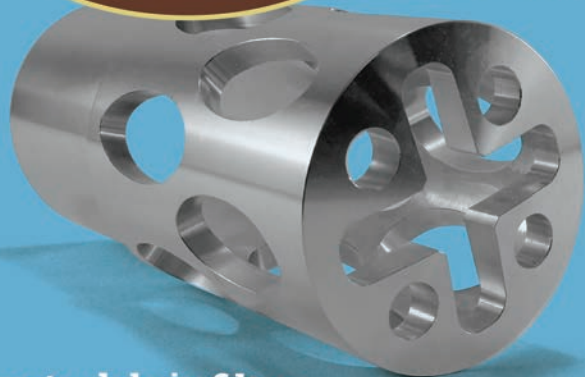
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