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## ANOTHER **STARR** PERFORMANCE

Third-generation PRO Jason Starr builds on the family legacy through modern technology and white glove service standards

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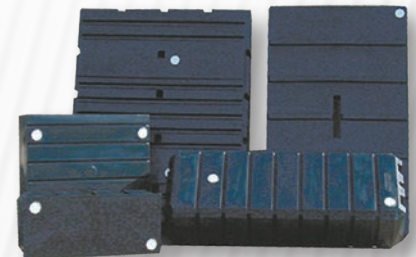
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**ON THE COVER:** By age 12, Jason Starr was helping out at his family's wastewater business. Today, at 44, Starr rents out about 1,000 portable restrooms, as well as provides septic service and industrial pumping at Starr Portables in central Pennsylvania. (Photo by Kevin Blackburn)
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By Jim Kneiszel

# 10 Steps to Protect Your Drivers as the Busy Season Approaches



**It's time for a springtime safety checklist to make sure your trucks are stocked with all the appropriate gear**

It's spring cleaning season and for PROs that means getting the work trucks in tip-top shape to handle longer, more hectic daily service routes. Part of that routine should be to pull everything out of the cab and make sure all safety gear is up-to-date, functional and within handy reach for your drivers. Here's a list of supplies and equipment you may want to add to every service vehicle in your fleet:

## Daily safety gear bag

Each truck or driver should be furnished with a safety gear bag with supplies meant to address a variety of emergency situations. These items should include a cellphone charger and alkaline batteries, ear plugs or earmuffs, a blanket, bottled water and food (such as energy bars), a rain poncho and rope. Since the arrival of the COVID-19 virus, consider adding disposable N95 masks and face shields to protect workers and the general public from spreading disease.

Further, stock a first-aid kit with supplies appropriate to running a service route. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration doesn't get specific but states "adequate first aid supplies shall be readily available," meaning what you carry should meet the hazards you could expect on the job. Items could include gauze and bandages, medical tape, a SAM (structural aluminum malleable) splint, trauma shears, Steri-Strips, biodegradable soaps, antibiotics and eye wash supplies.

Check the contents of the bag regularly to make sure it is well stocked and items are replaced as necessary due to age or deterioration. A cursory check should be done as part of your daily walk-around inspection of the truck. A more thorough inspection should be done monthly or quarterly as needed.

## Gloves

Carry two types of gloves. The first are disposable rubber gloves to protect hands from exposure to chemicals or infections that can be transmitted through handling waste. The most common options are made from latex or nitrile material and should be 4 to 8 mils thick; 5 to 8-mil thickness is more appropriate for industrial workers in more demanding conditions.

Which to choose? Latex gloves are made of a durable natural rubber usually coated with a powder. Some people have allergies to latex because of the powder. Latex doesn't hold up as well to chemicals and solvents;

**OSHA says hard hats that have cracks, dents, penetrations or wear from rough usage should be replaced. Most manufacturers recommend replacement every five years.**

however, they provide excellent dexterity. Nitrile gloves are made of synthetic rubber and don't pose the same allergy risk. They are also durable and are highly resistant to chemical and solvents, as well as punctures and tears. They are not as comfortable to wear for long periods.

Also carry leather work gloves to protect hands from cuts and abrasions. Finger injuries make up more than 25% of

workplace accidents, and PROs are subject to a lot of cutting or crushing injuries as they move portable restrooms in the field. Look for split cowhide and padded palms, and gloves that allow dexterity, good grip and cut and crush resistance.

## Hard hats

OSHA calls for hard hats when employees work in areas where they could suffer head injuries from impact, or from falling or flying objects, or from electrical shock and burns ... so basically most construction sites. Look for hard hats that meet ANSI Z89.1-2003, 2009 or 1997 standards for industrial head protection. Type 1 hard hats reduce the force of impact from the top only. Type 2 protect the top and side of the head. Class E and G helmets also provide electrical protection. Hard hats (marked HV) also provide added visibility for workers on job sites. Hardhats marked for "reverse donning" can be worn frontward or backward.

OSHA says hard hats that have cracks, dents, penetrations or wear from rough usage should be replaced. Most manufacturers recommend replacement every five years.

## Reflective wear

Reflective apparel should be available at all times in case drivers are working near roadside traffic, at busy events or construction sites with



trucks and machines working. Carry lightweight vests all year and consider adding reflective jackets and caps during cold weather service. Acceptable colors are fluorescent lime, orange and red, with retroreflective tape that lights up when illuminated by headlights. OSHA regulations call for a certain number of square inches of background material and reflective tape; all manufacturers likely follow these guidelines. Reflective gear comes in three levels of visibility, with level 3 being the safest. Carry multiple vests if more than one worker is ever in the service vehicle.

### Fire extinguisher

One of every eight fires responded to by emergency departments is for a highway vehicle fire. About half of these fires are caused by leaking fuel or other mechanical failures. The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) requires every commercial vehicle to be equipped with a UL-rated (a 5 B:C, or two 4 B:C for non-hazardous waste carriers) fire extinguisher. Look for the appropriate labeling. It's important to locate and secure the fire extinguishers where they are readily accessible to the driver. Dry chemical extinguishers are usually good for up to six years, but some are rated for 12 years before replacement.

### Jump starter

There was a time when the best you could do to protect against vehicle battery failure was carrying jumper cables and enlisting the help of another motorist. Today, every truck in your fleet should carry a portable jump starter pack. These compact power packs are available to provide the 1,500 to 2,000 amps necessary to start a commercial truck with a dead battery. You can't just put it in the truck and forget about it, though. While the packs will hold a charge for up to 18 months, it's best to top off the charging power through a USB connection every six months to a year. The jump packs typically also come with USB charging ports for your phone or other electronics, and often include an emergency light source.

### Safety glasses or goggles

Eye injuries are common, and PROs face significant risks of splashing while handling chemicals, suction hoses and power washers. OSHA requires appropriate face and eye protection when exposed to flying particles, liquid chemicals, caustic liquids, gases or vapors. OSHA relies on the ANSI Z87.1 standard so look for that marking on glasses or goggles you purchase. Because of the work they do, PROs need significant side and front protection, so your best choices may be goggles or glasses with side protection. Be sure to have plenty of glasses or goggles in inventory in case they are damaged or scratched and require quick replacement.

### Window breaker

A window-breaking tool or emergency hammer offers cheap protection should a vehicle end up in the water with the driver trapped inside, or following a crash where the electric windows or seatbelts malfunction. These devices are designed to easily break through truck window glass. They also have a sharp blade that can be used to slice through seat belts to free a driver or passenger. They come with a mounting bracket that will allow easy access to the user. There are two types — a hammer with a hardened steel tip or a spring-loaded device that automates the process.

### Weather radio

Now that everyone carries a cellphone, we no longer think about what happens if drivers are stranded where they can't get a cell signal. A pocket

AM/FM/weather radio can be bought for about \$20 and provide news, traffic or instant weather reports from any location. Some are charged via USB, while others use AA or AAA alkaline batteries. Some models also have a hand-crank dyno charger that can be used to power phone batteries, as well as an emergency flashlight with SOS strobing. Buy one for every vehicle in your fleet and keep it in the glovebox.

### Traffic safety equipment

Every truck should carry a kit with reflective triangles, cones and road flares in the event of a breakdown, especially at night. And LED road flares are making the process of marking vehicles much safer. The incendiary road flares you are used to can create a fire hazard, they can burn out quickly and are not reusable. LED flares offer more reliable light, are safe to place near vehicles that may be leaking fuel and will work for up to 36 hours and can then be recharged or have the batteries replaced. Further the LED flares often offer a variety of light patterns to attract more attention, and they are magnetic so they can be attached to your truck.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Performing a safety equipment inventory will protect your most valuable assets — your people — as we approach the busy season for restroom providers. What did I miss in my roundup? What new and interesting ways do you set up your trucks for safety? Let me know and I'll share your thoughts and ideas with readers in a future column. ■



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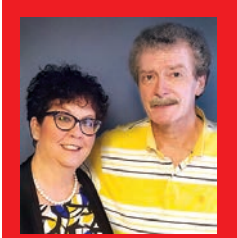
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By Jeff and Terri Wigley

# You Need Workers and We'll Help You Find Them

From writing a job description to a multi-prong approach to recruiting, PROs have many tools to find great job prospects

**QUESTION:** Over the last several months our company has been searching for new employees — primarily route service drivers. What are your recommendations as to various approaches that we can take to help with this situation?

**ANSWER:** From our experience, this is a process. It is more than merely running an ad for a specific job opening. We will describe the steps that many PROs use and explore the various ways to advertise job openings. Traditional methods of posting jobs will be highlighted as well as new alternatives that have surfaced as a result of the COVID pandemic.

Here is an overview of a suggested hiring plan and a detailed examination of the various options of publicizing the job opening.

## HIRING PROCESS

Determine your needs. Here are some guidelines:

Will this be a full-time or part-time position? What are the job responsibilities? Are there prerequisites for the position?

If this is for an existing job in your company, the written performance plan will be useful to refer to and to show potential new hires. If this is for a new position, creating the performance plan in advance of the hiring process is highly recommended.

If you are looking for a route service driver, will a CDL be required? Do you prefer an experienced driver? If so, how much experience? What are the driving record requirements?

For office positions, is experience required? Are there requirements for software proficiency? Are there work-at-home options?

Will drug screens and/or background checks be required prior to hiring?

What does your company budget allow in terms of the salary and the associated benefits for this position? Often benefits are overlooked in this process and they can impact the company's finances.

Recruiting strategies will be addressed below. Let's jump ahead to the hiring process once you have a qualified candidate.

## CONDUCT INTERVIEWS

In-person interviews are preferable in order to get a true impression of the job candidate. In addition, the candidate can tour your facility,

In-person interviews are preferable in order to get a true impression of the job candidate. In addition, the candidate is able to tour your facility, to experience the atmosphere and the culture of the company and to see the equipment and the various responsibilities of the job.

experience the atmosphere and the culture of the company and see the equipment and the various responsibilities of the job.

## EVALUATE THE CANDIDATES AND MAKE THE OFFER

Whether this job opening is planned or an immediate need, resist the temptation to hire the first person in the door. The hope is that this new employee will be a long-term member of your team.

## TRAINING

A formal training program not only benefits the new employee but also ensures your customers will receive the same consistent level of service. Employee retention can also be positively impacted by an effective training program.

## RETENTION

This is the ultimate goal in the hiring process. Experienced, motivated and happy long-term employees are the greatest asset of any company. Work to keep communication open with regular team meetings and encourage employee suggestions. Maintain performance plans and conduct employee reviews on a regular and consistent basis. Create incentive plans and career paths so employees will be motivated to become long-term members of the company.

## FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON

Once you have identified the need, the budget implications, the job description, and the prerequisites, you are ready to publicize the opening and to attract potential candidates.

There are several traditional methods of announcing job openings as well as several contemporary methods that have emerged over the last few years. Our recommendation is to try several of these strategies to maximize the number of potential job candidates rather than limiting your results by using one method.

Regardless of your strategy to attract potential hires, make sure your company website is up-to-date, interesting and descriptive of the services that you offer. Job seekers will examine the potential employer's website to gain additional information as well as to obtain a sense of the company's culture. Pay particular attention to the "About Us" page on your website as this is an important area of interest to both job seekers and customers.

You have identified a need and prepared for candidates. Now it's time to cast your net.

## TRADITIONAL CHANNELS

### NEWSPAPERS

Local papers are still an excellent source for candidates already living in your area, as well as to allow readers to spread the word to others that may not be aware of the job posting. No longer solely in print, most newspapers are also available online, so do not eliminate this medium as old-fashioned and irrelevant.

### SIGNS

Signs similar to those used to advertise new homes are an excellent way to publicize job openings. Include the company name, phone number and website and place them in a variety of high-access areas. In addition to major intersections or other public areas where it is permissible, put a sign outside your facility. One of the more creative ideas we have heard is to laminate signs with the company name and phone number and to secure on the job boxes on both sides of every service truck. As these route trucks traverse the service routes, the signs bring attention to your job opening. Pickup and delivery vehicles can also display these job advertisements.

### NETWORKING

"People know people" is a phrase we have often heard. Friends, family, business associates, customers and social or civic groups are all sources of spreading the word concerning job openings. We have found the local Chamber of Commerce and building construction associations are excellent places to post jobs. Many areas also have job-seeking network groups where openings can be announced.

### STAFFING AGENCIES

Some PROs have used this option as an effective method to try out employees. These agencies hire the employee and the PRO pays the agency for the labor. The agency can typically provide personnel on a timely basis; however, the rate the PRO pays includes a fee for the agency in addition to the hourly rate for the worker. Read and understand the contract as most often there is a buyout fee to hire the worker permanently after a specified period of time.

### EMPLOYEE REFERRAL PROGRAMS

Many companies establish a bonus program for current employees to recruit friends or acquaintances for the open position. If a referral is hired and remains on the job for a specified period of time, the bonus is paid

to the employee who recruited the candidate. PROs find this an effective approach because the referring employee is motivated to ensure the new hire is well-trained and performs according to company expectations and standards.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Trade schools are another source of full-time or part-time employees. We have heard of instances where a student works as a part-time employee and then becomes full time upon completing their education. This is an excellent situation for PROs show a new hire there is opportunity for growth within the company.

## NEW WAYS TO RECRUIT

Online posting and research have become an integral part of our lives and our culture. Several web-based services although founded several years ago have flourished during the COVID pandemic. "Job websites" has become the unofficial term for these online services.

These employment websites serve as both search engines and databases for open jobs. Job seekers can search for positions with specific skill sets within a particular geographic area, region or search nationally. And they gain a better understanding of openings by examining the details of the job description and the company to pinpoint jobs of genuine interest. In addition, the job opening database sites also offer the candidate fee-based assistance for organizing credentials, resume writing and career coaching.

For the employer, these sites allow specifying the precise skills and experience required and spell out the benefits and background information about the company. With more detailed information available, the number of unqualified job seekers is significantly reduced.

A partial list of these websites includes the following:

- **Indeed**
- **ZipRecruiter**
- **Monster**
- **Glassdoor**
- **LinkedIn**

Indeed.com is the most popular and recognized job website. The site posts listings for job seekers in a multitude of industries, from entry level to management. Candidates can search by industry as well as by salary range and date posted.

We conducted our own analysis of Indeed.com. We searched "portable restroom driver" with postings in the last 14 days and choose the location as "United States." There were an amazing 138 jobs posted. Of those, 114 were full-time positions. Additionally, of the 138 postings, 120 were termed entry level.

Our inquiry into Indeed.com went further. After having chosen "United States," we looked at several individual states for comparison. Portable restroom driver positions posted in the last 14 days for California listed 31 positions, Florida advertised 10 positions, and Texas had seven. We also found postings for Canada and many other countries as well.

Using Indeed.com, the job seeker can determine their level of interest and qualifications for positions before applying. The employer can also see the qualifications and the experience of those that are applying for these positions. This job matching process is a faster way to find good potential job candidates.

*(continued)*

One final consideration for using online recruitment is cost. Some sites charge a monthly rate, while others have a per-click cost structure. For example, Indeed.com offers a per-click model where costs can range from \$0.10 to just over \$5.00 per click. Other sites charge a flat rate of from \$100 to \$200 per month depending on various package offerings. Indeed.com offers several optional packages as well. Bottom line, do your research with any of these sites and then make an informed choice.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

In today's business environment, job openings are prevalent and the need to timely fill open positions is vital to your company. By using a variety of job posting methods, you have the best chance of attracting qualified candidates that will hopefully become long-term employees. Don't feel compelled to hire someone just to fill the position. Look for quality people as your employees are your company's greatest asset! ■

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**JUST SAY 'NO!'  
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In this exclusive online article, columnist Amanda Clark explains how negativity adversely affects your portable restroom operation. Read the article for Clark's tips and tricks to identifying sources of negativity and setting a new tone for your workplace.

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# Restroom Trailer

## Product Checklist

Having the right products in your arsenal will make your restroom trailer look and smell brand new, boosting your brand image and elevating you over the competition.

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### **BIO-PAK**

#### **Purpose: Deodorizer**

Enzyme-based drop-in that deodorizes black tank and digests solids, preventing clogging and build-up. Eliminates spills.



### **PORTA-PAK**

#### **Purpose: Deodorizer**

Best-selling drop-in packet that deodorizes black holding tank, eliminating spills and keeping restroom trailer smelling fresh.



### **COMMANDO**

#### **Purpose: Tank Restoration**

Enzyme-based drop-in that cleans trailer's black holding tank in 12-24 hours, no agitation required. Restores tank to like-new condition.



### **FAB LAV**

#### **Purpose: Cleaner**

Multi-purpose cleaner with a pleasing lavender fragrance guarantees trailer interior looks and smells fresh and clean.



### **BRAVO URINAL SCREENS**

#### **Purpose: Fragrance Enhancer**

Keeps urinal smelling fresh for up to 30 days with strong fragrance release and bacteria action that deodorizes & cleans urinal & drain.



### **OVATION**

#### **Purpose: Fragrance Enhancer**

Commercial-strength air fresheners that can be hung anywhere to fight odors for up to 30 days. Ideal for women's side.



### **URINAL CLEANER**

#### **Purpose: Urinal Cleaner**

Spray on urinal to remove calcium deposits, restoring trailer's urinals to like-new condition and eliminating foul odors.



### **BANISH**

#### **Purpose: Graffiti Remover**

Effectively removes markers, paint, pen, grease, tar, crayon, dirt and calcium build-up, improving trailer's appearance.



### **GREY WATER LIQUID**

#### **Purpose: Grey Tank Deodorizer**

Great for shower trailers; controls grey holding tank odors caused by soap scum, skin, saliva, dirt and lint.



# ANOTHER **STARR** PERFORMANCE



Third-generation PRO Jason Starr builds on the family legacy through modern technology and white glove service standards

By Dee Goerge



## **Starr Portables** Millville, Pennsylvania

**Owner:** Jason Starr

**Founded:** 1974

**Employees:** 5

**Services:** Portable sanitation, septic service and industrial pumping

**Service Area:** 50-mile radius in central Pennsylvania

Jason Starr knows he has a snack food processing plant and an enterprising grandfather to thank for his business, Starr Portables in tiny Millville, Pennsylvania. Like his grandfather, Max, the 44-year-old has ambition and ideas how to build the business even more through social media and by adding more restroom trailers.

Max Starr farmed 2,500 acres in central Pennsylvania, growing produce for canneries. He sold fertilizer and operated a school bus business and trucking operation when he contracted to unload corn for a potato chip and corn chip plant in the early 1970s. When he learned the plant needed to haul away water used in the processing, he purchased an old tanker truck to transfer the wastewater from the plant to area fields. Soon after, he started pumping septic tanks.

In 1989, Max recognized another opportunity when he rented a couple of portable restrooms for

an estate auction. “He had four (restrooms) by the end of the week. He went crazy after that,” Jason Starr says.

The Starr family purchased restrooms from Satellite Industries, which created another business for the family when they were asked to assemble Satellite restrooms for distribution in the East. Max’s son, Greg Starr, worked with his father in both businesses and continues to work in the warehouse assembling restrooms. Jason, Greg’s nephew, took over the septic and restroom businesses at the end of 2020. Jason’s father, Roger, is a truck driver and helps his son out on the septic side of the business.

Max died in 2012, but his wife, Martha, continues working with the businesses for her son Greg. At 90, she turned in her last handwritten and typed receipts and bookwork in 2020 for Starr Portables, when Jason Starr added a new

"I don't want to go bigger. I want to concentrate on special events and my restroom trailers. I love the restroom industry. I love the work and I am a big people person."

**JASON STARR**



**Above:** The Starr family poses with a restroom trailer from Satellite Suites. Shown in the doorways are Jason, Helen, Easton, McKenzie and Delainey Starr.

**Below:** Jason and Helen Starr are shown with a restroom trailer from Satellite Suites.

computer and software for the business. He, his wife, Helen, and Morgan Lawton, now take care of the bookwork.

### **THE LEGACY CONTINUES**

Jason Starr recognizes the responsibility of carrying on the family name.

"I was the oldest grandson and I was at my grandparents' every weekend," Starr recalls. "Paps" called him "The Boss" and at 12, the youngster was helping load, unload and wash restrooms.

"When I was 16, I got my license on Thursday and I was driving a pumper truck on Saturday. I worked weekends and after school. I wanted to quit school because I knew what I wanted to do," Starr recalls. He graduated from high school in 1996 and continued to work with his grandparents and uncle.



**Right:** Jason Starr reviews work orders with Morgan Lawton in the Starr Portables office.

**Below:** Starr checks the service records of every restroom that leaves the yard to ensure cleanliness standards.



Starr Portables still pumps wastewater from the potato chip factory that got the business started as well as septic tanks for long-time customers. But portable restrooms account for most of the business' income.

"In the last 10 years, this business went crazy," Starr says of the portable restrooms. Partly the growth has been because customers prefer a local, family run company and because clean restroom units are a priority for him.

"I have a pet peeve about dirty roofs that are black and moldy," he explains, noting units are thoroughly powerwashed inside and out. He has three Karcher pressure washers with 13 hp Honda engines, and they are also used to steam wash the fleet of vacuum trucks every week.

## DIVERSE CLIENTS

Though the business is located in a town with a population of about 1,000 in a very rural area, a wide variety of customers need services. Construction accounts for about 50%, and Starr recently expanded his coverage area to accommodate his contractors, which keeps the company busy through the winter. In past years, a gas pipeline project and natural gas plant construction projects required dozens of restrooms for extended periods with every-other-day service. Prisons and nearby Bloomsburg University also rent restrooms.

The COVID pandemic also created opportunities, which affected the business when Starr was preparing to purchase it from his uncle.

**"I took out more than 100 restrooms for weekend parties for the Fourth of July. I'm not the cheapest in town, but I'm not selling the restroom, I'm selling my service."**

**JASON STARR**

"I decided I'm going to make this work, like my grandpa, who was a go-getter," he says, noting that one positive thing resulted from the pandemic: People understand the importance of portable sanitation and appreciate the portable restroom business more.

Starr Portables contracted with four hospitals that needed restrooms, hand-wash and sanitizing stations. During 2021, events and parties were back full speed. "Special events and parties are where it's at," says Starr about the favorite part of his business.

Prior to the pandemic in 2019, the Starrs recognized the potential of trailers, and ordered a three-station Satellite unit that was only rented out a few times. But then during an outage, a power plant needed one. Not wanting to use his new trailer, he rented a construction-style trailer from a friend for the power company. Since then, he purchased a 2016 three-station Comforts of Home Services ADA trailer used and a 26-foot, 4-stall unit from Montondo Trailer and another Satellite three-stall trailer because the market for outdoor venues and barn weddings is growing and increasing the need for nicer trailer restrooms.

## EQUIPMENT CORNER

For most customers, Starr's inventory of about 1,000 Satellite Industries restrooms has been enough to cover the busy summers. In addition to private parties, it's common to book 15-20 restrooms for community celebrations and carnivals. There are several wine, apple and pumpkin festivals in the area also.

"I took out more than 100 restrooms for weekend parties for the Fourth of July," Starr says. "I'm not the cheapest in town, but I'm not selling the restroom, I'm selling my service."

He emphasizes that point to combat competition that undercuts the price. There is plenty of work for everyone, he says, and fuel and other prices have gone up, so PROs must remember to price for a profit.

*(continued)*



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Let me begin with an expression of our sincere thanks. As with most of our vendors and customers, the past two years presented us with some severe challenges. Your understanding and patience allowed us to weather the ongoing storm and come out stronger than ever. We will always be grateful for your support.

Now, I have some news about Armstrong Equipment, Inc., and our direction for the future. After 50 years in the industry, I have decided to retire and let the young folks take the helm and show us how capable they really are. It is with pride I leave a company that is financially sound and well respected, ready to continue moving forward. Like most small business owners, I will stand to the side, ready to answer questions and offer gems of Tribal Knowledge when needed.

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Jerome is one of the finest young men I have ever known; patient, knowledgeable, able to juggle 10 projects without a stumble, and always, always striving to help our company and the industry we serve flourish during the most trying of times. During his tenure, I have watched our sales triple and our position in this very specialized industry advance immeasurably. It is with the greatest pleasure I pass the torch to Mr. Jerome Walker!

Once again, I thank you for your help, your valued support and your friendship.

Sincerely,  
*John Armstrong*  
The "Burgermeister"



## EXTENDING THE LIFE OF PORTABLE RESTROOMS

Over the years, the crew at Starr Portables has learned how to maximize the longevity of portable restrooms. “We still have some of the original ones because of the ways we take care of them,” says owner Jason Starr. He has 50 to 60 of the earliest units set aside for disaster situations.

He credits thorough cleaning and regular maintenance for a long, useful life for equipment. “We take care of problems right away,” he says, citing an example of fixing units with broken door springs as soon as they were returned to the shop from a rental placement.

Painted graffiti is removed immediately with Sunrise graffiti remover. When vandals cut graffiti in with a knife, Starr Portables workers grind it off. Through the years there have been cases of even more damaging vandalism, so Starr has also learned about the areas where they shouldn’t be set up.

There is also a hierarchy for restrooms. The newest are used for weddings and events. Then as they get older, they are used in places like ballfields and parks. After that, restrooms are used for construction. The very bottom units on the equipment list are reserved for roofing contractors. That’s because it’s impossible to remove tar that is tracked in from workers, Starr says.

**Above:** Damien Winders and Brandon Farver load restrooms on an Isuzu 20-foot flatbed truck for delivery.

Besides restrooms, his inventory of hand-wash stations includes 15 PolyJohn and about 50 Satellite units. He also has 25 Highrise units from Satellite.

Starr Portables has a diverse fleet to deliver and service the restrooms with various capacities. There are four Fords — a 1999 F-550 with a stainless steel Best Enterprises slide-in unit with a 500-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater tank, a 2006 F-750 with an aluminum 1,500-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater Progress Tank, a 2009 F-550 with an aluminum 700-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater Progress tank and a 2017 F-550 with a stainless steel 700-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater Pik Rite tank. He also has a 2015 Kenworth truck with a stainless steel 1,000-gallon waste/500-gallon freshwater Best Enterprises tank. A 1999 Freightliner truck from Progress Tank with an aluminum 3,600-gallon tank is used for septic pumping. All have Masport pumps.

For moving restrooms, Starr Portables has a 2003 GMC 4500 with an 18-foot flatbed and lift gate, a 2017 Isuzu 20-foot flatbed truck with a lift gate, a 2015 Ford F-250 pickup with a lift gate and a 2016 Ford F-150 pickup with a lift gate. He recently purchased a 2022 Ford F-450 pickup, mostly for hauling trailers, including three single-axle trailers carrying two restrooms and a sink for agricultural use, a 12-place and 20-place trailer made by F.M. Manufacturing, and a 24-place Explorer trailer made by McKee Technologies.

## TAKE CARE OF WORKERS

Keeping the equipment running and the business successful requires good employees. Starr says he offers high wages for the area, gives occasional bonuses and recently started a 401K retirement program. Tyler Zimmerman has been with the company the longest. Brandon Farver also came with the business that the younger

*(continued)*

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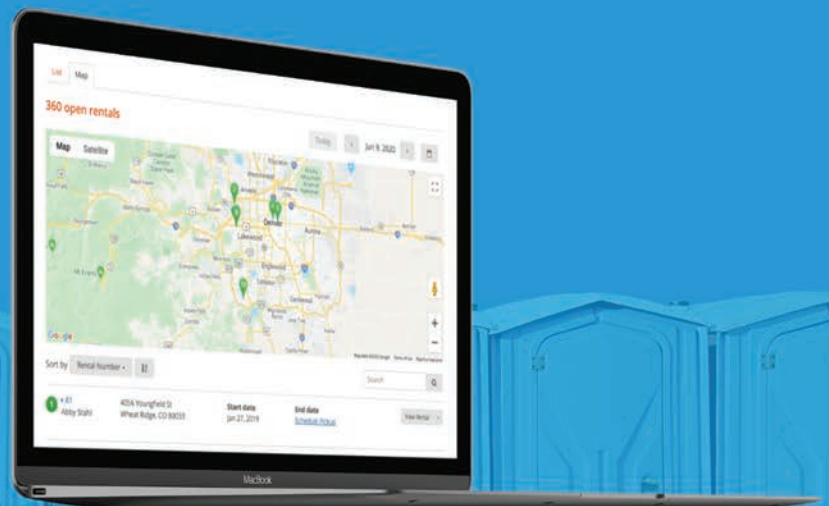
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Starr purchased at the end of 2020, and later he added Damien Winders. All new hires ride with Starr or another employee at first and are cross-trained to work both portable sanitation and septic-pumping routes.

“Randomly I will drive around and check the toilets,” Starr says, noting that usually they are up to his standards, including being cleaned with J-Spray from J&J Portable Sanitation Products and Spray Nine.

Drivers use Google Maps on their phones for their daily routes.

Starr added an office position and hired Morgan Lawton to answer the phone and schedule workers. With a new computer system and QuickBooks, Microsoft and Excel software, all aspects of the business from day-to-day accounting to separating out sales tax are organized and efficient. Office hours are 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., but there is an emergency number. If bad weather is forecast, like a recent flood, Starr sets it up to ring directly to his mobile phone.

Starr builds on old-fashioned service and name recognition with modern marketing tools. He and Helen mainly use Facebook. Many posts are quick and easy, such as sharing posts about the many events they contract serve. Other posts show their inventory — such as a restroom trailer set up at a beautiful location for a wedding.

Starr likes radio advertising that includes the business’s slogan: “The best seat in town.”

He also markets his business in a unique way with signs at eight area Little League baseball fields. Besides promoting Starr Portables, it provides a way to support communities he serves.

He uses Facebook to spread the word about his business by giving away things like tickets to the Pennsylvania State Fair and gift cards, when he randomly draws names from followers who like and share his posts.

## FAMILY TRADITION

“My grandpa always said to treat people fair and to treat them well. He worked until he was 83,” Starr says, noting that he is a hustler and go-getter like his grandfather. Besides stressing cleanliness, he prioritizes prompt delivery and pickup.

Looking into the future, Starr could envision the business continuing in the family with his daughters, McKenzie, 17, and Delaney, 14, and infant son Easton getting involved.

“I don’t want to go bigger,” Starr notes. “I want to concentrate on special events and my restroom trailers. I love the restroom industry. I love the work and I am a big people person.” ■

**Right:** Roger Starr, Jason’s father, helps out at the company. Here he is shown dumping a load at the wastewater treatment plant.

## MORE INFO

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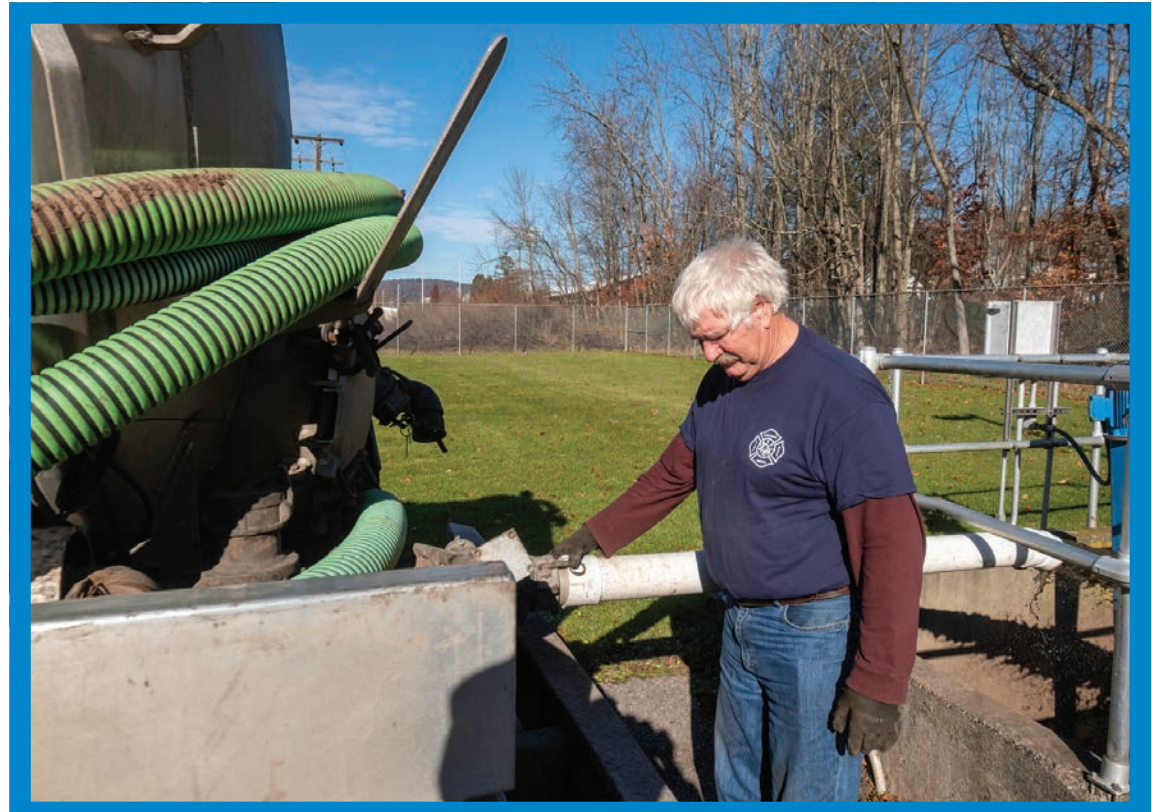
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Veronica Crosier is executive director of Portable Sanitation Association International. For more information, visit [www.pesai.org](http://www.pesai.org).

# Does Your Workplace Have a Wellness Program? Here's why it should!

By Veronica Crosier

**W**orkplace wellness is any policy, system or environmental support in the workplace that promotes employee health. This can look many ways, from ergonomic office furniture to flexible work schedules to on-site health fairs. Workplace wellness isn't a new concept, but it's taken time for employers to realize the benefits and spread the practice. It's more than just a series of one-off programs and policies though, it's about building a culture of wellness. If this language sounds fluffy to you, don't roll your eyes just yet.



Veronica Crosier, executive director of the PSAI, gives an employee workplace wellness presentation at a small business. (Photo courtesy of Veronica Crosier)

## WHY IS EMPLOYEE WELLNESS IMPORTANT?

You don't have to look far to find studies demonstrating the benefits of workplace wellness programs. When a workplace makes healthy choices not only easy, but the norm, employers can expect to see:

1. Increased employee retention
2. Decreased absenteeism
3. Decreased medical and workers compensation costs
4. Increased productivity
5. An average three- to five-year ROI for larger employers
6. An established wellness program can also attract new talent and boost your workplace's reputation as a great place to work.

## WELLNESS FOR PROS

Before coming to the Portable Sanitation Association International, I spent more than two years helping companies of all sectors and sizes develop workplace wellness programs for their employees. From that time, I can say the workplaces that required the most nuanced programming were those providing in-the-field-labor services such as the portable restroom industry. Why is that?

The biggest challenge may be the diverse employee body. The workday of the route driver differs greatly from that of the yard crew or the mechanic and all of those are quite different from the office staff. Therefore, a successful wellness program requires a multifaceted approach. Don't let this overwhelm you, though. Wellness programs should start small and specific. Over time, workplaces can increase the scope and depth of wellness supports.

## WHERE TO START?

Know your employees. The best plan starts with an assessment. Host an employee survey to determine what most interests them. Is it nutrition, physical activity, blood pressure management or something else? Ask what kinds of supports they'd most likely use. Would they like educational handouts, an on-site fitness station, or access to professional consultation? Starting with the employees' interests will increase employee buy-in, rather than making them feel forced into a lifestyle change they're not looking for.

From there, you can consider employee needs. Does your employee insurance provider offer biometric screenings? Such data can reveal where the deficits are in your employees' health. For instance, screenings could show many of your employees are prediabetic. Did you know that according to the National Diabetes Prevention Program, one in three Americans are prediabetic, but 80% of those don't know? Simply offering biometric screenings could literally save an employee's life by alerting them to conditions they may not be aware they have. But you can go the extra mile and post diabetes prevention education materials, put healthy snack options in the break room, or encourage an after-work walking club to provide even more support to them.

Does your workplace offer wellness programs or health benefits? Let us know what's worked for you. Email us at [info@psai.org](mailto:info@psai.org). ■



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4

**CUSTOMERS CAN FIND YOU EASILY:** Our location-based online finder tool helps potential customers find your business, whether you're a portable restroom operator or an industry supplier.

5

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**Left:** Ross Ambrose pauses at the Suwannee Hulaween event at Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park in Live Oak, Florida.

**Below:** The main stage at the Suwannee Hulaween event.



# TRIPPING the Light FANTASTIC

Florida music-and-lighting spectacle makes for a groovy but intense Halloween weekend

By Ken Wysocky



## ON LOCATION

- » **THE JOB:**  
Suwannee Hulaween
- » **LOCATION:**  
Live Oak, Florida
- » **THE PRO:**  
AAA Porta Serve

### THE TEAM

It's all hands on deck when AAA Porta Serve employees travel to Live Oak, Florida, to handle Suwannee Hulaween, a huge annual music festival that also features mind-blowing lighting effects and intriguing displays of artwork. Ross Ambrose, managing partner at Porta Serve, leads a team of nearly 30 people — including about two dozen friends and family members hired as temporary employees — during the four-day extravaganza held over Halloween weekend.

Key team members during the 2021 event included Robert Lynch, operations manager; David Wyrick, mechanic; and lead drivers Sam Arnett, Clint Fletcher, Lee Fletcher, Darren Fout, Ryan Fout, Michael Jenkins, Steven Lopez and Mark Poirier. They were joined by temporary crew

members James LaPoint, Codey Fletcher, Tyler Schultz, Joseph Price, Darrick Parker, Mike Mathis, Will Davis, Cody HonCoop, Jaya Gendleman, Barbara Jenkins, Dana Fout, Deanna Fout, Justin Fraddosio and Michael Sapienza. Ray Gerner and Rebecca Fletcher served as camp cooks, and former Porta Serve owner Woody Jasper rounded out the squad.

### COMPANY HISTORY

Ambrose, 58, bought the company in 2014; it was founded by Jasper in 2000. The business is based in High Springs, a town about 25 miles northwest of Gainesville in northern Florida. It employs 14 full-time employees and services about a 7,000-square-mile area of North Central Florida. Before Ambrose bought Porta Serve,

*(continued)*





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**Left:** Darrick Parker, left, and Clint Fletcher (with hose) cleans one of four banks of 50 restrooms.

**Below:** The area where AAA Porta Serve workers camp out at the Suwannee Hulaween.



he worked for years in the film and television industries. He occasionally would help Jasper, an old friend, handle large special events. Facing a career crossroads in 2014, Ambrose decided to buy Porta Serve from Jasper, who was retiring.

The company's business mix is about 80% monthly rentals (primarily construction-, recreation- and agriculture-related clients) and 20% special events.

## EQUIPMENT MATTERS

Porta Serve owns about 2,000 restrooms from Satellite Industries and PolyJohn; approximately 120 hand-wash stations from Satellite and PolyJohn; 90 holding tanks from Kentucky Tank and Satellite; and eight trailers for transporting restrooms from Liquid Waste Industries.

The company also owns 10 service trucks, built on Hino, Dodge 5500 and Chevrolet 3500 chassis. The tanks are made of aluminum and stainless steel and most of them were built by Imperial Industries, Best Enterprises and Arthur Custom Tank (a division of Mid-State Tank). They range in size from 200 gallons waste/100 gallons freshwater to 1,600 gallons waste/450 gallons freshwater. The trucks are equipped with vacuum pumps made by Masport, Condé (Westmoor Ltd.) and Jurop. The company expects to take delivery of two new Dodge 5500 trucks equipped with 900-gallon waste/350-gallon freshwater stainless steel tanks with Masport pumps from ITI Trailers and Truck Bodies.

**“We have the campground toilets in place by Friday night, six days before the event. We learned a long time ago that it's better to claim a space first, which eliminates those you-put-a-restroom-next-to-my-campsite phone calls.”**

**ROSS AMBROSE**

## THE MAIN EVENT

The festival is held at the 800-acre Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park in Live Oak, a small town about halfway between Tallahassee and Gainesville and roughly 50 miles northwest of Porta Serve's yard. It gets its name because it's adjacent to the Suwannee River. The jam-band String Cheese Incident started the festival in 2015 and the lineup of music acts during the four-day event is as diverse and eclectic as the group's blend of psychedelia, country, electronica, funk, rock and jazz.

In 2021, more than 80 bands played on five stages, with String Cheese Incident playing two sets a day Friday through Sunday. The record for attendance at the event is about 30,000 people, but attendance was capped at 20,000 this year, Ambrose says. Thousands of attendees camp out in the park for the duration of the event, which also features a dazzling light show around the park's Spirit Lake.

*(continued)*

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**Right:** The big AAA Porta Serve crew serving the Suwannee Hulaween is ready to spring into action.

**Below:** Ross Ambrose reviews plans for the workers at the Suwannee Hulaween.

**Below Right:** Ambrose talks to part of the large crew of workers at Suwannee Hulaween. Shown surrounding Ambrose are Cody HonCoop, Lee Fletcher, Clint Fletcher, Mark Poirier and Michael Jenkins.



## MORE INFO

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## BY THE NUMBERS

Porta Serve provided 243 restrooms for the concert grounds, 216 for the campground and 74 private restrooms rented by campers. The company also deployed 20 ADA-compliant restrooms, from Satellite and PolyJohn; 19 urinals from KROS International USA; 31 holding tanks (250- to 300-gallon capacities and used for food vendors and backstage trailers); two 4,000-gallon plastic bladders from Husky Portable Containment (used to hold wastewater from two shower trailers supplied by a subcontractor); 30 hand-wash stations; six self-fabricated hand-sanitizing stations and four self-fabricated hand-wash trailers; Ambrose says. The company also utilized eight service trucks. There were 62 points of service throughout the park and each location was serviced an average of 2-1/2 times a day, he says. "It's a big stretch for us," he says. "It can get stressful, but it's also very cool."

## READY TO ROLL

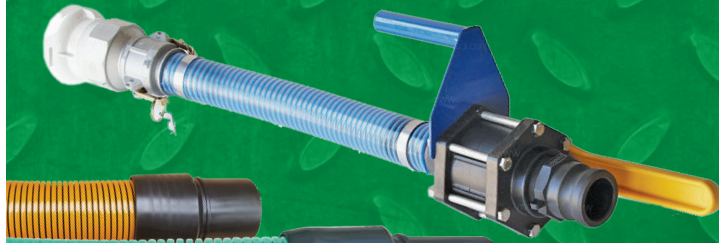
Porta Serve starts delivering restrooms a week before the event to accommodate many campers who arrive early, not to mention the hundreds of workers assembling event infrastructure around the Spirit Lake area — things like stages, three-dimensional projection stations, art exhibits and catering facilities. "We have the campground toilets in place by Friday night, six days before the event," Ambrose explains. "We learned a long time ago that it's better to claim a space first, which eliminates those you-put-a-restroom-next-to-my-campsite phone calls. It's also much easier to move around when there's not a lot of people around."

By the end of the Monday before the event begins (it starts on Thursday afternoon), most of the restrooms are in place; they're ready for use by the end of Tuesday, which is when Porta Serve crews start to service them, he says. "Logistically it's very challenging," he says. "If you don't deliver the restrooms early enough, you'll find yourself fighting the fences the event promoter puts up."

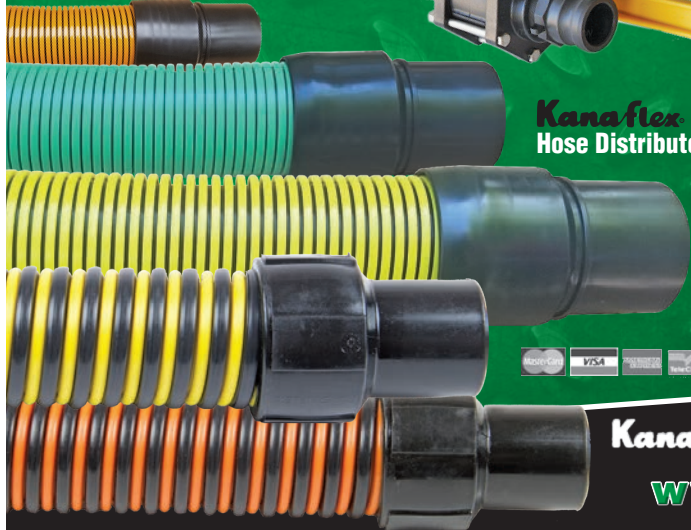
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Employees start working at 7 a.m. and are on stand-by until about 9 p.m. every day. “We all camp on-site during the event,” he says. “You can’t work this event and not be here all the time.” Breaking camp and cleaning and removing all the restrooms is also a big task; work starts on the Tuesday after the event and is mostly completed by Friday. But a good number of restrooms remain on site for a while longer to accommodate the many workers taking down the infrastructure erected the week before. “We slowly phase out those restrooms,” Ambrose says.

### TRICKY BALANCING ACT

Overall, the event demands three weeks of intense focus by most employees. To maintain service to other customers during the festival, some employees handle routes on Saturday or Sunday. “Or some drivers will do Tuesday’s routes and half of Wednesday’s routes on Tuesday, then on Wednesday do the rest of the usual Wednesday routes so they’re free to help out on Thursday and Friday,” Ambrose says. “It’s a big juggling act.”

The festival is the biggest special event Porta Serve handles and it can be a challenge at times. But given the music and eye-popping light shows, it’s also a pretty cool atmosphere, and employees feel a deep sense of camaraderie. In fact, Ambrose says one temporary employee actually uses vacation time to work the event. “It can be stressful,” he continues. “But it’s also very gratifying when we’re finished. We really like working it with everyone together.” ■

**Top Left:** An attendee admires some of the artwork at the festival.

**Top Right:** Lee Fletcher verifies a vacuum system clog has been cleared during a service run.

**Above:** From left, Dana Fout, Cody HonCoop and Codey Fletcher maintain hand-wash stations at Suwannee Hulaween.

Waste is stored in an on-site, 22,000-gallon frac tank and 1,200-, 2,500- and 3,000-gallon auxiliary holding tanks. Porta Serve keeps them on site year-round, he says. A local hauler removes and disposes of 4,500 gallons of waste at a time; the event generates about 160,000 gallons of waste, Ambrose estimates.

### FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS

The company provides restrooms for all special events held at the park. “We pay a licensing fee for our own radio frequency and we all communicate via Motorola and Kenwood walkie-talkies,” he says. “We also have our own entrance to the park.”



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By Craig Mandli

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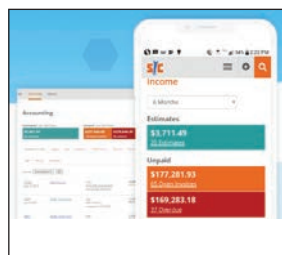
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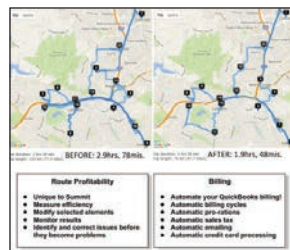
**AssetCommand Base** from **DPL Telematics** is the complete tool for companies to increase driver safety and productivity while decreasing the costs and risk of vehicle accidents and theft. Managers can remotely shut down their machines, wirelessly locate them anytime via GPS, collect odometer/run-time readings, track service intervals and receive real-time alerts for speeding or potentially dangerous driving. Driver ID options include iButton or RFID badges to restrict access to authorized drivers and correctly log each driver's activity. Users can also receive alerts for loss of power, boundary or curfew violations to curb unauthorized use. It is palm sized, has no external antenna and contains an internal backup battery to continue operating the unit if disconnected. To provide flexibility for seasonal usage, the device is billed on a month-to-month agreement, allowing customers to deactivate and reactivate anytime without penalty. **800-897-8093; www.dpltel.com**

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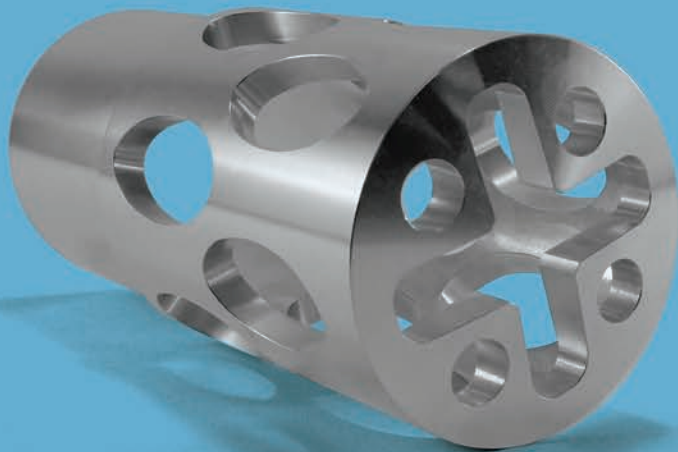


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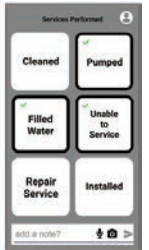
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**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

**Pods provide a well-lit portable restroom**

*By Tim Dobbins*

The Solar Pod light series is the direct result of an idea brought forth by a portable restroom operator. Over a year of research and design eventually led to a product that met the desired standards of Solar LED Innovations.

“It had to be low profile with less than a quarter of an inch above the roof and it had to be super bright and last for multiple days without sunlight,” says Tom Chorman, owner of Solar LED Innovations. “The result was our 65-lumen low profile Solar Pod light.”

Along with the bright light and solar charging, the company focused on making the Solar Pod easy for operators to use. “It had to be easy to install, durable and secure, and have a good look to it,” Chorman says. “It installs in less than a minute and double locks to provide a secure installation.”

The Solar Pod 65-lumen HD is now the brightest in the series. This light operates on a dusk to dawn sensor meaning it will turn on as light fades and remain lit until enough natural light is sensed.

“Over the years we added additional lights to the lineup that included long shaft lights with motion sensors and a budget-friendly light,” Chorman says. Solar LED Innovations now offers Solar Pod lights in 30- and 50-lumen options to go along with the original 65-lumen model.

The Solar Pod 30-lumen PIR (pyroelectric or passive infrared) light is 3.5 inches in diameter and can be installed in roofs up to 1-inch thick. This fixture requires a 38-mm hole for installation. PIR motion sensors turn the light on when a customer enters the restroom and will remain on as motion is sensed. After 40 seconds of no detected motion, the light will automatically turn off.

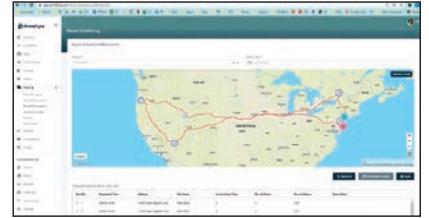
The next size in Solar LED Innovations’ lineup uses seven LED lights to produce 50 lumens and also has the PIR motion sensor. The fixture measures 5 inches in diameter, requires a 49-mm hole in the restroom roof for mounting and can be used in roofs up to 1 1/4-inches thick.

All Solar Pod lights come with a polycrystalline solar panel sized appropriately for each Solar Pod’s rechargeable batteries, eliminating the need for additional power sources.

“We have had hundreds of PROs around the world use our lights and express positive feedback,” Chorman says. “They appreciate the millions of hours of light provided to their customers that appreciate a well-lit portable restroom.” **484-639-4833; www.solargoose.com**

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**Abbott Rubber moves to new facility**

Abbott Rubber has moved to a new 112,000-square-foot facility in Itasca, Illinois, in the northwest suburbs of Chicago. The company celebrated its 70th year in the hose industry in 2021. Earlier in the year it also achieved ISO 9001:2015 certification as a fabricator and distributor of industrial hose, hose assemblies and industrial rubber products. Also, the company redesigned its website detailing available hose products and assemblies.



Jan Anderson



Kenosha, WI

**J&J Portable Sanitation announces new manager, location**

J&J Portable Sanitation Products named Jan Anderson as its new Midwest area manager. The company also opened its new central portable restroom warehouse in Kenosha, Wisconsin. The facility provides space to increase the inventory of its Echo portable restrooms and provides direct shipping to customers.

**Virginia Rubber Corp. Founder Harry Ronald Selfe Dies at 86**

Harry Ronald Selfe of Clifton, Virginia, founder of Virginia Rubber Corp., died at Arden Courts Memory Care unit Jan. 14, 2022, at the age of 86.

Selfe began his career in the industry as a salesman at Industrial Rubber in Maryland. In June of 1974, he left Industrial Rubber to form Virginia Rubber Corp. (VARCo), selling industrial hose and supplies. Working with two salesmen, he grew the business and interacted with many vendors, creating long-lasting relationships that survive today.

When his son Ron took over in 2007, Selfe came to work daily, attending the pumper trade shows and meeting with vendors. As his memory declined and the business grew, he would still come to work daily, helping out as best he could. Cars and biking were his passions and he spent much of his time with his beloved employees talking about them.

He is survived by his wife Judy, sons Ron and Brian, Brian's wife Andy, and granddaughter Tori. ■



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New Imperial 1,300 U.S. gallon, portable toilet service unit mounted on a 2021 Ford F550 cab and chassis with a Masport HXL4 pump package. (Stock #14031). [www.VacuumSalesInc.com](http://www.VacuumSalesInc.com). (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

Pre-owned 1,500 U.S. gallon (500 water - 1,000 waste) carbon steel, portable toilet service unit tank with rear toilet carrier. (Stock # 1500V). [www.VacuumSalesInc.com](http://www.VacuumSalesInc.com). (888) VAC-UNIT (822-8648). (TBM)

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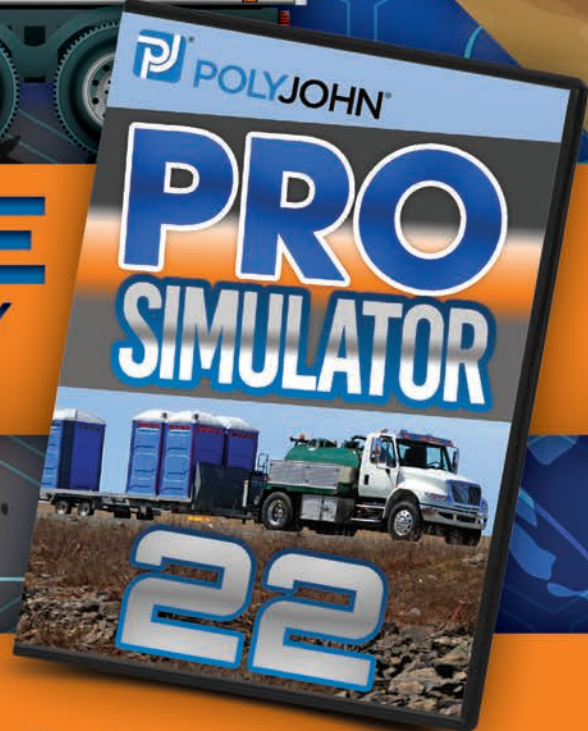


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