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LEFT: The Posh Privy provides VIP customer service treatment for clients in California's wine country. Owners Brian and Marisa Ferrell are shown with a Black Tie Products restroom trailer. (Photo by Fred Greaves)

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For over 60 years, Satellite has grown with its customers as a full-service partner

Satellite's vision for improving sanitation worldwide started in 1958 and continues today. Starting as a rental company with 36 wooden restrooms in Minneapolis, Satellite set out with the primary goal of bringing convenience, privacy and dignity to the public. As demand grew, Satellite moved out of the rental industry and focused on manufacturing quality products to help improve the portable sanitation industry. Satellite started as a full-service sanitation partner by providing three product lines: restrooms, deodorizers and trucks. Over the last nine years, Satellite has expanded to five product lines, including Satellite Suites restroom trailers and Sanitrax vacuum technology. By partnering with thousands of operators worldwide, Satellite products have helped provide portable sanitation in over 120 countries around the world.

Satellite Restrooms

In 1972, Satellite began producing the Tufway in polyethylene, which was much lighter and more hygienic than previous wooden toilets. This new restroom was an innovative boost in the market and quickly became the standard for restrooms in the industry. The Tufway has remained fundamentally consistent incorporating aesthetic improvements and upgrades as advancements in technology progressed over the past 50 years. Now Satellite provides five standard, two wheelchair accessible and one high-rise restroom, giving its partners a wider selection to choose from.

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Satellite Suites

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that some might say is better than home. Each trailer is built with commercial grade walls, flooring, doors and trim to withstand abuse. Its seamless surfaces, non-wood subsurfaces and aluminum structure reduce weight, prevent moisture damage and maintain their beauty long after other trailers have failed. Satellite Suites offers an extensive line of floor plans and options to meet the ever-evolving needs of its sanitation partners.

Satellite Vacuum Technology

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Satellite Industries manufactures portable restrooms, vacuum trucks and tanks, restroom trailers, vacuum technology products, deodorizers, hand wash units and other accessories for portable restrooms at construction and outdoor events.

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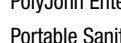
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By Jim Kneiszel

Dwindling Workload? Use the Slow Season to Your Advantage!



January is a time for many PROs to catch up on all the chores they put off when events and construction were going crazy

If there's anyone outside the driver's seat of a vacuum truck who knows how busy your life was in 2022, it's me. Try rounding up dozens of PROs for interviews and you soon find out how precious time is for owner-operators or technicians who run restroom routes. For the longest time, it's been busy signals or full voicemail boxes when I try networking.

But round about the holiday season, that starts to change. Special event work is over. Construction slows down a bit, especially in the northern states. The daily routes are shorter, and drivers coming back to the office are looking for ways to fill in the rest of their workday. And you can start picking up the phone when I come calling for a story.

You can embrace the peace and quiet for a while. Spend more time with the family during Christmas week. Take a few hours here or there to make up for all the weekend days you worked last summer. But about the second week of January, you need to get back up on that horse and start riding. This is the time to come up with a plan to keep you and the crew actively working to build and improve the business.

When the white stuff starts to pile up outside, I turn to the piles of articles and periodicals sitting on my desktop. As I was going through that mess of paperwork recently, I came upon a column by Jennie Lyon, a small business marketing expert and occasional contributor to PRO. She was writing about this very topic, encouraging business owners to take advantage of seasonal slow periods when they suddenly have extra time on their hands. It was a pep talk, essentially, suggesting lulls in revenue actually present an important opportunity.

I realize you're all probably paralyzed by the long to-do lists you've made as you tried to keep up with customer demands over the past year. Maybe you never thought the day would come when you would be able to cross a few items off those lists, but here we are. So I decided to tailor Jennie's message to the portable sanitation industry.

Here are a few suggestions of ways to make the most of unexpected free time and help your business continue on its growth trajectory:

GO BACK TO SCHOOL

'Tis the season for PROs to catch up on training and continuing education credits. Depending on your location, your state environment, transportation or local health departments may offer classes covering a variety of wastewater-related courses and health and safety training. Check out your industry trade associations for seminars or annual

Create a list of your top event planners and call on them to review how things worked out last year, and look at ways to improve service next year. ... It's important to show all customers you're thinking about them even at times when you're not sending invoices.

conferences that are often scheduled during winter months. Expand your horizons through local community college or state extension service classes that might enhance your business. Those could include general business or accounting, welding or mechanical courses, computer IT or marketing training. Encourage your staff to seek additional certifications that will benefit your team when business picks up again. "The money that goes into your education will pay off 10 times over as you start to get more clients," Jennie Lyon said. "I believe that optimal personal development is key to a healthy lifestyle and sustainable career."

GIVE EVERYONE SOME TIME OFF

When you face a slowdown, give your team some additional time for rest and relaxation. It's their reward for the many weeks you asked them to work overtime and through the weekends. Burnout is real. And so is the prospect of lowered morale among frontline workers. You can avoid all of that by flexing free time into the calendar when you can get the work done with fewer people.

Take a vacation yourself, too. And I don't just mean a few days off here and there. Plan a trip to a warm climate or check an important milestone off of your bucket list. Winter may afford you the opportunity to take at least a few weeks off in a row so you can really get away from the day-to-day grind. That way you can return with enthusiasm to attack the challenges coming this year.

FIX YOUR EQUIPMENT

During the busy season, it's inevitable that you'll shove damaged restrooms to the back of the yard and you'll put off service vehicle maintenance and repairs. Anything to keep the wheels turning and restrooms moving over the summer. Now it's time to shore up your

inventory and spend some time wrenching on equipment. Failing to catch up on maintenance will mean devalued assets and profit-killing breakdowns during the next busy season. If you don't already have a maintenance schedule written out, start keeping meticulous records and give some thought to an equipment replacement plan. Routine upgrades will boost efficiency and keep your team happy as they won't be constantly dealing with broken machines and Band-Aid fixes later on.

MEET WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS

Create a list of your top event planners and call on them to review how things worked out last year, and look at ways to improve service next year. Touch bases with construction contractors as well; find out about their expectations for the building season ahead and look for ways to enhance the products and services you deliver to them. It's important to show all customers you're thinking about them even at times when you're not sending invoices. It's also important to offer added services, such as hand-wash stations, holding tanks and restroom trailers, so you can order that equipment in time to deliver in a few months.

MAKE THINGS TIDY

Put your people to work deep-cleaning all areas of your shop and office. In the shop, inventory and reorder necessary supplies. Sell or scrap obsolete equipment or machines that are no longer needed. Vacuum cobwebs, clean up oil spots on the floor, add a coat of paint to spiff things up. In the office, shred old files that are no longer needed. Declutter and organize work stations and recycle obsolete electronics stacked up in the corners or closets. Consider upgrading office chairs and other furniture that is threadbare or no longer comfortable or practical. Is it time for faster computers, the latest model of mobile phones or tablets? Is all of your software updated? Do you have a cloud backup for your records?

BOOST YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

Lots of small businesses had good intentions when they launched a website, a blog or a YouTube video to find new customers. But lots of businesses then ignored the time-consuming chore of creating more content to fill and update those efforts. As a result, potential customers land on your webpage to find the last post was made in 2017. As Lyon said, now is a good time to remedy that.

"Create batches of content and schedule them. This will take some pressure off of you to create in a pinch. Your content won't go stale because everything has been planned ahead of time," she said. For instance, create a dozen timeless blogs about restroom service and post them once a month over the next year. Or come up with a variety of topics for videos or podcasts — an example would be 10 tips for wedding restrooms — and have them available for viewing as bridal events are scheduled this winter.

DO SOME GOOD WORKS

Most PROs I've talked to are civically minded and want to help the communities where they live and work. And they do. But it can be very difficult to think about contributing time, talents and treasure during the busy season. Now is the time to pause and reflect on what kinds of charitable work you want to participate in. Involve your team in these discussions. They may feel strongly about helping local causes and would appreciate your interest. Identify a few opportunities and reach out to the appropriate people for more information. Look for ways you can contribute your equipment and specialized skills to charity events. Planned giving

and follow-through is more effective than trying to respond to constant calls for help that pop up during the busy season.

WHAT'S UP?

So are you facing a welcome respite from working overtime right now? If so, how will you be filling out the hours over the next month or two? We'd like to know. Drop me a line at editor@promonthly.com and tell me about your slow-season activities. And fair warning, you may hear from me soon as I know you might find time to answer the phone! ■



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



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LISTEN UP!

New Podcast Episode Discusses New Squat Urinal for Women

Peequal, a U.K.-based company, hopes to revolutionize squat-and-go urinals for women while cutting down on sanitation congestion at special events. Find out how in this podcast interview with Peequal co-founder Amber Probyn. promonthly.com/featured

OVERHEARD ONLINE

“As the owner of a small business, it's hard not to get excited by the prospect of all those people seeing your advertisement. There are still plenty of ways that portable restroom operators like you can optimize Facebook advertising to help grow your business and attract a fraction of that massive user base.”

— [Diving Into Social Media Advertising](https://promonthly.com/featured)
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Weekly News Roundup

We recently updated our e-newsletters in order to share more industry news from around the country, along with the regular dose of articles featured on PROMonthly.com. If you're not subscribed yet, sign up on our website. You can also view past issues in the online archive. Scan the QR code to check them out.



FLEET MAINTENANCE

4 Steps to Avoid Being Left Out in the Cold This Winter

A portable restroom operator is only as good as their ability to get out and service their restrooms. Investing time in winterizing your equipment saves you money down the road. Read this article from the Association of Equipment Manufacturers for a winter maintenance blueprint

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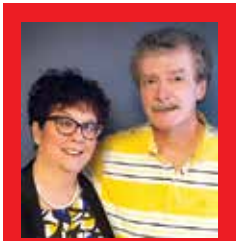


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Ellis



By Jeff and Terri Wigley

You've Chosen a Business Name. Now Make Sure It's Unique!

Take these precautionary steps to make sure your restroom company name follows legal rules and doesn't conflict with any other businesses

This is the second of a two-part answer to a question covering the topic of naming a new portable sanitation business or rebranding an existing business.

There are certainly many points to consider in developing a creative, legal and unique name to your business. As a reminder from our last article, here are some considerations when choosing your company name:

- The name is professional
- The name describes your business
- The name is unique and easy to remember and spell
- The name can be displayed on service trucks and decals as a form of advertising

We also recommended making a list of top choices, then weighing the options.

Continuing with this topic, we will address the legal structure of a company and the proper identification that must be used in the company name, taglines that can accompany the name and, finally, ensuring that complete name and any taglines are unique in your area and in your state.

LEGAL STRUCTURE (LLC, COMPANY, INCORPORATED, LIMITED, DBA)

Consult your legal counsel and CPA for advice regarding the best company structure for your business. Regulations vary from state to state and having both legal and tax guidance is imperative in this process. Once this determination is made, specific naming protocols must be used.

Sole proprietorship — For the sole owner of a company, unlimited personal liability as well as self-employment tax and personal tax responsibilities are the legal requirements for this type of entity. For these reasons, the company name must operate under the surname of the owner. If desired, the owner can file for a DBA (doing business as) name in order to establish a more creative company name.

Partnerships — For two or more owners, the legal requirements state unlimited personal liability unless the company is structured as a limited partnership. As with a sole proprietorship, self-employment tax (except for limited partners) and personal taxes are assessed. The legal name must operate under the surnames of the partners but, again, a DBA can be established in order to create a more unique name if desired.

Limited liability corporation — This is a common choice among many PROs as this structure protects the personal assets of the owners if the company faces legal actions. Verify that your state requires the phrase “limited liability corporation” or one of the acronyms “LLC” or “L.L.C.” This must be at the end of your company’s name on all legal documents.

Consult your legal counsel and CPA for advice regarding the best company structure for your business. Regulations vary from state to state and having both legal and tax guidance is imperative in this process.

S corporation — This is a legal structure that describes one or more owners, but less than 100, who, like the LLC, are not personally liable for any legal actions brought against the company. The taxes for the company flow to the owners’ personal returns. The most common phrases in the company name include “corporation,” company,” “incorporated” or “limited.”

C corporation — One or more owners are not personally liable and corporate taxes are paid. The same naming rules as those of a S corporation apply.

The end of your company name can be incredibly important from a legal standpoint, and we highly recommend legal counsel when selecting your company name.

CONSIDER TAGLINES

Taglines are merely the words beneath your company name, but they can be effective in conveying information to customers:

“Serving” — This word followed by a geographical reference can easily describe your company’s service area to potential customers. For example, “Serving the Entire Metropolitan Atlanta Area” would convey to customers that there would not be a need to call another company in the area for any of their future or current job sites.

“Since” — This word followed by a specific year conveys longevity and success. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, only 50% of all new businesses with employees survive past the five-year mark.

“Owned” — Several options are available here to describe the ownership status of the company. “Veteran-owned,” “woman-owned” and “minority-owned” are a few that are seen most often.

“Company name” if selecting another name for another product line — This would be a case where a certain product line would be introduced with reference back to the original company. For example, “Restroom Trailers by XYZ Company” refers back to the established XYZ Company.

VERIFY THE PROPOSED COMPANY NAME IS UNIQUE

Once you’ve selected a name, be sure it is unique in your area as well as in your state. Here is how you can check:

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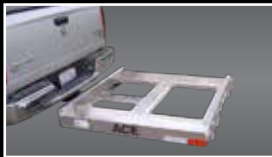
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Internet search — Using a search engine like Google, enter your proposed company name exactly as you would like for it to appear and check the results. As you have already searched and noted the names of portable sanitation companies in your area and in your state, you should not have any conflicts. Look for any other company name that is similar. Depending on the specifics of your choice of names, you may have to alter the name slightly.

Domain name suffix — The most desirable and most common domain name suffix for a company is obviously “.com.” There are many other options to consider, including “.net” and “.biz.” Check the availability of the domain name on such sites as GoDaddy.com, NetworkSolutions.com or Register.com.

Secretary of State search — Search your state’s website to ensure that your company name will be unique. If there is too much similarity in names, the website will identify this as being the case.

FINAL STEP

Consult your legal counsel and share the results of your research into your proposed business name. Verify once again the legal structure of your company and the appropriate notation at the end of the name. We recommend involving your attorney in the registration process with the secretary of state. Once registered, you are ready to go!

FINAL THOUGHTS

Careful consideration must be given concerning the legal designation of your company. The importance of consulting with your legal counsel and CPA cannot be overemphasized. On the more creative side, taglines are very effective in advertising your business. Once you have a great name created and verified, work to have that name symbolize an extraordinary company! ■

Below: The team at Posh Privy includes, from left, Emilio Hernandez, Marisa and Brian Ferrell, and Jose Torres. They are shown with a Black Tie Products restroom trailer. (Photos by Fred Greaves)



POP THE CORK



California's beautiful wine country sets the stage for a successful upscale restroom trailer business

By Betty Dageforde

In 2016, when Marisa Manna Ferrell decided she finally needed to get someone to help her run her growing eight-year-old event planning business, So Eventful, she didn't have to look too far. "My husband said, 'What about me?' I may have spit my martini out at that moment in sheer shock," she says.

Brian came with a degree in marketing as well as experience in purchasing and planning, working for manufacturing companies. He helped Marisa with marketing and human resources compliance issues, as well as creating processes, procedures and training guides.

Within four months he was already thinking about expansion. "Brian asked me what would be a good segue and I said there's a niche for luxury portable restrooms," Marisa says. "We noodled on it, Brian wrote up a business plan and then we contracted a company to build a trailer — and now we have 22."

The couple complement each other well from a business perspective, Brian says. "The joke is, Marisa is the gas and I'm the brakes. She is the

entrepreneurial spirit and I'm the guy who says, let's put it through the spreadsheet, do lots of research, look at the risks and rewards."

The Posh Privy, was set up as a separate business from So Eventful, but they operate from the same location in Healdsburg, California. The Posh Privy crew includes office manager Kim Schmidt, operations manager Jose Torres, driver Emilio Hernandez, part-time cleaner Matt Caro and on-call cleaner/driver-trainee Joseph Simmons. Most of their clients are in Sonoma, Napa and Marin counties — wine country — but they also go into San Francisco and surrounding areas.

GETTING STARTED

For their first trailer, after Brian did his research and looked at their events and typical guest counts, the Ferrells chose to go with a six-station unit.

Through portablerestroomtrailers.com, an intermediary to different manufacturers, they paired up with Black Tie Products to build out the unit. But they wanted to go above and beyond a



The Posh Privy Healdsburg, California

Owners: Marisa and Brian Ferrell

Founded: 2016

Employees: 7

Services: Restroom trailer rental for weddings and other events

Service Area: Three-county wine region of northern California

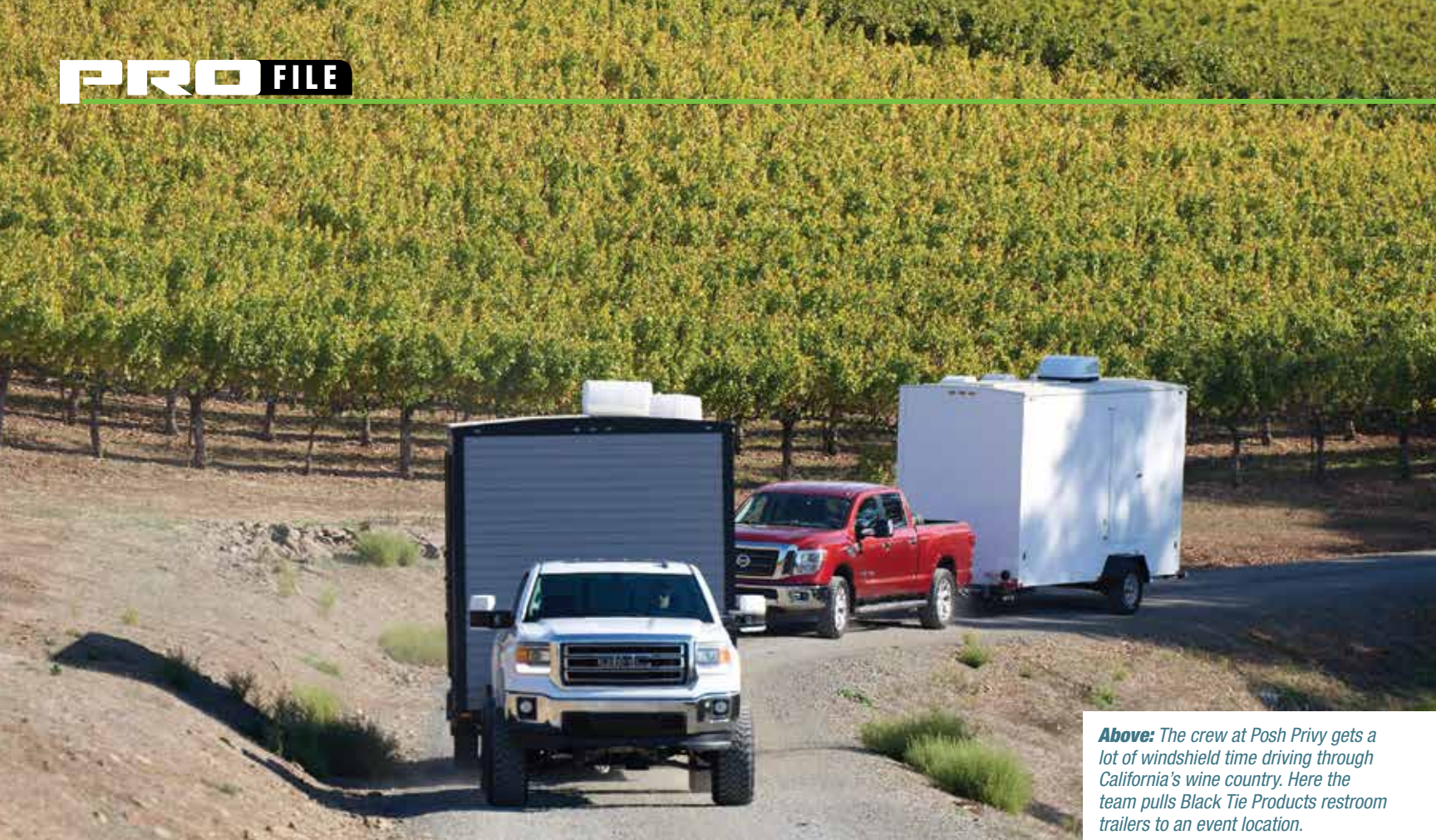
Website: www.theposhprivy.com

"The joke is, Marisa is the gas and I'm the brakes. She is the entrepreneurial spirit and I'm the guy who says, let's put it through the spreadsheet, do lots of research, look at the risks and rewards."

BRIAN FERRELL



Above: Marisa and Brian Ferrell show off the window treatments on a Black Tie Products restroom trailer.



Above: The crew at Posh Privy gets a lot of windshield time driving through California's wine country. Here the team pulls Black Tie Products restroom trailers to an event location.

basic model so they added a number of custom features — windows, wood siding, decorative light fixtures, flower boxes, wood covers for the wheels. The interior features Kohler sinks, custom countertops, motion-sensor faucets. Colors were chosen with care. “The men’s suite is more masculine with darker colors,” Brian says. “The women’s is softer with brighter colors.”

The Ferrells took delivery in 2017. They used Brian’s 2015 GMC Sierra for transport, and relied on other PROs for pumpouts, ADA-compliant portable restrooms and extra trailers when needed. They kept the unit in an RV storage facility until So Eventful rented warehouse space they were able to use.

FEAST OR FAMINE

The 2020s were a rollercoaster ride. For 15 months, COVID nearly shut down both their businesses. But they hung on and were able to retain employees with a few long-term contracts for hospitals and related facilities, and by applying for grants and no-interest loans. By summer 2021 things started to open up, and by 2022 there was a huge uptick in activity from postponements and pent-up demand.

Then their business really exploded when they made an acquisition that increased their trailer inventory from one unit to 22. They’d had a wonderful working relationship with Fancy Flush for years and when the owners began expressing frustration with the long hours and hiring difficulty, the Ferrells just looked at each other, a light bulb went off and Brian went back into research mode. By April 2022 they were the new owners.

The Ferrells have the legal right to use the Fancy Flush name and website for two years and are currently in the process of phasing those out, although they will keep some of the Fancy Flush online features, which they consider a huge asset. For example, customers can go on the availability page, put in their information, pick a trailer, add a generator if necessary and

“I don’t want (service technicians) to think of me as the owner, because I’m out there hauling trailers, pumping and dumping and doing it all, just like they are.”

BRIAN FERRELL

in less than 24 hours get a quote. They approve it electronically and quickly receive a contract.

EQUIPMENT LINEUP

The acquired trailers were built out by Black Tie, Satellite Suites and Rich Specialty Trailers, and range in size from a basic two-stall unit for budget-conscious clients or for use in narrow situations (such as San Francisco or a vineyard) to a five-stall luxury model with high-end

upgrades. There is also one luxury two-stall trailer custom-built with faux siding, decorative wallpaper and vessel sinks. Other than their basic model, all units have piped-in music. “And we’re dressing all the tires so they look shiny going down the road and at the location,” Brian says.

Other equipment from the acquisition included a few custom-built hand-wash stations, six generators, two 2017 Nissan Titan delivery trucks and various spare parts and tools including a powder-coating machine and sandblasting equipment for repairs. They also picked up their first vacuum truck. “The owner was pretty handy,” Brian says. “He took an Isuzu NPR box truck and built it out with a 900-gallon tank and a pump in the back.”

In addition to the two employees who stayed on, the Ferrells hired an operations manager with industry experience and a driver to handle the increased workload. Brian says he takes a team approach to employee management and considers himself just one of the guys.

“I don’t want them to think of me as the owner, because I’m out there

(continued)



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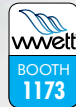


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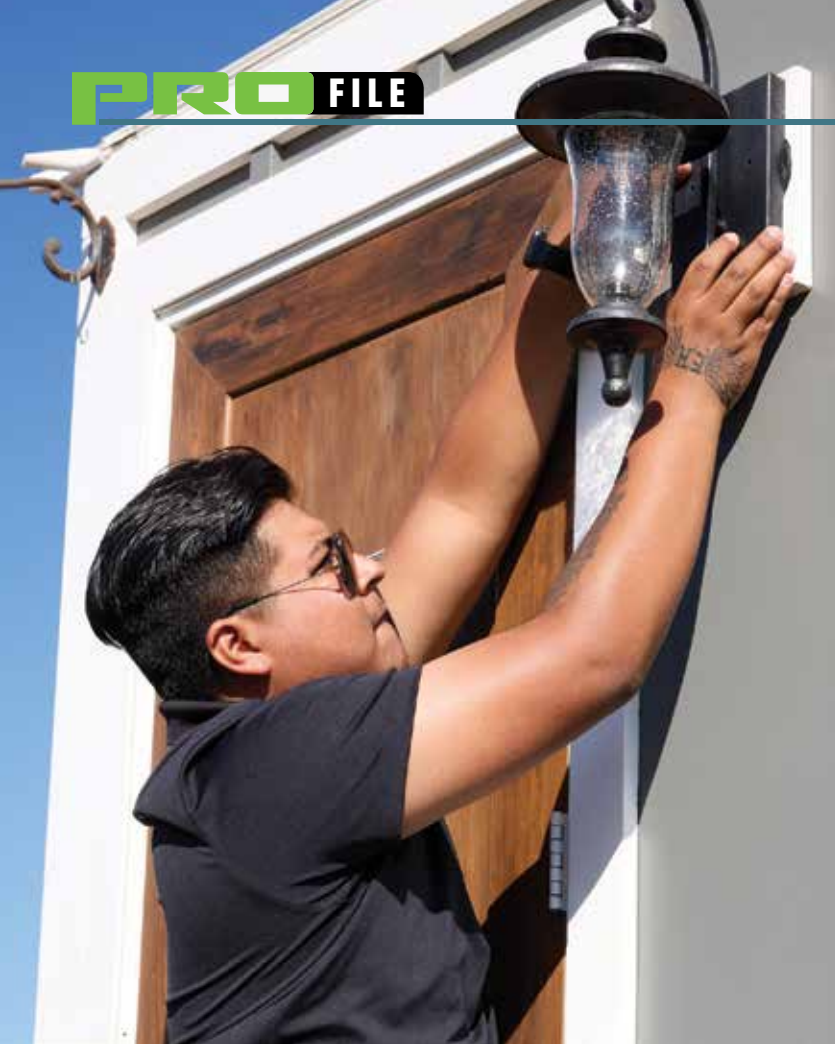
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Left: Emilio Hernandez adds decorative entrance lighting to a trailer on location.

hauling trailers, pumping and dumping and doing it all, just like they are,” he says.

It’s hard to get the whole team together because they’re all running around but they sometimes have a quick meeting in the morning to talk about safety items, customer feedback, what’s working and not working, finding out who needs what. And occasionally they even have time to grab some pizzas and have lunch together.

ALWAYS CELEBRATING

There are a thousand wineries within an hour of Healdsburg, Brian says, and every weekend they are at one or more of them for something. About 60% of their business is for weddings — many at the wineries but also private estates and other venues. Although these places have on-site restrooms, trailers are needed if the facilities are insufficient for the event size or if the ceremony is held somewhere else on the property. For example, some weddings take place in the middle of a vineyard.

The trailers are self-sufficient and can function without onsite water and power hookups if necessary. They’ve got solar power and onboard batteries. Generators can be brought in and all but their largest carry water.

The company’s nonwedding events include birthday parties and other life celebrations, corporate events, film festivals and filming projects for commercials. They recently provided trailers for March Madness in San Francisco and the John Madden memorial in Oakland. They also get their



Below: Emilio Hernandez and Jose Torres set up a restroom trailer built by a local company bought by The Posh Privy.

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share of emergency situations — perhaps a broken water main requiring a company to bring in a trailer for their customers and employees.

Brian says the company also loves working with nonprofits. “Anything we can do to help,” he says. “We do offer them discounts.” Examples include the Schultz Celebrity Golf Classic at the Mayacama Golf Club to raise money for children’s charities, a Humane Society event at the Kendall-Jackson winery in Santa Rosa, a Home Depot fundraiser for the Veterans Home in Yountville and a health facility in Santa Rosa caring for the homeless.

The company often teams up with So Eventful, which handles everything from tenting and transportation to food and decorations. When the Ferrells are on site for these events, working as attendants, it’s not unusual for them to hear guest chatter about how luxurious the restroom trailers are.

COVERING ALL BASES

Brian says they aim to perform every aspect of the business in a way that gives the customer superior service and creates a competitive advantage for the company.

Customer Service. “It really starts with Kim, our office manager,” he says. “She’s the first point of contact. She is so good with her knowledge and how she deals with the clients. Everybody loves her.”

Product. Then there’s the product offering itself — the variety of inventory, the size of the fleet, the uniqueness of the units, the luxury features. Units are stocked with high-end soaps, hand towels and amenity trays.

Cleanliness. Trailers are cleaned weekly with disinfectant and inspected before they leave the yard. There is a checklist of items to get a trailer ready. Even maintenance closets are vacuumed. “I don’t want anybody looking anywhere in the trailer and finding something to complain about,” Brian says.

Delivery. Drivers contact the customer when they leave the yard, then walk them through everything to make sure they know how to use the trailer and how to troubleshoot.

ON THE HORIZON

Brian says the most challenging aspect of day-to-day management is the logistics involved in scheduling — taking into account the different sizes and amenities of trailers, employee schedules, traffic patterns, fitting emergencies in without disrupting anything.

The longer-term challenge is figuring out how to generate revenue during the slow season. California winters are mild but most events take place from early spring to early fall. The staff stays busy taking care of maintenance and repairs but Brian wants to look for long-term leasing opportunities that provide income.

After running out of inventory several months in a row, the company is already planning on buying another custom trailer. “You don’t want to sell out because then you’ve got to turn away business,” Brian says. “You also want to continue to reinvent yourself. We’re looking at the numbers to see what size makes sense.”

Brian is still enthusiastic about his decision to join Marisa in the event industry. “Every day is different,” he says. “And the country here is absolutely breathtaking. It’s just rolling hills and vineyards. I’ve been to some of the most unbelievable private estates, wineries, things you didn’t even know existed. The beauty all around us certainly makes work a lot more enjoyable — especially when you’re dealing with a business like waste.” ■

MORE INFO

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Rich Specialty Trailers
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www.richrestrooms.com

Satellite Suites
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See ad, cover and page 5



Above: Attention to detail is important as Brian Ferrell sets up a Black Tie Products restroom.

UNFORGETTABLE EVENTS

In the five years The Posh Privy has been in business, Marisa and Brian Ferrell have seen some incredible things — fabulous estates, idyllic countryside, celebrities, no-expense-spared weddings. One of their standout events was a multiday \$2 million wedding at the Mayacama Golf Club. Brian was on site for the event, working as an attendant.

“They put up massive tents and the décor was absolutely breathtaking,” he says. “There were three award-winning chefs, Train was their band, and then a famous DJ from San Francisco played the rest of the night. There were heads of companies there that required private security.”

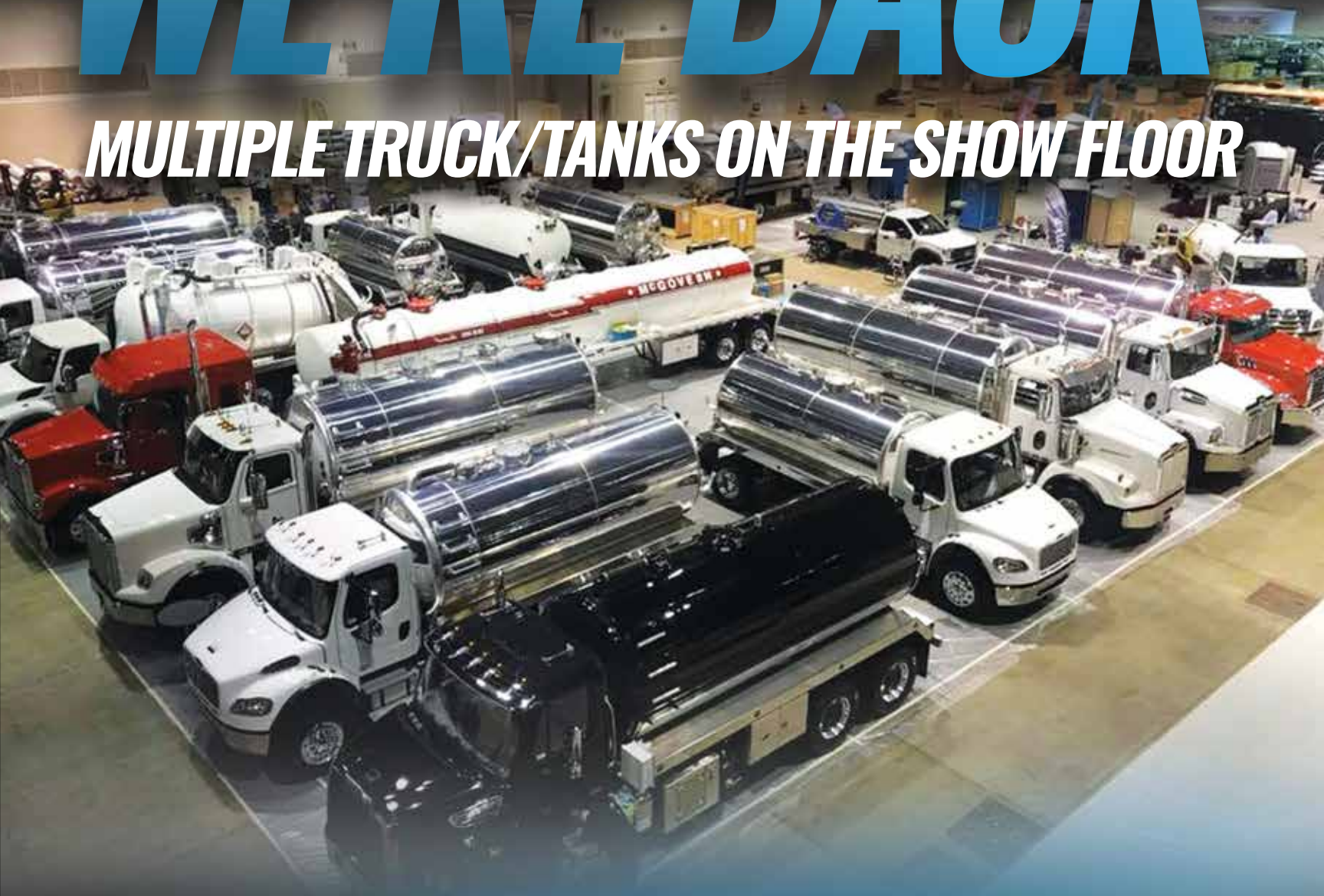
Another memorable event — but for the wrong reason — occurred in 2017, only five months after they started the business. Their trailer was out for a week-end event about 10 miles from their home.

“I delivered the trailer Friday, the event happened Saturday, and on Sunday evening was the Tubbs fire,” Brian says. “It absolutely devastated entire neighborhoods and nearly burned down the property the trailer was at.” He was unable to retrieve the trailer for a couple weeks because it was in the fire zone, requiring him to cancel another event for which it was scheduled. When he finally picked up the unit, it was covered in ash inside and out but fortunately there was no major damage.

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By Jessica Ayre

6 Ways Texting Will Benefit Your Portable Restrooms Business

Flexible SMS software programs enhance nimble communication, saving PROs time and landing more customers

Portable restrooms are a must for any large gathering, such as festivals, construction sites and outdoor sports contests. But events can be unpredictable, and logistics around restroom units can prove tricky. In those moments, and others, texting is a big help.

Integrating texting into your customer communications can be done through use of SMS, or short messaging service, a way to send quick messages via a cellular signal rather than an internet connection. A variety of business texting software services allow you to expand the capabilities of SMS and make it a valuable tool for small business.

Here are six ways grow your portable sanitation business through texting:

1. CAPTURE LEADS WITH SMS CHAT.

When customers are searching for a reliable portable restroom company, they're going to have plenty of questions and they want answers ASAP. They'll come to your website to learn more about your services and equipment, but they'd prefer to ask you a question directly. Those questions often include:

- Do you charge a monthly rate for a job site?
- How often do you service the restrooms?
- Can I do a one-day rental for a wedding?
- Can I have a quote for a 500-person two-day event?

So how can you connect quickly with prospects? With texting. SMS Chat is a chat widget that goes on your website where people can start conversations with you, and continue them via text.

SMS Chat enables you to capture leads and their contact information so that you can follow up with them later and turn them into paying customers. The first business to respond is often the one who the customer chooses, and auto-responses on SMS Chat help you respond instantly, even after business hours.

2. SCHEDULE AND RESCHEDULE DROP-OFFS AND PICKUPS.

Once prospects have decided to go with your business, they'll need to schedule to have the restrooms delivered to their location. Use texting to

The first business to respond is often the one who the customer chooses, and auto-responses on SMS Chat help you respond instantly, even after business hours.

confirm more appointments.

Customers can text your business directly to set up an appointment, and from there, you can send them a link to your calendar so that they can pick a time and date that works for them. Or, if it's a last-minute situation, just text back and forth to coordinate the details, like where on the property the equipment needs to be dropped off.

Send reminders upon appointment confirmation, and then remind them the day before and on the day of. Staying connected along the way will reassure your customers that you're there for them, and these nudges will also give them the opportunity to reschedule if needed.

Scheduling for drop-off and scheduling for pickup works the same. Once the event is finished, text customers to remind them of your pickup time and any additional particulars they need to know about that part of the process.

3. MANAGE IN-EVENT NEEDS.

Every event needs accessible restrooms and hand-wash stations, and cleanliness is going to be top of mind for every guest. Use texting to communicate with event staff about sanitation needs, especially if a unit needs to be serviced so guests are provided with a clean space. Guests can even text your number to give real-time feedback about the cleanliness or functionality of a unit, so your team can act fast.

If a unit has been tipped over due to inclement weather or a rowdy crowd, event staff can text your office immediately so that a driver can be dispatched to the location quickly to clean the unit or switch it out.

4. INCREASE PRODUCT AND SERVICE SALES VIA SMS PROMOTIONS.

Standard restrooms are usually the first thing that your customers think of when they consider your business, but do your customers know your full range of products and services? Use text promotions to get the

word out about everything you've got to offer, such as hand-wash stations, VIP restroom trailers, flushable units and accessories including fencing, trash containers and other equipment.

Make sure customers are getting everything they need for their situation. For example, festival organizers might not realize you offer fencing, and could use it to section off certain areas. Or, people dealing with a natural disaster will definitely need restrooms and showers, and they might also need to rent a trash container to help clear an area.

5. GET PAID WITH SECURE TEXT PAYMENTS.

You've got to get paid, so make it a breeze by letting customers pay over text. Customers can pay you on the go without stopping their day, and you'll have more on-time payments with less invoicing hassle.

To get started with text payments, you'll need to connect your payment processor to your business account. From there, text a payment request to your customer before or after a service, and they can text a confirmation code to pay, or follow a link to pay.

This is a completely secure, payment-card-industry-compliant process, so you can have confidence in getting your money safely.

6. GAIN POSITIVE ONLINE REVIEWS.

A high number of positive online reviews will only benefit your business. Why? When people are searching for a local portable restroom business, your organization will be more likely to show up at the top of search results. This is good news for you, since prospective customers are more inclined to choose a business with high-quality reviews.

So how do you get more reviews? By texting for them. After picking up your equipment from a site, all you'll have to do is text your customers and ask them to leave a review. Send them a direct link to your review pages such as Facebook or Google Reviews, and thank them for their business.

MAKE IT QUICK

You can use the mobile app of your texting software to do all of these things, so you don't have to sit in front of a computer all day. No matter the place or time, your business can provide comfort in all kinds of situations, and texting can help you better connect with people who need your service. ■

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Below: Musicians regularly gather for impromptu jam sessions at the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention. Visitors who hang out for as long as a week require restrooms and camper pumpouts. (Photos by Martin Cherry)



FIDDLIN' AROUND

An old-time music event keeps the crew at Alabama's Aerial Sewer dancing during service routes

By Betty Dageforde

ON LOCATION

» THE JOB:

Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention and the Wally Byam Airstream Club Rally

» LOCATION:

Athens, Alabama

» THE PRO:

Aerial Sewer Service

THE TEAM

Bert and Joanie Dain are the owners of Aerial Sewer Service in Athens, Alabama (population 27,000). Their son-in-law, Hunter Terry, has worked for them for 11 years, as has Jason McDaniel. About one-third of their work is portable restroom rentals, the rest septic pumping, repair and installation. They currently have about 130 units in inventory, half reserved for events.

COMPANY HISTORY

The Dains started their business in 1990 shortly after getting married when they were living in Wisconsin. In 1997 they added portable restrooms to supplement their septic work. In 2003 they moved to Athens in north-central Alabama

and started right up again, quickly adjusting to small-town life, a slower pace and a warmer climate.

THE MAIN EVENT

The 55th annual Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention was held Thursday through Saturday, Oct. 6-8, 2022 at Athens State University. About 15,000 people came from 30 states, many of whom stayed in three camping areas on the college campus. Competition categories for the 200 contestants included fiddle, guitar, harmonica, mandolin, banjo, dulcimer, old-time singing and buck dancing. Professional entertainers were on hand including the headliner act, Grammy Award winner Rhonda Vincent. But everyone got in on

(continued)

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Left: The Aerial Sewer Service team includes, from left, Joanie Dain, Bert Dain, Hunter Terry and Jason McDaniel.

Below: Bert Dain spends a lot of time making sure units are serviced properly at the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention and the Wally Byam Airstream Club Rally.



the action, participating in numerous jam sessions across the campus and enjoying the 150 booths featuring traditional crafts.

And each year about 35 members of the Alabama Unit of the Wally Byam Airstream Club hold a weeklong rally at the university to enjoy the event. A campus ballfield is the designated parking area for their travel trailers.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The Dains started serving the Fiddlers Convention in 2012. It was a rocky start. They weren't eligible to bid on the event until they had a minimum number of wheelchair-accessible units. When they finally got the chance, they were thrilled to win the job. They were concerned organizers had not ordered enough portable restrooms, so they put out 30 units even though they were only being paid for 24. They also walked around the venue, making sure supplies were adequate and units were kept clean.

Despite their efforts, the second year they lost out to a new company that underbid them by \$100. It proved to be a bad decision for the organizers. "We talked to them afterwards," Bert Dain reports. "They said, 'You don't have to worry about it. It's yours.'" It took a few more years to convince the organizers to order enough units.

BY THE NUMBERS

The company provided 58 standard units, four wheelchair-accessible units and one baby-changing station (Satellite Industries), all with hand

"We left the yard at 4:30, it was completely dark. We had lights on our heads. We had to be out by 8 when the gates opened."

BERT DAIN

sanitizer. Dain jokes that, although they'd like to be known as the purple port-a-potty pumping people (named for Joanie's favorite color), their units are actually in a wide range of colors, including simulated wood grain because it allows them to match a bride's wedding colors or meet other special requests. They also brought in two four-station hand sanitizer stands (T.S.F. Company). The university has a triple-basin stainless steel sink so no hand-wash stations were needed.

The company worked closely with the maintenance department and the dean of the university to coordinate their activities. The university is in a dry county so no alcohol was sold at the event.

LET'S ROLL

Units were washed, bleached and stocked with three rolls of tissue before being taken to the venue. Although the convention lasted only three days, campers began arriving two weeks before, so the company brought in eight units on Sept. 23 and serviced them once before the opening date.

The rest of the equipment was delivered the week of the event using a 2019 Toyota Tundra and a 2019 Chevrolet with 10-place and 16-place trailers. Eight standard units and one wheelchair-accessible unit were

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Left: Technician Hunter Terry stocks paper products in a row of Satellite Industries restrooms at the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Convention.

MORE INFO

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www.keithhuber.com

Satellite Industries
800-883-1123
www.satelliteindustries.com
See ad, cover and page 5

T.S.F. Company, Inc.
800-843-9286
www.tuff-jon.com
See ad, page 2

Walex Products Company
800-338-3155
www.walex.com
See ad, page 11

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

brought in on Monday; 10 standards, one wheelchair-accessible and one baby-changing unit on Tuesday; and 16 standards and one wheelchair-accessible on Thursday. All were placed in parking lots. Another batch of 16 standard units and one wheelchair-accessible unit were taken to campus on Monday but not set in place until Thursday. Those units were placed at the main stage and vendor area — a location that presented a unique challenge for the company.

“There’s a tree there that we call the stink apple tree,” Dain says. “It has little apples that fall off, right at the time of the Fiddlers Convention, and they stink to high heaven. People think it’s our toilets but it’s the tree. We do everything we can to eliminate it. We scatter deodorant disks all over the place — in, under and around the units, in the grass — and we go super heavy with the wall spray.”

The company wasted no time removing units after the event. “It takes us all week to get them out there,” Dain says, “but the whole works is gone on Monday when the three of us pick them up.”

KEEPIN’ IT CLEAN

The Dains checked on things midday Friday and Saturday. Full service took place Friday and Saturday mornings using two trucks. “We left the yard at 4:30,” Dain says. “It was completely dark. We had lights on our heads. We had to be out by 8 when the gates opened.” All the Airstream folks were pumped out on Thursday, paid for as part of their admission fee. It took about three hours. Waste was taken to the treatment plant.

The company builds out its own waste and water tanks for their vacuum trucks with the help of a local welder. The 1993 Chevrolet has a 200-gallon slide-in steel tank and a 50-gallon water tank. The 2000 GMC has a 2,000-gallon

steel tank and two 100-gallon water tanks. Both have Conde pumps. The company uses Walex deodorant products.

ONE VICTORY, ONE DISAPPOINTMENT

Dain says everything went smoothly and according to plan — except for one thing. They had ordered a new truck — a 2022 International outfitted with a 1,200-gallon Keith Huber tank, a Conde pump (Westmoor Ltd.) and a 175-gallon water tank — and expected it to be delivered in time for the event, but it was a few days late. It was disappointing, he says. For one thing, they could have had three people servicing units instead of two, and started at 5:30 a.m., not 4:30.

But event organizers were happy, campers were grateful and everyone is looking forward to next year. ■



Above: Hunter Terry is shown at the outdoor festival with the company’s GMC vacuum truck, which uses a Conde pump.



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STANDARD RESTROOMS

By Craig Mandli

STANDARD PORTABLE RESTROOMS



ARMAL WAVE

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

J&J PORTABLE SANITATION PRODUCTS ECHO

The **Echo** portable restroom from **J&J Portable Sanitation Products** is designed to withstand constant use and abuse. It is easy to clean and maintain, and it includes a domed floor with drains in front of the tank top for easy cleaning and no puddling. It includes an easy-to-clean deep-sump holding tank and a hover handle. The sides and roof have handgrips for easy moving. **800-345-3303; www.jjportable.com**



NUCONCEPTS VIP

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

P-POD

The **P-Pod** portable restroom utilizes a folding design that can be deployed quickly. Units are practical and lightweight, provide 30% more interior space and there is no need for the vent stack in



traditional units. Their interchangeable tanks can be removed without tools in seconds. They can be equipped with a traditional drop tank, recirculating tank or freshwater flushing tank, while allowing complete sanitization of all surfaces. They can be stacked three high when not in use. **866-763-9436; www.nexgenppod.com**



POLYJOHN PJN3

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

SANSOM INDUSTRIES ZENITH

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



SATELLITE TUFWAY

The **Tufway** from **Satellite** has a spacious, well-ventilated interior to reduce odors. A combination of floor and molded-in wall vents promote continuous airflow. The urinal drains down the vent pipe, which prevents unwanted tank odors from venting back inside the unit. In addition, the seat is positioned at the furthest point from the urinal, away from odor and user's direct sight. It can withstand impact and abusive handling without cracking or breaking, using fewer parts made from high-density polyethylene. Adding slope to the tank and floor forces liquids to drain, not puddle, and the sumped tank improves deodorizer coverage and assures quick, complete waste removal. **800-883-1123; www.satelliteindustries.com**



T.S.F. TUFF JON III

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



(continued)



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TBLUSTAR USA RAPIDLoo STAR

The **RapidLoo STAR** from **Tblustar USA** is engineered to meet the needs of operators servicing special events and especially construction sites. It uses 16 latches to assemble one restroom. It was developed using roto-

molding technology to provide durable HDPE plastic components that are resistant to the elements and extreme weather conditions. It features rounded corners to decrease friction on the ground during handling and to allow an easy tilt during the loading process. It includes double door springs, an easy-slide door handle and exterior grab handles on each panel. When assembled, the STAR measures 86.6 inches tall, 43 inches wide and 43 inches deep. It weighs 163 pounds empty and has a 48-gallon waste capacity. It is available in eight colors and the pieces are interchangeable. This allows for side wall color changes or easy replacement of single panels in cases of damage. **404-482-0736; www.tblustar.com**

THERMOFORM MT 18 PARAMO

The **MT 18 Paramo** from **Thermoform** utilizes tough construction and enhanced security features to ensure unit longevity. It is produced using UV-resistant and durable resin with international certifications — ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and IATF 16949. To reduce vandalism, the hinge shaft is made from high-resistance plastic, in addition to embedded counterweights and metal single-springs. It includes a double-barrier filter and locking cup. It is designed to simplify cleaning and reducing dirt accumulation. Rainwater guides ensure water will flow easily. Company logos can be molded into the wall of the restroom. **www.manitu.com.**



DECALS/MAGNETS/SIGNAGE



ALLIED GRAPHICS DECALS

Decals from **Allied Graphics** are designed for the portable restroom industry to stick and stay on units and in tough environments. The long-life vinyl decals use ultraviolet inks to look good for years, according to the maker. The decals can also

be applied to sinks and trailers. **763-428-8365; www.allied-graphics.com**

DYNAMIC PRINT + PROMOTIONS MONSTERSTICK

MonsterStick portable restroom decals from **Dynamic Print + Promotions** are made from flexible, 3.2-mil material that contours to textured surfaces and adheres without excessive adhesive.

The decals include UV lamination for long life and are made with UV inks for maximum pigment and life span. They are formulated to adhere to Lavant Grain textured surfaces. **800-472-0285; www.dynamicdecals.com**



Wes Tuttle

Masport welcomes Wes Tuttle as VP of marketing

Masport announced that Wes Tuttle has joined the company as vice president of sales and marketing. Tuttle, a Masport customer for 30 years, has worked within the OEM side of the vacuum truck industry and brings a depth of customer, product and industry experience to the role.

Over his career, Tuttle has worn many hats, usually gravitating toward sales and marketing roles but also finding himself involved in shop operations and general management. “My role now is about supporting and growing our ambitious team, helping bring new products to market, taking care of our existing customers and bringing that exceptional customer service experience to new customers,” Tuttle says in a release. ■

▶ **PRODUCT FOCUS**



ROEDA DECALS

ROEDA decals are adhered using an upgraded compound adhesive comprised of multiple elements that allows for high adhesion rating that surpasses the company’s previous line of adhesive applied vinyl. The decals have an increased coat weight to provide a wider range of conformability

to textured surfaces. The vinyl has gone through comprehensive testing periods over the last year to ensure optimized adhesion for decal longevity. **800-829-3021; www.roeda.com**

LIGHTING

LUNARGLO SOLAR LIGHTS

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



SOLAR LED INNOVATIONS SOLAR POD LIGHTS

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

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



▶ PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

Restroom service trucks offer customization

By Tim Dobbins

Operators need efficiency in the field. Less time swapping trucks for different services and more capabilities on service vehicles means more jobs with less hassle. Robinson Vacuum Tanks built their line of portable restroom trucks with that mindset.

“Our portable restroom truck line is designed with both waste and freshwater compartments, making them best for jobs that require both waste collection and washdown capabilities,” says Zach Robbins, president of Robinson Vacuum Tanks. “They also come standard with a folding aluminum bumper that allows operators to carry two portable restrooms or to pull a trailer.”

Trucks are available in three models — 1,200-, 1,500- or 2,000-gallon capacities. Each tank is manufactured from 1/4-inch 5454-H32 aluminum, a material Robbins says they use to provide strength while keeping weight light.

“All models come standard with a dual-service setup, allowing operators the ability to do their job from either side of the truck,” Robbins says. “Portable restroom operators are prime users of these trucks, but they are also often utilized by grease collection companies and any other service where vacuum collection and onboard washdown water is needed.”

All tank options are installed on non-CDL trucks. Trucks are equipped with a PTO-driven vacuum pump, washdown pump and a washdown hose reel. Tiger tail suction hoses are installed on both sides and come with a valve and suction wand. Customers will also find aluminum toolboxes mounted to the trucks for easy storage.

Robbins says that because the trucks come standard with high-end features and add-ons, customers enjoy the simple process of ordering the trucks. “RVT has designed these trucks with operators in mind,” he says. “This gives decision makers peace of mind knowing that they will receive a truck that is prepped with all the tools they need to do their job.” **814-933-0927; www.robinsontanks.com** ■

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