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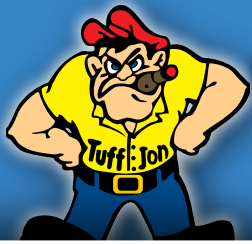
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LEFT: Michael Viramontes, right, owner of The Lavatory in Fresno, California, and general manager Matt Salazar are shown with a unit from Lang Specialty Trailers. (Photo by Gary Kazanjian)

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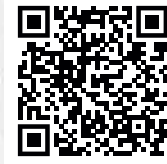




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By Jim Kneiszel

A Women-Only Restroom on Every Construction Site?

Ontario, Canada, is set to add portable sanitation rules to encourage more women to join the building trades

We all know about the shortage of workers in the construction trades. In fact, it's safe to say most of you have probably been impacted by a scarcity of workers to run your portable restroom service routes in recent years. Provincial officials in Ontario, Canada, think they have identified one way to build the workforce by attracting and retaining more women filling the ranks: better portable sanitation.

As safety and sanitation regulations go, Canadian governments have blazed new trails in the past, beefing up requirements for heated winter restrooms, hand-wash stations and more situations where flushing toilets are needed. And with new rules under consideration, Ontario is set to raise the bar again for construction site portable sanitation this month.

The changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act first proposed in the spring call for a women-only restroom on every construction site, doubling the number of restrooms on work sites, requiring adequate lighting and, when no running water is available, hand sanitizer, and ensuring that all restrooms are completely enclosed for privacy.

The effort is aimed at improving the conditions of restrooms that were found to be lacking in a recent Ministry of Labor bathroom inspection "blitz." But the greater impetus for the new rules is attracting and retaining more women to the construction industry, which officials say is the best way to solve the worker shortages.

Changes like these have the potential to help PROs in both Canada and the U.S. bring in new revenue. But perhaps more importantly, tighter regulations could help the sanitation industry erase persistent negative perceptions about using portable restrooms.

WOMEN IN THE TRADES

According to Ontario's labor minister, Monte McNaughton, only 10% of Ontario's 600,000 construction workers are women. In news accounts, he said the number of women registering for construction apprenticeships is up 28% year over year. Officials have said 100,000 new construction trades workers are needed by 2030, and they set a goal to raise the number of women in construction jobs from 4.5% to 15% by the same date.

"Access to a washroom is a basic human dignity and something every worker should have the right to," McNaughton said in a report. "Careers in construction offer six-figure salaries with pensions and benefits, and it is an injustice only 10% of them are filled by women."

McNaughton and labor leaders are banking on better sanitary conditions as one way to improve hiring and retention of women in these important jobs. They have heard many anecdotal accounts — both from women and men — about insufficient numbers of restrooms and inadequate service of the units. So the government visited more than 1,800 construction sites and found 244 violations of existing sanitation laws, mostly for having no restrooms on site, a lack of privacy for users of restrooms and restrooms that weren't serviced properly.

"In what other industry would this be acceptable? ... If we're going to encourage men and women into the skilled trades, then we need to ensure that we have proper facilities for them to use."

Monte McNaughton

According to Ontario officials, about 50% of women leave the construction trades after four years. They think the lack of quality portable sanitation service is a contributing factor for the turnover.

Women workers have reached out to confirm poor conditions and to ask for women-only restrooms on job sites. One of them, Mahee de Repentigny, posted a video to McNaughton's Twitter feed after he asked women to share their horror stories.

EXISTING RULES

"It's just a big pile of feces. No flushing, no water, no soap, no paper, no nothing. Might as well just go outside at that point," she said. Among other complaints, some women said doors were missing from restrooms or the restroom doors wouldn't lock to ensure privacy. Poor conditions aren't fair for women or men, and McNaughton said the new requirements will help the situation.

"In what other industry would this be acceptable? These are men and women, not livestock, and it's important that they get the respect that they deserve," he said. "If we're going to encourage men and women into the skilled trades, then we need to ensure that we have proper facilities for them to use."



These PolyJohn restrooms are placed at a construction site at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona. In regulatory changes, Canadian officials would like to require a women-only restroom on every construction site. (Photo by Jim Kneiszel)

It's not as if Ontario doesn't have stringent portable sanitation requirements already for construction sites. The Occupational Health and Safety Act regulation 213/91 currently calls for:

- When possible, flushing portable restrooms are required unless it is not reasonably possible. Units must have self-closing doors that can be locked from the inside, should be adequately heated when possible, include adequate ventilation and lighting and include a receptacle for sanitary napkins if used in women's restrooms.
- For drop tank units, the minimum number required is one for up to 10 workers, two for up to 20 workers, three for up to 30 workers and so on.
- Units shall have a wash basin with running water, both hot and cold "if reasonably possible," with soap or hand cleanser and hand dryers or paper towels.
- Units to be used in men's restrooms must include a urinal for each restroom.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Certainly requiring a women-only restroom on all construction sites would be a game-changer for restroom operators. You could outfit a number of your construction units with gender badging, a few convenience options directed toward women users, as well as the removal of a urinal that I have heard is a source of complaints for women who use restrooms.

The women's unit and overall doubling the required units would add revenue to every order. It would also take some pressure off each restroom, which would curtail some of those overuse complaints. PROs often tell me customers tend to want to under-order numbers of restrooms as well as numbers of services each month to reduce costs. These changes will help you avoid some of the inevitable disagreements about what is considered adequate service on job sites.

And hopefully the result would be cleaner restrooms and a cleaner reputation for the portable sanitation industry. Make no mistake, we still have a long road ahead to convince the average person that portable restrooms provide a clean and dignified experience when permanent bathroom facilities aren't available. But hopefully the Canadians are leading the way to improvements on construction sites. Our hardworking tradespeople deserve the best service we can give them. ■

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— Normalizing Deviant Safety Practices Is an Accident Waiting To Happen
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Avoid Disconnect With Your Service Route Drivers

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JUST RIGHT!
Business Sizing Is a Balancing Act

As portable restroom operators, you try to balance the size of your company with the needs of your market. No one wants explosive growth only to layoff half their workforce the next year. In this online article, columnist Amanda Clark explains how you to think critically about finding the right size for you. promonthly.com/featured

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By Jeff and Terri Wigley

Would You Like Fries With That Burger?

Diversifying site services offerings allow PROs to upsell existing customers and pursue new customers to build profitability. But you need to consider changes carefully.

Many of us in this industry have often wondered if we should expand our business into other areas beyond portable sanitation. This question is becoming more prevalent and we will address this idea this month.

QUESTION: We have been in the portable sanitation business for seven years. Starting from scratch we are now well-established in our community. We are interested in diversifying our business into other areas but we would like an overview of the factors we should take into consideration before entering another market. What are your thoughts?

ANSWER: The old adage of doing one thing and doing it well has brought your company success. Diversification can be a sound business decision if you employ some of the same planning strategies you used when you began your business.

Business diversification is a sound strategy to build revenue streams from different market segments to guard against slowdown in one particular area. Adding products and services increases your appeal to potential customers. Diversifying your business may eliminate their need to look elsewhere for a variety of services.

There are a multitude of product areas to consider when expanding your business. Whether you look at septic, solid waste, fencing, barricades, temporary storage containers, tent rental or countless other areas, you should investigate and evaluate several issues.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What market are you looking to enter? The advice here is “research, research, research.” You need to be an expert in any new market just as you are with portable restrooms.

CUSTOMERS

Speak with some of your key customers in both the construction and special events areas. What are their needs in conjunction with your portable restrooms?

Initial construction setup usually requires an office trailer with a holding tank, portable restroom, roll-off container, power pole, fencing and a temporary storage trailer for tools and equipment. Larger special events typically require tents, tables and chairs, fencing or barricades for crowd control, portable restrooms, restroom trailers and stage or bleacher setup.

Be aware of your competition just as you are in the portable restroom industry. Research their pricing structure, terms and conditions, and the equipment that they offer.

Do you want to serve both construction and special events or do you want to concentrate on one market segment?

Have existing customers asked if you provide certain services that go along with portable restrooms? Similar to the exercise above, customer input should be a key component in your research.

COMPETITORS

Do existing companies provide these products and services in your area? Be aware of your competition just as you are in the portable restroom industry. Research their pricing structure, terms and conditions, and the equipment that they offer. Who is their target market?

Is it possible to move into this new area by purchasing an existing company? Acquisition, if financially reasonable, allows you to immediately enter into that particular industry. Equipment, employees and loyal customers can save years of growth from scratch.

What is your goal in being in the new market? Do you want to be a participant in the market or do you want to become a dominant service provider? This answer will help determine the size of your new operation from employees to equipment inventory. How much revenue must be invested to establish the anticipated size of the new business offering?

PERSONNEL

Can you find the talent you need to diversify? If special skills are required such as a commercial driver’s license for roll-off or other equipment transport or OSHA training and licensing for tent installation, how will you recruit that talent and how long will this process take before the actual work can commence?

How will you organize employees’ work responsibilities after diversifying? Can workers be cross trained in all areas? For example, can portable restroom route technicians also pump septic tanks when needed?



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Will you keep your experienced employees in your existing business and have new hires in the new business or will you move personnel and have new hires in all areas?

Who will train new hires in the business you just started?

Share plans and generate excitement in your existing employees. This can be an area of possible career growth and opportunity.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Equipment and inventory needs: Will you have to make significant equipment and inventory purchases in order to start the new operation? This is part of the financial research you'll need to complete.

Legal: Will you continue to operate as one business or one business with different divisions? Will you form separate businesses? Consult a business attorney and certified public accountant to assist with these questions.

Rules and regulations: As a part of your research, investigate the need for additional business permits, insurance requirements, safety training or required certifications.

Logistics: Will you be able to use the same yard for the new business? Is there ample room for more equipment and possibly vehicle storage?

Resources for industry knowledge: Are there associations or organizations that may be of help in your research? The American Rental Association, National Association of Wastewater Transporters, your local homebuilder's association and chamber of commerce are just a few examples of networking resources.

Financial results: The most important consideration is last. Based on your company's current financial position, do you have the resources to expand, regardless of the area? The answers to all of the previous research questions should provide the evidence for the financial analysis to be

completed as accurately as possible. If the idea makes sense but the financial numbers do not, you should make another plan and begin to research that idea instead.

...

QUESTION: We are contemplating expanding our portable restroom company into temporary fencing. What factors do we need to consider?

ANSWER: Using the guide above as an outline, determine the type of fencing you would like to provide. Do you want to do fencing to actually enclose areas such as construction sites and the perimeter areas at a special event? Do you want to provide barricades for crowd control?

Once you decide on your product and your market, follow the questions above to assist with the financial analysis. One advantage to fencing some PROs have shared with us is that besides purchasing the fencing or barricades, a flat trailer can be used to transport this product which represents significant cost savings. Further, employees can be effectively cross trained in the proper installation of fencing without the need to hire specialists in this area. ■

Have a story idea?

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On a ROLL

Learn how California's Michael Viramontes has grown his restroom, shower and laundry trailer rental business to 100 units in five short years

By Peter Kenter

The Lavatory
Fresno, California

Owner: Michael Viramontes

Founded: 2018

Employees: 5

Services: Restroom trailer rental and service, shower trailer rental, freezer trailer rental, laundry trailer rental

Service Area: Northern and central California, Las Vegas, Arizona, Utah, Hawaii

Affiliations: American Rental Association

Website: www.thelavatory.com

Working for his family event rental business in Fresno, California, inspired young entrepreneur Michael Viramontes to branch off into a related business he could call his own. But the growth of The Lavatory's initial two restroom trailers into a 100-trailer business offering restroom, shower and laundry trailers has surprised even him.

Entrepreneurship runs in the family. Viramontes' father, Mario, once operated a business preparing and marketing his own brand of salsa. While attending trade shows, he became more interested in the business of managing the shows themselves. Assisting one particular contractor in booth teardowns following the shows he attended, he was inspired to buy the company, relaunching it as Expo Marketing in 1991.

"Expo was a trade show company that began to branch out into event rentals, offering tents, tables, linens and other equipment," Viramontes says. "I'm the youngest of five siblings and we all worked for the company in some way when we were younger, but I'm the only one who stayed with it."

Viramontes' parents were open to having him take over the family business one day, but with the proviso that he first earn a college degree and invest at least four years working for another company in the same industry.

He satisfied both requirements at the same time. In 2013, he began working for Diamond Event & Tent in Utah while attending Brigham Young University. He graduated in 2017 with a degree in business management.



Left: The team at The Lavatory includes, from left, Rob Sanchez, Salvador Martinez, John Siqueiros, Michael Viramontes and his son Mateo, wife Autumn, Jared Manfredi, Michelle Graff and Matt Salazar. The truck is from Custom Tank Fabrication and carries a Conde (Westmoor Ltd.) pump. (Photos by Gary Kazanjian)

from Lang Specialty Trailers in Pennsylvania, but within two hours of submitting the paperwork, Lang co-owners Adam and Steve Ghrist called him with a lead for a six-month rental in his area for a company building a distribution center.

“I rolled the dice under my new company name, The Lavatory, bid the job and got the contract,” Viramontes says. “I then immediately ordered a second trailer. The first one ended up rented for a year, and I used the second one for weddings, fundraisers and special events.”

But with a stronger Internet marketing effort and concentrating on the right Google SEO combinations, contracts to serve central and northern California customers kept coming, a combination of about 40% events and 60% construction.

“I was closing on almost all my bids and they were going longer and longer term, even as weekend rentals were increasing,” he says. “The expansion was almost crazy.”

By the end of year one, The Lavatory offered nine trailers. That grew to 19 in year two, 30 in year three and 100 today.

Lang supplies all of The Lavatory’s trailers.

“People ask me why I don’t shop around,” Viramontes says, “I ask them if they would rather have a lot of acquaintances or one good friend who returns your loyalty. I can call Lang on a Saturday night and someone will help me.”

But returning to Expo following graduation, he came to a realization:

“My dad was never going to give me much of a pay raise, so I began to look for a side hustle that was complementary to what I was familiar with.”

TRENDING TRAILERS

Expo had received numerous calls for restroom rentals, something the company never offered. Viramontes began exploring options to offer restroom rentals to clients through his own company.

“Expo clients were looking for luxury trailers, not individual restrooms,” he says. “Talking to the people who provided these trailers at trade shows, I realized that there were also higher margins in trailers. But when I tried to find those luxury trailer rental companies through Google searches, they were nonexistent. I figured if they were doing that well with poor marketing, there was a large, underserved market out there.”

In 2018, Viramontes called a number of trailer sales companies. He initially ordered a single trailer

“I started the business through them, got a heartbeat on demand in the local market and then waited for some long-term rental contracts. Once I have those long-term contracts I can finance moving other trailers to the area.”

MICHAEL VIRAMONTES

Below: John Siqueiros sprays down one of the company’s trailers as it sits in The Lavatory yard.





Above: The Lavatory's fleet of trailers is from Lang Specialty Trailers.

SBA LENDS A HAND

While he financed the early purchases, lenders eventually became reluctant to accept The Lavatory's long-term rental contracts at face value, forcing Viramontes to find alternative short-term financing that could be repaid by rental income. At the same time, the company maintained low overhead by operating from Expo headquarters and contracting Expo drivers to move trailers.

A loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration allowed him to refinance and lower his interest payments — and also expand his rental fleet to include two dedicated shower trailers, a laundry trailer and several ADA units.

"I keep the restroom trailer orders uniform," Viramontes says. "I have some two- and nine-station restroom trailers, and some two-station ADA trailers, but the majority are five-station. The capital cost isn't much greater, the trailer size is similar and the cost of delivery and setup is the same. I figure that a two-station can never substitute for a five-station model, but I can give clients a free upgrade if they only ask for two."

The same units are dressed up with removable rugs, luxury soap dispensers, plants and wall hangings, so they can be used for both construction and special events. However, all of the units are upgraded to heavy-duty floors, since Viramontes has noted that floors tend to be the first feature to show wear.

Of The Lavatory's 100 trailers, 83 are restroom trailers, five are freezer, 10 are shower and two are laundry. The company owns three RAM 2500s outfitted with air bag suspension to haul the trailers.

The laundry trailers have been rented by clients as diverse as the U.S. Army, a large hotel and disaster recovery organizations. Although they aren't always in use, they're big-ticket rentals that more than justify inclusion in the fleet.

"I started the business through them, got a heartbeat on demand in the local market and then waited for some long-term rental contracts. Once I have those long-term contracts I can finance moving other trailers to the area."

MICHAEL VIRAMONTES

Most of the shower trailers serve customers in construction, forestry camps or emergency services.

SERVICE CALLS

The Lavatory's freezer trailers provide additional services to store food and medication. Clients have included schools, hospitals, local fairs and special event organizers.

The company once counted on pumping contractors to service the units. But indifferent service and high monthly charges convinced Viramontes he'd rather offer the service in-house.

Today, the company employs five people, including three drivers, all trained in portable restroom service.

The Lavatory currently fields four vacuum service trucks. They're all RAM 5500s built out by Custom Tank Fabrication, with 999-gallon aluminum tanks (800 fresh/199 waste) and Westmoor Conde pumps.

In recent years, The Lavatory has expanded its territory to include Las Vegas, with four long-term rentals and one floater situated there. Inexpensive Vegas flights allow the company to deploy Fresno personnel as needed.

The company also has locations in Arizona and Utah, where two of Viramontes' siblings live.

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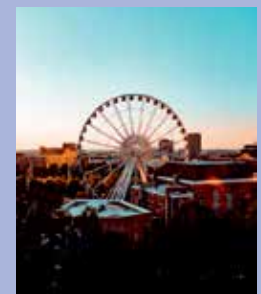
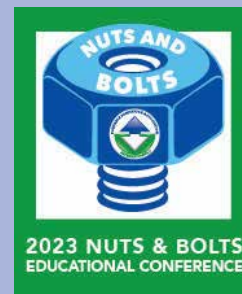
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Right: Technician John Siqueiros polishes a stall.



Below: Salvador Martinez checks a propane tank in one of the company's restroom trailers.



"I started the business through them, got a heartbeat on demand in the local market and then waited for some long-term rental contracts," he says. "Once I have those long-term contracts I can finance moving other trailers to the area."

Along with family members, he currently co-owns 14 trailers in Arizona and eight in Utah.

The Lavatory recently began testing the waters with restroom trailer service in Oahu, Hawaii, in a market research revealed was underserved. The company recently transported a five-station trailer to the location by ship on a confirmed long-term rental.

"As we get a feel for the market in Hawaii, we will consider adding slowly to the units on the island," Viramontes says.

HELPING HAND

General manager Matt Salazar assists Viramontes. He originally worked for one of the pumping contractors The Lavatory once used. Impressed when Salazar responded to a service trailer backup call on a Sunday afternoon, Viramontes later invited him to become part of the team.

"He knows the business, he's independent and he gives a damn," Viramontes says. "My business wouldn't be where it is without him."

Salazar says he loves the role because it gives him the freedom to act and innovate.

"I'm not the kind of person who likes to sit behind a computer," he says. "My duties range from sales to scheduling to dispatch to delivering trailers. I've also been able to improve customer communication and streamline billing. When I suggested to Michael that the Las Vegas market was underserved, he agreed and we opened a new location there."

Salazar personally oversaw the christening of the new restroom trailer service in Hawaii.



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"Hopefully we can bring some new ideas about the potential for restroom trailers to the island," he says. "It's energizing to know you're making a difference."

Now just 31, Viramontes is preparing to take the reins at Expo, as his parents signal their intention to step back over the next few years. However, The Lavatory will continue to provide opportunities for growth.

"The Ghrist brothers told me that after I bought my first trailer, I would never want to personally set up a tent again," he says. "They were right. What I thought was a detour has become my main business. Even when I tell myself I'll never buy another trailer, I know I'm not being honest with myself." ■

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**➤ WHY THE LAVATORY
 BELONGS TO THE AMERICAN
 RENTAL ASSOCIATION**

Michael Viramontes, owner of Fresno, California, restroom trailer rental company The Lavatory, first heard about the American Rental Association through his parents' trade show company, Expo Marketing.

The ARA is the largest international trade association for owners of equipment and event-rental operations, and for manufacturers and suppliers of rental equipment. Already focused on the event rental industry while in school, Viramontes received the ARA's Leonard Hawk Founders Scholarship.

"About two years ago, the ARA started to include restroom trailers," Viramontes says. "There are now a lot more members like me who include restroom trailers in their fleet offerings."

The ARA offers resources that include rental-specific insurance coverage, training, mentoring and information on health and safety, legal issues and risk management.

"The ARA isn't really focused on the technical aspects of restroom rentals," Viramontes says. "But it provides valuable information on the issues involved in providing rental equipment to service events and industries such as construction that aren't as well covered by any other organization."



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Below: Christopher Bradbury, of Bluejay Rentals, is shown on location at the Strange Fellows Brewery in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with his restroom trailer from The Trailer Factory. (Photos by Jennifer Gauthier)



And He's OFF

A freshly minted PRO hits the ground running working to land customers, learn to drive truck and deliver clean restroom trailers in Vancouver

By Betty Dageforde



Business **INCUBATOR**

Our Business Incubator feature follows the progress of brand new PROs trying to make their mark in the portable sanitation industry. If you are new to the business or know someone who is, write to us at editor@promonthly.com and tell us about it.

At the beginning of 2021, Christopher Bradbury was working as an accountant. But by year end he had bought a couple of two-room restroom trailers from The Trailer Factory and was the proud owner of his own portable sanitation business, Blue Jay Rentals in Richmond, British Columbia. He didn't give up his day job, of course, but by spring 2022 he was ready to devote weekends to providing high-end restrooms for the wedding market in the greater Vancouver area.

Bradbury had a long-term plan to become self employed and portable sanitation was one of the items in the "hopper of ideas," he explains. Having grown up with colitis, access to clean sanitation facilities had become a passion for him. And he had a hunch it would be an especially busy wedding season due to a heightened focus on sanitation and a backlog of work from the pandemic situation.

"I thought I'd try to capture what would be the busiest wedding summer in probably a decade, and catch some of the overflow demand rather than trying to steal competitors' demand," Bradbury says.

The gamble paid off. As the season got into full swing, he bought three more trailers — two-room, three-room and four-room units, all from The Trailer Factory. By fall he was exhausted but relieved the idea had been successful.

"I'm really proud of the business," Bradbury says. "I didn't always know exactly the direction I wanted to take it but it was something I was excited about — and still am."

EARLY DECISIONS

Bradbury knew trailers would be the core of the business, but also considered portable restrooms and hand-wash stations. With limited time and resources, he decided against that for the time being.

"Although they're complementary, they also have different business models. One is capital-intensive, the other labor-intensive. And it's two different client sets." Providing for handicap accessibility was a tougher issue. His current solution is to refer that out to competitors.

(continued)



Left: Bluejay Rentals outfitted a Ford F-350 flatbed with a vacuum tank from ITI and using a Masport pump. Bradbury is shown servicing his trailer at a local brewery.

Below: Bradbury removes trash from his trailer from The Trailer Factory.

In coming up with a company name, he thought about words that indicated what the business provides — but decided not to go that route.

“I wanted to be in a more open-ended category in case the business grew in a different direction,” Bradbury says. “I’m from Toronto. The Blue Jays are the baseball team. I wanted a name I could attach a logo to that was universally recognizable. It seemed very practical, unique, relatable, and identifiable across all cultures.” For \$1 he bought an online vector image and with the help of family worked out a design and color scheme.

“I’m thankful that the industry is a community of generous folks willing to give their time and knowledge.”

CHRISTOPHER BRADBURY

STRESS TESTS

Bradbury worked with a wholesaler to buy a service truck, a 2015 Ford F-350 flatbed. He had to spruce it up a bit but was happy with the result. Then he bought a tank and ran into a problem.

“The company gave a six-month lead time, which was fine,” Bradbury says. “But a week before delivery I was told it would be another six months — right before wedding season.” He’d already scheduled events and collected deposits and didn’t want to outsource the pumping.

But he scrambled and finally found a tank from ITI Trailers and Truck Bodies — a 250-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater stainless steel slide-in unit with a Masport pump.

Another nail-biter happened during an early event. Bradbury expected 150 people at a charity function but 600 showed up. “It became very high pressure very fast,” Bradbury says. “I hung around the whole weekend to make sure things were going well. I’m glad I did. It allowed me to see the capability of the trailer and how customers were using it. And it ended up being totally fine.”



TRAINING PROGRAMS

A lot of learning takes place when starting up a business and Bradbury had many teachers — equipment vendors, friendly competitors, family members, YouTube. And, of course, the inevitable school of hard knocks.

Learning to drive a truck and pull a trailer began with online videos, then progressed to driving around the storage lot. But then there was reality, Bradbury says. “It’s great when you have a 100-foot-by-100-foot place but most client sites are really narrow and snug and you have to figure it out.”

At one event, a toilet in a restroom trailer broke and flooded the stall. It was scheduled for another job so Bradbury had about two hours to replace it. Fortunately, he had preemptively locked in another unit with a supplier.

“That was a big lesson,” he says. “Being small, one of the biggest risks is there’s no room for error. There’s no backup trailer. When things go wrong



Right: Bradbury inspects the interior of his restroom trailer.

Below: Bradbury returns the suction hose to the ITI vacuum tank.



mode. Then sales ticked up and the company moved ahead.

What would he do different?: Bradbury says it would have been worth partnering with other contractors in the beginning. “Now that I’m doing that, it is very fruitful and helpful. That’s been very reassuring as a small business owner because I don’t have the experience some of these guys do. Those relationships last forever if you nurture them.”

Best thing about it: “When you make a sale it’s extremely validating,” Bradbury says. “It tells you someone trusts you with their money and time and a very important day. It’s very rewarding.”

Advice: Don’t be afraid to ask for help, Bradbury says. “If I could go back, I’d ask 10 times more questions. There’s not a lot of how-to’s online so it’s been people who are willing to impart knowledge, which has been really awesome. I’m thankful that the industry is a community of generous folks willing to give their time and knowledge.” ■

you have to be able to work on the fly or make it right for the client in any way possible.” He’s since mitigated the situation somewhat by buying spare parts and partnering with vendors and other contractors.

ONLINE PRESENCE

Hoping to line up customers before wedding season, Bradbury set up his website in the fall using Wix and hired a search engine optimization consultant. But when the site didn’t generate a lot of activity, he began cold-calling venues and event planners to ensure the company would be on everyone’s radar when events were being scheduled.

Although the website did finally gain some traction, by midsummer he knew he had to make some changes, especially improving the SEO standing. He redeveloped the site using WordPress and worked with a different consultant and are now getting better results.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Surprises: “The cost of insurance was atrocious, general operating costs were higher than anticipated, the cost of fuel was excessive,” Bradbury says. He had baked those items into the business model but it was still hard to bear. He also knew the time commitment would be high but it ended up being 100% of his free time and by August he was in survival

Below: Bradbury works on the flatbed of his Ford F-350 truck, outfitted with a slide-in tank from ITI and using a Masport pump.





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By Craig Mandli

ADA/ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS



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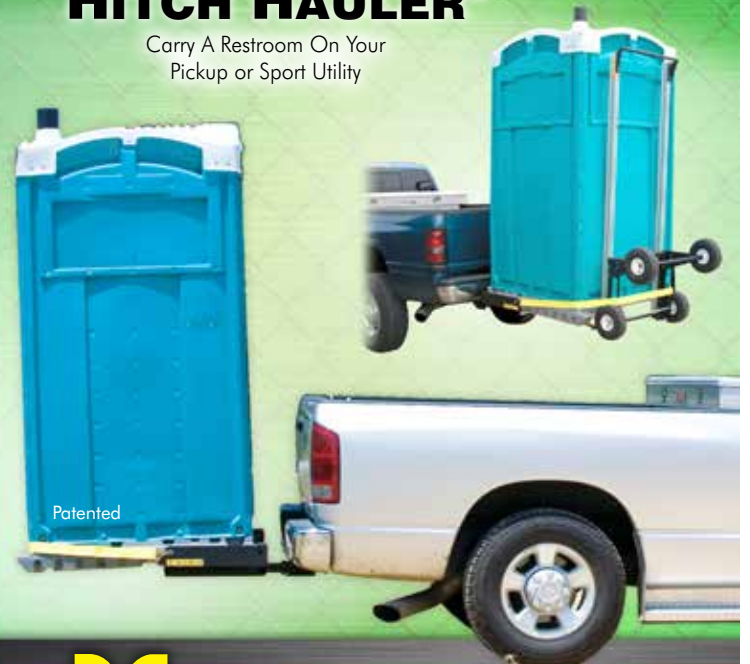
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➤ **PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

Customizable app provides full business management platform

By Craig Mandli

PROs often use a business management software platform. But for many of them, the process is essentially trying to jam a square peg into a round hole. Sure, you might find a platform that works if you “push” hard enough, but considering all the niche-type work PROs perform, using software designed for the plumbing or drain cleaning trades is likely missing the mark. Fortunately, PRO Software Solutions is designed for the portable restroom operator.

The platform is a customized web application designed specifically for the aspects of running a business that matter most to PROs. It routes, schedules and updates portable restroom inventory in real time. It offers master route optimization, fully automated accounting, inventory tracking, a restroom trailer reservation system, CRM and fleet tracking.

“PRO Software not only offers powerful logistics and routing capabilities but also complete accounting and billing management solutions,” says Vernon Hogan, owner and chief engineer of PRO Software. “Our platform is designed to help your company achieve optimal profitability and growth.”

The platform allows the user to optimize and automate every aspect of their operations, resulting in reduced costs, improved visibility and enhanced customer experience. According to Hogan, the tools enable a company to achieve on-time delivery of goods and ensure assets are fully managed and tracked. Essentially, all the tools needed to streamline logistics and routing are in one place.

“We designed the app with the fluidity to constantly tweak it to be able to solve specific issues that companies face,” says Hogan. “We call that the ‘discovery experience.’ It’s about doing right by our customers.”

The software offers a seamless integration of CRM and accounting solutions, providing a centralized platform to manage all customer data. Sales teams can access customer credit history, purchase patterns and payment details, enabling them to provide personalized and efficient service.

Having all customer information in one place allows for streamlined communication between sales and finance teams, improving collaboration and overall customer experience. According to Hogan, it’s a platform that he’s hoping, with additional tweaking, can eventually carry over to other applications, such as septic pumping and drain cleaning.

“The portable restroom industry has always been my baby, but a platform that does everything for you is attractive to other service industries,” he says. “Because it’s an app that can be constantly tweaked, that is possible.”

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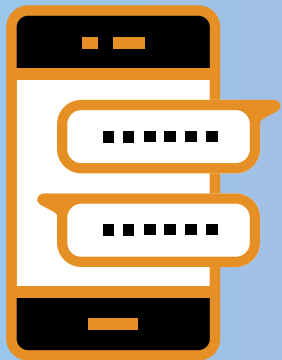
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AAA Event Services acquires Florida's Dampier Septic Tank

AAA Event Services, doing business as Porta Serve, has completed the acquisition of the portable sanitation operations from Dampier Septic Tank in the Gainesville, Florida area. Dampier Septic Tank has been providing services to the Gainesville area for over 40 years and will continue to offer septic services to the region.



Will Hannah

Walex hires new account manager

Walex Products has named Will Hannah regional account manager for the Midwest region. He has more than 15 years' sales and logistics experience at several companies. He graduated from Appalachian State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in marketing and a minor in international business. ■

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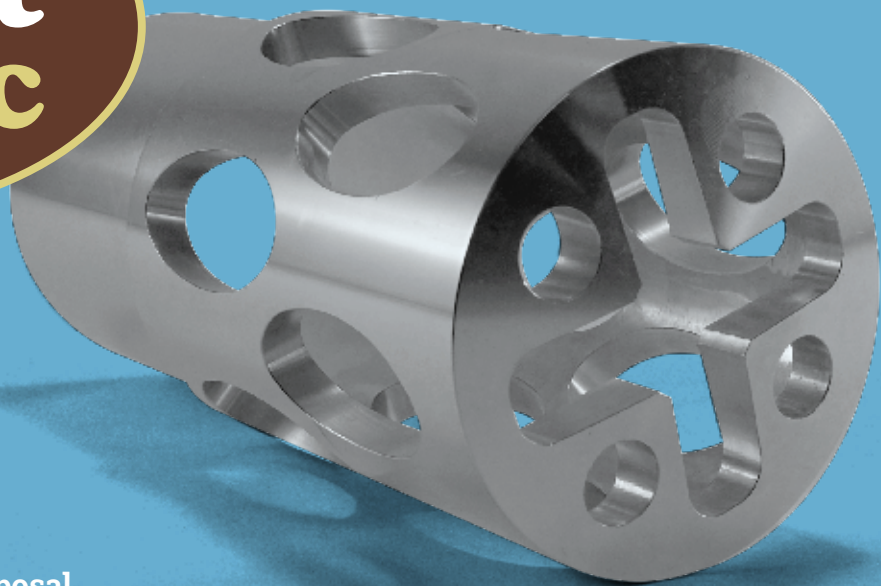


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What services does your company provide?
 Portable Restrooms Special Event Trailers Portable Sinks/Hand-Wash Stations
 Rental Equipment Septic System Maintenance/Vacuum Truck Services
 Dealer/Distributor/Manufacturer
 Other _____

How many portable restrooms do you maintain as part of your rental fleet?
 1 - 50 51 - 100 101 - 250 251 - 500 501 - 1000 1000 +

How many service vehicles do you utilize to maintain and service your portable sanitation units?
 1 - 3 4 - 5 6 - 8 9 - 12 13 - 15 16 +

What is your annual budget?
 \$1-\$10,000 \$10,001-\$30,000 \$30,001-\$50,000 \$50,001-\$75,000
 \$75,001-\$100,000 \$100,000+

Do you rent or plan to add ADA compliant units to your rental fleet? Yes No

Do you rent or plan to add special event trailers to your rental fleet? Yes No

Do you rent or plan to add portable sinks/hand-wash stations to your rental fleet? Yes No

If you provide special event trailers, how many do you own!
 1 - 3 4 - 6 7-10 10 +

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