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## HITTING A HIGH NOTE

PortaPros works out all of the portable sanitation details to help Boise, Idaho's Treefort Music Fest keep the crowds happy

Page 16

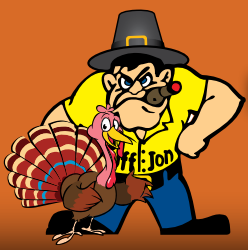
### PRODUCT FOCUS

Slide-In  
Service Units

Page 32







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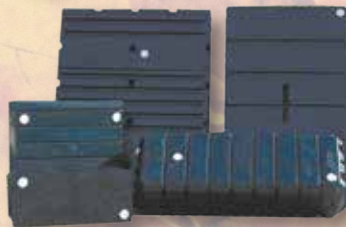
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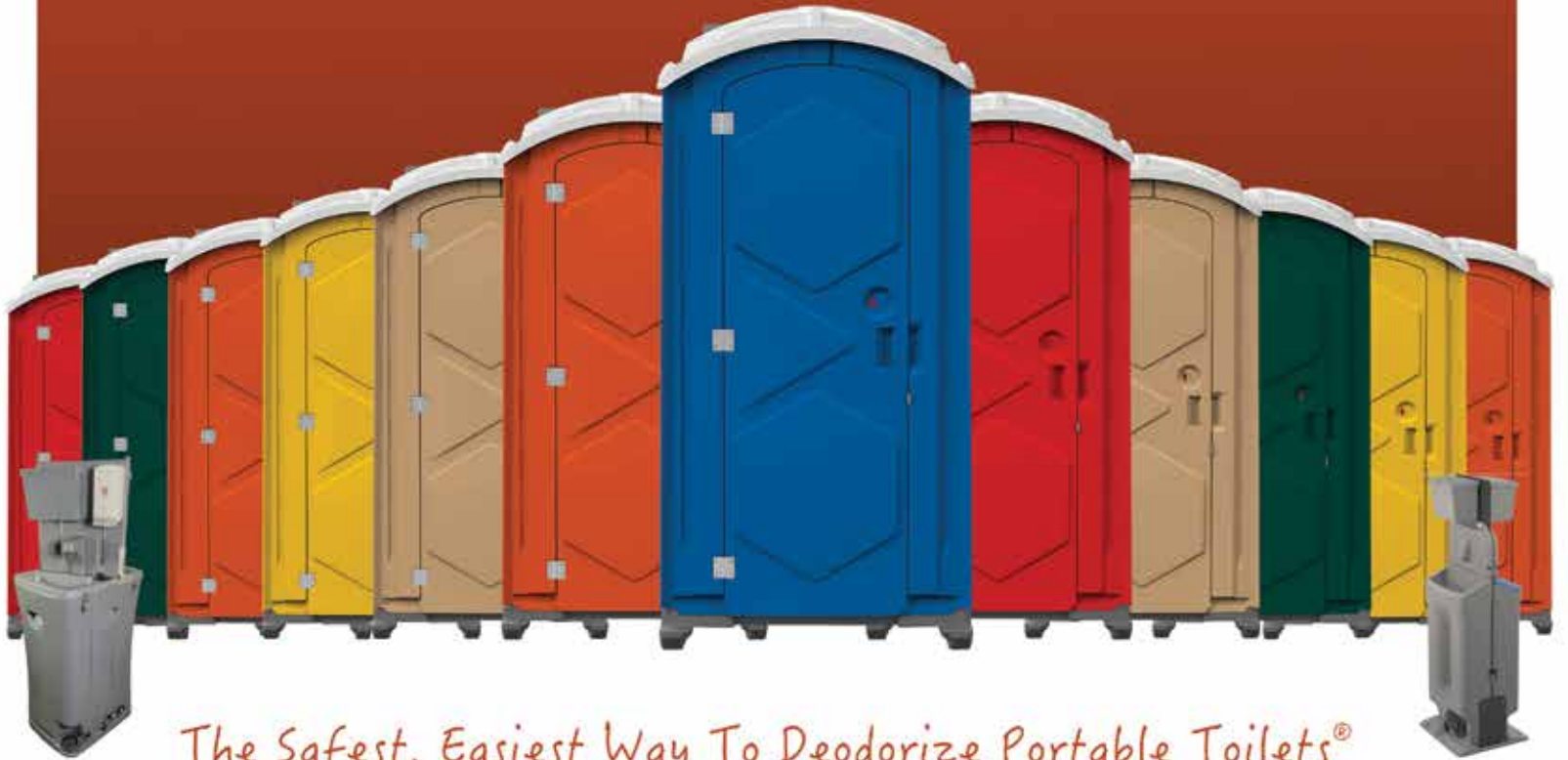
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**8 From the Editor:**  
**4 Questions You Need to Ask Following Every Job**  
 The U.S. military perfected the After Action Review, but it can also help your troops complete their next big portable sanitation mission.  
 - Jim Kneiszal

**10 @PRomonthly.com**  
 Check out exclusive online content.

**12 At Your Service: Think of AI as a Valued Office Assistant**  
 Artificial intelligence can't sling restrooms or run a vacuum tank, but helpful technology apps can perform many marketing, research and communication tasks with ease.  
 - Jeff and Terri Wigley

**16 On Location**



**Hitting a High Note!**  
 PortaPros works out all of the portable sanitation details to help Boise, Idaho's Treefort Music Fest keep the crowds happy.  
 - Betty Dageforde

**LEFT:** PortaPros proudly serves the Treefort Music Festival in Boise, Idaho, which features 500 bands from 19 countries. Jason Christie, left, and Car Arriola are shown on the festival grounds with Satellite Industries restrooms in the background. (Photo by Jason Hunsperger)

**20 In the Garage: Follow These 5 Tips to Improve Fleet Maintenance**  
 Restroom service providers need to keep a careful eye on the condition of their trucks or pay up big at the repair shop.  
 - Jeff Langley

**22 PRofile: The Family Touch**  
 Personal attention from Kalla Taylor and her crew helps grow Milwaukee's Stop N Go Portable Toilets.  
 - Ken Wysocky

**32 Product Focus:**  
 Slide-in Units  
 - Craig Mandli

**37 Product News - Product Spotlight:**  
 Business software designed for the PRO market  
 - Tim Dobbins



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- **Business Incubator:** She's starting with restroom trailers
- **PRofile:** The kids grew up in Oregon





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## ADVERTISER INDEX

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Armal, Inc. ....25

Century Paper Products .....37

Datum Corporation .....9

Deal Assoc.....21

Dynamic Print + Promotions .....19

F.M. Manufacturing, Inc.....19

FlowMark Vacuum Trucks .....33

FMC Advisors .....25, 29

Fruitland Manufacturing.....7

Imperial Industries, Inc.....39

J&J Portable Sanitation Products.....3

KeeVac Industries .....10

Lock America, Inc. ....19

McKee Technologies/Explorer Trailers ..36

Milwaukee Rubber Products, Inc.....31

National Vacuum Equipment, Inc.....25

NuConcepts .....27

PolyJohn Enterprises Corp. ....40

Portable Sanitation Association Intl.....15

PortaLogix .....6

Ready2Go Restroom Trailers Sales LLC....11

Rich Specialty Trailers.....38

Robinson Vacuum Tanks .....27

ROEDA.....14

Satellite Industries .....5

ScreencO Systems LLC.....33

Slide In Queen .....31

Surco® Portable Sanitation Products...36

T.S.F. Company, Inc.....2

Tank World Corp .....21

Walex Products Company .....13

WWETT Show .....30



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By Jim Kneiszel

# 4 Questions You Need to Ask Following Every Job

The U.S. military perfected the After Action Review, but it can also help your troops complete their next big portable sanitation mission

**A**n interesting expert column crossed my desk recently by Jake Mazulewicz, who consults with companies about eliminating errors in the workplace.

With a background in safety for electric utilities, and working as a firefighter, emergency medical technician and having served as a military paratrooper, Mazulewicz leans heavily on a U.S. Army tradition of performing After Action Reviews, or AARs, in his recommendations to companies in high-hazard industries.

He advises clients to bring together their crews after completing a project and ask these four questions to seek ways to constantly improve the services they provide:

1. What did we set out to do?
2. What did we actually do?
3. How did it turn out the way it did?
4. What will we do differently next time?



Jake Mazulewicz

Mazulewicz contends that these sit-downs with employees often only happen when something goes wrong on a project. Perhaps PROs can relate to that. What's the old saying, the squeaky wheel gets the grease? When you have a few problems on a service route or a weekend event experiences a glitch and the customer calls, a little hot under the collar, that's when you call in the troops for a dressing down.

In these circumstances, you might correct a thing or two with the team. But there is so much more you can learn and improve if you review every event or construction project you work on, Mazulewicz says. And this effort is time well spent — no matter how busy your crew is day to day.

## ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

“Many leaders argue that their teams are just too busy to spend time discussing why a successful project went well. They just wrap up fast, then dive into the next project,” he says. “The unspoken insights and unwritten

lessons learned from that project rarely ever get shared or discussed. Often, they just get forgotten in the frenzy of working project after project.”

The AAR came into regular use by the U.S. military in the 1980s to gather insights from soldiers following complex and dangerous missions. Leaders quickly realized meetings were drawing out important information that would improve strategies and tactics in missions moving forward, Mazulewicz explains, and the process has become routine.

And you'll notice if you look at the AAR list above, you might think the obvious question is missing: What went well and what went badly? You've probably had situations where you've gathered your own troops and this is the first thing out of your mouth.

**Providing optimal service can be a delicate balancing act; you certainly need proper staffing to keep restrooms clean and well-stocked, but you also don't want to ask your crew to work every weekend or pay overtime unless it's necessary.**

“Here's the problem,” Mazulewicz says. “The question nudges us to discuss blame, not improvements. And blame stops learning in its tracks. ... After Action Reviews focus on learning, not blame.”

That leads to the three common mistakes Mazulewicz says teams make when conducting AARs:

1. You don't want frontline workers to associate these meetups with exposing failures. If you bring up a problem first, employees will “give short, vague answers to get it over with as fast as possible,” he says. His recommendation is to conduct 80% of AARs after successful projects.
2. Don't let a lot of time pass after the project to take stock. Get workers talking about what they learned on the job as soon as possible. “Those unspoken ideas have a half-life of hours or less. So if you wait a day or more to lead your AAR, much of the priceless, unspoken wisdom will already have been lost, perhaps forever,” he says.



- If you're the boss, resist the urge to dominate the discussion. Let your crew answer the important questions. "You'll shut your team down until the only person talking is you. ... Remember that the leader is the person who talks the least. Choose your AAR leaders accordingly," he says.

So let's bring this concept back around to the world of portable sanitation. And November is a great time to do it. Most of you are reaching the end of your busy season, the perfect opportunity to reflect on what your crew did right over the past several months — as well as turning your attention to ways you can improve customer service when the busy season picks up again in the spring.

Gather your crew and answer these questions:

#### WERE YOU ALWAYS ABLE TO SAY YES?

Sometimes PROs get on a work site and hear requests for services they have not considered offering. For example, when you're setting up at an event, planners might ask you for trash bins, crowd control fencing or barricades or maybe they request lighting or other accessories for all or some of your restrooms. Or maybe a construction customer would like a lockable storage container or a generator for an office trailer. Be prepared for upselling opportunities and remain open to accommodating special requests to become more of a one-stop-shop for your clients.

#### DID YOUR PRE-PLANNING HIT THE MARK?

Look back at some of your more complex portable sanitation placements over the past busy season. Were your assessments of the needs of that commercial construction or event customer on the money? Were you unexpectedly called out to provide additional restroom servicing, indicating the units on hand were overused? Keep a detailed record of inventory and services rendered for every larger customer and look for ways to better predict the needs of each client. Constant evaluation will put you in the position to provide just the right amount of service next time around.

#### DID YOU HAVE ADEQUATE STAFFING FOR EVENTS?

You don't want to run your team ragged at a big special event and you also don't want workers sitting around on-site waiting for something to happen, either. Providing optimal service can be a delicate balancing act; you certainly need proper staffing to keep restrooms clean and well-stocked, but you also don't want to ask your crew to work every weekend or pay overtime unless it's necessary. Consistent review of weekend and evening staffing will ensure clients aren't overpaying and your crew isn't putting in too many hours and has some time at home with family.

#### WHAT ARE YOUR EQUIPMENT NEEDS MOVING FORWARD?

After you break down a work site and return inventory to your yard, it's a great time to review your future equipment needs. How many units at a big event went out with a broken door spring or a failed wall panel? Are your returning units still up to the standard of special event use, or are they looking dingy, faded or generally worn out? Are your trucks and uniforms still presentable for your more demanding event customers? Now is the time to start thinking about stocking up or refurbishing your equipment so you can hit the ground running next spring.

#### WERE YOU HAPPY WITH YOUR CLIENTS?

The longer you're in the portable sanitation business, the more you realize not every customer is a good customer. Review working relationships with your regular customers: Are you meeting their expectations or do they tend to complain a lot? Who pays their bills on time and who doesn't? Do some clients resist providing adequate equipment to serve their users or constantly fight over your prices? Ensuring profitability with each customer and each restroom that goes out the door should be your main goal. And so should taking care of your best and most loyal customers. If chucking a few of the bad ones will help you reach those goals, don't be afraid to do it.

#### IN CONCLUSION

Two-way communication with your crew following construction and event projects has great value and is well worth the time spent gathering in the office. After Action Reviews can send your business in new service directions and help you constantly improve service. And that bolsters your good reputation. If you want to learn more about Mazulewicz and his consulting service, go to [reliableorg.com](http://reliableorg.com). ■

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## Disaster Relief Shouldn't Be a Paperwork Nightmare

As portable restroom operators, you know emergency response is a normal, if unreliable, source of business. Understanding FEMA's requirements and the needs of your community can help you better provide service when a disaster strikes. Find out how in this exclusive online article.

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OVERHEARD ONLINE

“ We started reviewing recorded conversations and realized that we were giving out as much or more core business advice as we were marketing. We've noted the top three things we believe you have to nail to grow a business — and we mean any type of business. ”

— 3 Things to Master if You're Looking to Grow Your Business  
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THE NEXT GENERATION

## Start Employee Recruitment Early With an Internship Program

Gen Z is entering the workforce, and a graying portable sanitation industry needs to double down on recruitment. In this exclusive online article, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers explains how instituting an intern program could help attract fresh talent.

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TAX TIPS

## Do You Qualify for the Employee Retention Tax Credit?

While many pandemic-era tax programs are winding down, there is still time to qualify for the Employee Retention Tax Credit. Columnist Amanda Clark explains how your business could benefit from the ERTC in this article.

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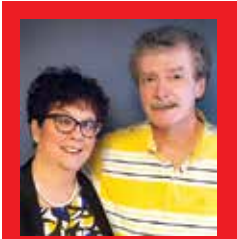
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By Jeff and Terri Wigley

# Think of AI as a Valued Office Assistant

Artificial intelligence can't sling restrooms or run a vacuum tank, but helpful technology apps can perform many marketing, research and communication tasks with ease

Artificial intelligence has become an ever-increasing topic of discussion this year. There are stories of the benefits and opportunities that AI offers as well as tales about the possible dangers and problems AI could create for us humans in the future. Does AI have practical applications today for PROs? We think that it does.

**QUESTION:** We have heard both good and bad about the use of artificial intelligence in business. We are rather skeptical and leery of AI right now. Are there any uses of AI that would be of benefit to our small company today?

**ANSWER:** It is human nature to be unsure or even skeptical about new technology, particularly if it has the potential to impact your company. In fact, we may even doubt our abilities to adapt to these new ideas. We have found the best approach is to become familiar with the basics of new systems or concepts and then evaluate the potential uses, if any, for our business.

Artificial intelligence provides great benefits to small businesses as it allows us to overcome challenges that come from limited budgets or the infrequent need for professionals to handle such tasks as drafting terms and conditions or managing social media. By strategically using AI, small businesses can access services of a comparable standard without higher costs.

An example of the industry's adaptation to new technology in the past may help in encouraging PROs to investigate AI. Consider GPS and its positive impact on our industry.

Developed by the U.S. military in the 1970s and adopted by the airline industry in 1983, it did not become popular until 2007 with sales doubling in 2011. We had map books, maps, written directions and knowledge of the streets and highways in our cities and towns and now a device was going to tell us where to go, when to turn and how to create our routes.

## MANY BENEFITS

Everyone began to investigate GPS at their own pace and comfort level. We used GPS in tandem with our map books until we were comfortable using GPS alone. We learned to also recognize the limits of GPS in certain remote areas and when connection is lost. We do not completely and totally rely on this technology, as we realize its limitations. We suggest adopting the same attitude about AI.

What is AI? The best definition that we have found is that AI is machine learning. Data is input into a computer program as opposed to just being stored there. Programmers can teach the program how to interpret the data and reach conclusions. As more and more data is entered, the program learns, thereby providing better and more accurate conclusions. Similar to a child's ability to learn in school, practice and repetition leads to success and promotion to the next grade.

How can PROs use AI software in their businesses?

AI software has many applications that can save time and money. Among the most common uses are:

**From a small-business perspective, think of AI as another tool used to help your business grow and become more productive and efficient.**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE** – AI-powered software, called chatbots, installed on your company website can have scripted responses to customer frequently asked questions while also having the ability to recommend and arrange human interaction for more complex questions. This is available on a 24/7 basis. The more that chatbots are used, the more they are prepared to answer additional questions and, in more detail, when asked. Providing customers and potential customers with accurate and timely information is essential in today's marketplace.

**PRODUCTIVITY** – AI can increase and enhance productivity in the office. Examples include:

- Ask AI to draft emails
- Create summaries of lengthy email threads
- Record notes during a meeting
- Analyze data from spreadsheets
- Research and analyze customer billing and payment history
- Streamline the payment process
- Increase general accounting knowledge



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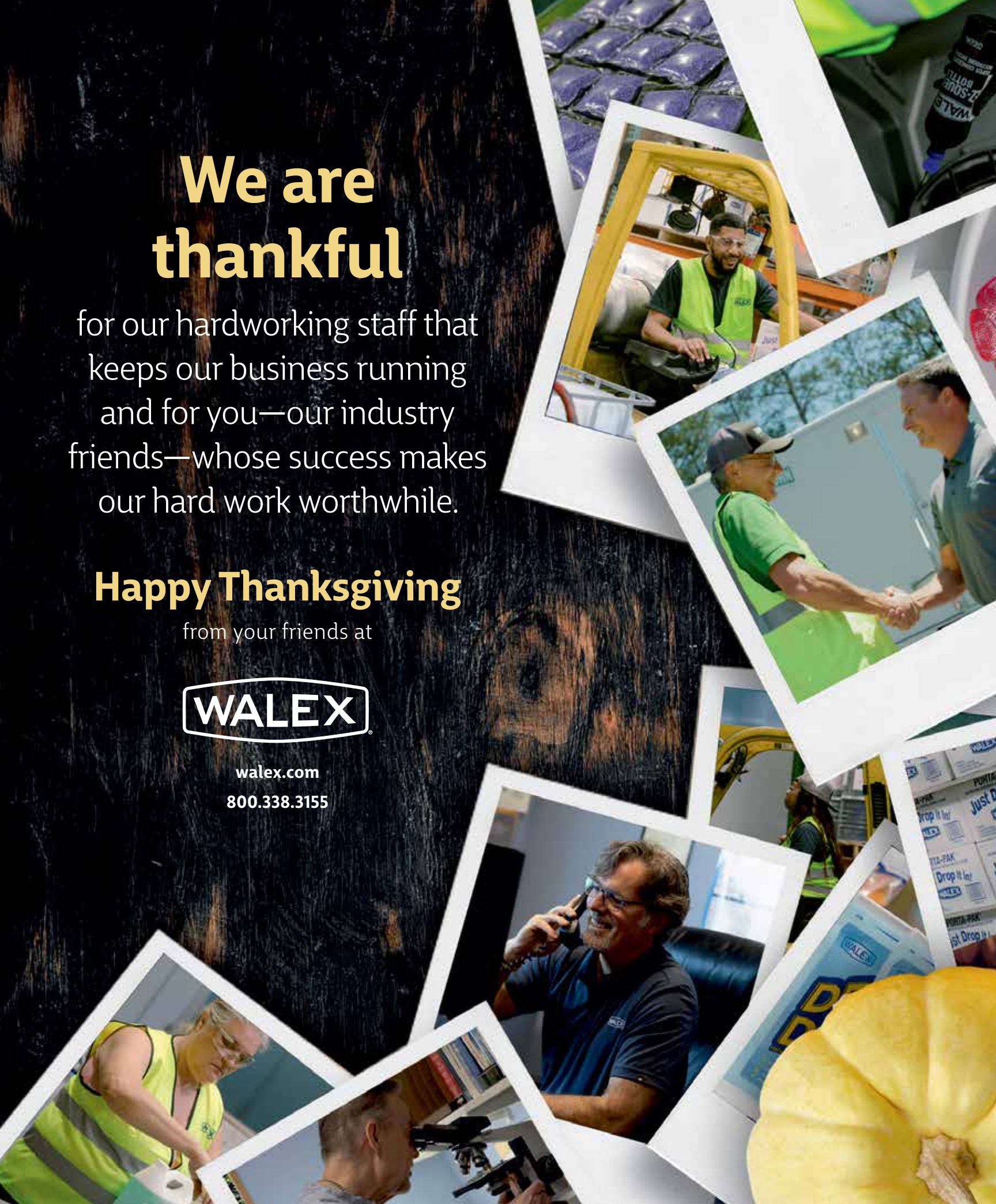
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All of this work can then be edited, altered or changed by the office staff as needed.

**MARKETING CAMPAIGNS** – Ask a chatbot — with access to marketing information and ideas — to produce specific ideas as to a marketing campaign for your company. Since AI is interactive, the initial ideas can be altered and improved by the follow-up questions and ideas that you initiate. Your marketing campaigns may yield professional results without paying professionals to create them.

AI is useful in assisting with the creation and posting of social media messages. In addition to suggesting ideas, posts can be scheduled for distribution in advance. AI can scan vast numbers of blogs related to our industry and suggest words and phrases for search engine optimization for your company. Website content and product descriptions can be further improved by the work of AI.

**CUSTOMER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** – AI CRM software allows you to collect data on customers, customer types and to better track leads for future customers. CRM allows you to monitor the success of marketing and

advertising campaigns. You have access to data that you would not be able to collect otherwise.

**CYBERSECURITY** – AI has to the ability to boost your cybersecurity by looking at patterns of use of your company’s stored information, apps and software programs. AI can look for potential threats such as inquiries from other computer systems and apps that are outside the range of normal interaction.

**HIRING** – AI can look for key phrases, words and experiences that are compatible for positions you need to fill. This search can be done over large numbers of resumes and job applications, saving time and narrowing the field of potential job candidates.

**TRANSLATION** – With AI technology, all written information such as forms, product information, emails and presentation — in addition to entire conversations — can be easily translated into other languages without losing the intended meaning and with grammatical accuracy. Compose emails in your native language and AI will handle the rest. This feature of AI far surpasses traditional translation tools.

How do you access AI?

To begin exploring the various uses of AI, download a free chatbot service app. A chatbot is software that allows you to interact with the system in human-like conversations with users via chat. The mission of the software is to answer user questions. ChatGPT is one popular free service you can utilize to interact with AI. Don’t be intimidated; it is similar to working with any new app, explore and investigate! Since this is a relatively new technology there are plenty of tutorials and resources to offer help and suggestions. YouTube has several excellent introductory videos that show the actual screen views and step-by-step interaction with the specific app that you are using.

Other chatbot service apps include HelloAI, Google Assistant and Microsoft Bing.

Several AI programs are specific to your needs. As with all apps, some are free and others have a monthly subscription price. Examples include:

**WRITING SPECIFIC** – Grammarly, Anyword, Jasper

**IMAGE CREATION** – Dall-E 2, Canva, Prisma Photo Editor

**MEETINGS AND NOTETAKING** – Otter, MeetGeek, Sembly

**SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION** – Semrush, Surfer SEO, Frase

As with any emerging technology, new apps are constantly being released. Find those that seem to be of interest and check them out!

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

In today’s popular culture, AI is often depicted as robots that will take over the world, a narrative commonly seen in science fiction movies. AI is not meant to replace humans; rather, it is designed to enhance each person’s skill set, efficiency and potential. From a small-business perspective, think of AI as another tool used to help your business grow and become more productive and efficient — similar to how we adapted to GPS. ■

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# ON LOCATION



## HITTING A HIGH NOTE

PortaPros works out all of the portable sanitation details to help Boise, Idaho's Treefort Music Fest keep the crowds happy

By Betty Sageforde



**Below:** Jason Christie, left, and Carl Arriola, pause during service at the Treefort Music Festival. Equipment includes restrooms and hand-wash stations from Satellite Industries.

### ON LOCATION

- » **THE JOB:**  
Treefort Music Fest
- » **LOCATION:**  
Boise, Idaho
- » **THE PRO:**  
PortaPros  
Pocatello, Idaho

#### THE TEAM

PortaPros has serviced the Treefort Music Fest in Boise, Idaho since its inception — and the PRO's inception — in 2012. Jason Christie, vice president of operations, says everyone from offices in Nampa, Idaho, and Ontario, Oregon, were involved in the 2023 event one way or another — logistics, dispatch, pickup and delivery, customer care, servicing, helping with existing routes, working in the yard.

Territory manager James Sokoloski oversaw the operation. "Then he syncs up with Ricky Parks, operations manager, and Tyler Patterson, dispatch manager," Christie says. "He lets them know, 'This is what I need for these days,' and then they put together the logistics for people, trucks and product."

#### COMPANY HISTORY

Company owner Carl Arriola had a lot of managerial experience in a number of diverse industries — but portable sanitation was not one of them. He didn't let that stop him when he came across a portable restroom company for sale in 2012. He saw its potential, bought the business and proceeded to create an employee-supportive, customer-centric company that promoted high standards. He attributes his initial success to the helpful contacts he made in the industry.

In 2019 he acquired two more companies. "When we started we had eight team members, a handful of trucks, a handful of portable restrooms," Christie says. "Today we have 25 vacuum trucks, 50-plus employees and 3,500 toilets."



**Left:** Members of the service team, from left, Travis Bauer, Ky Balls, Lance Johnson and James Sokoloski are shown with Satellite Industries restrooms ready for delivery at the Treefort Music Festival.

**Below:** Sokoloski, left, and Balls deliver a Satellite Industries ADA restroom at the Treefort Music Festival.



## THE MAIN EVENT

The five-day Treefort Music Fest was held over spring break, March 22-26, 2023, and featured 500 bands from 19 countries. It's billed as an indie rock fest but has grown over the years and now includes a wide variety of music as well as many other "forts" — Artfort, Comedyfort, Foodfort, Alefort, Kidfort, Filmfort, Yogafort, etc.

Julia Davis Park in downtown Boise was the base of operations, but bands and activities were featured at numerous bars, restaurants and theaters — and even on shuttle buses that serve the event. Half the park offered family-friendly free activities; the other half, which included the main stage, required a paid wristband. Snow and mud did not deter the enthusiasm of 25,000 attendees.

Hundreds of volunteers were on hand including the Green Team which ensured trash was properly separated into compostable and recyclable materials.

## MAKING PLANS

The park was a new location for the event in 2023, as the previous location was being redeveloped, so there was a little bit of extra work involved. Basic logistics planning began in October 2022, followed by an initial walk-through of the park. "Then we had many other walk-throughs," Christie says, "because the people who put it on are visionary and have a lot of different ideas so the map and everything changes quite often."

Plans were finalized by February and the company began scheduling people, equipment, locations, dates and times, coordinating closely with the parks department, organizers and the event rental company. Sokoloski held team meetings to go over job duties, maps and scheduling details.

**"Our success is hugely attributed to the people we have. Our brand is our people. Everyone is already planning and excited for next year's Treefort."**

**JASON CHRISTIE**

## BY THE NUMBERS

The company was an integral part of the planning process. "They gave James full capacity to say, 'This is what you guys need, this is where we need to place units for both the servicing side and for access to the public,'" Christie says.

PortaPros supplied 97 standard portable restrooms equipped with hand sanitizer dispensers, seven ADA-compliant units, 65 hand-wash stations (all from Satellite Industries), eight PolyJohn Enterprises graywater holding tanks, one two-stall Satellite Suites restroom trailer and 4,300 feet of SONCO Crowd Control temporary chain-link fencing.

## LET'S ROLL

Fencing was brought in on Tuesday and Wednesday of the week prior to the event. It was used to separate ticketed and free areas, hide generators and block restricted areas.

On Friday, restrooms and hand-wash stations were placed in the general vicinity of their final location until other vendors were finished bringing in their equipment. Units were zip-tied. Most of the equipment was placed



**Right:** Technician Kenny Wilson prepares to inspect a Satellite Suites restroom trailer at the Treefort Music Festival in Boise, Idaho.

**Below:** Wilson adds toilet paper inside of a Satellite Suites restroom trailer.



in various locations around the park. The rest was taken to other venues for the benefit of people waiting in line, and also parking lots that became temporary venues. Hand-wash stations were placed with every bank of units and also staggered around food and beverage vendors, entryways and strategic spots for festival workers.

Graywater tanks were used for unconsumed beer. "There were staging areas throughout the event where people who were done drinking their beer could pour the remainder into a bucket which then got transported to a holding tank," Christie says. "That way, cups could be recycled so people weren't just dumping half-full cups of beer into the trash."

On Monday the restroom trailer was brought in and placed at the main stage for the artists. On Tuesday and Wednesday Sokoloski and one of the technicians walked around for a final check before Wednesday's opening. The company picked up everything the following Monday and Tuesday.

## KEEPIN' IT CLEAN

Seven technicians wearing headlamps and high-visibility vests arrived daily around 3 a.m. to begin the three-hour process of cleaning the equipment. "Then they'd head back to our yard

and dump their effluent, get their trucks stocked back up and head out on routes," Christie says.

The team used seven vacuum trucks — 2020-2022 Isuzu Workmates built out by FMI Truck Sales & Service with 750-gallon waste/300-gallon freshwater steel tanks, an additional 75-gallon water tank on top and Masport pumps. The company keeps their fleet fresh, replacing trucks at four years, 150,000 miles or 10,000 engine hours.

Technician Kenny Wilson came by each day around 8 a.m. to do a final daylight check, then stayed until 5 p.m. to restock and take care of problems. "But nothing was amiss this year so he got to just enjoy the music and have dinner at the food truck," Christie says.

Disposal was at the company's yard. "We're one of the very fortunate operators that gets to dump our effluent onsite at our facility — but we are highly regulated," Christie says. "It goes directly to the city sewer."

## SMOOTH OPERATION

Christie says there were no complaints and feedback was all positive. "Even though it was a different venue, we're familiar with the event and their needs. And our success is hugely attributed to the people we have. Our brand is our people. Everyone is already planning and excited for next year's Treefort." ■

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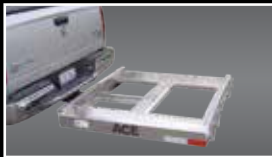
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By Jeff Langley

# Follow These 5 Tips to Improve Fleet Maintenance

Restroom service providers need to keep a careful eye on the condition of their trucks or pay up big at the repair shop

**M**ost fleet managers know that vehicle maintenance takes two forms: scheduled and unscheduled. In the same way that regularly scheduled health checkups can detect and fix minor medical problems before they become big ones, scheduled maintenance can help prevent, detect, and repair small problems before they become serious and expensive issues.

On the other hand, unscheduled checkups — for both you and your vehicles — usually only happen after some sort of breakdown. They're almost always more expensive than routine checkups, involve significant downtime and may have been prevented with routine, preventive maintenance.

Developing and implementing an effective fleet maintenance plan can be easy. Tools and technology are available to make it easier than ever before. It will help save your company plenty of time, frustration and money. When developing your fleet's maintenance plan, ask yourself these five questions:

1. What should be covered in the preventive maintenance checkup?
2. Who will be responsible for preventive maintenance service?
3. When will the service take place?
4. How can you simplify record keeping?
5. Where can you find more information?

## **TIP 1: DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST FOR YOUR VEHICLES**

What should be included in routine preventive maintenance service? Many checklists include these items, but you'll want to edit yours based on your fleet's needs.

- Engine oil and filter changes
- Transmission fluid
- Fuel system
- Cooling system
- Engine and transmission mounts
- Drive shafts or CV joints
- Belts and hoses
- Tuneups
- Electrical system components
- Braking system

Your drivers are the first line of defense against unexpected breakdowns and repairs. It's critical that they immediately report any problems to help keep your vehicles on the road.

- Steering and suspension system
- Tires, wheels and rims
- Exhaust system
- Undercarriage and frame
- Exterior and interior lights
- Body, glass and mirrors
- Windshield wiper system
- Horn
- Seat belts and seat structures
- Fluid leaks
- Auxiliary systems

## **TIP 2: MAKE THIS A TEAM EFFORT BETWEEN YOUR DRIVERS AND YOUR REPAIR TECHNICIANS**

Who will be responsible for preventive maintenance? Your drivers are the first line of defense against unexpected breakdowns and repairs. It's critical that they immediately report any problems to help keep your vehicles on the road. Drivers can and should be trained to monitor basic vehicle safety items (tires, brakes, steering, etc.); vehicle performance issues (including misfires and rough idling); and miscellaneous items (such as the heater or radio). Your repair technicians — whether in-house or outsourced — can perform more detailed inspections on each vehicle's components and systems.

## **TIP 3: EXAMINE ROUTINE AND UNSCHEDULED MAINTENANCE DATA TO DEVELOP A SCHEDULE THAT WORKS FOR YOUR FLEET**

When should preventive maintenance take place? Miles traveled, engine hours, fuel usage and calendar time are the typical guides used to create a schedule. By also tracking the number of breakdowns, jump-starts, tows and emergency repairs, you might see patterns that require adjustments to your schedule.

**TIP 4: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

If you're still entering and tracking data manually, seriously consider upgrading to a digital system. Manual systems can be tedious and time-consuming, no matter the fleet size. Computerized systems are a more efficient method for compiling reports, allowing you to make faster, better decisions. Telematics allows you to examine driver performance so you can offer important feedback and make recommendations. The technology you need is out there, and it can be surprisingly affordable; a little research and legwork can make your job much easier.

**TIP 5: GO ONLINE FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT FLEET MAINTENANCE SCHEDULES**

Where can you find more information? A few informative sites to get you started are Travelers (travelers.com/resources/business-topics/transportation/driver-fleet-safety/fleet-maintenance-planning) and Government Fleet (government-fleet.com/145442/how-to-implement-a-fleet-preventive-maintenance-program).

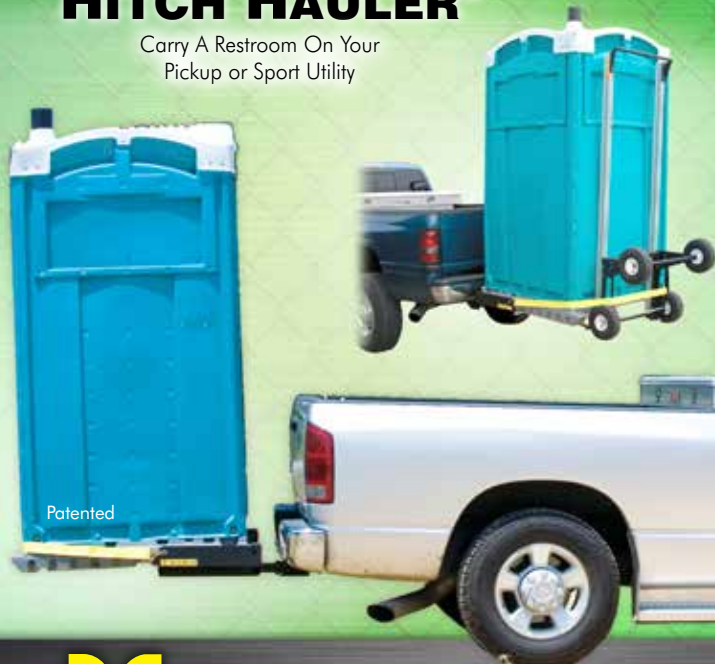
**THE BOTTOM LINE**

Why should you spend so much effort on a fleet maintenance plan? The time you spend now to develop your fleet's preventive maintenance plan could save your company a considerable amount of lost time in the future. In addition, the money you spend on implementing a preventive maintenance plan will be small in comparison to what you could spend on unscheduled, preventable repairs. In this case, a dime of prevention is definitely worth a dollar of cure. ■

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# THE FAMILY TOUCH



Personal attention from Kalla Taylor and her crew helps grow Milwaukee's Stop N Go Portable Toilets

By Ken Wysocky



**Left:** The Stop N Go Portables family includes, from left, Kalla, John, Reid and Riley Taylor. They are shown setting up restrooms at the Brady Street Festival in Milwaukee. Restrooms are from Satellite Industries. (Photos by Michael McLoone)

**W**hen customers of Stop N Go Portable Toilets have a problem, it's likely going to be resolved directly to Kalla Taylor, who manages the Milwaukee-based operation — and literally takes it personally while doing so.

"Building personal relationships with customers is crucial," says Taylor, 23, who started operating Stop N Go in 2020 after Judy Taylor-Clark, her aunt and the owner of the company, retired. "There's always competition everywhere, so maintaining those customer relationships is very important.

"I'm always reaching out to them — calling to see what we can do to assist them," she continues. "Since we're family and locally owned, they don't need to call an 800-number or a broker to do business with us. And when they call, they talk to someone directly right away.

"We're one of the only family-owned and operated restroom-rental businesses in Milwaukee, so we like to deliver that personal family touch," Taylor adds. "If something needs to be handled, I'll handle it."

This customer-centric approach seems to be working well. Since its inception in 2016 as an adjunct to Excel Disposal of Wisconsin, a roll-off dumpster rental business started by Taylor's father, John Taylor, Stop N Go has experienced solid growth. A certified women's business enterprise, the company now also operates out of a facility in Germantown, Wisconsin, and generally serves the entire southeastern corner of the state, from Milwaukee to Madison.

"Demand for construction roll-offs and portable restrooms go hand-in-hand," says Taylor, explaining why the company was created. "We like

"There have been times when it's been difficult to be a woman, plus being only 23 years old. There's always a few people who won't give you much respect, but remaining confident is key."

**KALLA TAYLOR**

to reference ourselves as a one-stop shop. People like the convenience of being able to call us for both services."

In addition, the company now owns twice as many restrooms as it started out with — 800 versus about 400 — and employs seven workers, up from two in 2016. And it's more strongly emphasizing restroom rentals for special events in an effort to diversify its customer base.

"About 80% of our business comes from monthly rentals, mostly on construction sites," Taylor explains. "It made sense to start out that way because of our already established construction ties.

"But we're getting more and more into special events," she added. "It's better to be a well-rounded company."

## MARKETING MATTERS

Marketing via social media outlets such as Facebook and Instagram has been critical to Stop N Go's growth. (The company has nearly 500 followers



**Above:** From left, John, Riley and Kalla Taylor use a Super Mongo Mover from Deal Assoc. to place a Satellite Industries restroom at a festival in Milwaukee. Stop N Go's fleet is made up of trucks built out by Best Enterprises and running Masport pumps.



## Stop N Go Portables Toilets LLC

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Owner:** Judy Taylor-Clark

**Founded:** 2016

**Employees:** 10

**Service Area:** Southeast Wisconsin

**Specialties:** Portable restroom rentals and service

**Website:** [www.stopngoportables.com](http://www.stopngoportables.com)





**Right:** Technician Josh Wakley services a portable restroom station at a construction site in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.

on Instagram.) In fact, Taylor says she can't imagine how a company can grow in today's business environment without a social media presence.

"I post almost daily on Facebook and Instagram," she explains. "You would be shocked at the amount of people who like to view photos of portable restrooms. We have followers from all over the world, from Mexico to Brazil to Germany and throughout Europe.

"This year I'm going to start focusing on making reels [videos] for Instagram," Taylor adds. "I posted one this past winter that showed some of our restrooms at a Snocross snowmobile event and it received quite a few views [731 at last count]."

The great thing about social media is it's free; the only cost is the time it takes to take photos and videos and post them. And using hashtags increases the chances that those photos and videos end up getting exposure on potential customer feeds. You also can pay for actual ads on Facebook and Instagram, she explains.

How does she generate content? She and the company's route technicians are always taking photos of Stop N Go restroom units at construction sites and special events, she says.

The company also uses its restrooms and service trucks to market the business. Most of the company's units are orange, an unusual color for restrooms that helps to differentiate the company from competitors and build brand recognition.

"That safety-orange color also stands out on job sites," she notes. Stop

**"Demand for construction roll-offs and portable restrooms go hand-in-hand. We like to reference ourselves as a one-stop shop."**

**KALLA TAYLOR**

N Go's service vehicles are jet black and feature the company's bright-orange logo on the cab doors. "They're on the road all day long, so a lot of people see them driving around," she adds.

**GROWING FLEET**

Along with the 800 restrooms, mostly made by Satellite Industries and some from PolyJohn, the company also owns about 60 hand-wash stations from Satellite and PolyJohn.

"Over the years, we've gone from just basic construction units to craneable and high-rise construction units to deluxe flushable units for special events," Taylor says. "We eventually hope to buy some restroom trailers."

The company also owns eight restroom service trucks, all built out by Best Enterprises with stainless steel tanks. The three newest trucks feature a 2022 and a 2023 International chassis and a 2022 Peterbilt chassis. The two Internationals are equipped with a 1,200-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater tank and one features a Conde vacuum pump from Westmoor Ltd. and the other features a Masport pump. The Peterbilt is equipped with a 450-gallon waste/200-gallon freshwater tank and a Masport pump.

In addition, the company runs a 2014 and a 2019 Hino truck, each outfitted with a 1,200-gallon waste/400-gallon freshwater tank and a Masport pump; a 2016 International and a 2016 Ford F-750, each featuring a 500-gallon waste/150-gallon freshwater/150-gallon brine tank with a Masport pump; and a 2004 International with a 1,200-gallon waste/400-



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  - Southeast portable sanitation company, \$1.6mm revenue
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## THE 3 P'S OF SPECIAL EVENT RELATIONSHIPS

Breaking into the special-events market can be difficult for portable restroom operators. But Kalla Taylor, who manages Stop N Go Portable Toilets in Milwaukee, has developed a formula for success: persistence, patience and a personal touch.

Providing great customer service also is a must, says Taylor, 23, who started operating the company in 2020 after Judy Taylor-Clark, her aunt and the owner of the company, retired. Special events now generate about 20% of the company's income.

"I think it's important to break into all aspects of the portable restroom business," Taylor says, noting the importance of a diversified business base. "But it wasn't easy for us to enter the market because some of our competitors have been doing it for 30 years.

"But it's easier to compete when you invest in nice restrooms and maintain them — and provide great service that keeps customers coming back."

Persistence has been critical, Taylor says.

"You can't let rejection get you down," she advises. "You have to keep on trying and also have to be patient. You may not get a certain event this year, but that doesn't mean you can't try for next year and in the years to come."

While some special event customers have contacted the company directly without any solicitation, Taylor has landed others through old-fashioned cold-calling.

"If there are events I've been to or seen, I will cold-call myself and try to get my foot in the door," she explains.

"It's important to take time to truly introduce yourself and get to know people.

"I've built countless relationships over the years with customers, which leads to years of working together."

Taylor also searches for potential special event customers on the internet. Many events also have created Facebook, Google business and Instagram accounts that provide solid background information, she notes.

Great customer service and communication is especially critical for customers who may leave a longtime portable restroom provider to do business with Stop N Go, Taylor says. "They're taking a risk by switching things up, so you have to take really good care of them," she notes.

Taylor wants to keep expanding the company's special event customer base and the company plans to buy a restroom trailer in 2024, which will help make inroads into supplying restrooms for weddings.

Succeeding in special events also requires quickly adapting to unexpected customer demands. As an example, Taylor cites a rally held in Wisconsin last summer for former President Donald Trump.

"It was one of our more challenging events," she explains. "The customer originally ordered 25 units, but that quickly went up to 85 units. This was not our only event that weekend and by the end of the day Friday, we had only one unit left on our loading dock.

"We didn't get home until pretty late that night," she continues. "But we've been very lucky with our team. Along with our awesome group of drivers, we have family that steps up and helps out with events during the summer, which has been a blessing."

## PROFILE



**Above:** John, left, and daughter Kalla Taylor of Stop N Go Portables in Milwaukee.

gallon freshwater tank and a Conde pump. They also use a Super Mongo Mover from Deal Assoc. to transport restrooms.

### CAREER CURVEBALL

Taylor started working for the company right around the time the pandemic hit and her aunt was talking about retiring. At the time, Taylor had been attending classes at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, working toward a business management degree.

Then COVID disrupted classes, so Taylor started working with her dad. And when her aunt retired, Taylor's father asked her if she was interested in staying on board to help grow the portable sanitation side of the business. (She's also still working toward her college degree.)

"I had no intention of getting into the business," she says. "But then I started working alongside my dad and enjoyed it, so things grew from there. The best part about it is the relationships you build with customers — you really get to know them well over the years.

"It's also a gratifying business because every day it seems like you're working toward something."

Taylor also likes her job because being a woman in the portable sanitation field is unusual.

"I think one of the best parts of being in this industry is being a woman in this industry," she says. "It's very empowering.

"There have been times when it's been difficult to be a woman, plus being only 23 years old," she says. "There's always a few people who won't



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give you much respect, but remaining confident is key.

“And the majority of the time, men on job sites are great people and have very high respect for what I do,” Taylor adds. “They like to see owners out on site and doing the dirty work!”

## LEARNING THE ROPES

Joining the Portable Sanitation Association International enhanced her knowledge about the industry, she says.

“My dad has been a member in the past,” she says. “I thought it would be good to network with other people in the industry and help me grow the business.”

Attending her first Water & Wastewater Equipment, Treatment & Transport Show last February also was instructional, she reports.

“It was a great experience,” Taylor says. “And it was even better because we had our new 2023 International pump truck on display at the Best Enterprises booth.

“Walking around and talking with everyone was very informative, as well as seeing products in person,” she continues. “And it also was nice to finally meet in person some of the individuals I’ve been working with for years and pairing faces with names.”

## BUSINESS BOOST

Stop N Go got a big lift in 2022 when it won a three-year contract to provide restrooms for one of the largest Milwaukee construction projects in recent years: an estimated \$456 million expansion of the Wisconsin Center, a convention facility located downtown.

“We have about 45 restrooms there that are cleaned three days a week, before 6 a.m.,” she says. “It’s one of the biggest contracts we’ve landed so far. “2022 was a very pivotal year for us.”

But the company also is pivoting into the special events field. So far, it has provided restrooms for a wide array of events, including car races at the Slinger Speedway, about 30 miles northwest of Milwaukee; a wine festival held at the Fiserv Forum, home to the Milwaukee Bucks; the Bay View Bash, a street festival in a popular Milwaukee neighborhood; a rally for former President Donald Trump; and several church festivals.

To keep better track of technicians as business grew, the company decided to invest in a GPS system from Geotab.

“We started using it about two years ago and it’s been very crucial to our growth,” Taylor reports. “We’ve had our fair share of drivers who said they were on site, but now we have assurance they actually got the job done. And if customers ever call and say their restrooms weren’t serviced, we have proof that a technician was on site at a specific time and day.”

Was there pushback from route technicians about the tracking system?

“There’s always a little bit of that because they think you don’t trust them,” she says. “But we reassure them it’s also for providing proof of service for customers.”

## MORE GROWTH EXPECTED

Looking ahead, Taylor envisions more growth for the company, with a continued emphasis on providing great customer service and further entry into special events.

“For sure I’m pressing for more growth,” Taylor says. “We see a lot of potential for expanding our business in Wisconsin and possibly even in Florida. Our family has a place down there, so we’ve been going there for a long time for vacations. There’s good potential for more growth down there.” ■



**Left:** Stop N Go technician Chris Thompson moves a Satellite wheelchair-accessible restroom into place with Satellite standard restrooms and hand-wash stations from PolyJohn.

## MORE INFO

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By Craig Mandli

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### SLIDE IN QUEEN FD-995-2C-SE

The **FD-995-2C-SE** from **Slide In Queen** offers the versatility and dependability of larger portable restroom systems, according to the maker. A flanged and dished tank is built for both on- and off-road service. It comes with a pumping system and optional power-twin washdown pump. With a smaller footprint than larger tanks, slide-in units can service hard-to-reach locations. Each is made from aluminum, steel or stainless-steel. Units come equipped with pump, motor, Tigertail suction hose and washdown hose with spray nozzle. **833-475-4334; www.slideinqueen.com**



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The **National Vacuum Equipment B250 Max Pak** is designed for the portable restroom market, using a hybrid tri-lobe blower with an integral four-way motor for vacuum/pressure



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**WALLENSTEIN VACUUM MODEL 151**

The **Model 151** from **Wallenstein Vacuum** can be used with portable sanitation tanks and slide-in units, and at campgrounds and marinas that require a compact package. It offers 80 cfm at 15 inches Hg, with a 2-inch vacuum/pressure valve, swivel elbows for easy hookup, air pressure or mechanical lubrication, and clockwise or counterclockwise operation. It can be direct-, hydraulic-, pulley- or clutch-driven. **800-801-6663; www.wallenstein.com**



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**Conde PowerPak** units from **Westmoor** are suitable for slide-in tank sizes from 50 to 2,000 gallons. They are compact and available in either belt- or direct-drive configurations.

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How many portable restrooms do you maintain as part of your rental fleet?  
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How many service vehicles do you utilize to maintain and service your portable sanitation units?  
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What is your annual budget?  
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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

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**PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT**

**Business software designed for the PRO market**

By Tim Dobbins

With business management software options becoming more plentiful, it can be daunting to choose one that fits a portable restroom business. ServiceCore thought specifically of PROs when developing their product.

“ServiceCore knew there was a need to develop software that took a PRO’s current workflows and made them more efficient, so the business could be more productive and provide better customer service,” says Matt Aiello, vice president of marketing for ServiceCore. “ServiceCore is one tool that cuts wasted time, manages jobs, optimizes routes, tracks inventory and automates billing. That’s more revenue, happy staff and satisfied customers.”

Among many features, the software will provide drivers the optimal way to get from one job to the next, making it easy for them to be as efficient as possible during servicing routes. Along with route optimization, it keeps track of where units are and displays them on a map, including those still in the yard, so it’s easy to see what’s out in the field and what’s available.

Users will get help with billing as well. ServiceCore allows for 28-day billing cycles and users can set up recurring invoices to go out to customers. The software also allows a business to set up as many service areas or pricing tiers as needed so customers will automatically be charged the correct amount and tax rate for each job.

“One thing we hear over and over again is that the product is extremely easy-to-use,” says Aiello. “That’s because we only focus on the portable sanitation industry and don’t try to be a one-size-fits-most solution for multiple industries.”

Aiello says ServiceCore didn’t only use PROs for development, but they continue to do so for support. “We hire good folks from the industry that have walked in PRO’s shoes,” he says. “They know the chaos that comes when a driver calls out sick, when you accidentally overbook your units, or when you spend hours and hours manually billing your customers.” **888-691-1333; www.servicecore.com** ■



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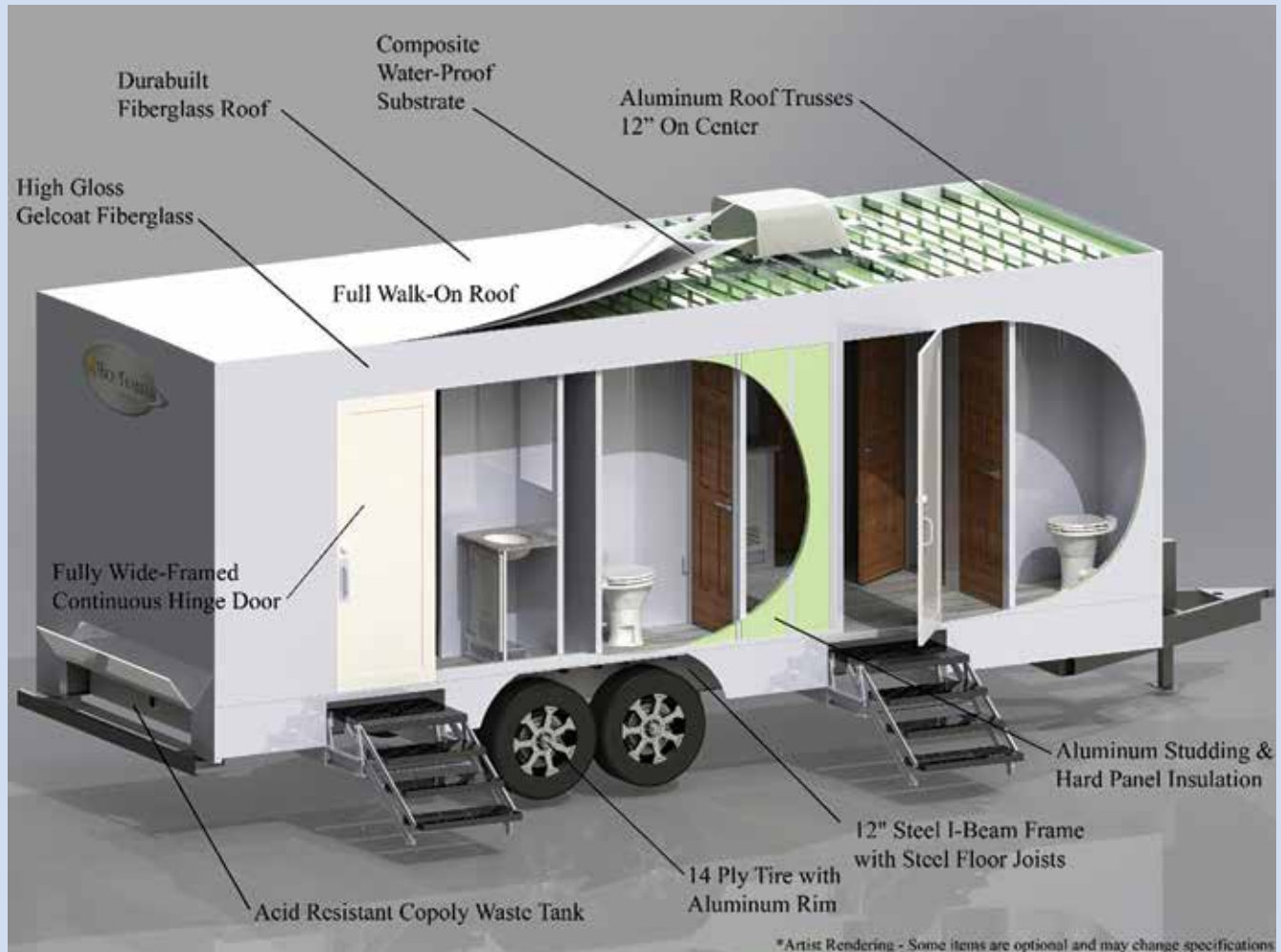
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