

Kathy Duck presents the Service Technician of the Year Award to Anna Kerin of Mr. John of Pittsburgh.



Industry's Service Technician of the Year Raises the Bar for All

by Kathy Duck

More so than in most industries, the portable restroom industry has to take proactive steps to ensure our image in the work world is both positive and professional. The Portable Sanitation Association International (PSAI) has led the way in this regard.

One of the ways we've tried to do that, on the national level, is to offer an award that showcases the professionalism of our service technicians. This marked the seventh year for our annual Service Technician of the Year awards. Not only was this year's contest the closest ever, but it was also the first year the top award was won by a woman.

Through the years, the PSAI's Service Technician of the Year award has become much coveted. One reason is that the winner receives \$1000 and a plaque, while the runner-up gets \$500 and a plaque. On a more personal level, they also get a year's worth of 'bragging rights,' since to win means being recognized as the driver who has put forth the highest level of quality in our entire industry. The award is a real badge of honor for someone who is out there every day in the trenches doing a difficult and important job.

Many are working in major cities, where they have to contend with horrendous traffic and much more. Since the routes can include as many as 60 to 80 stops, and that a range of different tasks must be done at each, there's nothing simple about doing the work. It takes a lot of diplomacy and skill to do the job, and our companies are only seen as being as

good as the job our techs do for us every day out in the field.

The management of PSAI member companies provide nominations for the award. Judging is done by the members of PSAI's Image and Education Committee. To even be considered, a worker must have passed the PSAI Certification Test. Then, the leading criteria the Committee uses to evaluate the applications it receives each year is, first and foremost, safety, both personally and while on the road.

For example, we take a look at whether each nominee has been free of workers' compensation claims, hasn't had any accidents on the road; that sort of thing. After that come customer service, co-operation and compliance with employer and industry guidelines, and concern and care for company property and equipment.

Then, the committee also loves to hear anything positive about the nominee that doesn't really fit into one of the above categories, things that might not necessarily be part of the job description. Because the judging has become so close, it's really the 'above and beyond' things that people have done that end up being the determining factor.

Still, what made the judging so difficult this year was that the track record of those who were nominated went far above and beyond the criteria. I can honestly say that I'd be very proud to have any of the nominees on my team.

Honorable mention went to the following: A Company in Boise, Idaho, nominated Shawn

...continued on page 30

Industry's Service Technician of the Year Raises the Bar for All



Anthony Carrol of Crosier Sanitary Service and Anna Kerin.

Atchison; Service Sanitation in Gary, Indiana, proposed Steven Paul Crouse; A Company in Salt Lake, Utah, nominated Homero Prado; Northwest Cascade/Honey Buckets in Puyallup, Washington, gave us Bill Sheid; and Jorge Rivera and Jim Torkelson were both nominated by Biffs, Inc. of Shakopee, Minnesota. Absolutely all of these candidates were highly qualified and the qualifications of each were impeccably documented. All deserve congratulations on the outstanding jobs they did this past year.

Our runner-up this year was Anthony Carrol, of Crosier Sanitary Service in Ansted, West Virginia. There's no question that Anthony's record showed him to be a star among stars. His driving and safety record was impeccable. Not only had Anthony completed his PSAI Certification, but he also scored 100%. He has a CDL with tanker and Haz-Mat endorsements as well as, due to one of the specialized routes he runs, certification by the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration. This includes annual training in first-aid and CPR, safety procedures, hazard identification and communication. In addition, Anthony logs over 50,000 miles annually in company vehicles.

Crosier management demands fairly extensive documentation and reporting on service procedures, including a digital photo record of every unit cleaned.

Anthony made sure that all of these procedures were followed meticulously. His supervisor even reported that he can't put all the compliments on Anthony's service level in his file because there are so many he fears he'll discourage his other drivers. Another of Anthony's claims to fame was his ability to meet with event organizers and be so professional as to land the accounts at full price. This skill alone was seen to have added over \$10,000 to Crosier's income for the year.

Our winner this year, Anna Kerin, of Mr. John of Pittsburg, was even more exceptional. She exceeded by far all of the basic requirements. Her safety record is perfect, and nothing but superlatives were used to describe the care she takes of her employer's property. They report that from her first day on the job she raised the bar as far as driving a clean service truck. Further, she does the best pre-trip inspection ever seen.

The application also brims with heartfelt testimonials from customers about "that lady truck driver" about whom they say "she knows how to give the finishing touches to her work that make her toilets stand out." In support of the application, Mr. John contacted Anna's customers, reaching about 120 of her 240 total. On one of these jobsites they put the call on the speakerphone, where one of the workers was heard to yell that Anna should be "the driver of the century." In

Anna's own words, as quoted in the newspaper: "I clean it the way that I would keep my own bathroom clean. No one should ever have to see a filthy port-a-john." Perhaps most amazing was that Anna won even though she also had to overcome grave personal adversity in recent months.

Anna is also a superb salesperson. Mr. John holds a competition every year to see who can earn the most commissions. This year it was a tight race until Anna blew away everyone else in the final thirty days. And, since her commissions have kept pouring in to this very day, she's already far ahead in next year's competition.

Our entire committee was very proud of the quality of personnel we had to choose from for this year's award, and it's a fine testimony to the quality of people we have in our industry.

Kathy Duck is President of a 2nd generation manufacturer of portable restrooms and related products, Georgia-based Poly Portables. Kathy served as a member of the Board of the Portable Sanitation Association for 6 years. She was Chair of the Image and Education Committee when the Service Tech of the Year Award program was founded, and has remained active in that PSA committee. Kathy may be contacted via email sent to: kduck@polyportables.com