

Portable Power

Rest facilities for parks and rec applications

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Having adequate rest facilities is a challenge many parks and recreation managers face. Added to that challenge is the prospect of handling large crowds for special events, such as tournaments.

According to Dave Bamberg, national sales manager for Synergy World, a St. Louis manufacturer of portable restrooms, even if a park has existing restrooms on site portable toilets can be extremely beneficial during tournaments.

"The standard facility might have two urinals and two stalls on the men's side and four stalls on the women's side," said Bamberg. "People will be standing in line. You can rent from a portable sanitation company if you have a tournament coming in. If you have men's, women's and handicapped facilities as your norm, you could have them bring out an additional three or four units so that you have additional stalls and urinals for the crowd."

According to Bamberg, portable sanitation units can always be added to existing facilities for special events. For example, the city of Jacksonville holds two major events at its fairgrounds each year. Typically they don't need additional units during the year, but they will put out 150 additional portable units for those two events.

According to Randy Haass, sales and marketing manager at Hampel Corp., a Germantown, WI, manufacturer of portable toilets, portability and cost are the two biggest advantages of portable toilets. When compared to the cost of installing permanent rest facilities, the average price of a portable toilet is a big benefit.

Monthly rental costs on a portable toilet average approximately \$70-\$75 per month, which includes service once or twice per week. However, prices can vary depending on the region of the country and the season. Included in the rental price would be once-a-week service in which the rental company pumps, cleans, and services the unit and makes sure that there is toilet paper. If a hand sanitizer is installed in the unit, the rental company will fill the sanitizer with gel. Most rental companies will also offer a damage waiver for an additional \$5 to \$8 per month, which covers the renter from paying replacement costs if the unit is destroyed.

"Many parks are in an area where there aren't any sewers," said Bamberg. "As a result, maintenance is high, and



the parks and recreation department has to invest in porcelain toilets and sinks and standard faucets that might get destroyed. Whereas if someone destroys a portable restroom, it could be replaced for about \$500."

According to Bamberg, installation of new plumbing or building a permanent rest facility requires the builder to put in a stall that is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which could increase the cost of a standard restroom by 45 percent.

"We now manufacture a unit that is certified ADA-compliant and those are serviced the same way as the other units," said Bamberg. "They cost a little more to rent, but again they require no maintenance on the part of the parks management."

According to Haass, renting portable units is beneficial because the rental company is responsible for placing and servicing the units as well as handling any issues that might arise with them.

"You can purchase the units, but then you still have to arrange for having the service done," said Haass.

According to Bamberg, purchasing has drawbacks because the buyer has to arrange to have fresh water brought to the unit and has to have some way to remove the waste. The longevity of a portable unit is about 7-8 years before the owner will be forced to buy a new unit. Renting is more beneficial than buying, because the rental company will service the units and also knows how to service the units in winter weather.

"When you use portable sanitation as a lessee or renter, you perform no maintenance," said Bamberg. "That is all performed by the company that rents it to you."

The rental company will also provide special event rentals, which is typically the price of a monthly contract.

According to Bamberg, the number of units needed for an event fluctuates, but at construction sites there is usually one toilet for every 10 people at the site. However, that is for the duration of an 8-hour workday.

According to Haass, any regulations regarding the placement of the portable toilets on the subject property are typically enforced at the local level.

"The rule of thumb is that you don't put a unit within 75 feet of a food vending area," said Bamberg. "If you do have food vending, you are required to have some sort of hand washing station."

Washing stations can be located inside or outside the portable restroom, and typically rent for about the same price or \$20 higher than a portable toilet.

