

## Hurricane Follow Up

### Checking back in with PSAI Members after the initial hit of Hurricane Irma

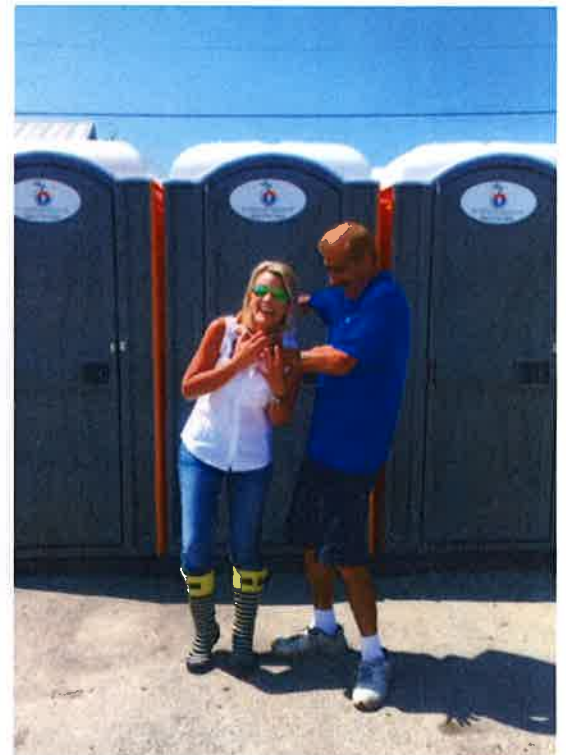
Two weeks ago the PSAI talked with Members affected by Hurricane Irma in both the Caribbean and in Florida. This week we reached out again to those companies to get an update on how they are doing in the aftermath of the storm. Considering that Hurricane Maria has recently swept through the Caribbean, it is unsurprising that our previously contacted Members there were unable to take the time to comment on this story. For them, the effects are fresh and we can only assume that they have all hands on deck.

Our Florida Members, however, are also still keeping very busy with the aftermath. When we reached Jennifer Corrigan (JW Craft Portable Restrooms) this week, she assured that they are still putting toilets out in the areas that need them, although these areas have altered a bit. Both Jennifer and Ross Ambrose (AAA Porta Serve) mentioned that much of the focus is now on servicing heavily damaged areas where contractors are working to repair homes.



Jennifer explained how, throughout the first week after Irma hit, they were “all living on adrenaline and going through the motions.” But she couldn’t ignore how emotional the last few weeks have been. “We’re human too,” she explained. “Naples is a wealthy city, but there are areas in the county that are poor – we see the homes and families that were destroyed by this and it hits us on an emotional level.” Many of us can only begin to imagine what our Members have seen and gone through in hurricane-affected areas, which Jennifer hit on. “It’s different when we turn on the nightly news and see Texas or Puerto Rico and we’re not there – but when it’s your community, it’s different. My mood is a little different from the last time we spoke – we’re tired. But we’re still pushing along,” she stated. Personifying this for her company, Jennifer couldn’t help but mention one of her employees, a JW Craft Supervisor named Mike (pictured right, goofing around with Jennifer). “He’s a hero in our eyes,” she said. “He hasn’t had a day off since [the hurricane] and is working 12 hours a day, every day... I’m surprised he hasn’t really strangled me!”

While the aftermath is undoubtedly emotional and taxing, the overall need for portable sanitation has been significant. Jennifer mentioned how in some low-income areas surrounding Naples there have been deaths due to exposed, raw sewage. Thankfully, many PSAI Members have rallied together in these hurricane-affected areas to help in any way they can. Ross highlighted how one AAA Porta Serve customer needed help getting a stretch of I-95 serviced at the rest areas. “They asked us because they had not had luck in finding a provider,” he said. “I reached out to some PSAI Members that were closer and while they could not handle the work, they referred me to someone they thought could. It worked out and my contact was really thankful that we were able to get them connected so quickly to a solution.”



## Hurricane Follow Up...continued

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Jennifer had a similar story when attempting to get shower trailers to people lacking water. JW Craft was sold out, and she knew some of her connections would likely quote prices beyond the means of those in need. With most industry suppliers sold out of stand alone shower units, she tried Armal, knowing they have some unique equipment that could be of use. "I reached out on a Saturday morning and they brought their staff in on a Sunday, getting [shower units] to us in days. Their customer service was outstanding." Jennifer (pictured in front of the showers on the previous page) continued with compliments all around. She said all of her suppliers have done a wonderful job of reaching out with many calling her even before the storm hit to make sure she had the necessary supplies.

With the industry and our Association rallying behind them, many of our affected PROs are able to push through and play an essential role in the relief efforts after these terrible storms. That being said, Ross had a few tips that he's learned from this experience in particular that would be beneficial for all of those in areas impacted by natural disasters to hear.

1. **Before the storm, you have to talk to your local fire chief and other first responders to find out what gas stations are holding fuel back for first responders. It made the world of difference to be able to access fuel.**
2. **I have to increase our holding capacity for waste. When bridges flooded over and we had another 40 miles added to an already long dump run, it really reduced our capacity to service. I'll be looking at adding a frac tank to our main yard so we have at least 20,000 gallons of storage capacity. It also did not help that the local sewer plants (that were running) refused to accept any of our portable sanitation waste.**
3. **When you know that a big storm is coming – order supplies in advance to have them on hand. The extra paper order I did was absolutely needed and our supplier out of Jacksonville was not able to resume regular deliveries for almost a week after the storm.**

Jennifer explained that she was "still processing" and putting in the work to aid her community, but she did mention that at some point she'd hope to get with the PSAI Training Committee and share with them what she's learned and gone through to help improve some of our Association's training courses on natural disasters. "I'm a lot more involved in committees now than I was during Hurricane Charley," she mentioned. "I think there is a lot to be taught with natural disasters and being prepared by the training committee – not just within the industry, but with the general public... There is so much to be learned in this situation."



While no two natural disasters are the same – and no two hurricanes, for that matter – there is a benefit to learning from the experiences of your fellow PSAI Members and understanding what worked for them and what didn't in their particular scenario. For this reason we have continued to shed light on the hurricane impact in any way that we can. For all of those in hurricane-affected areas that we have not been able to reach, know that the PSAI is thinking of you and we are here as a resource to help in any way that we can. If you have been impacted by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Jose, or Maria and have any interest in sharing your experience or what you've learned, don't hesitate to reach out to Rachel at [rachelj@psai.org](mailto:rachelj@psai.org). Your insight can benefit your fellow Members for years to come.