

# How a plastic recycling program can help portable restroom operators save the world – and some money

It's not often that a company can save money and positively impact the lives of every human being on the planet at the same time. We recently had the opportunity to learn about a program that will do just that. **PolyJohn Enterprises is launching the first-ever portable sanitation recycling program** in effort to 'close the loop' on the plastic portable restrooms that are manufactured throughout the industry. In a recent interview with PolyJohn's Managing Director, Mike Adams, we learned about the details of this innovative new program.

**Interviewer:** Recycling plastic has been done for a long time. Why has it taken the portable restroom industry so long to get onboard?

**Adams:** Well, it's not that we've been reluctant to get onboard – it's just that we are presented with a very different recycling challenge because of the type of plastic we use in making portable restrooms and the type of wear and exposure our plastic goes through. A plastic milk carton or a plastic bottle lives a life that is very different than a portable restroom! Plus, the plastic materials in those products are very different from the High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE) material used in portable toilets. Although PolyJohn and other plastics manufacturers have been recycling scrap HDPE generated from our own manufacturing processes for years, the challenge for PolyJohn has been finding a way to process the HDPE plastic from used restrooms.

**Interviewer:** What has made recycling used portable restrooms so challenging?

**Adams:** As you can probably guess, there are many reasons this has been a challenge! For one thing, the material from used units may contain HDPE that is up to 20 years old. During that time, the units were out in the field and subject to all sorts of weather conditions and the chemicals that are used

in the cleaning and servicing process. That can make it difficult to ensure that the quality of the material made from that recycled plastic has the same properties as products made from virgin plastic. These factors, along with the sheer logistics of moving restrooms to recycling equipment, have kept manufacturers from recycling used toilets.

**Interviewer:** So, how does PolyJohn's Recycling Program overcome these issues and help operators get their toilets recycled?

**Adams:** First off, our engineering team was able to develop a process that makes recycling the HDPE in used toilets possible. We've run a large number of tests on a variety of units without any problems. **To show operators what's possible, we're launching a pilot program out of our Whiting plant before we begin accepting units at our regional distribution centers.** Operators can find all the details about drop-off at Whiting on our website, and will receive a \$35 Recycling Rewards Coupon that can be used toward the single item purchase of a new restroom or sink for each unit they bring in to be recycled.

**Interviewer:** How does PolyJohn plan to use the recycled HDPE from the used toilets?

**Adams:** Because of the length of time our restrooms last in the field, which can be anywhere from 15 to 20 years, we will not risk using the materials we take in from used restrooms to make side panels, roofs, etc. After extensive testing, however, we have discovered that with some new additives that are now available, we can easily make floor sheet and possibly even mix the recycled restroom material with virgin materials to make our large holding tanks and the like. If we can't use the recycled restroom material after it is mixed at our Whiting facility, we do feel it will

be suitable for various uses outside our industry and have some value on the open market.

**Interviewer:** It must feel good to be able to offer such a program to your customers.

**Adams:** I have to say that there very few things I have done in my thirty plus years in the sanitation industry that I have felt as proud of as this program. **It is just the right thing to do.** We believe our customers – and the rest of the industry as a whole – will feel the same.

**Interviewer:** How can folks learn more about this program?

**Adams:** Just visit our web site at [www.polyjohn.com](http://www.polyjohn.com). All the information about prepping used units and where to send them are posted on link from there.

## Why is it The Right Thing To Do Environmentally?

Recycling 1 ton of plastic saves 7.4 cubic yards of landfill space. If we recycle 125,000 units over ten years, that means we will have prevented 18,038 garbage truck loads of plastic from being put into landfills.

## And Economically?

If you recycle 50 units, you save \$275 over the cost of straight disposal plus you earn \$1,750 worth of Recycling Rewards Coupons good toward the purchase of new PolyJohn products. Your net gain total is \$2,025!



**Find out More at PolyJohn.com!**

**800-292-1305**