

All About the Customers

A TRUCK-MOUNTED WATERJET UNIT HELPS A-1 SEWER AND DRAIN DELIVER EXEMPLARY WORK – AND ATTRACT BUSINESS WITH SHARP GRAPHICS

BY KEN WYSOCKY

Better customer service was Mike Hemenway’s primary goal when he bought a 2010 Isuzu NRR jetting truck equipped with a 4018 waterjetter from US Jetting. The fact that the truck also boosted productivity, profitability and visibility for his company, A-1 Sewer and Drain, was icing on the cake.

“This truck is all about my customers,” says Hemenway, president of the company that he established in 1994 in Norwalk in north central Ohio. “About 80 percent of our work is residential jet work, and our customers have come to expect that we jet the line because it cleans so thoroughly.

“Customers accustomed to cable cleanings every six months or a year have found that when we jet a line, they can go two or three years without another cleaning.”

HANDY IN WINTER

The truck has a 14-foot insulated Kold King box body from Supreme Corp., a maneuverable cab-forward design, a retractable and articulating hose reel with 500 feet of 1/2-inch hose, a high-pressure jetter that generates 4,000 psi/18 gpm, and two 150-gallon water tanks.

“In situations where we need more water, we can take our drain machines out of the truck and slide in another 300-gallon plastic tank, which gives us a total of 600 gallons,” Hemenway says. “We custom-made brackets to hold the tank in place, and it’s easy to install and remove. We don’t use that option very often, but it’s nice to have that capability for jobs where water isn’t readily available, or for bigger pipes that require a lot of water to clean.”

money machines

OWNER:	A-1 Sewer and Drain Inc., Norwalk, Ohio
VEHICLE:	Truck-mounted waterjetter
FEATURES:	2010 Isuzu NRR cab-forward truck, insulated box body, 4018 waterjetter from US Jetting
EQUIPMENT:	Cable machines, portable jetter, push camera, lining system
COST:	\$110,000



The truck has a 14-foot insulated Kold King box body from Supreme Corp., a cab-forward design, a retractable and articulating hose reel with 500 feet of 1/2-inch hose, a high-pressure jetter that generates 4,000 psi/18 gpm, and two 150-gallon water tanks. (Photo courtesy of A-1 Sewer and Drain)

The truck body is actually a well-insulated refrigerated unit, but A-1 heats it instead. That comes in handy during Ohio winters. “We have another 4018 jetter that’s trailer mounted,” Hemenway says. “It’s a great unit, but in winter, the road salt is hard on the paint and electrical components. It had an antifreeze package that works well, but it takes time to fill it with antifreeze and drain it. Sometimes on short trips, we’d just let it idle while we towed it so the water wouldn’t freeze.”

A jetter inside a heated box eliminates the antifreeze setup time. “Plus, it’s like summer 365 days a year inside that truck,” Hemenway says.

ADJUSTABLE FLOW

He cites the jetter’s water bypass valve as a small feature with

major benefits. The valve allows him to reduce water flow to the nozzle, then use an auxiliary reel with a smaller 1/4-inch hose to jet out clogged residential kitchen or restaurant sinks.

“This truck is all about my customers. About 80 percent of our work is residential jet work, and our customers have come to expect that we jet the line because it cleans so thoroughly.”

Mike Hemenway

“The ability to reduce the flow allows me to use the truck as a mini-jetter, too,” he says. “It only takes a second to use the valve, and it makes us more productive because it eliminates the setup time involved with smaller sink jettors. The unit has a wireless remote control, so we can go to the truck and set up the flow and pressure we want, then go inside and turn the water on and off as needed with the push of a button.” The truck carries an array of portable equipment including:

- RIDGID K-7500 cable machine for 3- to 7-inch mainlines.
- RIDGID K-3800 machine for sink and other indoor drains.
- M755 cable machine with a no-tension cable from MyTana Mfg. Co., used to clean 3- to 4-inch lines.
- Kinetic Water Ram from General Pipe Cleaners.
- RIDGID SeeSnake inspection system.
- Trenchless pipe rehabilitation tools made by PrimeLine Products.
- US Jetting and StoneAge Warthog nozzles.

GENERATING INTEREST

The truck’s smooth, spacious side panels – which allow for bold lettering and graphics, including a customer-friendly 1-800-GOT-ROOTS telephone number – enhance the company’s marketing. “The number is easy for potential customers to remember,” Hemenway notes. “It makes the phone ring.”

The letters are reflective, so they really pop at night. That’s important in Ohio, where night comes early in winter, and for a company that routinely makes night service calls. “We work 24/7, so we want people to see the truck,” Hemenway says. “It definitely turns heads when it’s lit up like that at night.”

Overall, Hemenway can’t say enough about his latest business partner, which improves profit by enabling crews to do more work per day. But just as important, it benefits customers: “We can go in, do what we need to do quickly, and get out of our customers’ hair so they can get on with their day.”

SHOW US THE MONEY (MACHINE)

Money Machines, a feature in *Cleaner*, reports on innovative work vehicles that help contractors operate more efficiently, satisfy customers and earn more profit. We’d like to know about your Money Machine — be it a service van, camera truck, jetting rig, vacuum unit or any vehicle that really helps drive your business. To nominate your vehicle for a feature in this column, send an email to editor@cleaner.com. Tell us briefly but specifically what features make it a great producer. And send a picture — because appearance counts. We look forward to seeing your Money Machine.

MORE TIME TO GET IN MORE HOLES.

Most days, it’s lateral holes. In your spare time, maybe 18. With MaxLiner, it’s always a gimme. As the first ICC-ES code compliant CIPP system, MaxLiner leads the field in solutions for lateral and vertical repairs. With the compact and portable features of the new stainless steel MaxLinerGun, you can reline even the toughest vertical pipes and downspouts, allowing you to get from one job to the next quickly and easily. However you choose to use your extra time, it will mean more green.

MAXLINER

NSF ICC-ES PMG f 276.656.1225 maxlinerusa.com