

JUNK

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no papers have to be exchanged with customers.

“It’s dumpster rental made easy. You can go on line tonight at 3 a.m., order a dumpster, and as long as we have it available it will be delivered tomorrow. You tell us where you want it, we deliver it, you don’t have to be there and we come back and get it on the day we say we’ll get it. You never see us, but the beauty is the communication is still there. They can call our call center in Wichita. We’ve provided a service in a way that’s protected them and protected us as well.”

The other service is junk removal.

“We come to someone’s home or business, they show us what they want gone, we give them an estimate based on how much of the truck we feel they are going to fill up. We take it away and dispose of it,” he said.

People can rent bins by the day, in sizes described as small, medium and large — roughly equivalent to a 10-, 20-, or 30 cubic-yard unit.

“Our medium size is our most popular – 5-foot tall, 14-foot long and 8-foot tall,” Claypool said. “All are 8 feet wide.”

Someone doing a roof project, for example, would probably want the smallest bin, he said.

The equipment is “driveway friendly. Our trucks are a little bit smaller, which has some advantages. We can get into tighter spots but more than anything we’re easy on the driveways.”

The single-axle trucks limit the disposal that can be done at one time, and sometimes multiple trips are necessary. The maximum load is 4 tons.

Those limits are intentional since no one wants to damage things while making improvements. Filling up a large dumpster with asphalt shingles, for instance, would

be too big to pick up and risks damaging the driveway, he said. Even a concrete driveway is not meant to handle that kind of load.

Typical household remodels or cleanouts are no problem, he said.

His market area is represented by his franchise. He purchased the entire St. Louis sector and his office is in Granite City. He covers about a 35-mile radius.

“We’ll go anywhere as long as it makes sense,” Claypool said.

The company itself is based in Wichita, where it got its start.

Claypool, who is 48, hooked up with 1-800-JUNKPRO in 2017 after several years in sales and sales leadership positions.

“I had sales reps I managed from Miami to Seattle to Philadelphia, and I was in school and was looking for something to take my experience and transition into my own thing.” He read about the company on the internet. He’d been looking at another junk company that didn’t have a location in St. Louis.

“I liked the simplicity of (JUNKPRO). I like the business model. The other one I looked at wasn’t willing to give me all the St. Louis market.”

Under the arrangement, he buys the equipment, and the company provides the vendors to get bins and trucks. He bases his operations at 5529 Dial Drive, right off Interstate 270 and Illinois Route 3.

His inventory includes 63 dumpsters, three dumpster trucks to deliver them and one junk removal truck.

Dumpsters, once purchased, can be rehabbed from time to time, which protects their value, he said.

“They should last a long time,” he said.

As of this fall, the 1-800-JUNKPRO system witnessed a 15 percent increase in sales over this time last year, as residents spent time stuck at home. Claypool’s particular franchise saw about an 8 percent

to 10 percent increase.

“We’ve had a good year. Junk removal, in general, has been hurt by COVID-19. There’s more interaction with people because you’re going into their homes and sometimes people just don’t want you in their homes. But as the junk removal suffered, the Dumpster rental did better. We’re going to see decent growth this year. I feel really fortunate. I have friends in business. Restaurants, gift shops — they are really struggling.”

1-800-JUNKPRO was founded as Better Hauling Company in 1999 by husband-and-wife team Mike and Misty Davis as a way to earn some extra money. By 2007, the business was doing so well that Mike Davis quit his corporate job and devoted himself full time to the business. In 2010, the Davises rebranded the company as 1-800-JUNKPRO and sold the first franchise in 2016 in Kansas City. Today, 1-800-JUNKPRO is a family affair, with Mike as CEO, Misty as CFO (chief fun officer) and their daughter Brittany serving as chief experience officer.

Today, 1-800-JUNKPRO has six locations and is on track to double in size in 2020 by targeting expansion in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States, particularly the Texas markets of Dallas, Houston and San Antonio.

“Our sweet spot is our customer services,” Claypool said. “We call before we’re heading (a customer’s) way. Sometimes they need that dumpster gone the next day. We facilitate those kinds of requests. We’ll work with any contractor out there but the ones who find us valuable are the ones who like the communication and have the projects that are a little more involved in managing.”

Claypool, who grew up in Tuscola, Ill., and now lives in Glen Carbon, has three team members working for him and says his role is essentially operations manager,

which puts him in charge of business development.

All his employees are cross trained in delivery, pickup and hauling.

People pay one of three prices for the three dumpster sizes. For the junk removal, they pay for a truck that is similar in size to the medium dumpster.

“We’ll do an estimate based on how much of the truck we think it’s going to fill up. If it’s a full truck it’s \$520; if it’s a half truck it’s \$339. We have prices ranging from a minimum load to a full truck, in 10 percent increments.”

Collected materials are delivered to a transfer station or taken for recycling.

“We try to recycle as much as we can. With dumpster rental, though, that’s a challenge, since other people are filling it up. With junk removal, materials are removed back at the office, like clothes and kids toys, etc. When they get back with a truck, metal goes in one (container), trash goes in another. Once they get enough recyclables they will deliver to places like Goodwill.”

His company has working arrangements with both Republic Waste Services and Waste Management, the two big trash and landfill operations in the St. Louis region.

Junk is big business, and the men have to be physically adept, but some jobs are easier than others.

“It’s funny, we’ll get deep freezes out of somebody’s basement, then you pull to a garage and they’ve got cardboard boxes they want gone. You never know what you’re going to get but you’ve got to be prepared for anything,” Claypool said. “The one trend I like is the large TVs going on their way out. I had one that we tried every way to get out of the basement, before the homeowner told me it was down there before they refinished the basement.”

He added: “We take a tape measure with us.”



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