



Teen's Company Cleans Up

Article

ALEXANDER, North Dakota (Achieve3000, February 15, 2013). It took less than 48 hours for 18-year-old Evan Jensen to smell opportunity in North Dakota. The recent high school graduate simply got a whiff of himself and his brother Justin after the two had been sleeping in a pickup while looking for work in the oil fields.

"We smelled," Evan said. "Bad."

Thousands of workers have descended on the remote region of the American Midwest to seek their fortune in North Dakota's oil fields. Housing construction and services haven't kept up with demand. The closest shower to Evan was some 60 miles away at a truck stop. The facilities there were expensive and filthy. The wait for a shower was several hours long.

That's when the idea for a mobile shower struck Evan.

"There are a lot of necessities that aren't available out here," Evan said, "like a place to take a shower and brush your teeth."

Many food trucks and other roving enterprises were already catering to oil field workers. But Evan believed that the workers would appreciate a hot shower nearly as much as a hot meal.

Evan pitched his idea to his parents back at their farm in eastern South Dakota. His father and other relatives decided to help him convert a 53-foot semitrailer into a five-stall shower center with an office and laundry facilities. They used a 6,000-gallon semi tanker alongside the trailer to collect the wastewater.

Evan paid for the renovation with \$15,000 that he had earned over the previous two years. He had trapped muskrats and sold their pelts for about \$10 apiece.

Evan's mobile venture, called Better Showers, rolled into an RV campground in the heart of the oil patch in June 2012. The teen charged \$10 per shower. He gave a 50 percent discount to residents of the RV park. He also offered towels and washcloths for \$1 apiece. The water pressure was strong, the soap was free, and there was no time limit.

Hayley Matthews, 47, moved to North Dakota to start a business cleaning homes and campers for oil field workers. Evan's shower facility, she said, was a blessing.

"It's just wonderful to take a nice shower...out here in the oil patch," Matthews said.

Evan said he's seen customers come in grimy and grouchy and leave clean and cordial. At least two dozen people stop by daily. Most of them, Evan said, are repeat customers.

Evan worked hard, and his venture has been profitable. He has earned several thousand dollars. Now, he hopes to sell

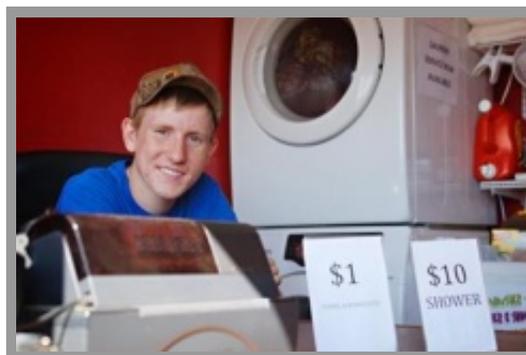


Photo credit: AP/James MacPherson

Eighteen-year-old Evan Jensen started a mobile shower business in the remote oil fields of North Dakota.

the fledgling business. He plans to use the proceeds to pay for four years of tuition at McNally Smith College of Music in St. Paul, Minnesota, to which Evan has already been accepted.

McNally Smith President Harry Chalmiers said that Evan's resourceful spirit will serve him well in the music industry.

"You've got to be prepared to think outside the box and be creative and innovative," Chalmiers said. "That's always been true for musicians, and...today, it's true for more and more people."

Evan is already busy considering more potential businesses.

"I brainstorm and think of what's in demand," said the teen. "I've got a bunch of ideas. All it takes is guts, really."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Dictionary

facility (*noun*) a building or service created to meet a particular need

fledgling (*adjective*) young, new, or inexperienced

innovative (*adjective*) imaginative and creative

renovation (*noun*) a repair or improvement

tuition (*noun*) money that each student pays in order to go to school