

Market Segment: Event

POWER PROFILE

Hale Northeastern Exposition Services

POWER NEED

More than nine million people in the U.S. now own RVs, and for tens of thousands of them, annual “RV rallies”—conventions or expositions for RV enthusiasts—have become an important vacation destination. At each RV rally, RV owners gather to enjoy and learn more about their increasingly popular recreational lifestyle through seminars, exhibits, entertainment, games and meetings with industry experts from all over the world.

Rallies are held throughout the U.S. Often, more than a thousand unique and personalized RVs are on display, including multi-million-dollar luxury motor coaches. Additionally, hundreds of RV products are displayed by vendors and manufacturers. Beyond providing entertainment and recreational activities for their attendees, the rallies are used by RV manufacturers to showcase the latest in equipment, aftermarket products and sales and service for all brands of RVs.

In the summer of 2007, Hale Northeastern Exposition Services, Inc. (Hale), was subcontracted to set up and run two such national RV rallies—the Great North American (GNA) RV Rally (known simply as “The Rally”) and the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) 78th Annual Convention and RV Rally—at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds in Redmond, Oregon. This was the FMCA’s third time and The Rally’s second time as hosts of RV rallies at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds in Redmond. The Rally was held July 19 through 22, followed a few weeks later by the FMCA RV Rally from August 13 through 16. The two rallies attracted a total registration of nearly 7,500 RVs, with up to 4,500 RVs present each day.

While attending such rallies, owners in the “Family Lot” need to connect their RVs to an on-site power supply to use lighting and appliances. In addition, an on-site power supply is required to provide electricity to the “Show Lot,” where events take place and outdoor displays of new RVs are provided.

Beyond the primary need to provide ample power to the thousands of “homes” present in the Family Lot and the events

in the Show Lot at the fairgrounds during the rallies was the secondary requirement that the temporary electric power source be self-contained and capable of being placed wherever needed throughout the 132-acre site. Meeting these two needs of an ample power supply in a flexible, temporary location is where a Caterpillar-based solution by Peterson Caterpillar of San Leandro, California, came into play. Peterson supplied a total of 82 electric power generator sets for the duration of both events at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds site to ensure a continuous supply of electric power to rally attendees for the duration of the two events.

SOLUTION

Based in Springfield, Oregon, Eric Plebuch is the rental sales representative for Peterson Caterpillar. It was his job to see that Hale’s needs for temporary power for the two rallies were met. According to Plebuch, it was a unique challenge.

“Just the sheer size and scope of this project was enormous,” said Plebuch. “Hale’s requirement for the first [GNA] rally was 51 generator sets, almost entirely in the 200- to 300-kW range,” said Plebuch. And while the second [FMCA] rally attracted a larger number of higher-end RVs with self-contained generator capabilities, Plebuch noted that 31 sets were still required to meet Hale’s needs at the second show. According to Plebuch, both the quantity of generators needed and the specific individual capacity of them were factors that helped the organizers choose Caterpillar.

“Quite honestly, it would be very difficult to find a supplier in the Pacific Northwest that could do all that Hale was requesting, with the exception of Peterson,” said Plebuch. He knew that Caterpillar was capable of providing all of the generators, cable, technical support and local service. And Peterson Caterpillar was also able to offer Hale the distinct advantage of its unique location: “We had a branch store across the street from the fairgrounds, so if a part or service was needed, help was literally right across the street,” Plebuch explained.



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CUSTOMER

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LOCATION

Deschutes County Fairgrounds,
Redmond, Oregon

CUSTOMER BUSINESS ISSUE

On-site temporary power for two national recreational vehicle (RV) rallies.

SOLUTION

Eighty-two Cat® diesel-fueled generator sets, predominantly C9 and C15 models, in the following quantities and output capacities:

- Three Cat C15, 400 kW
- Three Cat 3456, 400 kW
- Nine Cat C15, 300 kW
- Sixty Cat C9, 230 kW
- Seven Cat C4.4

Procurement, clearing arrangements, site installation and commissioning, start-up, maintenance, and decommissioning.

CAT DEALER

Peterson Caterpillar
San Leandro, California

When Hale awarded the contract, Plebuch led the work on the large-scale solution. Peterson had over half the requisite quantity and size of Cat® generator sets available in Oregon. Peterson's Jay Pleus (in Springfield, Oregon) and James Gray (in San Leandro, California) handled the logistics of transporting the remaining equipment to the fairgrounds site in a timely manner. The local operations staff in Oregon got the generator sets unpacked, tested and installed on schedule. Finally, Plebuch needed to find a suitable location to store the generator sets until they were needed for the rally and again after each rally ended. Because the two events were held about three weeks apart, Peterson had to plan to make the most of the allotted time to service the equipment, move it off site, and then turn around and get it all reinstalled. "In essence it was loading in and out twice within one month," said Plebuch.

Peterson met each challenge by adhering to a very thorough action plan.

"Most of the equipment was configured and set up before it arrived on site," Plebuch explained. "Because of that preparation, we only needed one person to run things at the fairgrounds." Plebuch noted that Hale had an agreement with a local electrical contractor to make the connections between the Cat generator sets and the existing electrical infrastructure for temporary power at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds.

"Our scope of service was to provide the units and get all the generator sets to the location. The fairgrounds' contractor would pick up from there," said Plebuch. Hale's careful preparation and Peterson's execution worked exactly as Plebuch had anticipated. "We made sure we had everything ready to go beforehand so that we didn't have any issues. It went off seamlessly—absolutely seamlessly," he said.

"The equipment was spread out over the 132 acres that comprise the main fairgrounds location as well as a couple of off-site locations," Plebuch explained. Because of this project's sheer size, Hale enlisted the aid of Cat Entertainment Services, a division within Caterpillar that focuses on electric power and infrastructure support for concerts and other public events, to help with Hale's needs for the rallies.

"In conjunction with Cat Entertainment, which supplied the cabling and technician support, Hale had all of the specialized RV panels already set up," said Plebuch. With a total of 4,000 RVs housing more than 10,000 visitors registered for The Rally, Plebuch knew that the Cat generator sets and switchgear would be facing a significant challenge.

"The associations would just line up the RVs, row upon row upon row, with our generator

sets already in place. They would plug all of these RVs in, and everybody was running off of our equipment," said Plebuch.

RESULTS

As assistant operations manager for Hale, Mark Lozinak has been working RV rallies for almost a decade. Lozinak is a veteran event manager who has grown to enjoy the professional challenges of making sure the individual parts of the plans he creates work successfully together.

"I enjoy the challenge," he admits, "I like wearing many hats and thinking through the details."

And there were plenty of details to attend to at the Redmond RV rallies. Each show takes 10 days to set up, runs for three, and then requires two more days to tear down. There's plenty to think about in that timeframe.

But according to Lozinak, the Cat generator sets he specified proved to be up to the task.

"They [the generator sets] worked out very well. Hale Northeastern has been managing these types of RV rallies probably for about 30 or 40 years, and I've been actively involved with them for the past nine years," said Lozinak. "We've used different generators along the way," he admits, "but the Cat generators that Peterson brought in were very quiet and did a very nice job."

For Plebuch, the reliability and proven capability of the Cat equipment was critical to the successful power performance during the two rallies. "The greatest factor in our achievement for Hale was that we had very reliable equipment," said Plebuch.

In choosing Cat generator sets through Peterson, Hale avoided the prospect of having to deal with multiple vendors and manufacturers, said Lozinak. Instead, they could rely on one vendor to supply the industry's leading brand of power-generation equipment and provide any necessary servicing.

"We wanted to ensure that Hale had just one phone call to make, instead of having to contact multiple companies," said Plebuch. As requested by Hale, Peterson staged backup generators on site as added insurance in the event one might be needed.

"I was set," said Lozinak, in describing the plan he presented to Plebuch. "I knew exactly what generators I needed and where I needed them. I had each rally all mapped out and ready to go."

And the ability to go to a one-stop shop was tremendously reassuring to Lozinak; it represented one less detail he had to worry about. "Anytime I needed something, Eric was there or his technicians were," said Lozinak. "Even when the Cat Entertainment tech needed something, he went right into Peterson's shop."

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Hale Northeastern Exposition Services provides on-site temporary power for national recreational vehicle rally.

Lozinak noted he was especially pleased with the bigger fuel tanks included with the Cat generator sets supplied by Peterson. "It's a huge advantage for us. Having to refill fuel tanks as little as possible is a great advantage."

Plebuch is quick to recognize that Caterpillar's success with the rallies may not have been possible with any other event organizer.

"The credit really goes to Hale Northeastern. Mark had come up with the schematics and the layout for where everything had to go," Plebuch notes. He cites the fact that Hale had done national RV rallies for years in different venues all over the country, including several rallies at the Redmond venue, and their experience with generator set placement was invaluable. "In Redmond, it was really a perfect marriage of us being able to offer a one-stop shop for equipment and their experience and knowledge of event management," Plebuch said.

Plebuch is looking forward to the opportunity to build on Caterpillar's success with the rallies in 2007. The rallies are tentatively scheduled to come back to the Deschutes County Fairgrounds in 2010 and 2011.

"We showed that we could do it last summer. Our challenge will be to do as good a job when it comes back again," said Plebuch.