

## From the President



**Rick Throop**  
*MSTA President*

As winter begins to leave us here in Michigan and spring slowly approaches, we all look forward to another busy summer season. I hope this winter has found you healthy and well and as busy as you can be in the slower months.

As I'm sure many of you were aware MSTA put on its first solo wastewater conference this year. There was a little over 200 attendees which includes 21 vendors in 13 booths, 168

attendees, 20 of which were non-members, and many speakers and special guests. The new venue, Soaring Eagle Casino, provided wonderful food, a very nice hotel facility, and plenty of activities after the conference was over for people staying to do. Jason and Karlyn did an amazing job in a very short period of time setting up a conference with 10.5 credits available to haulers. MSTA is already planning another conference next year at the same facility however those dates have yet to be decided. I hope all that attend had a wonderful time and were able to fill out your survey in your email to give us any ideas how to improve things for next year.

On Tuesday evening, MSTA had its annual member banquet. We were able to announce our intentions to give out scholarships in honor of Mark Scott and Dave Snyder with many members stepping up and pledging money to that fund. Scholarship pledges from Williams and Bay Pumping, Halls Serv-All, Spartan Sewer, Brendel's Septic Tank Service, Mick Natzel, All American Septic Service, Sloan's Septic Tank Service

and Woods-Utica Septic Service were greatly appreciated. If someone wishes to donate to 1 or both scholarships, contact Karlyn Wickham at [executiveofficer@msta.biz](mailto:executiveofficer@msta.biz). There is currently a committee putting together ideas of what type of careers the scholarship recipients will need to be going into to be able to award the money. With input from the Scott family and the Snyder family, I am sure it will go to support future careers these two individuals would like to see thrive. That being said, I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to both families for attending our banquet and I hope that they were able to see just how important these two men were not only as business owners in our industry but as friends and peers to not only myself but many other younger members. Personally, both Mark and Dave were my go-to for any questions I ever had as I'm sure they were for many other people. They will both be sincerely missed.

MSTA does have a spring meeting coming up on April 23, which will be held in Cassopolis, Michigan at Dervin Witmer's facility. We have 5.5 credits approved for that meeting. I think we will have some pretty exciting and new topics to talk about. A big thank you to Dervin for volunteering this place. And our fall meeting is scheduled for October 8 and is currently scheduled to be held in National Vacuum Equipment. A big thank you to them for volunteering to do that for us once again.

Lastly, I again want to thank Jason, Karlyn, and everyone else who was a part of making our conference go well. I hope all of you have a profitable summer and I look forward to seeing some of you at our spring meeting.

Thank You,  
**Rick Throop**  
*MSTA President*

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## 2022 Education Calendar

### MSTA Spring Meeting – Registration now available on the MSTA Website

**Saturday, April 23**  
Dig-It Excavating, Inc.  
62055 M-62, Cassopolis, MI

### MSTA Fall Meeting – Registration coming in late summer

**Saturday, October 8**  
National Vacuum Equipment Headquarters  
2707 Aero Park Drive, Traverse City, MI

## Congratulations to the 2022 MSTA Raffle Winners

- 1<sup>st</sup> place: Matt Dejonghe \$750
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Chris White \$450
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Jim Cousins \$400
- 4<sup>th</sup> place: Wink Goltz TriStar Setter O/U 12 gauge
- 5<sup>th</sup> place: Gordon Meyerink \$300
- 6<sup>th</sup> place: Darin Gross \$200
- 7<sup>th</sup> place: Ken Brown Stevens 301 Single Shot Turkey 20 gauge
- 8<sup>th</sup> place: Leon Everhart Ruger Wrangler Revolver 22



## Meet your 2022 MSTA Board of Directors

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## Sentiments about Mark and Dave

Mark Scott - I remember it well the first time I met Mark. My father introduced me to him 15 years go and I remember Mark being so genuine and professional. He was always that way. I never witnessed him treat anyone any other way. He always wanted to show others that they had value. That is a trait about Mark that I will always carry with me..... Mick Natzel

Mark always had a kind and contagious smile, he will be missed.....Sami Jackson



Mark Scott - "A Gent and A Scholar".....

Tony Martin, Li'L Willies Inc

Mark is someone who's influence has been felt and will continue to be felt by everyone he met as well as in the onsite industry in Michigan. We need more Mark Scott's in the world to brighten our days with their fun attitude, priceless energy and humble sincerity. Our hearts are heavy and our thoughts are with his family. It's hard to believe someone with so much life is not here any longer....Gary Koteskey and Darrell Maves

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## Sentiments about Mark and Dave

Dave Snyder - Dave always seemed to have a smile on his face. He worked hard for the MSTA. He was really good with people. Always taking the time to listen. I enjoyed the many laughs that I had with him. Especially over a few beers....  
Mick Natzel



I remember sitting in a coffee shop in the state building of the house of representatives in Lansing and Dave says "oh shit" and got up and 10 minutes later returned and said he went out to put his "legal" gun in his van....  
Joe Hall

Mark Scott was always a joker....  
Joe Hall

Mark is someone who's influence has been felt and will continue to be felt by everyone he met as well as in the onsite industry in Michigan. We need more Mark Scott's in the world to brighten our days with their fun attitude, priceless energy and humble sincerity. Our hearts are heavy and our thoughts are with his family. It's hard to believe someone with so much life is not here any longer.....Gary Koteskey and Darrell Maves

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They were family men who volunteered their expertise in monies to the betterment of the Michigan Septic Tank Association. They spent countless hours to shape the professionalism of the septic industry.....Joe Hall

**MARKism's**  
Presented by Mark's Family

I'm so happy I could crap! Not bad for a fat, old, bald guy...  
It was nice of you to bring your father (husband).  
Never leave to tomorrow, what can be done today.  
Ummm...ahhh...  
A royal flush beats a full house!  
I love my family so much!  
The six P's - Previous Planning Prevents Piss Poor Performance.  
My employees don't work for me, they work with me.  
Peggy rides a mountain bike, but my bike has a motor.  
This is my favorite mother in law.  
The best beer is a free beer...  
You might not want to go in there for a while (bathroom)... oh wait, my crap doesn't stink.  
That food was delicious!  
I'm so proud of all of my children...





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## Introducing two scholarships..... *The Mark Scott Scholarship Fund and the Dave Snyder Scholarship Fund*



We recently lost two of the “Best of the Best of MSTAs”, Mark Scott and Dave Snyder. They were both instrumental in the progress of taking the Michigan Septic Tank Association to where it is today. Together they have over 50 years of history and experience with MSTAs and many of us have known each of them for most of those years.

During the MSTAs Conference at the Soaring Eagle Resort in February, we were honored to host the Scott Family and Snyder Family to the banquet. Many people shared stories and memories of Mark and Dave during the banquet and enjoyed the slideshow that was displayed as well.

To honor Mark and Dave, MSTAs will be creating a scholarship for each of them. We are not sure yet the details of the scholarships, but they will be established and funded each year starting in 2023. During the banquet, some of our members pledged to give money to these scholarships. A huge thank you goes out to the following people whose generosity and thoughtfulness goes beyond words....

Rick Throop, Woods-Utica Septic Service  
Rodrigo Meirelles, Williams and Bay Pumping Service  
Rodrigo Meirelles and Daniel Meirelles, Northeastern Michigan Environmental (Halls Serv-All)  
Mick Natzel, General Agency Company  
Bob Burgdorf, Spartan Sewer & Septic Tank Service  
Paul Lawrence, All American Septic Service  
Susan Armstrong, Brendel’s Septic Tank Service LLC  
Chris Sloan, Sloan’s Septic Tank Service LLC

*If you would like to contribute money to one or both scholarships,  
please email Karlyn Wickham, MSTAs Executive Officer,  
at [executiveofficer@msta.biz](mailto:executiveofficer@msta.biz).  
Thank you.*

## > Pumper PROFILE

# Retooling the Family Business



### The Pumping Service LLC

Beulah, Michigan

- OWNERS:** Nate and Brianne Geetings
- FOUNDED:** 1975
- EMPLOYEES:** 5
- SERVICE AREA:** 25-mile radius around Beulah, Michigan, including Manistee, Benzie, Leelanau, Wexford and Grand Traverse counties.
- SERVICES:** Septic and grease trap service, onsite installations and repairs.
- WEBSITE:** [benziepumping.com](http://benziepumping.com)

A new name, expanded territory and marketing moxie fuel growth for a successful Michigan pumping company

By Peter Kenter

**W**hen Nate Geetings was born in 1984, his parents had already been operating Benzie Pumping for nine years. He has nothing but respect for the hard work of his parents who built the business into a strong local brand. But following the death of his father in 2020, Nate and his wife Brianne have taken the company in new directions, building on the legacy they were given but enhancing it with an emphasis on new tools, such as a digital scheduling system, new business opportunities and a new approach to branding and advertising.

Nate's father Kim bought the company in 1975 as Benzie Pumping Service, Inc., a single-pumper business headquartered in the small town of Beulah, in Northwest Michigan's Benzie County. The company offered three primary services: septic tank, holding tank and grease trap pumping. As Kim bought out other companies, the service area grew, and so did the name, eventually becoming Benzie, Crystal & Interlochen Pumping Service, Inc., reflecting its larger service area.



◀ The team at The Pumping Service is shown with the company's five Freightliner vacuum trucks, four built by Imperial Industries and one from Marsh Industrial. They all feature NVE pumps. Shown from left are Trent Wittbecker, Matt Bennet, Garret Leiva, Nate and Brianne Geetings. (Photos by Aubrey Ann Parker)



✔ The biggest of the Freightliner tanks is this 6,000-gallon aluminum unit stopping to pump a commercial tank. The truck was built out by Imperial Industries and uses a pump from National Vacuum Equipment.

“ WE WANT TO CREATE A BETTER IMAGE FOR A BUSINESS THAT TOO OFTEN TRADES ON HUMOR EMPHASIZING ITS LESS TASTEFUL SIDE. ”

**BRIANNE GEETINGS**

“My mother, Patty, and father ran the business together and were hard workers,” says Nate. “They built the business through strong personal connections, paper-based scheduling and traditional advertising through vehicles like the Yellow Pages. They had the personal touch and when someone called, they knew one of them would pick up the phone.”

Nate rode in his father’s truck from an early age and watched the company grow, adding pumpers and hiring an extra employee, Kim’s cousin Paul Little, along the way. Nate worked for the company part time, riding shotgun, and then driving himself starting in 2003 after graduating high school.

### COMING HOME

“Taking over the company wasn’t something I had honestly thought about,” he says. “My mom and dad never pushed me to take over. They made sure I got good grades in school and let me forge my own path.”

He moved away to attend college but still spent summers driving a vacuum truck for his father. His studies took him from business to human biology — and an introduction to his wife Brianne, an advertising major, on the campus of Michigan State University. After graduating in 2008, they settled near Nate’s hometown where he returned to a full-time position with the pumping business. At that time conversations about taking over the business became more serious.

Kim was diagnosed with cancer in 2017, requiring Nate to take on more of the day-to-day operations. He and longtime driver Trent Wittbecker handled most calls. They hired an additional driver, Matt Bennett, in 2019.

“My dad passed away in 2020 and that was a long year for all of us,” Nate says. “My mom decided it was her time to retire and we bought the business from her, effective January 2021.”

Today, the company employs an additional driver, Garret Leiva, while Brianne has taken a greater role in supporting the company’s marketing efforts and administration.

### PROUD OF THE TRUCKS

The majority of the work involves pumping septic and holding tanks (when required in lake country). About 10% of the work is pumping grease traps.

The Pumping Service operates five vacuum trucks, all of them Freightliner Columbias carrying National Vacuum Equipment pumps. The 2006 features a 3,500-gallon steel tank built by Marsh Industrial. It’s the company’s “good-old girl” that carries them through road salt season and tough winter weather. The remaining four offer aluminum tanks and are built out by Imperial Industries: a 2007 with a 4,000-gallon tank, a 2010 with a 4,000-gallon tank, a 2016 with a 4,500-gallon tank, and a 2020 with a 6,000-gallon tank.

The company continues to take advantage of the 30-by-50-foot heated garage on land owned by Nate’s mother, as well as a large barn used to park service trucks indoors as needed. Most truck maintenance is completed on site.



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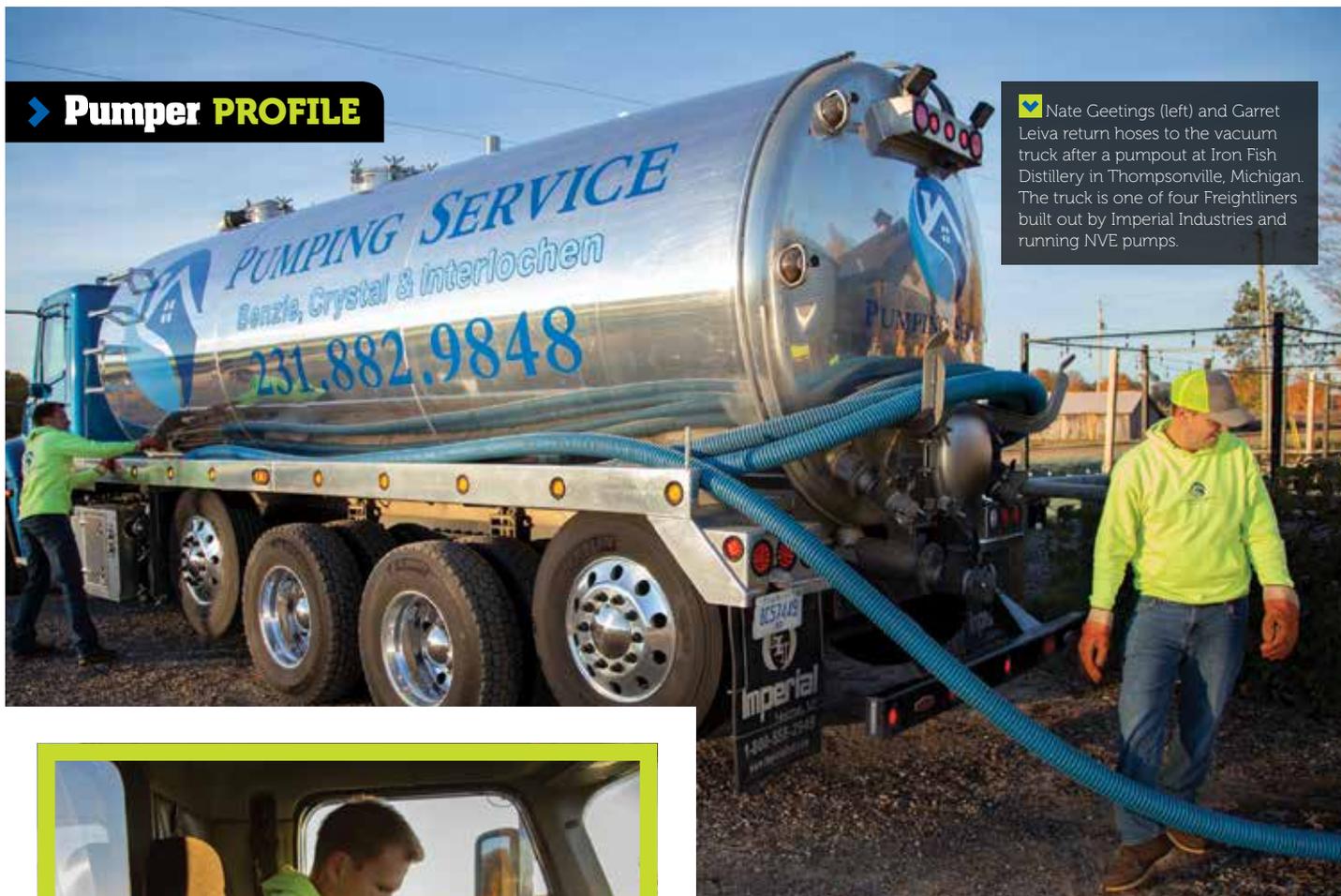
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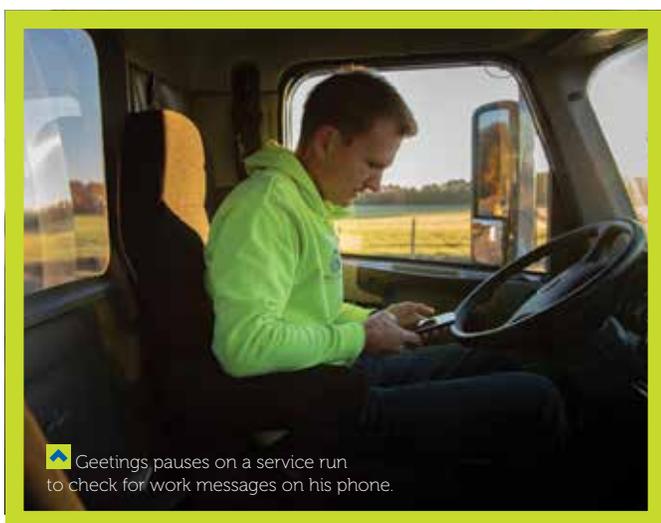
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## ► Pumper PROFILE



▼ Nate Geetings (left) and Garret Leiva return hoses to the vacuum truck after a pumpout at Iron Fish Distillery in Thompsonville, Michigan. The truck is one of four Freightliners built out by Imperial Industries and running NVE pumps.



▲ Geetings pauses on a service run to check for work messages on his phone.

“ TAKING OVER THE COMPANY WASN'T SOMETHING I HAD HONESTLY THOUGHT ABOUT. MY MOM AND DAD NEVER PUSHED ME TO TAKE OVER. THEY MADE SURE I GOT GOOD GRADES IN SCHOOL AND LET ME FORGE MY OWN PATH. ”

**NATE GEETINGS**

“Taking over the business, I believed that there was further room to grow,” says Nate. “We were effectively providing service inside a 15-mile radius, but not beyond.”

One reason was the company name, which specifically listed Benzie, Crystal and Interlochen.

“We were getting calls from Traverse City asking us if we pumped outside those areas,” says Nate. The company was recently rebranded as The Pumping Service to emphasize a broader service area.

Working outside the 15-mile-radius was also less profitable, in part because paper-based scheduling made logistics less efficient. Brianne chose Jobber, a service scheduling program and app, to streamline the system and take it to a digital level.

“There’s no paperwork, and the guys bring their schedules with them electronically,” Nate says. “All they need to do is make sure their phone is charged. They can create invoices and even collect payments electronically.”

### GETTING BUSY

Nate also reviewed all existing suppliers from insurance to accounting and replaced them with suppliers he believes reflect his ambitions and vision for the company.

Less than year after taking the helm, business is booming. The company has increased its service area for septic pumping and grease trap service, now stretching 25 miles to Traverse City and beyond. Nate notes that in 2020 the company had four trucks on the road simultaneously only a handful of times. From the summer of 2021 on, four trucks are on the road more often than not.

*(continued)*

## ► Pumper PROFILE



▲ The pumping crew includes, from left, Matthew Bennett, Nate Geetings, Trent Wittbecker and Garret Leiva.



## In-house marketing expertise

Nate and Brianne Geetings, owners of The Pumping Service, like to play on their strengths. Brianne has an advertising degree from Michigan State University and worked for a marketing agency in Traverse City, near their home base. Those skills are being put to good use for the business.

First on the company's marketing agenda was adjusting the former name, Benzie, Crystal & Interlochen Pumping Service. "The name continued to grow with the new locations they serviced," says Brianne Geetings. "We were hearing from people who never realized that

we pump out of the area, but we also didn't want to alienate the customers who already knew us."

She suggested the name "The Pumping Service" because that's the way the company already answered its phone. The names Benzie, Crystal & Interlochen still appear, but are de-emphasized in the updated logo she designed.

Geetings notified customers about the name change in a letter attached to invoices and then continued to use the new branding in an expanded advertising campaign that included Google and Facebook ads, mailers,

local newspaper print ads and billboards. She also reflected the new identity on the company website and five vacuum trucks.

A recent sponsorship deal negotiated by Geetings saw the Crystal Mountain ski resort pump track rebranded as "The Pumping Service Pump Track at Crystal Mountain."

She's recently built a new marketing campaign around the changing seasons, using upbeat imagery to sell the company's services. Those themes are also reflected on the company website and mailers.

"We want to create a better image for a business that too often trades on humor emphasizing its less tasteful side," she says.

Not every family business comes complete with a marketing expert. If you can't invest in the services of a professional, she suggests that — at the very least — any public-facing creative effort be reviewed and read over by another set of eyes before it's launched.

"It's not always 100% great just because I created it," she says. "It's always a good idea to get feedback first."

(continued)



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Nate still drives a service rig as needed, but generally assists with the most challenging tasks and oversees work on larger projects. Brianne now answers most calls and slots customers into the schedule. Nate then assigns crew members to each job through the Jobber app, based on their location.

The Pumping Service will take on related work such as line repairs, pump work and riser installations (most often Polylok), but it's not the company's bread and butter. They own a pair of Kubotas — a mini-excavator and backhoe — along with a dump trailer. They'll take the work when they're less busy but pass it off to subcontractors when schedules are tight.

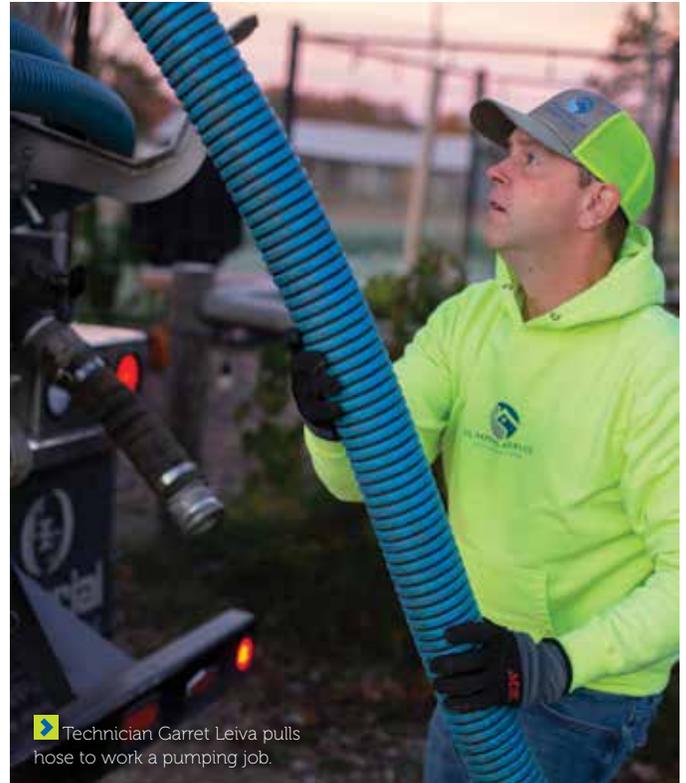
This year, the company has also become the local installer and distributor for SludgeHammer, a modular biological wastewater treatment system that can be installed inside conventional septic systems. Nate acts as the contractor on each job, subcontracting most of the excavation and installation work.

### OUTLOOK IS BRIGHT

What does the future hold for The Pumping Service? Nate says he might consider branching into portable restroom rentals if he sees a market niche to fill without stretching his labor force too thin. Right now, he aims simply to do better each year than he did the last.

Will the couple's three sons Mason 9, Carter 7, and Winston 4 one day take over the company?

"Like my parents, we're not pushing them toward any outcome," says Nate. "We're just going to be supportive of whatever they choose to do. But if they did one day decide they wanted to own and operate the company, that would be awesome." **P**



▶ Technician Garret Leiva pulls hose to work a pumping job.



▶ Nate Geetings holds the hose while Garret Leiva agitates waste in the septic tank they're pumping.

**MORE INFO**

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▶ Nate and Brianne Geetings

# Thank you to our 2022 PAC Fund Donors

(As of March 2022)

**RODRIGO MEIRELLES**

**DARRELL BUTLER, JR.**

We want to remind everyone that we can only make our political efforts possible through the help of our membership donations to the MSTA PAC fund. With the help of Joe Hall's leadership in the past years we were able to successfully make several legislative changes that have strengthened our industry and organization. We hope to continue having a prominent voice in the capital by representing our member's ability to effectively conduct business in the State of Michigan.

With that being said, we would like to encourage engagement from our general members and provide transparency to the use of our PAC dollars. If any members have specific pain points they feel should be communicated, we are happy to review them at the PAC committee so we can properly plan how to address them with legislators. Additionally, any contributions are appreciated and begin to add up when considering the potential scale of our association. For example, if we have 150 of our members donate \$100, we have \$15,000 of fire power to move forward our initiatives and make sure our voice is heard in Lansing.

Please note that all PAC donations must come from personal checks and we can't accept checks written from business accounts.

Best regards,  
MSTA PAC Committee





# HOW TO NAVIGATE THE MSTA WEBSITE

[www.msta.org](http://www.msta.org)



**Karlyn Wickham**

*MSTA Executive Officer*

## HOW TO LOG IN TO YOUR PERSONAL PORTAL OF THE MSTA WEBSITE

1. Log into your account on [www.msta.biz](http://www.msta.biz)

If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password. Follow the instructions on this email to log in.

## GETTING YOUR CSE CREDITS OFF FROM THE MSTA WEBSITE

As you already know, we have a new website and database system to track your membership and CSE credits. The old website contained all your CSE Credits prior to August of 2017. If you don’t have records of your credits prior to August 2017, you will not be able to get them by logging onto the website. Instead you will have to send an email to the address below to request a report of those.

The new website contains your CSE Credits from August 2017 through now. To get a record of the credits you received from the Fall 2017 meeting or the 2018 Michigan Onsite WW Conference, follow the steps below:

1. Log into your account on [www.msta.biz](http://www.msta.biz) If you do not remember your username /or password, click on “Forgot Your Password?” on the MSTA Homepage. You will receive an automatic email with instructions to get your username / password.
2. Once you are logged in, go to “My Membership Information”
3. Click on the “other information” tab
4. Click on “Prior Event Registrations”
5. Find the class you just attended and click on the symbol with the checkmark inside the square
6. A copy of your transcript will appear showing the credits you earned by going to the meeting
7. Print this page and keep it for your records to be turned into the DEQ when you renew your license.

Please save these instructions for future use. Please also save your username and password somewhere safe as well so that you can log onto the MSTA website again. By the way, your username and password can be changed to something you remember more easily by clicking on “Member Information / change username and password” (right next to the “other information” tab).

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4. Click on “additional individuals attached to this membership”
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# Legislative Report for MSTA

## *Judy Augenstein, Legislative Consultant*

### Spring Report

Gubernatorial primary candidate James Craig spelled out more specific policy points than he has in other campaign speeches Thursday night at a dinner event for Eaton County Republicans, and also indicated that his campaign has hired a consultant who worked on the campaign of Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Mr. Craig took several jabs at his would-be opponent after the primary, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, on what he called her failed policies and perceived unwillingness to work with Republicans on disparate issues.

“What Michigan needs is a winning team. We know that this administration hasn’t done a good job of doing what?” Mr. Craig said as the keynote speaker at the Eaton County Republican Party Lincoln Day Dinner event. “You are going to have to sit in rooms with people you may not like, who you may not agree with. But it’s in the best interest of who? Everybody in Michigan. Sometimes you just got to do it. This thing how polarized we are today. Left or right. Look, we’re all in this together. We’re not going to always agree, but leaders know how to get folks in the room.”

Mr. Craig aimed criticism at Ms. Whitmer over the loss of Ford Motor Company’s electric vehicle manufacturing and called her out for not knowing that one of the state’s largest and essential companies was looking outside the state for a new home for its future fleet.

“Automobile manufacturing is kind of important in this state, isn’t it?” Mr. Craig said. “This administration came back and said, ‘we didn’t know.’ Well, if you have relationships with folks, you know what’s going on. ... There is no reason for Ford to have moved their operations.”

He also said that it was his understanding that one of the main reasons they chose Tennessee over Michigan was because of a lack of public infrastructure, like safe and reliable roads – another avenue for Mr. Craig to tackle Ms. Whitmer on her own policies.

On public safety, Mr. Craig renewed his rhetoric on the open and concealed carry of firearms in Michigan, noting that he’s taken heat for saying that well-armed citizens would be safer than not. But he also touched on what he saw as an emerging policy from “radical prosecutors” to not charge those who committed felonies with a firearm with firearms charges or other criminal enhancements used during trials or at sentencing. He said such a policy attempts to “make victims out of the criminals,” and that he would oppose that as governor.

*(continued on page 26)*



(continued from page 24)

Further, he said that he was opposed to attempts at bail reform and pushes from the more progressive wing of the Democratic Party to reduce the prison population. He said that some of those folks could be reformed, but others he wouldn't want walking the streets, insinuating that some of those individuals may be too far gone to rehabilitate.

While Mr. Craig has touched on some education policy before – saying he believed underperforming schools should potentially receive less funding or face remedial action because accountability was paramount, in his view, to fixing public education woes – he did touch on the Michigan Democratic Party's now-deleted Facebook post that expressed frustrations about parents opposed to what they believed to be critical race theory-inspired curricula being.



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