



# MAKING IT CLEAR

Serving the Needs of Georgia's Onsite Wastewater Industry

P.O. BOX 2946 | LAGRANGE, GA 30241

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## Letter from the PRESIDENT



Tommy Chambliss, Jr.

When I stepped into office as President of GOWA last August, I could not have predicted the roller coaster to come! The very first challenge was to identify a new management company for the association. We partnered with Association Services Group in LaGrange, GA to manage the programs, membership and finances of GOWA. Together, we've rolled up our sleeves and taken a hard look at our organization from top to bottom.

GOWA is a tremendous resource for our industry. As the only organization representing the collective professional interests of the onsite industry, GOWA is our vehicle to be a strong, unified voice and to make a difference in the development of future programs, regulation and legislation affecting the industry. Being a member is an investment in your future and the future success of your company. For too long, we've undervalued the importance of GOWA membership and the Board took action to put GOWA on more successful path.

Effective June 1, 2018, GOWA's membership structure and dues levels changed to better reflect the value of GOWA membership. When we looked at Onsite Wastewater Associations in other states, it was clear that GOWA was out of step. The new dues structure puts us in line with other states.

With the new dues structure, we will be able to add a new dimension to GOWA membership. GOWA has joined the National Onsite Wastewater Association as a supporting affiliate member. Now GOWA members have access to some of the benefits NOWRA offers, including their Online Learning Academy. In 2019, we hope to become a full affiliate member of NOWRA, which will give every GOWA member access to all NOWRA programs, including their Septic Locator service and discount programs for financing and insurance services.

Our first mission is and will always be to provide knowledge, grow the profession and educate our membership to protect the environment and public health and to promote sustainable onsite

wastewater systems in Georgia. Informed and well-trained operators enhance our industry as a whole and poorly trained operators reflect badly on us all. It's not just a matter of checking off the hours of continuing education needed to maintain your license; it's about providing the best services and solutions to your customers.

GOWA hosted 11 workshops in 2017 and six more in 2018 to provide opportunities for more than 850 contractors across the state to fulfill their continuing education requirements for license renewal. ASG did a good job pulling these together in short order and we are already planning ways to improve and enhance these workshops when we begin again in the fall of 2019.

In the meantime, there will be an opportunity to get a jumpstart on continuing ed requirements at the GOWA Annual Conference coming up in August in Savannah. You'll find all the info about the meeting and how to register in this newsletter. Our education committee is putting together an excellent program of education sessions and it's always valuable to network with all the sectors of our industry. Almost every conference, I learn something that helps me improve my business or to avoid a mistake that someone else alerted me to at the meeting.

Many of us are going full out to keep up with demands of new construction as the economy in the state has rebounded, but we all know we can't count on boom times to continue. We have to invest in improving our skills and our businesses, and we have to invest in our future as an industry and support GOWA.

I hope to see you all in Savannah! ●

See Inside:

## GOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

August 24 - 25  
in Savannah, GA

At this conference, you will have the opportunity to earn Continuing Education Units, learn about exhibiting companies' products and services, and interact with the people of your industry.

Visit: [onsitewastewater.org](http://onsitewastewater.org) to register as an attendee, exhibitor, and/or sponsor.

Opportunity is knocking!



# DPH Q & A: I Smell Rotten Eggs

Chris Kumnick, Georgia Department of Public Health Land Use Program Director

I'm back, it's funny because I've received a pretty even response as to whether that's a good or bad thing. That's fair. As many of you know I stepped away for a year. I had thought



Appalachian Trail Northern Terminus

that I had lost my calling for Public Health but after a long walk and some needed rest I realized I was just burned out. Long story short: before I left I simultaneously served as the Interim Environmental Health Section Director, Deputy EH Section Director and Land Use Program Director. It seemed to be taking me twenty minutes to do five minutes of work. It wasn't sustainable. However, now that I'm back, I'm very proud to say the only hat I wear is that of the Land Use Program Director and it fits just fine. Believe it or not I'm happy as a carp in a septic tank.

Since I've been back I've fielded a few questions. Some of them I addressed as we went around the state for the GOWA Continuing Education Trainings. One of them I want to real quickly cover here: "Why are we seeing concrete tanks eroding right at the water line?" Many of you have encountered deterioration of our concrete tanks to the point of being brittle or crumbling and for some the lids and walls have collapsed. We know some of these issues come from poor manufacturing

practices. I'll start with those - call the state. Our office wants to hear about what quality concerns you are seeing. Honey combing, cracking, crazing, exposed reinforcement, green tanks, etc. If you let us know, DPH will investigate and do our best to work with the precaster to fix any issues.

What I really want to speak to here are those issues caused by hydrogen sulfide. Hydrogen sulfide is a byproduct of *Thiobacillus* bacteria breaking down the organic material in the wastewater. Hydrogen sulfide is a flammable, colorless gas with a characteristic odor of rotten eggs. We all know sometimes we don't need the address to find a septic failure, especially in August. Hydrogen sulfide is commonly known as sulfuric acid or corrosive sewer gas. Hydrosulphuric acid is very corrosive and is typically responsible for the deterioration that you are seeing. Damage may occur slowly at first but once the concrete begins to erode down to the reinforcing rebar and wire a complete failure in the lid or tank walls can happen quickly.

A couple studies suggest that the additional organic load introduced by a garbage disposal will raise the hydrogen sulfide levels. Another said turbulence in the tank from washing machines and dishwasher pumps release hydrogen sulfide. I haven't seen where cleaning products have contributed. That's understandable, if there were flushed chemicals in concentrations strong enough to

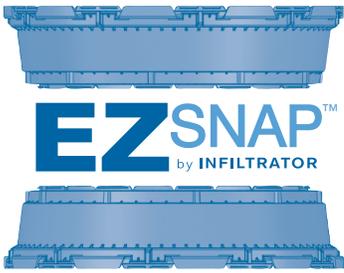
erode concrete we would have bigger issues to contend with than the tank crumbling. I also don't think the salt brine from a water softener contributes that much. Salt ions typically stay in solution and most of the damage we see is occurring above the water line. The main contributor to the deterioration we see is hydrogen sulfide.

If the corrosive gas is the problem then proper venting must be the solution. The *DPH Manual for On-site Sewage Management Systems* directly speaks to the importance of venting. In fact, part of the rationale for 4-inch Schedule 40 PVC sewer pipe is to facilitate liquid transport on the bottom of the pipe and gas exchange on the top. Hydrogen sulfide is heavier than air, the Manual requires sewer pipe to be installed on original or compacted soil which prevents bows in the line. The collecting of effluent in a compromised bowed sewer line can prevent the corrosive gas from dispersing through the soil. Also, when installing a dosing pump make sure the floats are set so that the metal pump is below the water line to protect it from those corrosive sewer gases. And lastly, I'll finish where I started, tank quality always comes into play. The concrete quality and hardness goes a long way for promoting longevity in our tanks.

Now that I'm back, I encourage you to call the state office, and often, let us know what you're seeing. If you have any questions, all of us need to be part of the answer. ●



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# GOWA is the voice for the onsite wastewater industry in Georgia

and it works to represent the interests of the industry on legislative and regulatory issues. GOWA's primary mission is providing education to licensed contractors within the state. Well-trained and informed contractors elevate the entire industry.

- ✓ Members receive all electronic and printed mailings from GOWA and discounted rates for meetings and education sessions.
- ✓ Being a GOWA member is an investment in your future and the future success of your company. Invest in your future, join GOWA today.
- ✓ Companies who join GOWA after June 1, 2018 will receive membership benefits through 2019. Now is the time to get the best value for your membership.

GOWA MEMBER TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ANNUAL DUES
Company Member	Companies who provide onsite and/or portable septic services. Each membership includes listing for two company representatives.	\$125
Associate Member	Open to employees of member companies.	\$25
Vendor	Companies that provide equipment, services or support to septic tank installers, pumpers and portable restroom providers.	\$500
Regulatory/Affiliate	State and federal government employees and academic supporters.	\$75

## Which is your PRIMARY Category?

- Engineer
- Regulator/Compliance Monitor
- Installer
- Installer/Pumper
- Land Application
- Manufacturer/Supplier
- Portable Sanitation
- Pumper
- Soil Scientist

Listing your primary category on your member application/renewal form helps us better serve you with industry exhibits and seminars to inform you about what is happening in YOUR industry.



P.O. Box 2946  
LaGrange, GA 30241

## GOWA 2017-2018 Officers

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Terri Wigley ..... Pit Stop, Marietta - Portable Restrooms

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# GOWA – New or Renewal Membership Form

New     Renewal

## MEMBER INFORMATION

Name (First and Last) \_\_\_\_\_ Certification Number / Last 4 of SSN \_\_\_\_\_

Company / Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Category  
(i.e. Engineer, Regulator/Compliance Monitor, Installer, Installer/Pumper, Land Application, Manufacturer/Supplier, Portable Sanitation, Pumper, Soil Scientist)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CHOOSE A MEMBER TYPE	GOWA MEMBER TYPE	DESCRIPTION	ANNUAL DUES
<input type="checkbox"/>	Company Member	Companies who provide onsite and/or portable septic services. Each membership includes listing for two company representatives.	\$125
<input type="checkbox"/>	Associate Member	Only open to employees of current member companies. Company membership will be verified prior to approval.	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vendor	Companies that provide equipment, services or support to septic tank installers, pumpers and portable restroom providers.	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulatory/Affiliate	State and federal government employees and academic supporters.	\$75

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Interested in sponsoring the 2018 Annual Conference? Sponsorship opportunities are currently available!  
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Jane Zima



# 5 Strategies to Grow Your Pumping Business

Anja Smith - Originally Published in Pumper magazine

Thinking about long-term growth for your business can fall by the wayside when you're focused on day-to-day operations. But it's worth carefully considering the pros and cons of the many different growth methods.

Sometimes it seems like there isn't any energy or time left after getting through the day's jobs. Growing the company – whether strategic or incidental – becomes an afterthought. Hall of Fame football coach Lou Holtz once said, "In this world you're either growing or you're dying so get in motion and grow."

Many pumping companies pride themselves for growing on word-of-mouth alone. That's something to be proud of for sure, but there is also a danger to this strategy. First off, it's leaving your business growth somewhat to chance. Not everyone's goal is world domination, but without some intentional strategy, you may be killing your company by default.

On the other hand, when you get a little bit of success, it can become addictive. You feel the pride, stability and prosperity that comes with running a successful small business and start to crave more. At this point, growth strategy becomes about reducing risk and using resources wisely.

Growth strategies come in a lot of different shapes and sizes. The first step in deciding how to grow is understanding your options. Here are some ideas to consider:

## Market Penetration

Market penetration considers how many people, of the currently available customers, are doing business with you. If there are 100 potential customers and you do business with 10 of them, you have a 10 percent market penetration rate.

"Getting more customers" may seem like an overly simple growth strategy, but it is worth looking at first. Often, this is the least risky



and most attainable growth strategy. The question is how are you going to make that happen.

Usually, increasing your sales from your existing market requires a price reduction, like a promotion, or increased marketing.

Most pumpers aren't fans of discounting service, and I agree with them. Not only does it devalue the labor, but also the cheapest is rarely the best. Customers know that. It can get a customer through the door, but you may have to continue to offer discounted pricing to keep them. Unless you have a very firm grip on your numbers, this is a dangerous game to play.

Marketing efforts or sales can be effective, if executed properly. There is a bit of a risk in spending money and hoping for results, but always ask yourself how you are tracking the return on the marketing investment. Stick to tactics that allow you to track that easily and don't sign unnecessary contracts.

Finally, keep in mind that this strategy has a shelf life. At some point, you will reach market saturation. That will never be 100 percent unless you are the only pumper in town, so don't even try.

## Market Development

Market development looks for opportunities to bring your current services to a new set of customers. Geographic expansion is the most common tactic for this, and a fairly obvious growth strategy for pumpers. Keep doing the same work in more places.

Some may argue this strategy has minimal risk, but don't take it for granted. You probably saw success in your current geographic market because you understand the area and the customers. Moving to a new area means you don't have a network to build customers from, it means you don't know the suppliers or the inspectors, and there may be different codes or common problems that you are not used to dealing with. Everything from soil type to climate can change pumping

[continued]

practices, so don't take your success for granted in another market.

Another way to develop the market is to bring your services to a different time, rather than a different place. Expanding service hours or offering emergency service is another way of developing the market to build your business.

**Service Expansion & Diversification**

Developing new service categories is a great way to build a pumping business. This might mean the purchase of new equipment that diversifies your offerings, or it might mean expanding the type of work you do. For instance, you could add drain cleaning services to a septic pumping business.

Training and market research are incredibly important to this type of expansion plan. It isn't as simple as buying the new shiny machine at the trade show. You have to understand your market, your talent pool, and consider whether you can sell to your existing customers or attract new ones.

**Unrelated Diversification**

Your business can do more than just sell pumping services. In fact, you may even be able to add revenue streams that have nothing to do with pumping services. The most common example of this is real estate.

If you have extra space in your facility, could you rent a portion out to another company? That would be one simple example of adding a revenue stream to your company that has nothing to do with pumping. Be creative and look at your assets. If there is something that can be leveraged there might an opportunity to grow your company in a direction that you never before imagined.

**Merger & Acquisition**

The idea of buying another company might seem intimidating, but it is actually very common. Even small companies can acquire. This is a fast track way to create growth, but it does require up-front capital.

Most people immediately consider buying a competitor. That can be a great way to increase market share, but that isn't the only kind of acquisition out there.

Consider backward acquisition as well. Backway acquisition is when you purchase a supplier. For instance, if you work with a leak detection company who provides you leads for slab leak repairs you could buy that company – now you have revenues for the leak detection and the repair.

**Brainstorming Ideas for Growth**

These are far from the only types of growth opportunities, but that is the exciting part. There is so much opportunity in the pumping industry that there are no limits to the success you can enjoy.

When you sit down to consider where your next growth opportunity lies, you should take the process seriously and do your research. Start with a simple brainstorming session. Write down 10 to 20 ideas – crazy, big, small, serious and everything in between. Once you have that list, pick your top five to do a strategic planning session for.

List each strategy. Next to each one, in a new column, list the immediate resources you would need in order to execute it. Put numbers on these if possible – understand the capital, people, process and administrative costs that are needed to pursue the opportunity.

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Note: Sponsorship deadline for guaranteed inclusion in printed and onsite materials is Friday, July 27, 2018. Event sponsors contact Kelley Atkinson at [katkinson@asginfo.net](mailto:katkinson@asginfo.net) or Abby DeGennaro at [adegennaro@asginfo.net](mailto:adegennaro@asginfo.net)

Next, look at the pros and cons of each strategy. Be honest with yourself about the day-to-day impact this will have on your business and your life. Cap this section off with a revenue estimate of what this strategy might add, in dollars, to your business every year. As much research as you can do to accurately predict this number, the better. Don't pick a number out of thin air.

Finally, list the initial steps to implement the strategy.

Now you are ready to consider your five options. You know your resources cost and your potential upside. You know the pros and cons of each and how you are going to get started.

When presented in this easy-to-read format, with all of the facts laid out before you, decisions become easier. Making growth decisions, not on whims but on facts, is important to the success of your company.

There is no right or wrong to growth strategies for your business. Each company is unique. Look for opportunities that excite you and play to your strengths. A final tip: Don't discount the effect a growth opportunity will have on your personal life or goals for your family, which could be way more important than the money it would bear. ●



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Check it out.

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Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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Name on Badge (First and Last) \_\_\_\_\_ Certification Number \_\_\_\_\_

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Name on Badge (First and Last) \_\_\_\_\_ Certification Number \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTRATION	RATE	NUMBER ATTENDING	AMOUNT DUE
Member - Full Registration	\$250		
Member - Friday Only	\$200		
Member - Saturday Only	\$165		
Non-Member - Full Registration	\$325		
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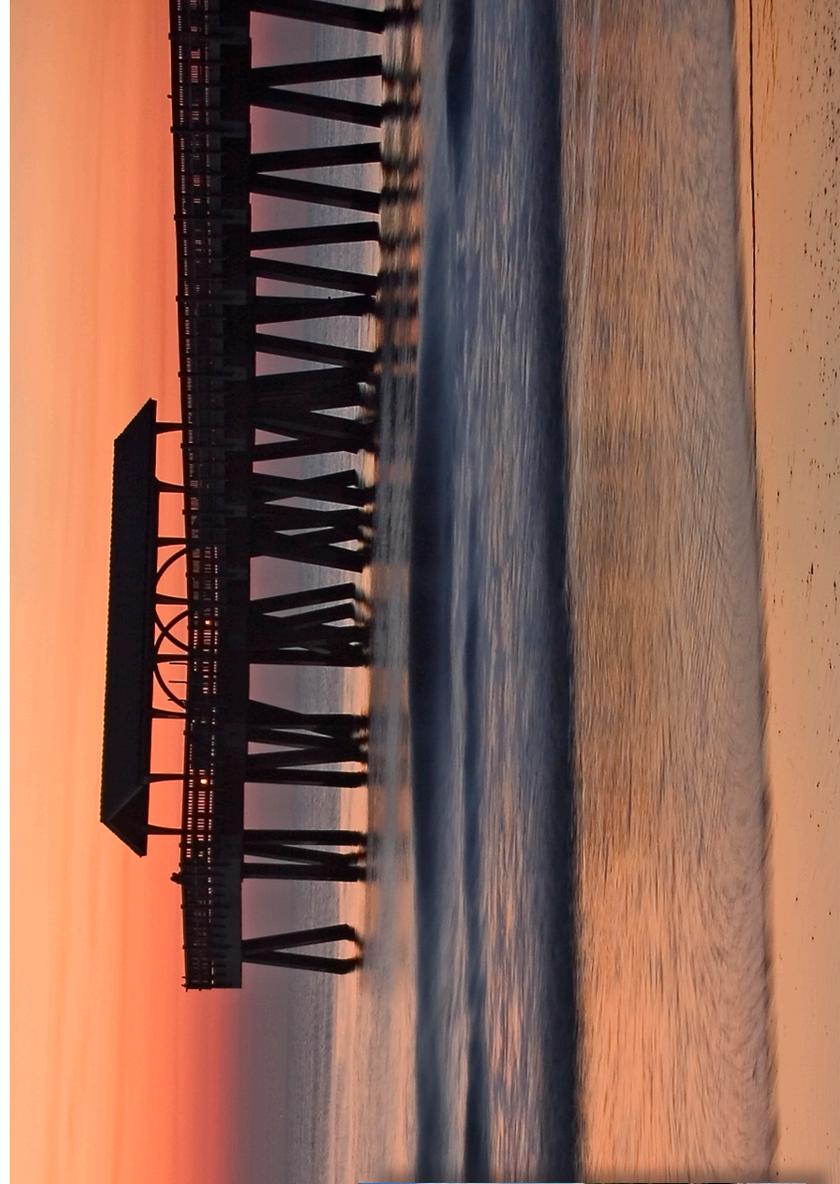
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\*Any exhibitor/vendor selling goods or services onsite is considered a "Transient Merchant" and must obtain a City of Savannah Business Tax Certificate.

Please mail your form and payment to GOWA, PO Box 2946, LaGrange, GA 30241 or fax your form with credit card information to 706-883-8215. You can also find this form online at [onsitewastewater.org](http://onsitewastewater.org).



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Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association  
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