

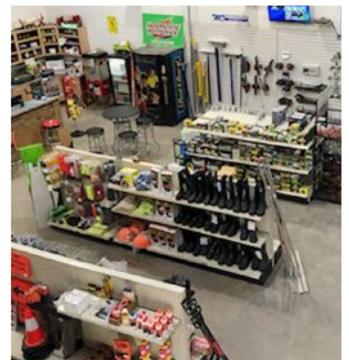
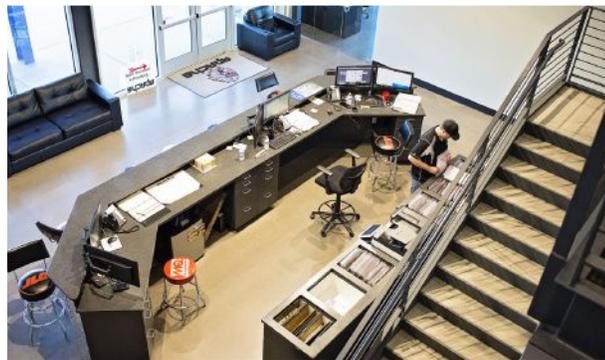
# RENTAL MANAGEMENT

The Official Magazine of the American Rental Association

March 2019



## Portraying a **professional image**



News coverage from  
The ARA Show 2019  
Profiting with drain  
cleaning equipment



By Connie Lannan



## Texas investigator honored with **ARA Insurance/ NER Award** at the show

**T**he quick actions and valuable connections of Investigator Kenneth Peters with the Hunt County Sheriff's Office, Greenville, Texas, not only helped recover a stolen excavator and arrest a suspect, but they also garnered him the ARA Insurance/National Equipment Register (NER) Award. He was presented that award during The ARA Show™ 2019 that took place last month in Anaheim, Calif.

Peters was nominated by David Grant Mossman, senior analyst at NER, a Verisk business. In his nomination, Mossman wrote:

"A newer John Deere mid-size excavator was stolen from an American Rental Association (ARA) member rental business through a fraudulent rental. The local police agency had difficulty responding to the theft as a criminal act. NER reached out to Investigator Peters because of his equipment crimes knowledge and connections throughout the area. Despite the crime not being in his jurisdiction, he helped the local agency to correctly enter the crime in police systems, then engaged state and local investigators to pursue GPS and social media data to locate the machine and suspects. Investigator Peters' use of the NER alert in the theft resulted in tips that lead to the identification of one suspect, that person's eventual arrest and recovery of the equipment."

Peters has had a long career in local and state law enforcement that has given him a wealth of knowledge about auto and equipment theft:

- Began his career 39 years ago at the Commerce, Texas, Police Department.
- Worked at the Hunt County Sheriff's Office.
- Moved to the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission before retiring.
- Came out of retirement to serve as the chief deputy of the Delta County Sheriff's Office.
- Was elected Justice of the Peace.
- After his term ended, returned to the Hunt County Sheriff's Office.

"Over the years I have worked closely with the Northeast Texas Auto Theft Task Force in Paris and the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB). I have built relationships with a lot of auto theft

investigators throughout my career and I learned from them," he says.

Since he has been back at the sheriff's office, he has handled all of the auto and equipment theft cases. "If it has wheels and runs on diesel, I am the one they call," he says, noting that he wouldn't have it any other way. "I like equipment and I like getting people's stuff back. I answer the phone 24 hours a day, so if a theft occurs, I am the one who gets called."

That network, knowledge and dedication proved invaluable in the case of the stolen excavator.

"Rental theft is unknown to a lot of younger officers. They don't teach them about that at the academy, so officers can become confused and think cases like this are civil matters. In this case, the suspect used a fraudulent ID to rent equipment from the scene, which is obviously a theft. Mr. Mossman from NER called me, I made some phone calls and got the case to those at the Terrell [Texas] Police Department who made the correct theft report. I put the information on Facebook and somebody recognized who the suspect was. The machine had a GPS unit on it, so it was tracked down relatively quickly," he says.

That is nothing unusual for Peters, who has become a vital resource to law enforcement agencies around the area.

"Anytime we have thefts, or another agency has thefts, I send the information to NER. They then publish the theft alerts. I also post the NER alerts on Facebook and spend a lot of time educating other police officers about what to look for regarding equipment theft," he says.

For Peters, taking the time to get the word out about theft, even if it isn't in his district, making sure other law enforcement officers keep equipment theft top of mind and going the extra mile to recover stolen equipment is just part of his job. He definitely wasn't expecting to be nominated for this prestigious award.

"It was a real honor," he says, noting that it meant a lot "for a small department like ours to be recognized at the national level."

The recognition at the show in California was made even sweeter because his family — daughter Emily Rose, his father, his father's friend and his sister — was there to witness it.

Peters is not the only one who benefits from this award. His department also benefits by receiving \$2,000 that can be used to enhance the department's theft-recovery efforts. ♦



## Award winner offers two tips to help recover stolen equipment

Hunt County Texas Sheriff's Office Investigator Kenneth Peters, pictured above, who was named the 2018 ARA Insurance/National Equipment Register (NER) Award winner at The ARA Show™ in February, has been involved in numerous equipment theft cases. He knows that every minute counts when it comes to recovering stolen equipment. That is why he encourages rental operators to take the following steps:

**Know the investigator in your area who works this type of crime — before your equipment is stolen.** "That way if you do have something stolen, you already have a contact. A lot of times when GPS on the equipment goes off at two in the morning, rental operators don't know who to call. They will call some agency that isn't familiar with how GPS works on the equipment and your information won't be passed on to the right people at the right time. If I get a call at 2 a.m. on the weekend that there is stolen machinery running down the highway, I will be on that highway in five minutes; whereas if you call somebody else, it might be Monday before they go out and look for it. By then the thieves have already taken the GPS device off," he says.

**Provide weekend/off-hours contact information.** "We run across equipment many times on weekends, but we don't have any contact information for people at the rental operation during that time. If you are in the rental business, at least give NER the right phone number to call if there is an emergency on the weekends," Peters says. ♦

## Law enforcement officers offer exceptional service to the industry

Law enforcement officers from around the country are dedicated to helping those in the equipment and event rental industry recover stolen equipment. That commitment was reflected in the nominations for the ARA Insurance/National Equipment Register (NER) Award, which was presented at The ARA Show™ in February. See how these officers are making a difference.

### **Officer Jessica Huntley, Baxter Police Department, Baxter, Minn.**

*Nominated by Steve Mau, president, Brainerd General Rental, Baxter, Minn.*

During the last several years, Mau and his team have contacted local law enforcement officers when nonresponsive customers maintained possession of pieces of equipment that raised concerns of theft by conversion or when an item was dropped off near the facility after business hours with the intent of nonpayment.

"Officer Huntley has taken concerns regarding theft by conversion and theft of rental services seriously each and every time. Her prompt attention and thorough investigation have resulted in numerous convictions over the years. When considering where to build our new facility, we chose to remain in Baxter in part because of the support of Officer Huntley and the entire Baxter Police Department," he says.

### **Sgt. Michael Kluttz, Cabarrus County Sheriff's Office, Concord, N.C.**

*Nominated by Henry Beck, LoJack, Wellford, S.C.*

After a rental customer did not return a skid steer at the end of the contract and defaulted on the rental payments in June 2018, the rental company made numerous attempts to contact the customer to no avail. The skid steer was equipped with a GPS; however, the rental company lost tracking capabilities in August. In September, after several attempts to find the equipment on various job sites the customer was known to frequent, the rental company contacted the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., Police Department and reported it stolen.

"The police department verified the theft and entered the information into the state and federal crime computers, which automatically activated the LoJack® system that was concealed in the skid steer," Beck says. "Sgt. Michael Kluttz picked up the silent signal with the LoJack Police Tracking Computers (PTC). Following the directional and audible clues, he tracked the vehicle to a residence nearly 70 miles away from the last known GPS location. The skid steer was recovered and returned. The case agent with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department signed a warrant on the rental customer for felony larceny."

### **Patrol Lt. Daniel Bellinger, Garden Ridge Police Department, Garden Ridge, Texas**

*Nominated by Michael Holdman, manager, Texas First Rentals, Waco, Texas.*

Before joining the police force, Bellinger worked for more than two years at a Texas Rental Association (TRA) rental operation as a counter salesperson and mechanic. That knowledge and understanding has been invaluable, according to Holdman.

"He has been a great supporter of the TRA/ARA. Since going on the police force, he has continued to help rental members by looking for equipment that just 'does not look right.' Officer Bellinger is a great asset in keeping our costs down due to theft," Holdman says.

### **Motor Carrier Officer Maxwell Holly, Michigan State Police, Jackson Post, Mich.**

*Nominated by Capt. Michael Krumm, commander, Michigan State Police, Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Division.*

"Motor Carrier Officer (MCO) Holly has developed an affinity for stopping vehicles carrying heavy equipment and identifying them. He has worked with our auto theft unit and has become an expert at identifying and searching for stolen heavy equipment," Krumm says.

That awareness and expertise resulted in two large recoveries of stolen heavy equipment from traffic stops.

An incident in May "resulted in the identification of a stolen skid steer after a vehicle carrying the skid steer bypassed our weigh station. The equipment had the PIN [product identification number] removed. He had to go the extra mile of identifying this vehicle through the NICB [National Insurance Crime Bureau] and other resources," Krumm says. ♦