

Show Biz Generators Rely on Separ Filters to Keep the Lights and Cameras Running

By Mark McNeely

Whether it's a live television event, the latest drama series or the set of a soon-to-be blockbuster movie, power failures are not an option in the entertainment industry. Downtime costs big money. Likewise, nobody would be happy if power is lost during a special event such as a presidential inauguration or the White House Easter egg hunt.



With the goal of keeping the power flowing, Annapolis Mobile Power Services, Inc. (AMPS), has built a solid reputation providing mobile rental generator sets to the entertainment and special events industries. That reputation lies on a foundation of rigorous preventive maintenance, paying particular attention to fuel quality and cleanliness, according to Patrick McAllister, owner of the Centreville, Maryland-based company.

"I compete with the big guys every day," McAllister says, "so I have to be better than the big guys because I can't just throw more iron at a job if we have a gen-set failure."

AMPS' preventive maintenance program has come to rely on fuel filtration products from Separ to keep the fuel clean in its fleet of generator sets. "Failure is not allowed in my line of business,

"The whole experience made me a true believer in Separ."

given the high profile nature of the events that we help power," McAllister says.

AMPS uses Separ's model SWK-2000/10G fuel filter/water separators on its gen-sets, which are fitted between the fuel tank and the engine's lift pump. The AMPS fleet consists of Crawford gen-sets that range in size from 30 to 165 kW, powered by a mix of diesel engines from Volvo, Caterpillar, Cummins and Hatz. The units were packaged by Engine & Equipment Co., which has since become a part of Multiquip Inc.

"After I bought and installed my first Separ separator, which was a replacement for the existing OEM-supplied unit, I noticed right off the bat that the Separ was trapping more dirt and sediment than the other filter had ever collected," McAllister notes. "What impressed me even more was that you could drain the separator bowl without taking it apart – what a concept!

"Adding to this is the fact that the Separ filters can be back flushed up to five times," he says. "So I replaced all of the other fuel/water separators with Separ and I haven't looked back since."

Michael Hudson, technical sales with Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.-based Separ, comments, "We are pleased to be an integral part of AMPS' preventive maintenance program. It's important to maintain a clean fuel supply to help these gen-sets operate trouble free."

The Separ 2000/10G fuel filter/water separators feature an optimum flow rate of 2.63 gpm, or 157.8 gph. The "G" denotes a vacuum gauge option that allows visual indication of filter restriction. The Separ 2000 series of filters are manufactured from high quality, non-corroding aluminum alloy castings, heavy polycarbonate or metal bowls and stainless steel hardware. Single and duplex systems are available with flow rates from 80 to 2060 gph. Benefits of the Separ units include a small physical size, high flow rate, low restriction and long-life filter elements.

"It's really easy to drain and change out a Separ filter," McAllister says. He recalls a particular situation earlier this year where changing the Separ filter in minutes literally saved his day. Seventy-five minutes before a live broadcast, the Separ fuel filter became filled with what looked to be rust and sediment. "I drained the Separ, flushed the 30 micron filter and refilled the unit. It took fewer than 10 minutes. The big proof of how effective the Separ had been came the following morning when I removed the two fuel filters from the engine manifold. There was no rusty brown fuel in the manifold filters. The Separ was dirty again, but not so much as to cause any engine problems," McAllister says.

"That whole experience made me a true believer in Separ," he adds.

Notes Hudson, "Our filters are designed for easy installation and quick field service, which obviously played out in this instance for AMPS."

In addition to the gen-set mounted fuel water separators, McAllister uses Separ 10 micron filtration on his fuel transfer tank in an effort to trap contaminants before they reach the generator set fuel tank. "We also have a portable fuel polishing system that we use to keep the gen-set fuel tanks as clean as possible. In my opinion, anyone who has a diesel generator set and doesn't polish their fuel is just inviting trouble." ■

