

**Award Presentation by Ranger Kidwell-Ross,  
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Today's presentation of the World Sweeper / World Sweeping Association Award of Excellence in Power Sweeping continues a tradition I began 21 years ago.

This year's Award Winner has been in the industry for over 40 years and, like a lot of the rest of you in this room, didn't really know what he was getting into. In 1975, he was a college student at San Jose State University with an entrepreneur's spirit and mechanical skills such that, in his spare time, he and a friend started building boat trailers for flat-bottom speedboats.

One day an area boat racer named Leonard Vella came by looking to have a boat trailer made. As they got to know Vella, they learned he was also the owner of a power sweeping company who, although he liked his large TYMCO street sweepers, absolutely hated the little ride-on sweepers he was trailering around in order to sweep his company's 15 parking lot routes.

For each route, Vella groused to the kids, he had to buy and maintain 3 different pieces of equipment: a Tennant ride-on sweeper, a trailer to put it onto and a tow vehicle to pull the trailer and sweeper between jobs. Then, once his employees got the tiny sweepers unloaded they had to bump around the parking lot at 2-3 miles an hour trying to do a job the Tennant sweepers weren't even made to do.

Vella wondered if Larry, the kid who was clearly good with fabrication, might be able to come up with a small parking lot sweeper that could be mounted onto a regular pickup truck? Then, it could be driven to a parking lot, used to sweep the lot and then driven to the next account.

Shop space was rented and a collaboration started on the process of making a parking lot air sweeper. The first one was mounted onto a Ford Courier pickup and the sweeper part worked via a fan spun by a Wisconsin two-cylinder motor. Vella's crew tried the machine out on the job and, when it worked fine, they made another. Ultimately, Vella bought the first 10 of the pickup-mounted sweepers.

A year or so later, in 1976, a partnership between the kid builder, Larry Dyck, a sales promoter, Jim Mills, and Mill's partner, Frank Dorsa, incorporated as the Mr. Air Company. Like Henry Ford, the fledgling company started out making just one model of sweeper, although it was offered in two styles: one version mounted onto a pickup truck and the other made to slide into a pickup's existing bed.

Then, around 1978, they heard a guy named Bob Woltering was going to hold a pavement maintenance show in New Orleans. They decided to take one of their little round tank sweepers, which they mounted on a Datsun pickup. Arriving at the show, they found their machine was waaaaay smaller than any other sweepers there. That first year, Larry Dyck reminisced recently, we were known as "the people who were trying to sell a tin can mounted on a little bitty pickup truck."

However, through mostly word of mouth Mr. Air sweepers caught on quickly. The pair set up a dealership in Los Angeles, with the late Bob Binge hired as the manager. From input from Vella's sweeper operators they made a change that continues to this day.

The biggest problem we have, the operators said, are flat tires caused by the mid-mounted sweeping head. Acting on this information, the decision was made to mount Mr. Air sweeping heads on the rear of the sweeper, the reason they're mounted that way today.

Around this same time, the Mr. Air team also started the first ever power sweeping association. Although mostly a mix of contractors from the San Jose area, Bob Schwarze, the founder of Schwarze Industries, drove out from Alabama for the meeting and brought along his banker, the late Carl Austin. Monthly meetings were held for awhile but trailed off over time.

Jim Mills, who legend documents as a great promoter, also wrote a few issues of what became the first newsletter for sweeping contractors, relegating to second place the SuperVac Quarterly, the newsletter I started for Schwarze Industries in 1987.

Some years ago, the decision was made to shorten the Mr. Air Sweeper Company name to its first letter acronyms: MASCO. Finally, I want to note that when I interviewed Larry Dyck a few days ago — without him knowing it was for this award — he modestly credited his employees — especially his brother, Mike, who ran MASCO's marketing for over 30 years — as being the reason for his company's success.

With that, I'm proud to announce that the WorldSweeper.com / World Sweeping Association winner of the 2016 United States Award of Excellence in Power Sweeping is Larry Dyck and his company, MASCO Sweepers.