

# AJAY Equipment Corp.

*Giving storage a lift for 21 years*

*By Amy Campbell*

Randy Vander Hill began his career 32 years ago in the industrial-equipment industry when he was just a teen, working weekends and summers for the company that employed his father. In 1983, he launched his own business, Placentia, Calif.-based AJAY Equipment Corp., which sells and installs vertical reciprocating conveyors designed for the self-storage industry.

"Vertical reciprocating conveyors, or VRCs as they are called by many people, were slowly coming into the storage industry," recalls Vander Hill. "We had done some of the first installations at the prior company I worked with, and I really felt there would be a market for this product in the storage industry, if it was promoted properly."

Vander Hill was right. Twenty-one years later, AJAY continues to thrive with more than 600 installations in 41 states. The company has 16 employees, most of whom have been with the company for many years. "We feel the most important part of any business is the employees, and we are certainly very dedicated to ours," he says.

## The VRC Advantage

AJAY's custom-made lifts are an economical alternative to passenger elevators, especially for existing self-storage facilities. "There are a lot of facilities that were built in the '70s and '80s, and even some being built today, with two or sometimes three stories that do not have any kind of freight lift or elevator. This is a viable alternative and at a great savings to the customer," Vander Hill says.

Purchasing a VRC rather than a passenger elevator could save a self-storage operator as much as \$75,000 just in the initial purchase, shaft way construction, mechanical installation and first few years of maintenance. "It's an economical alternative. In today's world, I would not build a two- or three-story facility without having a lift of some kind. You will not lease the upper floors without this kind of product," Vander Hill says.

The easy-to-use VRCs transport a storage customer's goods from floor to floor. The customer loads his goods onto the lift, and then takes the stairs or a passenger elevator. The VRC takes only seconds to reach the next level. VRCs are also bigger than the standard passenger elevator, which translates to fewer trips for the self-storage customer and eliminates carrying heavy boxes up

and down stairs. "Typically, with passenger elevators, the carrier car is predicated by capacity. Many passenger elevators have a much smaller interior space than our vertical reciprocating conveyors," Vander Hill says. For example, a 2,500-pound capacity passenger elevator may have an interior car size of only 4 by 6 feet.

VRC platforms can be up to 6 by 9 feet. "There's a lot more space to put your goods on."

There are other advantages as well. The VRC uses a free-standing truss mast tower design. "It's a key component, because this design is extremely rigid and doesn't rely on any building structure for support. That's what makes it unique," Vander Hill says. "With a lot of elevators, you have to put in concrete load-bearing walls, a deep walled concrete pit and major electrical services. Our product

doesn't require any of this."

The VRC comes with numerous safety and proprietary design features developed by AJAY, including a four-way safety slide-bolt interlock, and other electrical and hydraulic safety features.

AJAY also offers a maintenance plan. "You would not want to make this kind of investment without getting after sales service. This is a considerable expense and should not be neglected," Vander Hill says. "In today's world, we are all concerned about safety and liability, so we want to make sure the product is properly maintained. That's one of the things our company is known for-providing quality after-sales service and customer support."

AJAY's customer base has grown over the years to include small and large companies. "Most of our customers are still the mom-and-pop companies who will buy one or two lifts," Vander Hill says. "However, we do multiple installations for many of the larger firms, including Storage USA, 5A Rent-A-Space, Caster Properties and Public Storage. We take great pride in the long-term business relationships we have developed through the years with all of our customers and the many building contractors who have worked with us."

It is the company's reputation for quality work, superior equipment and excellent customer service that has driven AJAY's continuing success. "There have been other companies that have come and gone through the years, and like I tell everyone, we're here to stay," Vander Hill says. "When you look at the whole picture of who we are, and what we've accomplished you will understand why we feel there is no equal."

For more information, call 800.521.AJAY; visit [www.ajaystoragelifts.com](http://www.ajaystoragelifts.com).

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THE MOST  
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—RANDY VANDER HILL