

[00:00:00.330] - Speaker 1
You.

[00:00:02.290] - Speaker 2
Since the dawn of time, mankind has searched for ways to shelter themselves from the elements. Over the centuries, these shelters have evolved from bamboo huts to concrete towers. The last few years, there's been a push to save the planet. Are you ready to embark on a more sustainable lifestyle? Look no further. You're about to enter the adventures of container home living and now contractor, radio and TV personality and your host for Boxcar Universe, Steve DuBell.

[00:00:39.950] - Speaker 3
Hi, I'm Steve DuBell, host of Boxcar Universe, along with my co host, Mel Alva. And here's what's coming up on this week's edition of Boxcar Universe. Joe James is here with us. He is the CEO and president of Mobile Emergency Housing Corporation. With the fires in Maui and many of the people there that are homeless, Joe's company is filling the gap with mobile emergency housing. Also with us is Chuck Warsaver. He is the advisor and operating partner of Stardust Building Supplies. Your choice for reclaiming and recycling all kinds of building materials. That and more right here on this week's edition of Boxcar Universe, your home for container sustainable lifestyle living. And we want to welcome all our guests to the show today. Mel and I are here and manning the Ford as usual. Mel, how are you today?

[00:01:36.290] - Speaker 4
I'm doing great, Steve.

[00:01:37.480] - Speaker 3
How are we're? Just like you, we're running in the gap here, as they say, and trying to make a difference and make things happen. But the one thing I want to just touch base on before we introduce our first guest. The fires in Maui have been at the forefront of the news broadcast for several weeks now. Exactly the devastation that we see there in the pictures and stuff, and then all of a sudden, then after they're thinking about devastation and all these people are displaced, then all of a sudden the finger pointing starts. But one of the things that I always thought of originally when I first saw the fires was that this is the perfect place for emergency temporary housing because these displaced people have no home. A lot of the people have lost all their valuables. They have no money. And we see some of these interviews on television and it's really heartbreaking. And sometimes the government is not as efficient as we would like them to be because they aren't fulfilling the need of people that have been devastated by a natural either by natural disasters or with this situation with fires.

[00:03:08.170] - Speaker 3
And there's a lot of different theories that I've heard that where the fire start. Well, these are things that need to be figured out. But the one thing that really needs to be figured out immediately is how to help these people who have lost basically everything. And it's just something that needs to be taken care of by people that stepping in and filling the gap. And our first guest is Joe James. He's the CEO and president of Mobile Emergency Housing Corporation. And I happen to hear Joe doing an interview on the radio on Monday on Labor Day. And I reached out to Joe and I said, I have to have you as a guest on my show because this is something that is near and dear to what Mel and I actually try and do is helping the public understand what's going on and in this realm of temporary housing and container homes. And Joe agreed to come on the show today and tell us a little bit about his company and what is going on with his support of those devastated people in Maui. Joe, thank you for being on Box Car Universe today.

[00:04:24.180] - Speaker 3
Welcome to the show.

[00:04:25.910] - Speaker 1
My pleasure. Thanks for having me.

[00:04:27.580] - Speaker 3

Great. And I know you're in the midst of traveling, so we're going to try not to take up a lot of your time because I know you've got a tight schedule. But Joe, tell us a little bit about you and how you got started with your company.

[00:04:46.890] - Speaker 1

Well, mobile emergency Housing corp basically started about four or five years ago 2019. It was an outgrowth of another company I own called Coaches on Location. We were supplying luxury onsite accommodations for the entertainment industry, the film and entertainment industry. The company wound up doing the Grammys in 2018. And a friend of mine approached me. He said, Joe, Hurricane Maria wiped out Puerto Rico and I'm tight with the governor. Could you help know, basically you have all these vehicles and you're catering to celebrities. What can you do for us? So we actually looked at shipping crates, putting them together, using them as temporary housing for the people in Puerto Rico. The problem with Puerto Rico was that that hurricane was so devastating that they had no infrastructure, had no way to get them from the docks up. The know telephone poles are still down for weeks, trees were down. But it gave me a good lesson about this industry and how needed it was. And that really kind of broke my heart again. I mean, I'm watching TV and I'm seeing these people living in the streets with a tarp over them or living in their cars.

[00:06:08.550] - Speaker 1

Here I am with these A class movie stars hanging out in my RVs. And I said, there's something else I should be doing basically to help people like this. So Mobile Emergency Housing started getting calls, ironically, from a couple of entertainers producers whose house burned down. They wanted to stay in our luxury RVs. And that lit a fuse between Hurricane Maria and a couple of other events. I said, this is really what I want to do, because I can't imagine being in that situation and have to rely on the government because the government's not going to make you whole. So we formed the company in 19 and the first year we were profitable. We've been growing 450% year over year. And we treat our clients like their family. We put ourselves in their situation. So we will not rent them something that I would not personally live in or rent to somebody in my family. And from that philosophy, I mean, our philosophy is customer service first. These people have lost everything. They have nothing. Some of them have lost their pets. Some of them have lost family members. So what can I do to make their life a little easier?

[00:07:28.360] - Speaker 1

And that's the premise of the company. And it's just been phenomenal at the outrage, the type of reviews we get and the gratitude that I get from helping people in that type of situation.

[00:07:43.270] - Speaker 3

Yeah, it's got to be very rewarding. Especially when you meet and greet these people. I can imagine that they are eternally indebted to you and your company for some of the things that you're doing and being able to supply them with just to put a roof over their head and help them through this really bad time. We think about some of the things that we've seen in other spots around the country and around the world. I got to believe that with the way you hear about all these different climate problems and weather related issues that your product is needed everywhere.

[00:08:31.170] - Speaker 1

Absolutely. To your point. Our clients become our friends. I mean, they invite me to their barbecues. They've invited me to their weddings. They literally become friends. And I reach out to them from time to time. One person in particular comes to my mind that lived in Mechanicsville, Maryland. She owned two houses and she had a house in Alabama that got destroyed by a hurricane. And then she moved up to her other house in Mechanicsville and another weather event destroyed that house. It was so devastating to her husband. He had a heart attack and a stroke and wound up in a hospital, had to have vascular surgery. And it was just a bad situation. So he's getting ready basically to be released from the hospital. He has no place to go. The hospital won't release him unless he has someplace to go. They contacted me. We were building some custom residential trailers. A couple of them were actually coming offline from the factory. We shipped it straight from the factory straight to her home. Unfortunately, that particular day, my installer wasn't available and I knew that it was an emergency.

So I jumped in my car and drove the 5 hours down to Mechanicsville, Maryland and set the trailer up myself.

[00:09:51.390] - Speaker 1

And you're talking about gratitude. It just was like a phenomenal situation for them and they were very thankful. And we became good friends.

[00:10:04.770] - Speaker 3

Some of the things that we always do, especially in the field, doing remodeling and repairs and stuff like that, when those kind of things strike in any shape or form, it's kind of like it's emergency time and it needs to be fixed like yesterday. That's right. The need of the homeowner always comes first because I'm sure like you do. You want to be able to know that they're safe and sound and you did your best and we could sleep at night.

[00:10:38.490] - Speaker 1

Yes. If they call me at 03:00 in the morning and I'm up, I'm answering that phone. It rolls over to all my phones and all my staff. But really I'm the one that's looking at the lines coming in. So nine out of ten times when the phone rings I'm going to answer it unless I'm in a meeting. If it goes past my lines, my staff pick up the phone. So we're a 24/7 shop, it doesn't matter. Emergencies happen anytime, all day, every day, so they don't happen on a schedule. Someone calls me and they need something and we can deliver it. That's what we're going to do. So Maui is a special case. Maui has been so devastated by the wildfire and yes, there's a lot of politics involved and finger pointing, frankly I'm not concerned about any of that. So I'm going direct to the homeowner. Our business model basically is we help displace homeowners, get temporary housing because they have insurance, people that have to wait on the government, unfortunately, or nonprofits, it's a little bit more difficult for them. So right now what we're doing is we're compiling a list of the homeowners who have been displaced who are insured to provide them with temporary housing once their land is cleared.

[00:12:05.530] - Speaker 1

Now that doesn't mean that we are ignoring the renters and people that didn't have insurance. We are actually compiling a list of everyone who reaches out to us who needs housing and we're submitting that list over to the government, the local senators and nonprofits and hopefully raise some money so they can also live in one of our units. Basically we have smart homes that's going to be delivered really nice high tech units and also the collapsible trailers which I'll get into more detail with.

[00:12:45.510] - Speaker 3

Sure, I mean that's one of the things I wanted to just touch base on. Looking at some of the pictures on the way these can be put together, it's just amazing. I could see how you can stack them up as many as you can and ship them overseas to be able to get them there and just basically with a forklift. And I'm sure it's for somebody who grew up, as they say, being my business. I guess you could say I'm handy with tools because I know a lot of homeowners who are dangerous with tools and I try and save them from hurting themselves. But it seems that the assembly of them seems to be pretty simple when you put them together, when they're shipped flat and then they are erected and put together, they're weathertight, they look very nice. When you think about a temporary home, I mean, any home really that someone can provide for you in a time of disaster. Like you said, it's greatly appreciated.

[00:14:07.150] - Speaker 1

Yeah, the foldable shelters. They're patented and they are easily transportable. We can put ten of them on a flatbed truck. We could put 1000 of them on a ship and move them all around the world. Basically, it takes about 15 minutes to set them up. There's four hinges. Once they are elevated using a single forklift and you just put the hinges in place, they sit back down and they become weathertight. They have a window that can be optimized for air conditioning. So you can put a unit in basically as a heat pump or AC, and then you can outfit it however you need. Walls come down so you can stack them side by side. You can make them command centers. You could do a lot of different things with them. Meeting rooms, all types of configurations. Shelters for homeless, for the immigrants. You could really stack them as far as you have space. Support services, we arrange that

as well. All depends on what the need is. We'll bring in portable holding tanks, storage tanks, potable water tanks and bathrooms. Showers. These particular units don't have bathrooms, but they can be configured with a shower bathroom stall setup attached to the back of it.

[00:15:49.760] - Speaker 1

So it depends on what the client needs. They're very versatile.

[00:15:54.760] - Speaker 3

That's really great. Before we go to break, I want to just give out Joe's company's phone number and his actual URL. His phone number is 888-201-7999 and you could check out his website online@mobileemergencyhousing.com. But on the other side of the break, we're going to talk a little more about Maui and his company's plan on how to get all this material and housing over there and what the long term game plan is right there. But I want everybody to stay tuned right here. You are listening to Boxcar Universe.

[00:16:40.450] - Speaker 1

It.

[00:16:56.630] - Speaker 4

I'm Mel Alva with Alva Interiors and co host of Boxcar Universe. As a professional interior designer with over 22 years experience, I'm excited to bring my knowledge to the Boxcar Universe show as a full service interior design studio. We see your designs from the conceptual phase through to the styling and furnishing of your home. At Alva Interiors, our team approaches every design project with a fashion meets design sense to execute timeless interiors style that makes a statement. You can find us on the web web@alvainersaz.com, on Facebook at [alvaintersaz](#) and on Instagram at [alvainers](#).

[00:17:37.530] - Speaker 2

Chances are, when it's time to call a service professional, you need someone right away. Who can you call for those electrical problems fast? The answer is Mr. Electric, a licensed, bonded and insured company serving the Valley of the sun since 2000. Some of their residential and commercial services include expert troubleshooting, replacing an outlet, hanging a ceiling fan, or upgrading your electric service, and much more. Rest assured, all work is guaranteed. Call today for your appointment 480-503-1339. You can find them on the web at phoenixmetro.mrelectric.com. Remember, at Mr. Electric, we have the power to make things better you.

[00:18:34.950] - Speaker 3

All right, we are back and you're listening to Boxcar Universe. And we are here today with Joe James, the CEO and president of Mobile Emergency Housing. And we're talking about what his great company is doing to help the needy people in fire ridden Maui. And it's just an amazing thing that he is providing. And we want to get a little more in depth on the plan on how all this came about. And I know, Joe, you had said that you're working with the insurance companies with this. Why don't you take us through some of the nuts and bolts of how all that works?

[00:19:18.930] - Speaker 1

Sure. So our primary business model is helping displaced homeowners throughout the United States who have been burnt out of their house or their house has been destroyed by some extreme weather event. The homeowner then files a claim with the insurance company. The insurance company goes over to a housing company, a temporary housing agency to outsource that particular homeowner's needs, and they contact a company like us. What happens a lot of times is the homeowner needs to find us on their own because not a lot of temporary housing agencies have actually there's not a lot of companies like my company out there that services the United States and especially Hawaii. So the homeowner then picks up the ball and they jump online and they start googling temporary housing and they come across us. They may come across one of our competitors, but when they look at their reviews and our reviews, they invariably go with us. We then put together an estimate based on what they need. If they say they need two bedrooms, three bedrooms, four bedrooms, we put together an estimate. We get our contractors to look at the property, see what it needs in terms of sewer, electric, water, and then we shoot that over to the homeowner and copy their insurance company.

[00:20:52.210] - Speaker 1

And the insurance company says either yes or no. 90% of the times they say yes, especially if they have no other options. We're normally cheaper than leaving the homeowner in a hotel for a long period of time. And that's problematic by itself because a lot of times, for example, if it's a rural fire, a person's farm burns down. The closest motel may be an hour away, which means now that the kids have to look for a different school district. And it creates all types of logistical problems for the family. So the solution for that is for them to have a mobile home brought to their property if they have enough room and to be set up on their property. And that's basically the premise of our company. So when we have a natural disaster, we get calls from all over the country from homeowners who are displaced. And we work with them and the insurance companies on a case by case basis to basically deploy and deliver our equipment.

[00:21:56.610] - Speaker 3

How do you foresee obviously you're doing have you sent over a shipment of these homes yet over there or are they on their way?

[00:22:08.200] - Speaker 1

Not yet, not yet because basically we have to get permission from the governor and the mayor. Maui is still pretty much on lockdown. They're still trying to figure a lot of things out to be honest with you. They need to clear the land. So there's things that need to happen before we can deliver because what we normally do is we deliver the unit to the actual lot where the house was standing or next to where it's going to be built and they reside in the unit until it's completed. The units that we're going to be supplying for Maui, they can be lived in year round because these structures are made out of steel. They're not like your typical mobile home. The steel portion is guaranteed for 50 years so they can actually use these as a primary residence. We can combine them. Right now they're configured in one and two bedroom residences. We can attach two, two bedroom smart homes we call them and they'll have four bedrooms and a living room and two bathrooms. So it depends on the land, it depends on what the government allows. I was speaking to the building department yesterday and for every 6000 square foot lot they're allowed to have one primary structure and two accessory structures.

[00:23:41.180] - Speaker 1

But right now the mayor's office is in control of all of that. There have been restrictions on mobile homes because of the builders. Unions didn't want mobile homes to come in basically and destroy their market. My understanding is they have relaxed that position because they know that they need to open it up so that people can get housing. So everything is still in the works. It's kind of in flux unfortunately. femus there they have shelters set up. A lot of people are up in hotels, a lot of people are up in airbnbs and we're making our list of everyone that needs housing whether they have insurance or not. So when we get the green light we'll be able to ship the units over.

[00:24:29.910] - Speaker 3

Yeah. Any idea on a timeline when you foresee that happening?

[00:24:36.170] - Speaker 1

Well, it takes us all depends on the number of foldable houses. We have a storage, I'm sorry, a warehouse storing some of the units in California so that would be easier to get to Maui, Hawaii. Transit time is going to be somewhere between ten and twelve days. The units are being built for us in Hungary and they're being shipped from Hungary to Maui and all depends on basically how many would he need. They can produce for us 250 a month and it takes anywhere between 30 and 40 days to go from Hungary over to Maui. So that's the transit time once we get the green light. So there's a few other things that need to happen logistically. The land needs to be cleared. The government has to give us the green light. And of course the insurance companies have to say yes or no.

[00:25:47.790] - Speaker 3

Sometimes. That's the problem where you have the units there and the government is just dragging your heels. Not to mention you've got a distance thing there, although you have those some in California already, which is always a good thing. Now you had told me the other day that you have

people that work with you spread out throughout the whole country.

[00:26:14.950] - Speaker 1

Yes, we have strategic relationships with several companies who actually reached out to me and asked me to partner with them to help bring some type of housing relief to Maui. So the equipment that we're getting is not all owned by us. It's from a strategic partnership that we have that's being built. And we're a vendor for a couple of the firms that is supplying the equipment and everybody's on deck because everybody understands how important this is. No one company is going to be able to solve this problem by themselves. So it's going to take a collaboration of multiple companies in order to come together and make this happen.

[00:27:10.570] - Speaker 3

Yeah, it's something that's really a combined effort with a lot of people and I would imagine trying to keep track of all this is a job in itself.

[00:27:24.030] - Speaker 1

Yes, it is.

[00:27:24.830] - Speaker 3

Yes, for sure. That's amazing.

[00:27:27.950] - Speaker 1

Joe, go ahead. We've had experience at it, so over the last five years we've learned by trial and error, basically. And we've systematized everything. We have in house engineers, we have in house attorneys. Basically, we have everything we need. But we do utilize local labor to make these things happen because local knowledge is key. We're out of farmydale new York. We can't tell you what it's like in Elk, Washington. So we partner with a lot of different companies basically to make this happen. And once they understand the significance of the work they're doing, they're on board 100%. The companies who see it as a profit margin or a profit moderm, I should say we shy away from them. We've had a couple of vendors who gave us two different rates. They had the regular rate and they had the disaster rate and the disaster rate was 400% higher. And we don't play that game.

[00:28:44.500] - Speaker 3

No, that's just wrong. Especially when you're talking about disaster.

[00:28:51.210] - Speaker 1

Ethically, it's wrong and frankly, you're not going to stay in business because sooner or later it's going to attract the wrong attention. And like during COVID when people were trying to scout PPP and all of that kind of stuff, folks wind up going to jail, rightfully so, because they were withholding this vital material for an unreasonable profit and that's something that we just won't tolerate. I want to be able to go to bed at night knowing that I did the best I can for my clients, I made a reasonable profit for my company and we move on. And frankly, whatever they need, we give it to them. If they call me up at 02:00 in the morning and say hey my refrigerator just stopped working. We're on the phone with our supplier and we'll get a refrigerator there sometimes the next day if not in a couple of days because we understand these things are important.

[00:29:51.650] - Speaker 3

Yeah absolutely. Now before we wrap up what we were talking about I understand what you had told me that you are making a couple of stops here in the country on the east coast and then you are flying to Maui and how long you plan on staying there?

[00:30:15.890] - Speaker 1

That's a good.

[00:30:20.530] - Speaker 3

As as needed basis I would think right?

[00:30:23.910] - Speaker 1

Yeah that's the answer. It depends on a lot of things. Right now basically we're anticipating delivering somewhere between 355 hundred units a month so once we have the infrastructure in place in order to make that happen all of the labor basically just to coordinate everything then I might be able to relax and come home. But Maui is not a bad place to hang out if you got to work.

[00:30:55.570] - Speaker 3

That's true. But I hope that when you do come back that you reach out to us, because we'd love to hear a follow up on what's going on with your supplying the homes there and what's going on with the people there, and just give our listeners a little bit of an update to know that someone's looking after them. And I want to thank you for doing that, because I think that's part of what everybody should be doing, especially when they have the means to help somebody. They just don't bury their head in the sand. And you're a gentleman, actually, a man after my own heart, who wants to put other people's needs in front of their own. And we want to thank you for doing that.

[00:31:42.350] - Speaker 1

I really appreciate it and I will definitely check back and give you an update to let you know how things are going. My strategy right now was to put some pressure on the local politicians to make them move. It's just not moving fast enough. We've reached out to the senators and the mayor's office and all the other departments and it takes them days in order to respond. So the sooner that we could get clearance from the government the faster we can get over there. I can't start shipping units until we know that Maui is open or at least approximately when it's going to be open. So we could have our team there to meet the ship at the port offload and take them from the port basically over to their final destination. That's what we're waiting on. We have the equipment, we have the knowledge and we have the manpower. We're just waiting on the government now basically to get out of our way.

[00:32:44.770] - Speaker 3

I know a lot of people are waiting for the government to get out of their way but yeah it's just something we have to deal with. But Joe why don't you give out your contact information one more time?

[00:32:57.770] - Speaker 1

Sure. My name is Joseph James and my direct line is 888-34-8553. The main line to the company is 888-20-1799 and our website is mobileemergencyhousing.com. Go to the website if you ever have a need for temporary housing. If you're a homeowner whose house is caught on fire and you need someplace, just go to the website and click Get help. And that email comes over to me and my staff. Twenty four, seven and we get back to you in less than 24 hours. So looking forward to helping everybody that we can. And thank you Steve, for what you're doing to keep Maui in the forefront because basically how the news cycle is next hurricane comes along, the last one basically gets forgotten. So we want to keep Maui basically at the forefront and just push them to get things going faster than they're going because people are really hurting. They're living in their cars, they're sleeping in the streets, they tend to a room in some places.

[00:34:11.080] - Speaker 3

It's just amazing. Yeah, I agree with you about when the next disaster comes, the last one gets forgotten about just like all the people that are hurting where the train derailment when they had the hazmat several months ago and they're still hurting and they're having to fight the government for mean and that's just totally wrong. Just totally wrong. Joe, thanks again so much. Happy travels. Thank you and safe travels and we'll talk to you real soon.

[00:34:41.610] - Speaker 1

Excellent, thank you.

[00:34:42.840] - Speaker 3

All right, take care. All right, Joe James is is got a great company. The area is going to be doing some great things for the people in Maui and just a little piece of something that we can help our listeners get up to speed on and know that there is somebody trying to make a difference. And his company

name again is Mobile Emergency Housing Corporation. So thanks again, appreciate it Joe. But we're going to take a short break. When we come back we have our next guest, Chuck Warshaver. He is the advertiser and operating partner of Stardust Building Supplies here in the Phoenix. Phoenix is our premier choice for recycled building supplies. So I want everybody to hang tight, don't go away. You're listening to Boxcar Universe.

[00:35:51.570] - Speaker 2

Stardust Building Supplies is your home improvement thrift store. Find salvaged and gently used cabinetry doors, windows, appliances, lighting, plumbing and much more. Save money, be green and support the community. Shop and donate at starbuilding Supplies Valley locations. For more info visit stardustbuilding.org.

[00:36:12.300] - Speaker 3

You may not believe this, but smart home technology can be traced back to 1975 to the first home automation platform when the X Ten was invented. In 48 years, things have come a long way to truly have a smart home. Today the homeowner needs to make a smart decision and call a premier high tech company. That company is mythic. Sound, lighting and Shade mythic can simplify your. Life with home automation, home security, home theater lighting and shade, plus outdoor and indoor home audio custom designed to fit your lifestyle. For the finest in products and services, visit their website@mythicsls.com, that's Mythics.com, or call them today for a free consultation at 602-329-4252. That's 602-329-4252.

[00:37:18.330] - Speaker 5

Hi, I'm Sean with Mr. Electric and I have a tip to help make your life better. One important reminder is to call a qualified electrician when you have frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers. When a circuit breaker trips or a fuse blows, it's indicating that you have a problem with some other part of the circuit. If your breaker trips more than once, you should have a qualified electrician come out and take a look at it. Contrary to what may be acceptable, you really shouldn't try to continuously try to reset the breaker because there may be a problem somewhere else down the circuit and you could be causing a fire hazard. There could be a loose connection or some other form of problem on the circuit and every time you reset the circuit breaker could be causing a spark at the other end. We recommend having a qualified electrician come out and check on the condition of the circuit and make sure that the circuit does not have any problems and it could just be a bad breaker also. But you definitely want to have a qualified electrician check that out. To have someone come out from our team may only take a portion of a day, but it could potentially save you a lot of money or your life.

[00:38:14.300] - Speaker 5

And that's just another way Mr. Electric has the power to make your life better.

[00:38:31.250] - Speaker 3

All right, we are back and you are listening to Boxcar Universe. And our next guest is chuck Warsaver. He is the advisor and operating partner of Stardust Building Supplies here in the Valley of the sun. And I've been doing business with Stardust for years. I mean, I can go back and think about this. Had to be at least 20 years, at least when we started doing bigger remodeling projects and stuff like that, and when there was a need to be able to go out and find some different types of units, whether it be some maybe countertops that were when people wanted to get I mean, I remember seeing we used to have formica tops. I don't think mel, when's the last time you saw a Formica countertop?

[00:39:23.840] - Speaker 4

Oh my gosh, the word just makes me cringe.

[00:39:28.630] - Speaker 6

Don't cringe. Don't cringe. Because we still carry them.

[00:39:32.550] - Speaker 4

No, you know what? They're great for certain spaces. Obviously I wouldn't put them on an interior of a

home anymore. But you're talking to a designer, I mean, obviously they're affordable. And that was the thing back in.

[00:39:48.380] - Speaker 3

The day, back in the to take they used to save them. I remember that used to save with the we were talking to Chuck earlier during the break. One of the things that I remember that I had used Stardust, a lot of they have a lot of with their deconstruction program. But I'm going to let Chuck jump in here and tell us a little bit about Stardust for our listeners who are not familiar with Stardust building supplies and whether it be in the Phoenix area or around the country, because I know around the country, there are a lot of different similar type companies. So, Chuck, welcome to the show. Thank you for taking time out to be on Box Car Universe.

[00:40:35.630] - Speaker 6

Appreciate it. Thanks, Steve, for having me. So, first of all, Stardust is a nonprofit, and we've been around for 27 years, and our mission is quite simply to keep things out of the landfill. So, yeah, deconstruction is a big part of what we do. So we'll go into homes or hotels or commercial properties and carefully deconstruct cabinets, fixtures, and alike bathrooms, et cetera, kitchens, and we will resell them in our reuse centers. We've got a reuse center in Mesa and one in Glendale. And we also, in addition to doing deconstruction, we take back a lot of returns and canceled orders and excess inventory from vendors. So we'll get a lot of times brand new stuff that was a canceled order. Cabinets are a big one that we get a lot of office furniture and so on. So it's sort of like a scavenger hunt when you come through the store, because we get new things every day, and there's a very fast churn because people, the loyalists, pay attention to what we have and are in and out sometimes multiple times a week.

[00:41:44.610] - Speaker 3

Yeah, I can imagine that. It's something that the turnover on what you get in is quite probably quite quick.

[00:41:55.830] - Speaker 6

Yeah, we've been posting multiple times a day on social media, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, so people pay attention, and if they see an item that is of interest, they're jumping all over it and coming in to buy.

[00:42:10.280] - Speaker 3

Yeah, it's amazing. I remember, I think the first time I got familiar with Stardust and what you guys carry. I remember when I had bought my first home in Arizona back in 89. It's going back 89. Mel, were you around in Phoenix in 89?

[00:42:32.850] - Speaker 4

I mean, Steve, I was barely born before that. Just kidding. Yes, I was. I just wanted to make the old man joke.

[00:42:43.030] - Speaker 3

Come on now, watch it.

[00:42:44.170] - Speaker 4

I think I was probably in, I don't know, first grade, maybe.

[00:42:50.070] - Speaker 3

I walked into that one, Mel. I walked into that.

[00:42:53.450] - Speaker 6

Steve and I were we were in 7th grade.

[00:42:55.730] - Speaker 3

Chuck and I were in 7th grade. No, okay. Yeah. No, really? When I got my first house here. And you

know what's amazing? We're talking about homes. Mel, you'll appreciate this. Okay? You think the time it takes to do a remodel. Okay. When I bought my first house here, we were staying with some friends, and all of a sudden, they told me so how long is it going to take to build my house? 45 days. And it always stuck in my brain. Build a house in 45 days just didn't seem like it was right. Is this house going to be standing in 20 years? But they did that. When you think about 45 days, if you have an extensive remodel, it could take 45 days. They want to build a whole house. But when I got there and we started tweaking a few things, I wanted to add some cabinetry right outside around the corner, but I wanted to get something that was the same, and I wasn't going to get that from the builder. He doesn't have them, and he got them from a supplier. But what happened? I went to Stardust, and what do I find?

[00:44:03.790] - Speaker 3

The one wall upper cabinet that I needed in the same finish. That was like, it's mine. Okay. And it was like, almost brand new, and you'd never know. And it wasn't in line with the other ones because it was around the corner, and it was right above a small piece. I just needed some extra space, and it was perfect. So you never know when you go to Stardust what you're looking for. I try and say it's just like when I used to DJ years ago. Don't let me walk into a record store because I'm like a kid in a candy store. I want that. I want that because that's what will happen when you go to Stardust. You'll walk in there and before you know it, you'll see something. I need that. But I didn't need it when I walked in. But when I saw it, I needed it. So you could walk out. Bring your pickup truck.

[00:44:57.570] - Speaker 1

Absolutely.

[00:44:58.340] - Speaker 3

Take everything with you.

[00:44:59.790] - Speaker 6

That is true. Yeah. We've got any home building supply that you could think of that you would need. And we also get unique items like pianos and every now and then pool tables. And of course, we've got all the bathroom fixtures. So, yeah, it's quite comprehensive. And pretty much anything that you think you would need, including for Micah that you mentioned, and butcher block, and that stuff flies out the door, actually.

[00:45:25.020] - Speaker 3

Really?

[00:45:25.420] - Speaker 6

Yeah, we can't keep that stuff in.

[00:45:29.830] - Speaker 3

I've seen I've done a lot of tear outs of countertops, and sometimes you think about it. I remember doing a tear out for somebody. A customer called me and says, well, yeah, I'm getting a new countertop. Can you tear out? And it was old granite. And he asked me that question, well, can you save it? And I'm like, are you serious? You can't save that? I says, Because I can't get it out in the pieces that it was installed in. At the only thing you could hope for is we just break it out without damaging the cabinet. And when your new installer comes in and does his template and fabricates your new top, it'll go right on top of the old cabinet, but you can't save granite countertops. It's just almost impossible. You might get lucky and get a big piece and maybe the fabricator, they'll make a big coaster for you.

[00:46:26.320] - Speaker 1

That's about it.

[00:46:27.660] - Speaker 3

That's all you can do. But light fixtures and other things that are good there, obviously you don't take ones that are extremely old. And do they still have the, what was it, 20 year rule on accepting used

cabinets?

[00:46:50.770] - Speaker 6

If it's an older home, historical home, we'll go out and do an inspection. But we're doing a lot of work with the preservation society here, so I think it's on a look at it and see if it's something that we can reach salvage. Yeah, and I think a big service that we offer homeowners is a lot of times they don't know what to do with the stuff where they have an appliance that they just replaced and they don't know for a nominal fee of \$25, we'll come out and actually pick it up. And so that's a part of the program that is expanding. I should also mention when we do do deconstruction, the homeowners get the tax deduction right, so they get a tax receipt. So if we're working with a contractor and we're going in collaboratively and doing a deconstruction project, he can pass that tax savings on to the homeowner.

[00:47:41.010] - Speaker 4

Hey, Chuck, I have a question. Can you tell me how that works a little bit more, the deconstruction and what's the timeline on that? Is there a fee involved?

[00:47:51.150] - Speaker 1

Yeah.

[00:47:52.070] - Speaker 4

And then I heard that you mentioned that you even pick up pianos and things like that. Do you guys actually pick them up or you just come pick them up from a curb? How does that person get the piano out of their house?

[00:48:04.430] - Speaker 6

Yeah, we would need that to be outside the house. I mean, we're not going to go in because obviously there's some liability there to the bigger pieces. And then to answer your question about the deconstruction, we'll come out and do an inspection and we do charge a nominal fee. It's 375 for half day and 750 for a full day. And primarily we're doing kitchens and bathrooms. So we'll go in into the kitchen, take out all the appliances, carefully take out the cabinets. If we can recycle the countertops, which most times we can, we'll take those out as well. And then the same thing would hold true for bathrooms. And so in terms of scheduling, we're probably a couple of weeks out to schedule a decon project to actually go and do it. In terms of inspecting it, we can move pretty quickly and do an inspection within a few days.

[00:48:59.210] - Speaker 4

And would the listeners, do they call you to schedule that directly or is there a different line that they yeah.

[00:49:04.530] - Speaker 6

So if they go on our website, there's a place for them to put their information in or call and we have a person that's dedicated specifically for scheduling. And it's very simple to fill out a form online to say, I'm requesting an inspection or a decon project. And our website is Stardustbuilding.org. Stardustbuilding.org.

[00:49:30.950] - Speaker 3

That website. All our listeners can go on there and are basically all the items posted on the website, or only just some of them.

[00:49:42.410] - Speaker 1

No.

[00:49:42.650] - Speaker 6

So when you go on the website, it will prompt you to sign up for our newsletter. The newsletter will then every week you'll get a listing of what we have. But really the magic is getting onto social media and following us on Facebook or Instagram, because we're posting literally multiple times a day.

Because again, the churn, if we were to post stuff online, it would be gone by the time we posted it.

[00:50:08.450] - Speaker 3
Yes.

[00:50:10.850] - Speaker 6
Stuff just doesn't stay. It turns incredibly quick. So that's why we're literally posting every single day, so that the consumers can see what we have.

[00:50:19.430] - Speaker 3
Yeah, and that's so important, obviously, to keep that moving, because that's one of the first things I know when I speak to somebody. Then they want to do a remodel and you have something like that. Well, what are you going to do with your old cabinets? Which is the first thing? Or what are you going to do with, again, the lighting. How old is the lighting? Is it going to be resellable? I would have to think if it's older, it could be very outdated and you probably wouldn't even want it.

[00:50:55.590] - Speaker 6
But the bottom line is that old expression, someone's trash is someone else's treasure. If it works, someone will buy it. It's just a matter of price.

[00:51:04.260] - Speaker 1
Right.

[00:51:04.530] - Speaker 6
So we have automatic markdown. So if stuff doesn't sell, we'll mark it down and then there will be a point where it will sell. It will sell, provided it works. The same thing with appliances. We will take back some older appliances, provided they work, and someone will buy them, whether they may be doing an apartment building or maybe they're doing an in law suite or whatever. But there's always someone that will find a home for these.

[00:51:34.990] - Speaker 3
How long does someone have to wait? Are you talking about appliances? For somebody to come pick up the cabinets? Obviously, deconstruction takes a couple of weeks to get it on the schedule. But what about appliances and stuff like.

[00:51:49.990] - Speaker 6
That to get a pickup? Yeah, I mean, it depends. Typically a week to two is the most that they'd have to wait for us to come pick up stuff. We're pretty steady. We run multiple trucks a day, so I sort of pay attention. I see it on the schedule and I'd never see more than a couple of weeks out. And then with vendors, we have recurring pickups, so they have schedules because a lot of them we have weekly pickups because they just have a lot of stuff.

[00:52:15.850] - Speaker 3
Yeah, and I think that's something for the homeowners to take into account. And think about when they were thinking about, well, we're going to have a local bulk pickup. Okay, that's all well and good but is some of the stuff that you're throwing away for that bulk pickup, can it be recycled and is it something that Stardust can use to put it in the store and sell and not go into a landfill?

[00:52:45.020] - Speaker 6
Yeah, the answer is 100% yes. You see so many things that are in bulk pickups that someone would love to buy and at the same time the homeowner is getting a tax deduction so it's a double bonus for them.

[00:53:01.850] - Speaker 3
I want to ask you a question like out here in the East Valley we had the demolition of Fiesta Mall. Were you guys able to any donations come in from that demolition, that project?

[00:53:16.700] - Speaker 6

No, but we are in touch with a lot of commercial companies that do that kind of stuff and we are doing projects where we can go in prior to the demo and go into the bathrooms and go into the offices and take yeah, we can do that. We got to be ahead of it. That one. No, we tried and we were unsuccessful in getting to them.

[00:53:40.310] - Speaker 3

You can't get everyone and at the.

[00:53:42.500] - Speaker 6

End of the day as sad as it sounds, you got to care about the environment because it's a little bit of extra work. It's one more step to make that call to have us scheduled to go out there and do it. But think about all the benefit you're doing on landfill side and at the consumer side.

[00:54:03.040] - Speaker 3

True. And that's so very important to be able to do. But you guys could basically start us you could say it's been a mainstay here in the Valley for a very long time.

[00:54:15.640] - Speaker 6

Yeah, it's 27 years. It was founded by Jerry Bisgrove and he owned a company Stardust and it's the name Stardust and we're growing every year and we have some really aggressive plans for more growth and enlarge our stores and potentially maybe even have a third store. So we've got a lot of plans in exciting.

[00:54:37.010] - Speaker 3

Well good. I remember the other store that we used to have off of Thunderbird up in that was, that was very convenient for me because I live up in North Phoenix so anything that we went over there used to be able to it was a great place, short drive to donate. But again, you know, two locations in the Valley, one in Mesa and one in those are that's basically for all our listeners out there who live in the Phoenix area, east side, west side, so both stores are relatively well stocked was the last time I was there. I know the Mesa store was in fact I can't remember it was a couple of years ago, it was a special event at Stardust in Mesa and I co hosted it with Terry Olette from Sonora living out there and it was a great time of people came out. It's a lot of festivities, and I think it was just an event to get to showcase, stardust and show what it could be as being part of the community and being something a resource. That's the word I was a resource for the community.

[00:55:55.010] - Speaker 6

Yeah, we're doing a lot of that hosting of parlors with different associations to get them into the store, so not all their members are familiar with us. And then obviously, they come in. And to your point, they're like a kid in the candy store because the breadth of what we have is so amazing. And I don't think that they realize that when you walk into a 50,000 square foot store with racks, how much stuff we have. And again, the churn, it's just like every day. We're getting donations from commercial hotels, office furniture companies, in addition to the decon work that we're doing, in addition to the home goods stuff. So if someone's redoing their home office desks, chairs, filing cabinets, waste paper baskets, you can do your whole office for incredibly short money. That's really great.

[00:56:45.730] - Speaker 3

Great. Chuck, why don't you give our listeners your contact information so they can find you one more time?

[00:56:53.540] - Speaker 6

Absolutely. So my name is Chuck Warshaver. My email address is c worshaver, and that's W-A-R-S-H-A-V as in Victor e R@stardustbuilding.org and access the website. And again, I really encourage you to follow us on our social media accounts.

[00:57:17.850] - Speaker 3

It's really great. And keep up the good work. And Mel and I will send anything that we can your way.

[00:57:26.500] - Speaker 6
Much appreciated.

[00:57:27.300] - Speaker 3
To make sure that we could always want to do our part and always get the word out with our customers that are interested when we see something that could be used, because they're always thinking, recycle. What else? We don't want to put a lot into a landfill. It's just not good.

[00:57:48.520] - Speaker 6
Yeah. And Mel, being a designer, we're doing a lot of work with designers now, and there's a ton of obvious projects, and so that quality of goods that we're taking back, incredible.

[00:57:59.870] - Speaker 3
Yeah.

[00:58:00.700] - Speaker 4
Well, chef, I have to say, I am a designer, but I am also now officially a general contractor as well, so I have a full design build firm now. And the reason I was asking those questions is because I actually do have a project that I will be starting. That crazy enough. Their cabinets are beautiful.

[00:58:20.590] - Speaker 6
I'm not surprised. We've seen unbelievable stuff that comes back. High end doors, high end appliances.

[00:58:27.240] - Speaker 4
So I'll have a big project for you guys to come out and deconstruct and countertops and nice, modern looking contemporary cabinets that they just want something new, even though it is pretty new.

[00:58:41.690] - Speaker 6
Well, now, thanks to you, I can take Sunday off because I've earned my keep here.

[00:58:45.930] - Speaker 4
Now, Mel, no kidding. I really think that you're going to be quite impressed.

[00:58:51.950] - Speaker 1
Perfect.

[00:58:52.570] - Speaker 3
That's really good.

[00:58:54.250] - Speaker 4
You guys pick sliders and doors and windows and stuff like that as well.

[00:58:57.690] - Speaker 6
Yeah, the windows obviously, have to be in case, but yes. Yeah, we do a ton of windows.

[00:59:01.750] - Speaker 3
Tons is a single or double pane or both.

[00:59:05.300] - Speaker 6
Doesn't matter.

[00:59:05.940] - Speaker 3
Doesn't matter.

[00:59:07.090] - Speaker 1

Okay, Chuck.

[00:59:08.660] - Speaker 4
Thank you so much.

[00:59:09.650] - Speaker 6
Appreciate you guys.

[00:59:10.640] - Speaker 1
All right.

[00:59:10.990] - Speaker 6
Thanks for having me.

[00:59:11.570] - Speaker 3
Appreciate it. Chuck Warshaver from Stardust Building Supplies, a great, great nonprofit organization here in the Valley of the sun. So we want to thank him for all his great work and look forward to continued partnership in promoting that great organization, but also want to thank our listening audience to listen to our weekly podcast, the Boxcar Universe. Remember, we are your source for cutting edge information on container homes and container pools. So let Mel and I design and build your dream container home. And we also want to send out kudos to Mel on her new contractor's license.

[00:59:57.250] - Speaker 1
Yay.

[00:59:58.430] - Speaker 3
All right.

[00:59:59.040] - Speaker 4
Thank you.

[01:00:01.890] - Speaker 3
All right. Many, many successful years coming your way, Mel.

[01:00:06.380] - Speaker 4
God willing.

[01:00:07.370] - Speaker 3
Yes, absolutely. And if you'd like to email Mel or I, you could always contact us at boxcarliving@gmail.com or Steve@boxcaruniverse.com. And as I said earlier, boxcar Universe can be heard weekly on any podcast player. And always remember, let us containerize your lifestyle. See you next week.

[01:00:32.160] - Speaker 1
You're a great American. I love.