**Joe Beatty Podcast Transcription**

**RW:** *Hey everyone, welcome to the Janus Connected Podcast. Today our guest is Joe Beatty, who is one of the owners of Tri-Village Self-Storage based in Ohio. Joe has been in the self-storage industry for a while and he’s got some great experiences that we are so excited to get into and hear more about. So welcome to the podcast Joe, and thank you for joining us!*

**JB:** Thank you for having me!

**RW:** *Alright. So Joe, you and Tim Galvin found your way into the self-storage business after venturing into construction and development. So can you tell us a little bit more about those early years?*

**JB:** Well, as far as getting into the self-storage business, we are developers and constructers to begin with and we continued to develop in construction. We had a location that was all t’d up before the market went bust and for a medical office building and after 2008 it was just a struggle so we kept looking for different ways to use the property to its best potential. A broker friend of ours recommended self-storage, and we looked at the numbers and saw we could definitely do these returns. So we ended up starting with a small suburban facility and had a consultant that guided us through some of the early issues. One of the best things he did was steer us towards Janus. We’ve been using Janus doors and the SecurGuard system ever since. We went out and looked at our competition and felt that we could do better to provide a cleaner, safer, and friendlier experience. Hopefully we’ve done that.

**RW:** *Awesome, I would definitely say you have. I’ve written about your sites before and I’ve just always been blown away by the level of detail you guys put into making your facility, like you said safe and clean. What were some of the other things, like what were some specific markers that really inspired you to make your mark in the sector? What were some of the things you wanted to implement in your facilities?*

**JB:** With technology becoming a greater and greater role in everyone’s lives. We looked at it and having been in the medical side of construction development, we saw that some of the access control was lagging behind. Then we started looking for alternate systems that would not only bring our facility into the twenty-first century but also make it easier to manage. We decided to dig into that heavily and made a test of the SecurGuard locks at our downtown six story facility and loved the way it helped our managers to have the peace of mind that when the end of the month is there, they’re not going to have to worry about somebody rushing in and clearing out a unit when they go delinquent. Everything became more easily automatable. For us, we wanted the facility to reflect upon us as well and be a net positive for the community versus, and this may be an improper view that some municipalities and the general public have that storage facilities are net negative on their community. We do things like Charity Storage have aesthetically pleasing building. We make sure to keep our facilities in tip top shape and hire managers that also believe in that as well.

**RW:** *Absolutely, and there was one of your facilities, I’ve seen some of the pictures of it, where it looks like you’re literally in a hotel lobby. Like you would never guess you were in a self-storage facility. You guys just set the mark so high for yourself. It’s really inspiring!*

**JB:** I can thank Tim and Tess Galvin for that. For me, I’m very functional. I do like things looking nice and neat. They had a good eye, and we want people to know that we intend to take very good care of them and their possessions. With the majority of our facilities being climate controlled, we monitor humidity as well as the temperature and maintain a comfortable temperature. I have been in facilities where instead of climate controlled, I was helping out a neighbor a few years back, and I think it might have been colder inside of the facility than it was outside.

**RW:** *Oh no!*

**JB:** It was in the low 30’s or actually even colder than that. (laughs) I just remember helping carry an entire dresser and a file cabinet and feeling like my fingers were going to fall off every time I hit something. (laughs)

**RW:** *Oh my gosh, that’s so miserable.*

**JB:** You know, for me and having rented prior to being in the industry, we proactively care and also get pest control in place so that’s never an actual issue. We make sure our managers are out and meeting their tenants and asking what they’re bringing in so we don’t end up with rodents. As a whole, there’s a lot of things we want to do, and it should be reflected in our lobby and facility. I think the facility you may have been talking about is our downtown location which has all Janus hallway systems as the beta test for SecurGuard which went incredibly smooth as far as the beta test goes. Even as far as just any initial move in, development, and roll outs, we had very few issues. It was great dealing with Janus. We also have wine storage, Janus wine lockers, and a wine tasting room for our wine storage customers.

**RW:** *Oh, that’s nice!*

**JB:** We have big screen tv’s so they could watch the Buckeyes game, because the whole world stops in Columbus when the Ohio State Buckeyes are playing football.

**RW:** *That’s awesome, I love that. (Laughs)*

**JB:** We have events for the wine storage tenants and every so often, right now we’re only doing it about once or twice a year. We have a tenant appreciation party in the wine tasting room. That was our first facility with Janus doors. After that facility, we wound up heavily in the new developments and the specifications for our new facilities. It was yes, we are using Janus doors and the SecurGuard system at all of our new facilities. Going back to the hotel lobby feel, when you open and close the Janus doors, they have a secure feeling. We’ve had zero issues with the Janus doors. It goes back to providing the best for our customers. I don’t even think we pay a premium for the doors, it’s just we’re getting a far superior product than it’s offered in the storage industry. Whether it’s our customers or even other facility owners will come into our facilities. They love that for one, they don’t have to bend down to get the door open and two, they love that the door opens easily, and they’re not having to you know, pop a hernia trying to open the door. (Laughs)

**RW:** *Right! (Laughs) So, you guys just installed the new SecurGuard Smart Entry System at your third Tri-Village location. How has technology played a role in your business operations, and then on top of that, how have your tenants responded to this new way of approaching self-storage and having the managers more free to go around and help them, clean out the facility, and all of that?*

**JB:** We just finished installing the SecurGuard/Noke Smart Entry System at our third facility. It is our sixth facility however with the SecurGuard locking system. We went from the beginning of 2018 of two facilities being open to and eight by the end of 2018, so it’s been a busy year for me and my team. As far as how Noke plays a role in our business operations, it has made life tremendously easier! The first two facilities we opened this year had competitor’s access management system that works with SecurGuard. To be honest, those were a little bit of a struggle as well as us trying to work out some bugs from their access control system at our other locations. My only wish was that we had Noke about two months earlier so we could have installed it at our corporate headquarters, which is co-located with a climate controlled self-storage facility. For one, it would have saved us twenty-one miles of low voltage cabling. Two, the implication of the Janus Noke/SecurGuard Smart Entry System at the three facilities with its required, I would say twenty to thirty hours or less on set up time than those with the previous access control system. We had three facilities open with Noke installed in late fall, and I had three managers that were able to pick up the system in less than a day. I was able to go on vacation in December and get zero calls about the facilities that have the SecurGuard/Noke Smart Entry System.

**RW:**  *That is amazing! (laughs)*

**JB:** You know, it definitely took one or two phone calls about issues with the other control systems. So, for me it was impressive to put up almost eighteen hundred units to have zero phone calls on them in an almost three week span. The technology made life so much easier! Being able to compare our first facility to our last facility, the amount of management required is so significantly changed. We’re actually using a manager from our location to manage a facility that we have acquired that we will be switching the gate entry system to Noke. That’s actually been a request from several of the older tenants as well as tenants that own Rv’s. With the old keypad system, they would have to get out of their vehicle in order to punch in their code and then run back to their vehicle to drive through the gate. They feel rushed and stressed about it. They’re already having to drive a big vehicle.

**RW:** *Right.*

**JB:** They’re always like, “hey is there a way we can do this?” After pricing it, it’s going to be more than worth it for us. We do key fob access, because let’s be honest, no one ever remembers their passcode because at work they have to change their password quarterly, if not monthly in some cases and they have to have like fifteen characters. For us, we’re just trying to make it possible. With the fob, people are far less likely to give their keys to somebody then to just give them their passcode. We also see our facility more secure because of that.

**RW:** *Right, and do you have customers engaging with the digital key sharing?*

**JB:** We do, and that’s one of the things I reached back out to our managers because I don’t necessarily see it on our Janus texts. We trained our managers how to do it. So as far as the move in process they show them how to do it. Initially, just looking at the Noke/SecurGuard app that’s been beautifully personalized to Tri-Village Self-Storage, it’s very self-explanatory. We had a tenant that said, “oh no, I just showed myself how to do it. I wasn’t paying attention when you guys showed me how to do it.” (laughs) The simplicity that is expected in an app has been carried over in the Noke Smart Entry System. We all expect our technology to be simpler and simpler, but in some cases some companies are going the opposite way. Janus was able to kind of tally apple with a way of doing things and partnered with technology that they think is significantly easier. I can’t stress how easy the last three facility sign-ups have been as well as the role in the way that I’m able to function with eight managers below me. No more having to spend countless hours showing the managers the new entry system. If they need to open a door, they can pull out their phone and open that door. They don’t have to go sit down at the computer or figure out some new overly complicated app. They open the app and it says “door” or “entry door” or “elevator one.” It amazes me how that’s not the standard.

**RW:** *Well, I am so glad to hear that you guys have had such a great experience and that it’s making your lives easier. To me that’s one of the overarching points of why we provide these solutions, to make your lives easier. I’m so glad you’re having that experience with it. I also wanted to see, what was one of the biggest lessons learned throughout your whole journey of developing these Tri-Village locations, and then alongside that, what advice do you have for owners and operators who are looking to incorporate more customer focused technology into their facilities?*

**JB:** Overall, we started out looking at the best technology. We did quite a bit of research, whether it was going to trade shows, numerous conference calls, sales calls, webinars, and web meetings to figure out what was best. For me, I was previously in the military. I did medical construction and medical development. I was looking, and I was like, there is not a better system than this than with Janus introducing the SecurGuard system and partnering with Noke, hands down there is very little research to be done beyond that Janus and Noke are the same. Just simply taking old technology and renamed it or puts new branding or finally connecting it to the web, but it’s still their old system that’s still old. It doesn’t create a good customer experience, it’s not easy, whether it’s implementing software systems on the construction side or implementing new technology on storage, or implementing new systems in the military. One of the things I’ve been able to figure out, I can figure out most systems, but if it takes me a good bit of figuring out, my managers and customers aren’t going to love it. With Noke and SecurGuard, it’s quick, it’s easy, and it’s not another bell and whistle that you don’t need. It’s something that will make your life easier and that will allow you to manage the facilities remotely. As long as you have cellular signal or data, you’re able to do a lot more with a lot less effort than other products. It’s just that simple. We’ve learned that a lot of our tenants don’t necessarily understand or know, but as soon as they do have something or see it explained, suddenly they say, hey I’m spending a few more dollars a month and I’m getting a far greater experience. We rent trucks and when we have people come in they say, “Oh you have storage units?” We explain to them how it is or even sometimes we end up taking them on tours, and they’re blown away by the Noke/SecurGuard system. We end up with customers that say, “I’m paid up for this month but I’m moving over here.”

**RW:** *Nice!*

**JB:** Which is great. For me, that’s what I expected. If we can do better on using technology to improve our lives and our customer’s lives then it’s a simple decision to make. We’re selling security and a peace of mind that when you go home, you know your unit is secure. You know that with the SecurGuard/Noke system, with the motion sensor, you know that something is moving in your unit, and you’re at home and it’s 9:00 pm, that you have an issue. You can either reach out to the facility manager or you know whoever you gave your access to is in there. For businesses that rent from us, that’s another added bonus. They have one less thing to worry about. Whenever I’m asked how happy we are with SecurGuard and Janus, I end up talking forever. (Laughs) I’m a talker, but even then I’m like I’ve been talking for a long time, and I have answered a lot of questions.

**RW:** *(laughs) well, that’s a good problem to have.*

**JB:** I always end up at the end thinking, “ah man, I missed this? I didn’t tell them about this or this.” But the following day, I go to one of our facilities and I’m like, “Ugh.” I don’t think I can stress enough that Janus SecurGuard systems are the gold standard that others in the industry should be striving for. It’s modern and even just walking down the hallway in a facility with Noke, you see all the lights lit up. You know all of these units are locked. It has a good feeling and makes you feel a lot of thought has gone into your facility. A lot of thought and effort is being placed on making sure that your customer’s goods are being taken care of. For us, we want to make sure every customer is secure, and also we have no blind spots. It’s a value add overall. As far as working with Janus, it’s been a value add from day one. I can’t say enough great things about your team. Whether it is knowledge, timeliness, the response time, and great customer support, even for some of my crazy questions that as soon as I say them, I remember the answer to. As soon as I think of the answer I’m like, “I already know how to do that, sorry guys.” (Laughs) For me, as a customer, I feel valued, and we’re able to pass that on to our customers. Everything in the design of our facility and the products that we use contribute to our aesthetic of being a cleaner, better, easier, and more modern storage facility. They know that any point, they can reach somebody. At any point, they’re able to pay their bills, and we pride ourselves on that.

**RW:** *Well Joe, I am so glad to hear all of that. That is the best kind of feedback that we could hope for! I’m so glad you’re having a great experience with this. Thank you so much for sharing with us and telling us about all of your experiences with this and the system. Before we wrap up, right now whenever we’re recording, it is early January 2019. I just wanted to ask you, what are some things you guys are excited for in 2019?*

**JB:** Well we’re filling up some facilities. We’ve got a few facilities in planning with the SecurGuard system for our climate controlled facilities. The SecurGuard system on the doors as well as the Noke system and managing access control. We’re going to convert one or maybe two possible facilities to Noke. I’m really excited to have a great team that did a lot of great things over the past year. For one, I’m excited to know I’m not going to be opening six facilities.

**RW:** *Yay!*

**JB:** I’m excited that I have eight great facilities that stand out and reflect well on us, on our vendors, and looking forward to another great year and having more free time because of Janus products.

**RW:** *Awesome! Well that is what it’s all about. I love that. Thank you again so much Joe, and I wish you guys continued success in 2019. You’re going to have another great year, and we’re excited to see what you guys come up with. So, thanks again and have a great rest of your day!*

**JB:** Thank you very much and thanks for having me!

**RW:** *Listeners, if you need to get in touch with me or have any questions, you can send me an email at* *marketing@janusintl.com**.*