

# TOWING & RECOVERY FOOTNOTES

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## Towing Troopers

### THINK YOUR WORK IS TOUGH? TRY A RECOVERY UNDER FIRE!

By Allan T. Duffin

It was April 2004 and the First Battle of Fallujah was underway. Near the Iraqi city, a U.S. Army observation helicopter had been shot down and lay crippled on the ground. A cordon of military vehicles encircled the crash site, protecting the disabled chopper. Army Sergeant 1st Class Sean Dewitt rolled his M88 recovery vehicle into the area. All around him, enemy small arms fire chattered in the pitch-black night.

It was the most difficult recovery job of his career. "The helicopter had been shot down right outside of the city," recalls Dewitt. The 82nd Airborne Division had secured the accident scene. "I've never seen so many armored vehicles protecting one site," remembers Dewitt. "We went out there and hooked up the helicopter safely."

An 18-wheeler flatbed truck was right behind Dewitt. "We picked up the helicopter, had the flatbed back up



Army Staff Sergeant Joshua Slusher (center) during his deployment to Iraq as a vehicle operator. Sergeant Slusher was later awarded a direct commission as an officer and is currently a second lieutenant in training.

underneath it, lowered the helicopter and then strapped it down real good." Then, the job done, "We got it out of there."

Though they operate behind the scenes and with little fanfare, military recovery specialists are critical to the units with which they serve, whether at home or deployed to hot spots like the current battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Combat scenarios like the one described by Sean Dewitt happen periodically in Iraq, where even recovery vehicles have been turned into weapons: last July a suicide bomber packed a tow truck with explosives, drove into a bustling commercial area in the city of Hillah, south of Baghdad, and detonated his payload. Two dozen Iraqis died and 69 were wounded in the ensuing fireball.

Although different branches of the military — Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force — all have some type of "motor pool" for their vehicles, they don't all use the same type of tow truck. At Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, a sprawling facility of

more than 125,000 acres in Southern California, one of the vehicles that Sergeant Robert Short operates is the MK36, a 6x6 wrecker built by Oshkosh Truck.

The MK36 is a variant of the Medium Tactical Replacement Vehicle, or MTRV, which is used by the Navy and Marine Corps for a number of all-terrain purposes including cargo hauling and re-supply. "It's outfitted with a winch and a lifting cylinder," said Short, "plus a crane as well as a lifting arm."

Like the civilian towing industry, the military routinely refreshes its fleet of towing equipment as new technology and new requirements pop up. When the Marines upgrade their heavy equipment, they naturally needed a larger tow vehicle for recovery operations. When Marines stationed in Okinawa received the MK36 two years ago, they appreciated the improved capability of the new wrecker.

"Almost every motor transport unit has gotten rid of their five-ton vehicles, which is the most weight the old wreckers were capable of lifting," Gunnery Sgt. Benjamin Douglas, a

recovery vehicle operator, told the *Okinawa Marine* newspaper at the time. Due to its ability to lift seven tons instead of just five, Douglas added, "[The MK36] will drastically cut down the man-hours and work time it takes to recover a vehicle."

### Military Tow Masters

Back at Camp Pendleton, Sergeant Short, originally from Bridgeville, Del., has experience across a wide spectrum of Marine Corps vehicles. "I've done everything from motor recovery to civilian recovery and heavy equipment recovery," he said. Much of his work has been done in Iraq, where he has served three tours of duty.

Short adds that he has worked alongside civilian recovery specialists during his time overseas. "If a civilian vehicle was disabled," he said, "civilian towers were dispatched to go out with us to pick it up." According to Short, the assistance of civilian towing contractors was a big help in a combat zone where the workload was already hectic: "It's one less thing we had to worry about." Also, notes Short, "We compared notes and learn from each other."

Not all of Short's memories of his time in Iraq center on combat situations. On a humorous note, he recalls the day that he was tasked to pull several disabled Humvees out of a ditch full of wastewater. "That was no fun," he laughs. "As I was working, the ground gave way and I fell in underneath the wastewater." One recovery and one shower later, Short was back at work.

So why do soldiers join the motor pool? "I've always been a mechanic," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Slusher, a native of Wallace, Idaho, who is assigned to Bravo Company, 101st Forward Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, out of Fort Riley, Kan. "I started working on cars in high school, rebuilt my first car

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# TOW LINES

## Letters to the editor from our readers

*T&R Footnotes invites and encourages readers to submit letters on any topic by email to the editor at bcandler@traderonline.com or by snail mail to Bill Candler, Towing & Recovery Footnotes, Dominion Enterprises, 150 Granby St, Norfolk, VA 23510. Publication and editing of letters will be in the editor's sole discretion.*

**To the Editor:**

I give you credit for tackling the issue of foreign manufacturing making inroads in the towing industry. You have every right to address any issue that affects the towing industry, so never let anyone intimidate you.

After reading all the letters to the editor about the Galaxy article, I recalled a story about Honda executives who came here, I believe in 1962. They wanted to investigate the possibility of starting car dealerships in the U.S. When they arrived, they drove around in a Honda until the car broke down and they had to rent an American car! They returned to Japan realizing that they were not ready yet and had much work to do. How things have changed since then.

Many years ago (1973-75), I worked at a used machinery dealership. They mainly bought and sold used machinery but they did have one mill on display made by a company in Japan. The manufacturer lent it as a demo piece because the boss didn't even want to buy one as a distributor. It looked beautiful but the clients who walked past it would smile and laugh at it every time they passed by it. No one would touch it so it sat there the whole time I worked there. They never sold it. They preferred the big American names like Cincinnati, Bridgeport, and Norton.

The fact is, the Japanese soon came to dominate this industry with great quality and superior technology, like computer numerical control (CNC) and robotics. "Made in Japan" was a joke

back in the '60s and early '70s but no more. Now they own the industry.

I see Chinese goods being in the same position as Japanese goods were at that time. The similarity is uncanny. China may not have the quality yet but they will someday. Like Japan, it's not a matter of if they will make a better product, just a matter of when. It may not be here yet, but it's coming and good quality tow trucks for a cheaper price will win just as it did with the machinery industry.

I'm all for "Made in the USA" but how do you compete with manufacturers who pay their employees with a bowl of rice and a fish head? A couple of years ago I looked into having an item manufactured in China. I spoke to a manufacturer's rep in Texas whose company had relationships with several factories in China. He told me when a Chinese company prices an item for manufacturing, they don't even include labor costs. Imagine! How will U.S. companies compete with that? Maybe they can for now, but ultimately it's going to be very hard to do. This is the cold, hard reality of living in a world economy.

**Wayne Olson**

**To the Editor:**

I just read the crybaby replies in letters to the editor about the Chinese wreckers. Well, welcome to The Real World of Towing. The motor clubs have been doing this to the towers for years. Now it's the manufacturers' and distributors' turn. How does it feel to have someone undercut your prices, the quality of your goods, your years of service. With the insurance industry hooking up with the motor clubs to do secondary tows at cut rates, the only trucks towers will be able to buy are these Chinese bodies.

Wow! A Japanese truck with a Chinese body. (U.S. auto makers deserve this). If the U.S. manufacturers who are flooding

the market with tow truck bodies don't start supporting towers' efforts to improve motor club rates (like the towing associations were supposed to but haven't), you can be sure that cheaper bodies like the Galaxy are going to look mighty fine to towers who do the \$25 and \$35 tows!

And while I'm on the subject of insurance companies getting in bed with the motor clubs to do secondary tows, it's time to send them both a clear message that we've had it with them. All towing and body shop people need to take a stand now!

Here is what needs to be done. When the tower who is working for the motor club comes to your yard to pick up a vehicle, you just play the game, saying the car is blocked in, you can't find the keys, we need to move a few things around, etc. When they call for charges, tell them the charges are \$50 more than they are, and when they hand you the check, say you added wrong, and they need to go get another check. Hang the sign on the gate that tells everyone they need steel-toed shoes and a hard hat to enter your yard – all this to tie the tower up for one hour.

What will all this do? Well, the motor club tower has agreed to tow these cars for about \$35 each, and if it takes three hours for each job, about three jobs a day at \$35 each will be \$105 a day. Let's see him stay in business doing that! Let's see how many towers will refuse to come to your yard to pick up cars. If you go to their yard to pick up a vehicle and they play the game, just tell them it is fine because you will just bill the insurance company for your time.

Some will say that this is wrong, but just remember that after the insurance companies get this up and running, they will be coming after you and what you are charging for police tows, and if you think I am kidding, just call some towers in New Jersey and ask them who is behind the last law that was passed in their state about setting their rates: the insurance industry.

The time is now to take a stand. Don't let the last chance pass you by.

**The Towing Curmudgeon**

*The content of letters to the editor is the opinion of the writers only and does not represent the official position of Footnotes, nor does Footnotes warrant the accuracy of statements made.*

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# BRAINSTORMIN WITH STORMIN NORMAN

## Second-Class Citizen

*Why should towers do jobs like this for free?*

By Norman Horton

I think that if I get another demand from an insurance adjuster that I do their work for them *pro bono* (legal term for “no pay”), I am going to scream. Why is that just because we have something to do with wreckers we seem to be automatically considered second-class citizens?

It is common for adjusters to call or email us for a complete parts work-up, an appraisal of a truck, or some other request to help them do their job. The kicker is they want us to do it free. Why is that? Why would they expect us to give them our time and expertise without remuneration?

I’ve lost count of the ones who get in a huff, and some have actually got in a tizzy, cussed, and called us vulgar names solely because we want to be paid for doing their work for them.

The last time I checked, an appraiser got paid for appraising a vehicle that was wrecked, burnt, or what-have-you. I recently got an email from an appraiser that said: “Dear Norman: I am attaching pictures and a condition report and I need to get an appraisal on what this unit is worth.” Not a “How much do you charge?” Not a “Please, can you help me?” but a demand: “This is what I want,” and it is assumed that you are going to drop what you’re doing and devote your valuable time to do this for nothing. Strangely enough, after I replied to him with our appraisal rates, I did not hear back from him.

Why do adjusters assume we’ll just give away our time and expertise? Could it be for the same reason that the Nigerian scam artists and the work-at-home scam artists keep sending you emails? Could it be that people really fall for that? Yes, they do.

Do other wrecker dealers obligingly do things like this for adjusters for free? Yes, they do. Yet when you have a rig turned over and you set it up and you present the bill, these adjusters are the first to run hollering and screaming, “Oh, we cannot pay you that!” (keeping in mind that they made \$100,000 in premiums last year), “This is not right,” etc. We have to keep whittling you down.

Heaven forbid that the shoe should be on the other foot when we need help from an adjuster. Have you even gotten their help for free? But then again, maybe we bring some of that on ourselves.

So how often do wrecker dealers work for a customer without pay? I do not know how many times as a wreck-

er dealer that I have worked with a customer to help them spec the perfect chassis, vehicle, or heavy-duty unit, (which is a fairly involved process) only to have them go purchase that unit somewhere else.

On more than one occasion, I have had them call me months later asking me to help them sell that truck. “Well, sir, have you contacted the dealer you purchased it from?” “Yes, I have, but they have their money and they do not want to help me now, they are too busy. You were so helpful before with trying to help me find something that we figured you’d want to go ahead and help us sell this unit since I made a mistake.”

Hmmm. Maybe we need to make sure that we are not doing the same thing to others that we do not appreciate being done to us.

Well, I was talking about wrecker dealers, but what about those abandoned vehicles you “have to tow” for free? What about the sheriff’s department or police chief who wants vehicles towed for free? How about the city that wants vehicles towed for free?

The whole point I am trying to make is that we may be bringing it on ourselves to be treated as second-class citizens. When we behave the same as those who do free (and perhaps skuzzy) work and never complain about it, we shouldn’t be surprised to be treated that way.

Years ago I wrote an article called BALD (Bankers, Accountants, Lawyers, and Doctors) for Footnotes. The gist of the article was that we put our pants on one leg at a time just like a banker, accountant, lawyer, and a doctor. Just because they received their education in a different manner than most towers – just because they wear a suit and tie and we don’t – does not mean that we are stupid. It does not mean that the education we received in the school of hard knocks is worth anything less.

If those guys could set up a loaded tractor-trailer without tearing it up, they would. But guess what? They can’t. So when we do, it’s realistic to expect to be treated with respect for our expertise and receive fair compensation.

But once again I bring up the point that maybe we bring some of this upon ourselves. When you go out spend anywhere from \$65,000 to \$95,000 for a rollback and then you run down the road to tow a man’s vehicle for \$35, then what are you saying about your worth as a towman?

I know, I know, there are people down the road who tow cheaper than

you do. Then why are you getting in the mud with them?

We’ve had people try and beat us up on the prices we charged. They would say “Why don’t you charge what so-and-so charges for a tow?” Well, what they did not realize was that so-and-so did not have insurance (like a tower in this area that recently t-boned a friend of mine). Why didn’t they have insurance? Maybe they were not charging enough to be able to afford insurance. When we play those low-price games instead of charging what needs to be charged, then it shows that we don’t value the truly important things, like having insurance.

I have had customers ask why we did not charge the same as XYZ Company and I would tell them that we have good trucks, good employees, good drivers, and we are not going to stoop to a level where we are forced to throw you under the bus if we damage something because we did not charge enough to begin with. Nine times out of 10, the response would be “Well, if I was in your business, I certainly wouldn’t tow for what XYZ Company is charging but as long as they are stupid enough to keep charging that amount, then I will take advantage of it.”

So, people, let’s not set ourselves up as being the doormat that people wipe their feet on. Let’s present our business as a professional tow company and charge professional prices. And when we are asked to roll over, get kicked around, and walked on like yesterday’s newspaper, then maybe it is time to rise up and say “No, it is not going to happen like that!”

There is no doubt in my mind that every one of these adjusters that I have told we charge for our appraisal services has gone to another wrecker dealer and gotten it done for free. Why else would they expect – and yes, even demand – that I do their work for them for free if they were not used to that?

Are you a second-class citizen? It’s your choice. ☘

*The views expressed in this column each month are the opinion of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the editorial position of this publication.*

### Stormins’ Online Poll

Here’s your chance to let towers know what’s on your mind about the towing and recovery industry!

On Stormin Norman’s website at [www.stormins.com](http://www.stormins.com), you can vote (anonymously) on issues of interest to towing and recovery owners and operators everywhere – and then read about the results of the voting on Stormin’s website and in *T&R Footnotes*.

Here’s how you voted on a recent question:

#### Does the holiday season bring you more business with drunk-driving accidents?

Choice:	Percentage
• Yes, a lot more .....	25%
• Yes, a little more .....	17%
• Not really in my area .....	58%

Stormin invites you to visit [www.stormins.com](http://www.stormins.com) and vote on the next question...

## TOWING TROOPERS

continued from page 1

engine before senior year, then decided to join the Army.” When he met with a military recruiter, Slusher said that he wanted to work on cars and engines. “I signed up and have loved it ever since,” he said.

For his first assignment, Slusher was sent to Germany, where he worked on a vehicle recovery team for four years. Slusher’s inventory of recovery vehicles included the Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck, or HEMTT, a multipurpose vehicle manufactured by Oshkosh Truck that could be configured as a cargo carrier, fuel tanker, or wrecker. In addition, Slusher also drove the gigantic, 70-ton M88 armored recovery vehicle, designed for its crew to dislodge stuck vehicles and engage in repair activities — all while under fire in a combat zone!



U.S. Army photo by Wayne D. Haley

**Spc. Stacy Harms, mechanic and tow truck driver-operator, 101st Airborne Division, unloads a damaged M1114 Humvee, Tikrit, Iraq**

### Flats, Rollovers & More

At Ft. Riley, Slusher’s current post of assignment, “We usually deal with a lot of breakdowns and bad engines,” he said. In addition, he said, “every once in awhile we’ll have a rollover, or someone getting stuck in the mud somewhere.” HMMWVs, also known as high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles, or Humvees, originally lacked spare tire carriers. So a flat tire necessitated a tow, “usually with a five-ton wrecker like the M936A2,” said Slusher. The M936A2, a 6x6 recovery vehicle, was eventually replaced with the MK36 wrecker.

Dewitt notes that his unit has six wreckers for rescuing disabled vehicles that weigh up to 10 tons. “Right now,” he adds, “we’re recovering mostly Humvees using light vehicle recovery procedures.” In most cases, this involves towing a Humvee with another Humvee, using a towbar.

Larger vehicles require a recovery truck like the HEMTT M984A1, an 8x8, 10-ton wrecker with a main winch capacity of 30 tons. Additional equipment includes a self-recovery winch and a crane to assist in activities like lifting engines.

Then there are the “tracked vehicles,” like tanks, which when disabled require special recovery equipment. “For tracked vehicles we used to use an M88A1,” said Slusher. “Now we have an updated model, the M88A2, also known as the Hercules.” The newer versions of the M88 were redesigned to tow newer equipment like the M1A1

Abrams tank and the 52-ton Bradley fighting vehicle. Features of the M88A2 include a powerful 1050-horsepower V-12 engine, a 35-ton boom, a 70-ton main winch, and a three-ton auxiliary winch.

### Danger Everywhere

During an overseas deployment the Army recovery operator's job becomes even more important. Slusher was deployed to Iraq and typically used the HEMTT and five-ton wrecker in his work. He remembers one dangerous mission when he was called upon to rescue an MH-6 light attack helicopter that had been shot down. Slusher placed the small two-seat aircraft, affectionately known as "Little Bird," in the back of a light medium tactical vehicle (LMTV), a cargo carrier, and drove it off the battlefield. Later, Slusher recovered a Marine Corps troop transporter with his five-ton tow truck.

"When you're deployed," said Slusher, "you're usually dealing with accidents. And you still get your normal breakdowns and such. But there's more of a sense of urgency when you're deployed. You do whatever it takes to get disabled equipment out of the area." Danger is all around during a combat deployment, notes Slusher. "Soldiers' lives are on the line. The longer the equipment stays out there, the longer people have to stay to guard it."



The Army's Palletized Load System (PLS) used as recovery vehicles in Iraq

Joshua Kohler was an Army Staff Sergeant assigned to the 445th Transportation Company out of Waterloo, Iowa, when he was deployed to Iraq. While there, he and his fellow soldiers designated specific convoy vehicles to assist with recoveries. "We were using the Palletized Load System (PLS)" — a truck with removable cargo beds known as "flat racks" — "to recover Humvees and other disabled vehicles," Kohler recalls. "Each of our convoys was about 10 trucks long, and we would turn at least two of those trucks into recovery vehicles."

The flat racks on those two PLS trucks were packed with spare tires, petroleum products, tow bars, cargo straps, and anything else that might be needed in the field. By designating several of their vehicles to help with field repairs, the convoys were able to perform self-recoveries when needed — speeding up the process and keeping the convoy moving, which was critical in a combat zone.

"If one of our trucks got a flat," continued Kohler, "we were able to fix it right on the road." One of the recovery PLS's would pull up next to the disabled vehicle and drop its tool-laden flat rack on the ground right



Marines from Motor Transport Company, II Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, Camp Lejeune, N.C., attach chains and shackles to the tow hooks of a Humvee. This training is preparation for a scheduled six-week Vehicle Recovery Course at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. The chains will be attached to an MK36 medium tactical wrecker to drag the Humvee out of the swamp.

next to it. Then the soldiers would get to work. "It made everything a lot faster," said Kohler.

### Learning The Ropes

How do Army mechanics and vehicle operators become recovery specialists? After attending basic training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) to gain expertise in vehicle operations, the Army selects the top 10 percent of the class to attend its two-week vehicle recovery course at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

Army recovery specialists enter their career field for different reasons. Sergeant Dewitt, also assigned to the 101st Forward Support Battalion, grew up in Baltimore, Md., and wanted to stay close to his home and new wife. He attended a six-month course for tracked-vehicle mechanics and then was chosen to follow up with recovery school.

Unlike the civilian towing industry, the military has a strict set of standard regulations that govern how vehicles are to be towed — and how the tow operators are to be trained for the job. "Different types of equipment have certain procedures you have to follow," said Dewitt. "Mostly it comes down to safety. You don't want someone who's not qualified to tow a certain piece of equipment because

he or she can injure somebody else."

Whether a soldier operates an overhead lift crane, a troop transport vehicle, or a street cleaner, "the military ensures you've been properly trained on it," said Dewitt. Among other vehicles, he is certified to drive the M1A1 Abrams tank and the Bradley fighting vehicle. "A private might be certified on maybe one or two vehicles," said Dewitt. "By the time you're a Sergeant 1st Class, you need to know how to operate a lot of vehicles."

*"Last July a suicide bomber packed a tow truck with explosives"*

### The Motor Pool

Those vehicles are typically parked in the military version of a tow yard, known as the "motor pool." Equipment that is ready for use is staged on a ready line in an orderly fashion. According to Kohler, "we'd probably have them dress-right-dress, chock-blocked down. On the line in the motor pool is where we'd



Operators' license course, the MK36 Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement wrecker, Camp Foster, Okinawa



Marine Corps MK36 recovery truck, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Force Service Support Group, Camp Fallujah, Iraq



An M88A2 Hercules weighs 70 tons fully loaded and has the capacity to lift 35 tons

## Lifted By Hercules

The M88 provides towing, winching, and hoisting operations to support battlefield recovery operations and evacuation of heavy tanks and other tracked combat vehicles. The M88A2 Hercules is the primary recovery support for the Abrams tank fleet, the heavy assault bridge, light armored vehicles, and heavy self-propelled artillery. It is known as the Marine Corps' tow truck.

Specs: Length: 338 in; Height: 123 in; Width: 144 in; Weight: 70 tons; Speed: 25 mph w/o load, 17 mph w/load; Cruising range: 200 mi; Boom capacity: 35 tons; Winch capacity: 70 tons/670 ft; Draw-bar pull: 70 tons; Armament: One 50-caliber machine gun; Power train: 12 cylinder, 1050 hp air-cooled diesel engine with three-speed automatic transmission; Crew: three; Manufacturer: United Defense, L.P., York, PA.

do our operator-level maintenance like changing tires, filling fluids, and checking oil, gas, air pressure, and battery levels." If a vehicle requires additional care, it is sent to the maintenance shop, which is either in or near the motor pool area.

Although military tow operators usually have little contact with their civilian counterparts, sometimes events will conspire to put the two together. In May 1997, the *New York Times* reported that a civilian towing company called on the military for assistance during a recovery operation on the Gowanus Expressway in Brooklyn. A 10-wheel truck packed with 12,000 pounds of bagged ice overturned on the highway, and the civilian towing company's conventional wrecker couldn't right the ice truck.

Meanwhile, a military tow truck from the Army's 101st Cavalry Division, traveling in the opposite direction, passed by the accident scene. The civilian tower flagged down the military heavy-duty vehicle, which lent its assistance, and the highway reopened for business three hours later.

During that recovery operation, a little ingenuity and a lot of good timing made the difference. Although the customers and equipment might be different, civilian and military towers have the same mission: to recover a vehicle as quickly and as safely as possible. 🚚

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Pfc. Christopher D. Lytle, August 2006

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Nich R. Babt, December 2005

U.S. Army photo

U.S. Marine Corps photo

Chuck Criss, Olive-Drab.com

# TOW HEROES

## Danger, Darkness & Daring

*Singing the praises of unsung champions of the road*

By Gary Lund

Last winter, a storm resulted in a multi-vehicle pile-up on north-bound Highway 400, just past Highway 88, about 40 miles north of Toronto, Canada. Approximately 100 vehicles were involved. Among these, four tractor-trailers, two highway coaches, and about 40 cars and light trucks suffered serious damage. Fortunately, no lives were lost, but there were a number of injuries, some serious.

The day began with cold, snowy weather, slippery roads, and severe white-outs. Trotter's Towing's owner, John Trotter, said this had already been a crazy day — the company had trucks going to accidents all over the place. Other emergency responders were overwhelmed. Then the pile-up occurred.

Once the high-volume 400 plugged up, all the other roads surrounding the area filled with traffic. Nearby towns were jammed. "Everywhere around the accident scene, every road, every side road, every concession road, every town street was jammed for hours and hours," said Trotter. With so many motorists stuck for hours in traffic, police could not come from the south. The only way in to the accident scene was from the north.

At the incident site, there were two main clusters of vehicles, with a number of smaller accidents in between. The entire scene covered about a mile of highway.

### Chain Reaction

The whole affair began around noon when a highway coach rear-ended a



Among the vehicle casualties in his cluster were this bus with front- and rear-end damage

semi-trailer, crushing a Toyota Corolla between them. The Corolla's two occupants were actually able to crawl out the window, but the bus driver had to be extricated from his vehicle. The bus's controls were wrecked, and the engine continued roaring away, drive wheels spinning until the smoking tires wore down to the cord. There was concern that a fire would result, but none did.

In the second cluster of vehicles was a propane-carrying tanker, which had rear-ended a tractor-trailer, severely damaging the trailer. The tanker's tractor had wedged itself

under the rear of the heavily-laden trailer, trapping the driver.

The fire department eventually managed to extricate the driver from the bus in the front cluster, but couldn't deal with the weights involved with the rear cluster. Glenn Currie's heavy rotator — and his expertise — were needed.

The only way for responders to get to the scene was from the north, the front of the chain, but the propane truck driver was way back in the second cluster of vehicles. Meanwhile, police required that no vehicles be removed from the scene during their investigation.

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The bus rear-ended a tractor-trailer and crushed this Toyota Corolla between them

### Squeeze Play

The many towers involved worked their way from the north end, through the tangled mess, moving vehicles aside to create a path for Currie Heavy Towing's heavy wreckers that were needed at the propane tanker. By the time this path was cleared, the tanker driver had been stuck for hours, and he was developing frostbite.

The 400 at that point has three lanes and a shoulder, with a box guard rail at the median. A number of vehicles were caught between the semi and the guard rail.

Trotter described the situation: "The rear cluster of vehicles [consisted of] the rear-ended tractor-trailer, high in the air — with the propane tanker's tractor jammed under the rear of it, with a bus up against the side if it, another tractor-

trailer up against the bus, and probably a dozen cars around it."

By the time Currie's heavies arrived on-scene, just enough space had been created for them around the tractor-trailer. Currie's heavy rotator was positioned next to the trailer, another of Currie's heavies on the other side, and one of Trotters' heavies was placed at the front for added safety. The operation was tricky: the towers were working with a heavily damaged, heavily-laden, awkwardly-positioned trailer in a confined, awkward space. The trailer had to be handled with extra care, to maintain its integrity and not spill its load.

Currie's heavy rotator was the right vehicle to do the job. Glenn Currie lifted the trailer up off the tanker's tractor, just enough so that the fire

See DANGER, DARKNESS & DARING, page 9

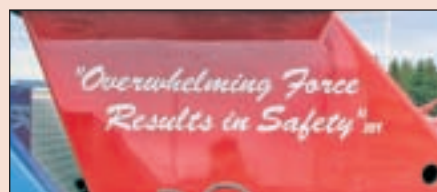
### Many Men & Machines

A huge number of towers were involved in this multi-vehicle pile. John Trotter's company brought two heavy wreckers, one medium wrecker, two flatbeds, and two or three light wreckers to the scene, leaving few vehicles left over for dealing with problems elsewhere. Altogether, Trotters' personnel and equipment were on-scene for more than 12 hours, handling two buses and 12 cars.

One of Trotter's jobs was to pull the Corolla, bus, and tractor-trailer apart. Trotter said that highway coaches are technically challenging to work with. They cannot be placed on a flat deck because of their height — they'd never fit through an underpass. Their air brake systems are different from



Currie Heavy Towing has the largest fleet of heavy towing and recovery units north of Toronto. The fleet includes six heavy recovery units from 25-ton to 70-ton, single- and tandem-axle tilt'n load floats, and air cushion equipment.



The Trotter's Towing motto most trucks' systems. They are low to the ground and very heavy.

These buses were particularly difficult since all the controls were smashed on both — there were no electrical power or air systems. With wrecked front steering, they had to be rolled along on their rear wheels so the drive shafts or axles needed to be disconnected, as well as the maxi-brakes.

One of the buses had so much rear damage that it couldn't roll on its rear wheels until body material had been cut out or winched out of the way. Trotter's team had its hands full with the two buses and a number of cars, besides helping with the tanker situation. Trotter's crew didn't get the second bus off the highway until midnight.

The buses were carried away using Trotters' 30-ton NRC slider mounted on an International chassis. The company's other heavy is a 25-ton Holmes on a Freightliner Classic. Trotter's Towing fleet includes two heavy wreckers, one medium wrecker, and eight light wreckers. The operation includes a staff of 36, a 24-hour gas station, a convenience store, and auto repair service.

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## DANGER, DARKNESS...

continued from page 8

and ambulance personnel could pull the driver out; then, due to the limited space, he had to set it back down on the tractor, just where it had been. With the driver rescued, everyone was ordered to leave the area near the tanker, as a precaution, because of the possibility of a propane leak.

Another tanker was eventually brought in to transfer the propane. The tanker and semi remained there all night, and were finally moved in the morning partly because Tri-Mac, owner of the tanker, wanted to get its own tow truck to the scene to haul it away. All the other vehicles involved were hauled away within 14 hours of the accident.

### Notable Efforts

After the propane tanker's driver was rescued, "then the darkness came," said Trotter, "and the cold. Severe cold, one of the coldest nights of my life ever out there, and I've been out there lots. (There were) high winds, an unbelievable wind chill." Trotter estimated it at minus 40 degrees.

"When we were doing that lift, we were walking through slush, snow, diesel fuel," he said. "There were rumors about the propane tank leaking and there were people everywhere. The taxpayer-funded emergency services were overwhelmed, but they were great. And the towers were great, too."

As big as this accident was, as miserable as the working conditions were, as brave as the towing personnel were to trudge through spilled diesel fuel with the threat of a propane leak, Trotter said all of this is a part of the job of a tower, and if not routine, certainly not uncommon. What Trotter believed was truly extraordinary about this story is that the towers were given commendation and praise in both the Ontario Legislature and Canada's Parliament.

*"There were high winds, an unbelievable wind chill"*

Glenn Currie and the rest were praised for working "bravely in terrible conditions to make rescues possible," and for often doing so without compensation. Two members of Parliament said that towers deserve the public's tribute, as do police, fire, and ambulance personnel.

Trotter suggested that individual towers around Canada thank these parliamentary representatives for noticing their colleagues' heroism and then mentioning the praise to their own representatives. This way, towers might multiply the positive momentum gained by this recognition. It may be an impetus for taking more initiative and standing up for themselves, their peers, and their industry.

Trotter is pleased that towers were recognized as an industry. He believes the towing industry does great things, including a great deal of emergency service, for no extra compensation. Is it time for towers, as emergency responders, to not only receive more forms of recognition and reward, but to ask for it as well? Towers in Canada and the U.S might well consider this. ☛

*Gary Lund is a Vancouver, British Columbia-based freelance writer and editor, and an active member of the Editors' Association of Canada. Contact him at [lundwriting@shaw.ca](mailto:lundwriting@shaw.ca) or 604-267-7460. This article was previously published in Tow Canada magazine.*

## Tributes From The Top

In a statement to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, MP Julia Munro described the massive pile-up and said, "No loss of life occurring is a tribute to the fire, police and ambulance services that responded to the scene. However, there is one other responder who deserves our tribute. Tow truck drivers worked bravely in terrible conditions to make rescues possible."

After a detailed tribute to the on-scene work of Glenn Currie of Currie Heavy Towing, she added, "This is not the first

time that Currie Heavy Towing has performed a task like this, and it won't be the last. They, like many other towers, do this without compensation. The Currie family does not request and will not accept any payment for life-saving emergency work."

In the House of Commons, MP Patrick Brown also described the heroic work of all responders, but added that "there is one other emergency service that responded that needs tribute as well: tow trucks, big and small, all part of the private sector and all working bravely in terrible conditions to make rescues possible and remove the horrendous mess of crushed vehicles."

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## THE TOW SHOP

# Towing & Only Towing

*This towman has resisted expanding into other businesses*

By Michelle A. Ziner

Towing company owner/operators often expand their businesses beyond towing, adding body work, repair, and/or other services. Andy Chesney, owner of Euless B&B Wrecker Service of Euless, TX, is determined not to take this road. Concentrating on towing alone in six surrounding cities, Chesney's business is 60 percent commercial and private towing and 40 percent for police and fire departments. "Our company is known for our experience and expertise," he said. "We do what others can't or won't."

Euless has been in business since 1954 when Chesney's father-in-law, Robert Baker, opened up shop. Chesney started his towing career working there as a teen and then on and off throughout his early years. In 1986, Chesney and his wife Debi bought the business outright, and 10 years later they purchased seven acres three blocks away and relocated the business. This property houses their office, a shop for working on their own equipment, and a storage lot for towed cars.

Requests for hauling heavy items are common. Chesney uses one of his six Landoll lowboy trailers to move generators, compressors, motor homes, and

overseas containers. "Because of our expertise we respond to a lot of 'stuck' calls," he said, including pulling a 727 out of the mud after it ran off the runway at Dallas/Fort Worth airport. Chesney pulled the plane onto steel plates, then chained its wheels to them and hauled the plane out on the plates.

Simpler recoveries have included autos, trucks and motor homes, some overturned in creeks, channels, or the woods. Chesney often has to use heavy duties to get some of them out. For these recoveries, Chesney uses a Chevron or Century 9055 or 5025, or a 1040 SDU from his fleet of 32 wreckers. Last year alone, Chesney purchased 11 new wreckers. Two years ago he purchased a Patriot Rollback wrecker with a six-degree load angle to handle the newer high-end automobiles.

### Business Decisions

Chesney decided on private towing versus roadside contracts for financial reasons. "Roadside is too cheap," he said. There are so many wrecker companies that the competition drives down the profit on roadside. "It is just not worthwhile," he added.

He feels that the rates for towing industry-wide have not kept up with



Andy Chesney of Euless, TX

the expenses of towing. Equipment has gone up steadily over the past 20 years or so, but the insurance on the same piece of equipment has tripled over the same years. The cost of doing business has also risen dramatically.

*"It's hard to find employees who want to be in this business"*

Chesney has 33 employees, including 22 full-time drivers. Getting and keeping good help has been very difficult over the years. "It seems to me that no one wants to work," he said. He eventually went to two 12-hour shifts for drivers instead of having them work days and be on call at night.

It's hard to find employees who even want to be in this business," said Chesney. "I think we are not educating people in the public on what this business is and we are missing a gap on people coming out of driving school. We are not training them correctly on specifics and then we send them out unprepared. This is

very discouraging and we set them up to fail."

### Cleaning Up

Chesney feels the industry overall needs to "clean up" their image. "People think we're all junk yard or repo guys. They don't think we are out to help them, especially when some show up with grease all over them," he said. Chesney insists that his drivers wear uniforms, are clean cut, and pass criminal and drug testing. He checks the trucks to be sure they are clean inside and out. Drivers use the on-site wash bay to maintain the cleanliness Chesney expects.

"If more training happened nationwide, this would raise the bar across the industry," he said. To do his part for training, Chesney is on the Texas Towing and Storage Association training committee, which did their first sponsored event for Miller Industries at their last tow show and plans to continue this yearly. He looks for vehicles to use in training sessions for hands-on education.

NASCAR is a favorite pastime of Chesney's. He is a driver instructor for Team Texas NASCAR Driving School and goes to every race at Texas Motor Speedway. "I love the sport and all of the cars, I take my motor home and stay the whole time," he said. ☛

## Home Wrecker



Euless B&B Wrecker Service hauls the tank



The "home wrecker" at work



The Extreme Makeover Home Edition volunteers



The Westbrook family has a new home

Last year Chesney and his wife were involved in a thrilling and rewarding "once in a lifetime" project when the television show, "Extreme Makeover Home Edition" needed an army tank delivered.

A United States soldier had returned home in 2004 to his wife and children after

serving in Iraq. He was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of a bombing in a mess hall in his camp.

Two years later, he and his wife and three children were traveling when their van rolled over and flipped, causing his nine-year-old boy to be paralyzed from the waist

down as well.

With both of them in wheelchairs, "Extreme Makeover" committed to building them a new home.

In order to do this, the old home was demolished by an Army tank. Chesney went to Houston with a lowboy to pick it

up and towed it to Lawton, OK. He got to ride in the tank as it smashed into the house. "This was truly thrilling," said Chesney.

It was costly because it took a week away from his business but he said it was well worth it.

# The Laugh List

## Where Is That Driver From?

- One hand on wheel, one hand on horn: **Chicago**
- One hand on wheel, one finger out window: **New York**
- One hand on wheel, one finger out window, cutting across all lanes of traffic: **New Jersey**
- One hand on wheel, one hand on newspaper, foot solidly on accelerator: **Boston**
- One hand on wheel, one hand on nonfat double decaf cappuccino, cradling cell phone, brick on accelerator, with gun in lap: **Los Angeles**
- Both hands on wheel, eyes shut, both feet on brake, quivering in terror: **Ohio but driving in California**
- Both hands in air, gesturing, both feet on accelerator, head turned to talk to someone in back seat: **Italy**
- One hand on latte, one knee on wheel, cradling cell phone, foot on brake, mind on radio game: **Seattle**
- One hand on wheel, one hand on hunting rifle, alternating between both feet being on the accelerator and both feet on brake, throwing McDonald's bag out the window: **Texas**
- Four-wheel-drive pickup truck, shotgun mounted in rear window, beer cans on floor, squirrel tails attached to antenna: **West Virginia**
- Two hands gripping wheel, blue hair barely visible above windshield, driving 35 on the Interstate in the left lane with the left blinker on: **Florida**

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2007 Ford F-450, 300HP 6.0L Diesel Engine, Auto Torque Shift Transmission, Tire Valve Wheel, Cruise Control, 34 Gallon Fuel Tank, 19.5 Tires, Dynamic "Classic" 701 BDW, Single Planetary Bk Winch, Air Bags, Motorcycle Attachment, Work Lights, LED Lights, FB Escape Light Bar 2 Tail Light Housing, Clutch Fulcrum PTO, Deweaze Pump Style, Hydraulic Brakes, Power & Heated Mirrors



2008 Ford F-350 Dually Super Cab 4x4, 350HP 6.4L Diesel, Auto Torque Shift Trans, ACP/WPL/CC, Aluminum Wheels, FX4 Package, Trailer Hitch, Clutch Pump PTO, Deweaze Pump, Hydraulic Brakes, In Cab Camera System, 4 Corner Strobes, Electronic Shift on the Fly 4x4, "Stealth" Wheel Lift System

## Parts Specials

**EMERGENCY FLASHERS**  
Aves (#5335) \$13.99  
Rio (#5336)

**STRAP RATCHET WITH DOUBLE J**  
\$18.50  
NO minimum purchase of 20 straps (#566756)

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BUY 2 FOR \$141.50 EACH  
BUY 5 OR MORE FOR \$135.00 EACH  
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**MAGNETIC TOW LIGHTS**  
\$56.65  
#41110

**JUMP BOX** \$125.00  
#888650

**BUNGEE SAFETY FLAGS** \$6.99 EACH  
#8300, 244861

**900 CA HEAVY DUTY**  
#888650

**TOOL BOX 18x18x18** \$169.99  
#110404

**2 USED In stock!**



2005 Ford F-450, 300 HP 6.0 L Engine, Automatic Transmission, ACP/WPL/CC, AM/FM/CD, 16,000 GVWR, 5200 FA lbs, 12,000 RAx lbs, 79R, 19.5 Tires, Recovery Solutions 501 BDW Wrecker, 8,000 lb Planetary Winch

**3 In stock!**



2008 Peterbilt 325, 240 HP Paccar Engine, Allison Automatic, Chevron Series 10 Rollback, Ramsay Worm Winch, Federal Signal LED Light Bar, 96" Bed Width, 2 In Rubber Work Lights, LED Lights

**NEW!**



2008 Dodge 5500, 305 HP Cummins Engine, Automatic Transmission, Air Conditioning, 22 Gallon Fuel Tank, Cruise Control Chevron 19" Aluminum Series 10 Rollback, 97" Bed Width, 4 Work Lights

**\$39,900**



2005 Freightliner, 21 ft. Steel Century Bed, 210HP MBE 900 Engine, Allison Automatic, Two 48" Toolboxes, BK Planetary Winch, Phoenix Light Bar, 96" Bed Width



2007 Chevy 5500 Duramax C5500 Engine, Allison Automatic, ACP/WPL/CC, Keyless Entry, 5 Way Switch Panel, Chevron Series 10 21ft Rollback, Removable Rails, 96" Bed Width, 8,000 lb Planetary Winch

**4 In Stock!**

**28' & 30' Available**



2008 Peterbilt 335, 330HP Paccar P48, Allison Automatic Trans, ACP/WPL/CC, AM/FM/CD, Air Brakes, Disc Mount PTO, Chevron 20 Series 28 ft Aluminum Rollback, 102" Bed Width, Air Free Spool Winch, 9,000 lb Planetary Winches, Two 8,000 lb Worm Winches, 3 Way Switch Panel, 110 Aluminum Fuel Tank

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Email [bcandler@traderonline.com](mailto:bcandler@traderonline.com) about your new or improved tow truck chassis and bodies, towing parts and equipment, and accessories with any available photos or art and we'll include it here.

## Seminar For Survivors

Miller Industries held a two-day rotator seminar in California that drew towers from as far away as Florida and Maryland. It was conducted at the Los Angeles County Fire Training Center and included rescue and fire fighters from Los Angeles County and City, Torrance, CA, and Washington D.C. Fire Departments.

The class was conducted by John Hawkins and Tom Luciano of Miller Industries, but all preparation, planning and registration was conducted by Robert and Rob Van Lingen of Van Lingen Towing in Torrance.

The Van Lingen's collected the registration fees and gave checks totaling \$7,000 to the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum's Survivor Fund, which was begun in conjunction with the Wall of the Fallen to provide assistance to families who have lost loved ones in the line of service in the towing industry.

For more information on the Survivor Fund or the Wall of the Fallen, visit the museum's website [www.international-towingmuseum.org](http://www.international-towingmuseum.org).

## Clean Ride

Voodoo Ride, a manufacturer of vehicle appearance products co-founded by Dale Earnhardt Jr., has developed a new non-abrasive wheel and tire cleaner called Shoq that will clean your wheels without damaging your tires and is environmentally friendly. It cleans without the use of acids and is biodegradable, phosphate free, and non-flammable.

Shoq cleans brake dust, road tar, dirt, and other grime that collects on wheels and tires. It can be safely used on all finishes, including clear-coated wheels. For more information, call 312-944-0465 or visit [www.voodooide.com](http://www.voodooide.com)



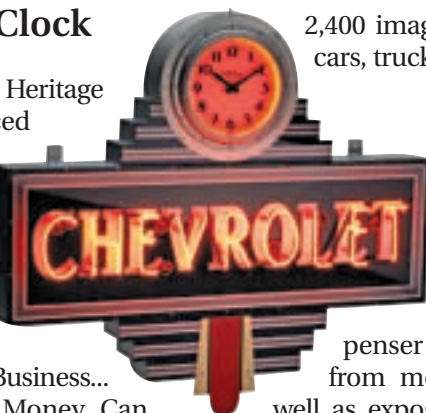
A non-abrasive wheel and tire cleaner



Randy Olson, Miller Industries VP of Marketing, accepts checks on behalf of the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame & Museum from Robert and Rob Van Lingen of Van Lingen Towing. The entire registration fee collected by the Van Lingen's is being donated to the museum's Survivor Fund.

## Cool Chevy Clock

The General Motors Heritage Center has announced the addition of a limited edition, art deco Chevrolet neon-clock sign to its collection of precision-made scaled reproductions. "Light the Way to Your Place of Business..."



The Best Time Money Can

Buy" is how the Walker

Sign Company described this rare 1930s Chevrolet neon dealership sign in their catalog.

Measuring 60 inches wide, the sign is accurately scaled to a size that makes it practical for use in a home, garage, shop, or place of business.

Priced at \$6,500, the neon-clock sign will have a serial-numbered plaque attached and come with a certificate of authenticity from the GM Heritage Center.

The GM Heritage Center Vintage Neon Dealership Collection now includes eight replicas: one Buick, two Cadillac, two Chevrolet, one GMC Truck, one Oldsmobile and one Pontiac scaled reproduction. See [www.gmphotostore.com](http://www.gmphotostore.com) or call 800-558-2550. The

website offers over

2,400 images of GM's history of cars, trucks, people, and places.

## Tough Wipes

Brawny's refillable dry wiper system features a reusable and waterproof bucket dispenser that protects wipers from moisture and grime as well as exposure to liquids. Offering the strength and absorbency to tackle

tough jobs, Brawny Industrial Wipers feature one-at-a-time dispensing, which reduces unnecessary waste and cuts down on unsightly clutter. See [www.gp.com/brawnyindustrial](http://www.gp.com/brawnyindustrial)

## Unlock Your Engine

Engine Release is a liquid solution for seized engines that eliminates corrosion and frees up engines of all types that have seized during storage. Engine Release fills the gap between the piston and cylinder wall, migrates behind and around each piston ring,



Tackle those tough clean-up jobs

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then moves from the top piston ring and groove to the lowest, through each ring gap. Excess Engine Release wets the piston skirt and cylinder bore making engine starting easy. See [www.engineerelase.com](http://www.engineerelase.com)

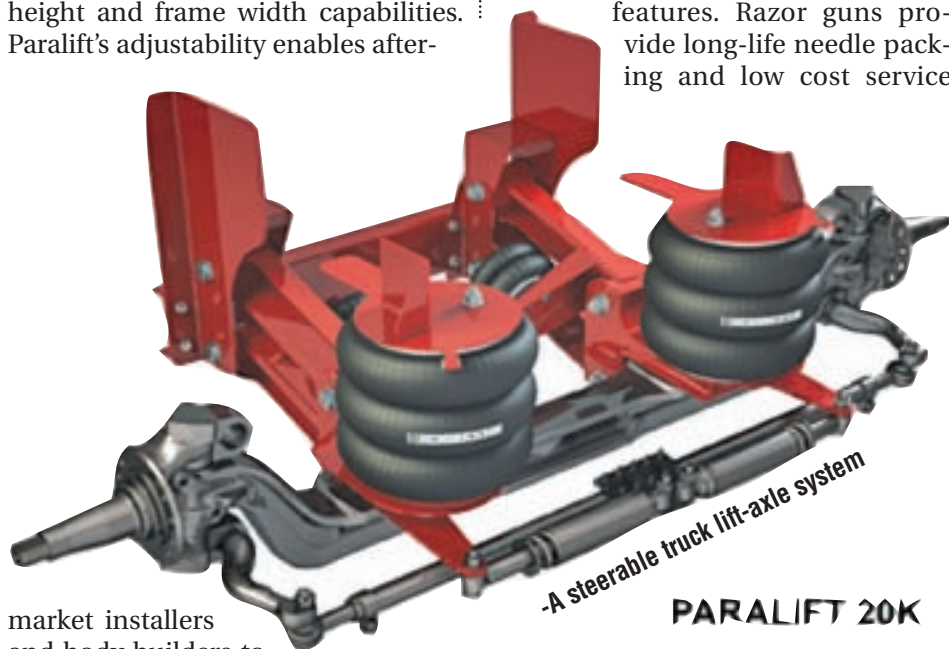


A liquid solution for seized engines

## 20,000-Pound Lift Axle

Hendrickson Auxiliary Axle Systems has introduced the newly upgraded 20,000-pound capacity Paralift steerable truck lift-axle system.

It is available with adjustable ride height and frame width capabilities. Paralift's adjustability enables after-



-A steerable truck lift-axle system  
**PARALIFT 20K**

market installers and body builders to stock one unit to meet a wide variety of truck configurations.

The trailing arm beams feature a more efficient single paddle, z-beam configuration. The combined impact of a new lift springs design and a repositioned stabilizer increases wheel cut from 18 degrees more than 25 degrees to help improve maneuverability and tire wear. With a 1,465-pound system weight, Paralift offers a 160-pound weight savings, lowering both cost and weight for fleets and operators. Visit the Hendrickson Web site at [www.hendrickson-intl.com](http://www.hendrickson-intl.com)

## Truck Bodies

H&H Sales Company, Inc., has a new two-page sheet featuring the commercial truck bodies and products manufactured and distributed by H&H. The new sheet provides a complete list of the truck bodies available from H&H, including com-

pressed and propane cylinder delivery bodies, service/installation crane bodies, truck tool boxes and cabinets, and construction/landscape bodies.

H&H Sales Company specializes in fabricating custom service and delivery truck bodies, bulk tank trailers, and LP gas and in-plant gas cylinder handling and storage equipment. Contacts: 800-551-9341 or 260-637-3177; [hhequip@verizon.net](mailto:hhequip@verizon.net); [www.hhsalescompany.com](http://www.hhsalescompany.com)

## Auto Paint

Sharpe, manufacturer of paint spraying equipment for the automotive refinish market, has introduced the high-performance Razor line of paint spray guns, which apply quality base, clear and primer coats and are lightweight with ergonomic features. Razor guns provide long-life needle packing and low cost service



One of a line of paint spray guns

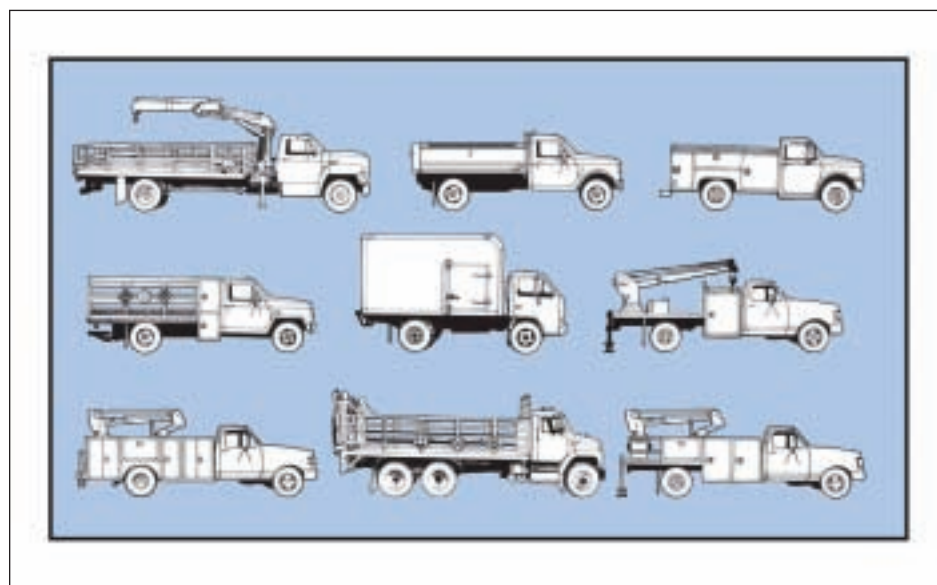
## Thread Repairs

Alcoa Fastening Systems offers Fix-A-Thred Repair Kits. The tool's handle has been redesigned with a fitted opening above the grip to accommodate the kit's reamer. This opening eliminates the need for a wrench and fits perfectly with the included reamer tool. The kits provide a user-friendly thread repair option for mechanics and do-it-yourselfers. Fix-A-Thred thread repair products can be used in a wide range of repair applications including automotive, truck, marine, lawn and garden equipment,



A user-friendly thread repair option

and parts. The new spray guns offer a variety of fluid tips, from 1.0 to 2.5 mm and come with a three year warranty. See, [www.sharpe1.com](http://www.sharpe1.com)



H&H service truck bodies

motorcycle, and more. Contact: 800-732-3470 or visit [www.alcoafastening-systems.com](http://www.alcoafastening-systems.com)

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# SHORT HAULS

## Industry people, news, shows, awards, and more

By Cyndi Kight

Email your company press releases, news items, and other information to the editor at [bcandler@traderonline.com](mailto:bcandler@traderonline.com) with any available photos and art.

2008 TRAA Legislative and Leadership Conference. Join fellow towers from around the country on March 6, 7 and 8 in Arlington, VA at the Marriott Crystal City Hotel for the Towing and Recovery Association of America's legislative and leadership conference. This annual forum is held to share information about issues of concern for all towing and recovery operators. Topics will include abandoned vehicles, private property impound towing, and Unified Carrier Registration. Registration is \$245. Lodging is available through Marriott Crystal City Hotel.

Prior to the conference, on March 5 and March 6, the I-95 Corridor Coalition will hold its first Towing Summit at the Marriott Crystal City Hotel. This summit is separate from the TRAA conference, but will address items of interest to towers.

For information, visit [www.towserver.net](http://www.towserver.net) or call TRAA at 800-728-0136. A downloadable conference registration form is available online.

Advanced Level "Complete" Tanker Recovery Course. Sponsored by Wes Wilburn Consulting, this three-day course April 15-18 in Myrtle Beach, SC will cover a variety of different aspects of tanker towing and recovery and feature veteran instructors Wes Wilburn and Tom Luciano. Sessions include theory and hands-on demonstrations, including quicker/safer methods, new ideas



Walt Phillips

*I'm not the receptionist – I'm the owner.  
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<p><b>14 TON</b></p> <p><b>2008 PETERBILT 14 TON WRECKER</b>, 330hp, 10 spd, air ride, exhaust brake, alum. wheels &amp; tank, 28,000 boom lift, 11,000lb. underlift w/forks, dual 15,000lb. planetary hyd. winches, 7/16x150" cable, driver &amp; passenger controls, air shift winch, built in storage &amp; chain racks, air shift PTO, plenty of tool space &amp; lighting! Call Dave for details!</p>	<p><b>35 TON ALL NEW SRS!</b></p> <p><b>THE FIRST STOCK 35 TON INDEPENDENT JERR-DAN WRECKER w/The ALL NEW SRS</b> (side recovery system) on a <b>2008 KENWORTH T800</b>, Cummins 550hp, 18 spd, 20K steer axle, 46K rear w/cross-lock diff., air ride, sunroof, keyless, wireless remote, HD tire lift, 5th wheel attach, pintle hook w/2" ball, TONS of LED lights w/the NEW SRS w/35,000lb. winch &amp; wireless remote! Call Dave For Details!</p>	<p><b>50 TON W/ SRS SYSTEM</b></p> <p><b>2008 KENWORTH T800</b>, 550 ISX cummins, 18 spd dual stainless air cleaners, dual fuel tanks, sun roof, air ride seats, tilt, air ride, alum whls w/ Jerr-Dan 50 ton independent wrecker, 171" composite/aluminum main body w/ (2) 24" vertical comp and (3) hor. comp. per side (1) 24" tunnel toolbox, 3 Stage Coach boom underlift, Super HD tire lift (25,000#) 5th whl attach &amp; pintle hook w/2" ball, 4 sets of frame forks &amp; spring hanger attachments, (2) 50,000 DP 2 sp planetary winches, 18 function wireless remote, tons &amp; tons of LED lights, tool &amp; body compartment lighting, Jerr-Dan SRS (side recovery system) w/remote! Call Dave NOW! IN STOCK MARCH!</p>
<p><b>25 TON</b></p> <p><b>This 2004 KENWORTH CHASSIS</b> w/475hp Cummins, 13spd trans., 224k miles, WILL BE BUILT LATE FEB or EARLY MARCH with a 25 TON WRECKER BODY! Including - (1) 24" &amp; (1) 40" tunnel toolbox, 146" main body, LED lightbars &amp; mini wing lts, LED body &amp; tail lts, tire lift, 5th wheel attach, pintle w/2" ball, 12 function wireless remote! Call Dave for Details!</p>	<p><b>50 TON</b></p> <p><b>2007 KENWORTH 50 TON WRECKER</b>, Cat 550hp, 18 spd, dual fuel tanks, air ride, alum. wheels, 2-24" vertical comp, 3 horizontal comp. each side, 3 stage 176" underlift, 4 sets frame forks, 2 - 50,000lb. DP 2 spd Planetary winches, 18 function wireless remote, TONS of LED lights, tool &amp; body lighting, Call Dave for details!</p>	<p><b>Awesome Used 25 Ton</b></p> <p><b>1995 INTERNATIONAL 9400, N14 Cummins</b>, 566k miles, mounted w/JERR-DAN 25 TON WRECKER (3) 24" tunnel toolboxes, 1-vert. 2-horiz. compartments, wireless remote, NEW cables, light pkg. 5th wheel attach, pintle hitch w/2" ball, 4 sets frame forks, spring hanger attachments, SALE PRICED at \$109,000. Call Dave for details!</p>
<p><b>50 TON</b></p> <p><b>2008 KENWORTH 50 TON WRECKER</b>, Cummins 550hp, 18 spd, air ride, dual tanks, sunroof, alum. wheels, 2-24" vertical &amp; 3 horizontal comp. each side, 2 - 50,000lb. DP 2 spd planetary winches, 25,000lb. tire lift, 4 sets frame forks, 18 function wireless remote, TONS of LED lights, Call Dave For Details!</p>		

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**60 TON ROTATOR**

**2008 KENWORTH T800 60 TON ROTATOR**, Cummins 550hp, 18 spd, 20,000lb. steer axle, 46,000lb. rears w/crosslock diff., air ride, sunroof, 60 ton 3 stage Rotator w/fullly proportional wireless remote, HD tire lift, 5th wheel attach, ALL light bars & body lights will be LED. Will be DONE in FEB! Call Dave for Details!

**MEET the NEXT STOCK ROTATOR!! Built UNDER 80,000lb. WITHOUT Compromising our INTEGRITY that allows us to be the INDUSTRY LEADER! This unit will be built UNDER \$500,000 w/FET!!!**

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from across North America and opportunities to network with other progressive towing operators. Though geared for experienced operators, the classes are open to all levels.

The Ultimate Event Package Complete Recovery Class, including accommodations at the Crown Reef Resort in Myrtle Beach, is \$1,895. A one-day Advanced Level Light-Duty class with Wilburn will also be offered on April 15 for \$195. For more information and registration, visit [www.towcoop.com](http://www.towcoop.com) or contact Wes Wilburn at 910-486-8928 or [wes.wilburn@aol.com](mailto:wes.wilburn@aol.com).

**Extrication Fest 2008.** The 2008 Extrication Fest will be held on March 14-16, 2008. It is presented by the Emergency Services Training Institute of the Texas Engineering Extension Services (a member of the Texas A&M University System) and Midsouth Rescue Technologies.

It will be held at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, TX. Offerings include: three levels of auto and truck extrication training; patient care; scene management; supplemental restraint system technology; hybrid vehicle anatomy and extrication. The Expo includes live demos, training exhibits, and free classes. Courses range from \$125 to \$150.

For more information and registration, visit [www.midsouthrescue.org](http://www.midsouthrescue.org). For the latest updates on Extrication Fest, visit <http://www.trfootnotes.com>

[/mypage.html?pg=ExtricationFest'08](http://mypage.html?pg=ExtricationFest'08) Info to read their newsletter.

**Argh! She's Everywhere!** Guess it had to happen sooner or later. Britney Spears and the towing industry have crossed paths. The pop starlet endured the indignity of a flat tire in early January while driving down Sunset Boulevard. She abandoned her Mercedes in rush hour traffic and hitched a ride from one of the paparazzi following her. LA cops had it removed by Quicksilver Towing.

Read the story at [http://www.usmagazine.com/britneys\\_car\\_towed](http://www.usmagazine.com/britneys_car_towed).



**towSearch.com Now Offers More.** towPartners has announced that its free towing and road service provider locator tool, towSearch.com has been updated to significantly improve its

offering to fleet clients. These updates include search capability for extra-heavy-duty towing and incident management. In addition, towPartners reports that over 1,000 members have opted-in to provide a 10% discount to first-time customers using towSearch.

Learn more about towPartners at [www.towpartners.com](http://www.towpartners.com).

**Farewell, Friends.** Our condolences go out to the family and acquaintances of these members of the towing industry who have recently passed away.

Gary Sperling of Sperling's Garage and Wrecker Service in Cape Girardeau, MO. Read about a tribute to Sperling at <http://www.semmissourian.com/story/1299143.html>.

Margo Frownfelter of Bolster's Towing in Kalispell, MT. Read about Frownfelter at <http://www.dailyinterlake.com/articles/2007/12/07/obituaries/obit01.txt>.

Kenneth Abbott of Abbott's Towing in Benton, IL. Read about a tribute to Abbott at <http://www.southernillinoisan.com/articles/2008/01/09/local/22898673.txt>.

Darrell Jones of Pensu Towing in Newport News, VA. Read about a tribute to Jones at [http://www.wavy.com/Global/story.asp?S=7629049&nav=menu45\\_2](http://www.wavy.com/Global/story.asp?S=7629049&nav=menu45_2).

Michael Patrick Kelly of Vrchota Corp. in Boca Raton, FL. Read about Kelly at <http://www.naples-dailynews.com/news/2008/jan/15/deputies-pickup-canal-person-inside-after-accident/>.

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## RECOVERY NOTES

# Learn Your Limits

*Or you, your truck, and your load are in for big trouble*

By Bill Jackson

I was sitting quietly in my office reading a magazine article by yet another towing expert and feeling generally pleased with the world in general when my eye caught the following: "After buying your big hydraulic tow truck, it is important to calculate the various limits that can be reached before it will turn over"...or, I thought, before your front wheels paw the air!

The word that stirred me up was "after." Surely, the writer meant "before." In deciding what to buy, it is of vital importance that you do all the calculations *first*. You really do not want to be out on your first big recovery and regretting your choice of trucks.

I have done a lot of research into how this can be done, but let's start by

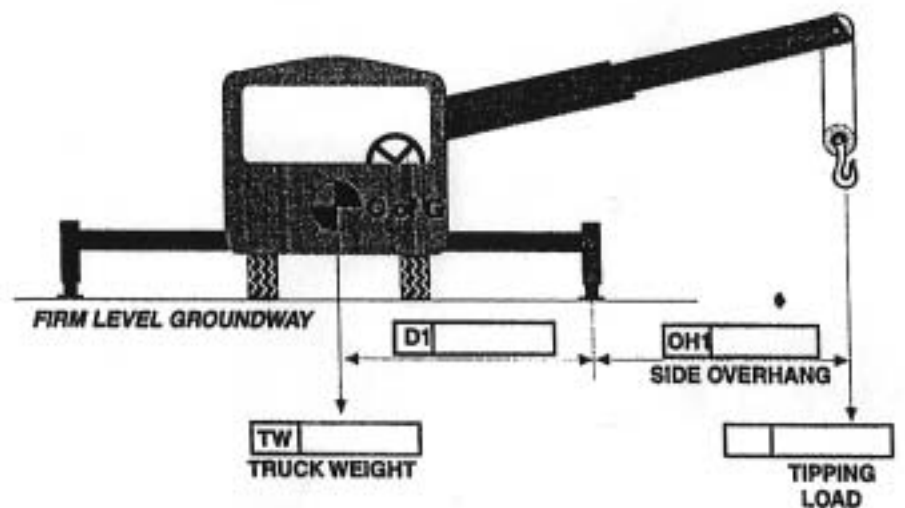
looking at what the manufacturer should do. We will then try to do the rest.

Basically, the maker or assembler of a tow truck has a legal responsibility to give you a certificate that clearly states what the actual equipment made by them will lift before it breaks. I have a photo of an actual test carried out on NRC equipment (rated at 75 tons) where the truck has been loaded with the actual dead weight of 150,000 pounds. With feet down all around, this is an actual test as it does not rely on the electronic or hydraulic meters that are preferred by most manufacturers.

### Get A Certificate

At the very least, you must get a test certificate from the manufacturer that

### TO FIND VERTICAL BOOM LOAD THAT WILL TIP RECOVERY VEHICLE OVER SIDEWAYS



**FORMULA: Vertical boom load that will tip recovery vehicle over sideways**  $TL = \frac{TW \times D1}{OH1}$

will tell you the following:

- The absolute maximum strain the equipment will withstand
- The amount of weight the equipment will stand on your actual chassis with the boom over the back and the boom over the side

Both of these maximums can be calculated with the boom at minimum radii.

Most big manufacturers today will provide a load chart for the actual machine. Some go even further and add a bell or horn that sounds when the truck is about to turn over. One heavy-duty, the 75-ton NRC, has a unique device that stops the operator from tipping the chassis, and even

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**2000 CHEV 3500HD**  
#U-2258, 454 V8 Gas, Auto, Cheyenne, 17.5' Century Alum, Perm. Pylon.  
**\$14,995**



**2004 INT 4300**  
#U-2246 EXTENDED CAB, DT 466, Auto, White, Air Seat, Air Compressor, Air Horn, Loaded, 21' Vulcan Alum, W/L.  
**\$33,995**



**2003 INT 4300 DT466**  
6-SPD, Loaded, Champion Steel Beds, Wheel lift, New Paint, SIMS, Ready to Go! 2 to choose from!  
**\$33,995**



**2000 CHEV C6500**  
#U-2257, 427 Gas, 19' Century Steel, Removable Rails.  
**\$24,995**



**2000 INTERNATIONAL 4700**  
#U-2124 T444E Trans, Auto Loaded, New Paint, 21' Champion Steel, W/L.  
**\$24,995**



**1997 CHEVY C-6500**  
#U-2240, 3116 CAT, 6SPD, White, Loaded, 19' Century Alum, W/L.  
**\$18,995**



**2000 INTERNATIONAL 4700**  
#U-2103, DT 466, 7-SPD, Air Compressor, Air Ride, Air Brakes, Yellow/Blue, 21' Steel Vulcan, Fixed Pylon, W/L New Paint.  
**\$24,995**



**2007 CHEV K-3500**  
#U-2244, Classic, 6.0 Gas, Auto, 4x4, EXTENDED CAB, 9300 Miles, Silverado, Jerr-Dan MPL40, T/L, Autoloader.  
**\$58,995**



**1986 Kenworth T600A**  
#U-2213, NTC 350 Cummins, 9 SPD, Red/Silver, 44" Sleeper, Vulcan 3025 Integrated, Hydraulic Spades, T/L, U/L, 278" WB.  
**\$\$\$\$\$\$**



**2002 CHEV K-3500**  
#U-2245, 6.0 Gas, Auto, Silverado, Blue, Loaded, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, S/L, W/L, 72" CA.  
**\$25,995**



**2002 CHEVY C-6500**  
#U-2232 3126 CAT, 7 SPD, Red, 42,000 Miles, Hard Loaded, Air Seat, Air Horns, Air Compressor, 21' Century Steel, Steel Removable Rails, W/L.  
**\$39,995**



**1999 FORD F-450**  
#U-2255, 4x4, Powerstroke Diesel, Auto, XLT, Black, Century 412, T/L, W/L, Dollies, Push Bumper, 72" CA.  
**\$21,995**



**1999 CHEV C-6500**  
#U-2254, 3126 CAT, Auto, Loaded, Red, Air Compressor, Air Seat, 125,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, 1210D Boom, Cougar W/L, Dollies.  
**\$32,995**



**2001 GMC C-6500, 3126 CAT**  
#U-2204, 210 HP, 6-SPD, Loaded, Red, Air Seat, Air Compressor, Air Horns, 21' Jerr-Dan Steel BIC, Removable Rails, W/L.  
**\$26,995**



**1999 CHEV C6500**  
#U-2260, 3126 CAT, 6 spd, Holmes 552, T/L, W/L, 108" CA.  
**\$32,995**



**2005 FORD F650 SUPER CAB**  
#U2220, 5.9 Cummins, Auto, Loaded, 21' Jerr-Dan steel Shark, W/L.  
**\$47,995**



**1991 GMC TOPKICK**  
#U-2237, 366 Gas, Auto, 19' Jerr-Dan alum Stingray.  
**\$13,995**



**2002 CHEVY K-3500**  
#U-2231C, Extended Cab, White, 6.6L Duramax Diesel, Auto, Silverado, Loaded, Century 412 Alum. Body, T/L, W/L.  
**\$34,995**



**1999 CHEVY K-3500**  
#U-2045, 454 Gas, Auto Silverado, Red, Vulcan 882, T/L, W/L, Push Bumper, 84" CA.  
**\$16,995**



**2005 FORD F-650 SUPERCAB XLT**  
#U-2251, Cummins, auto, 21' Jerr-Dan Steel Rustler, W/L.  
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**2007 CHEV C5500**  
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**2006 FORD F-450**  
#U-2190, SUPER CAB, Powerstroke Diesel, Auto, XLT, White, 13,000 Miles, New Century 301 Express, S/L, Auto Loader, Custom Paint.  
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**2008 FORD F-650**  
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**\$\$\$\$\$**



**2007 FREIGHTLINER**  
#N-1930, M2, MBE 900 210 HP, Auto, air seat, Air Compressor, Exhaust, Loaded, 21' Century Steel, Alum. Removable Rails, W/L, Fixed Pylon.  
**\$\$\$\$\$**

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## LEARN YOUR LIMITS

continued from page 15

levels the truck when on its four outriggers. Some others ignore the whole question.

Clearly, you must carefully read and agree with what you find on your Safe Load Certificate *before* you buy, otherwise you are in for some nasty shocks.

### Do It Yourself

If you want to do it yourself, there is a simple way to find out what your truck will do or what you can expect from your chassis. Please be sure to put your normal road equipment onto it. Even though this is very simple math, you do need to be exact.

If, one day, your truck has broken or turned over, you will be very pleased you took this precaution because it's the first thing the attorneys will ask for. I should know as I have both had a huge truck overturn and acted as legal witness in several such cases.

Remember the following important actions when setting up your own chart:

- Always weigh the truck with the full working equipment on it
- Make sure you are measuring to the correct points I show you on the sketch
- Don't try to confuse the issue by pumping up any leading third air-assist axle

**STEP by STEP: Fill in the blanks and calculate as follows:-**

$$\text{TW} \times \text{D1} = \text{[ ]}$$

$$\text{[ ]} \div \text{OH1} = \text{TL}$$

**NOTE!**  
**NEVER WORK TO MAXIMUM TIPPING LOAD!**  
**GRADIENTS WILL DRASTICALLY EFFECT THE ABOVE**

Note: Do not use this chart for working out non-vertical loads such as winching, or else you will be in great trouble and have great expense.

If you know the side-tipping load of your truck, you can pick up the load over the side and rest assured that the load will be safe at the boom

*“Most big manufacturers today will provide a load chart”*

angle and extension right around the truck.

Over the back, you have the extra weight of the front end of the truck, making it even safer, but there is a proviso. If the truck has narrower legs at the front of the bed than the rear, these can prove dangerous when the load is swung over each corner of the bed. Why any manufacturer would make a truck with very wide feet at the front and narrow feet at the back is a mystery because what you gain at the side, you lose at the corners.

### Do The Math

Again, I suggest you work out three figures:

- Boom flat, boom extended

- Boom at 45-degrees fully extended
- Boom with lift cable just clearing the side feet

Steps:

- Enter your GVW at “TW”
- Measure from center of the truck to the other support leg
- Measure from the side support leg to the hook dropped vertically
- Don't try to confuse the issue by playing with the air-assist axle. Put it in the math or leave it out!

But there is another little secret the manufacturers don't say a lot about, one I refer to as “proportionate valves” (PV). I can just imagine your faces as you read this, thinking, “What the heck has that to do with anything?”

More then you can possibly imagine! When you buy the ordinary tow truck, you pull a lever and (usually) something happens. The problem is that it happens violently.

This means that one moment you have nearly a full load, the next (after opening the valve) you have full power and load on the machine. On a machine fitted with PV, you open the valve just a little and the load comes on a little at a time. This alone can help prevent boom overload. Just imagine what that means if you are working a rescue and the crew needs you to lift (or lower) the load gently. I rest my case! ☘

*If you have any questions on this whole subject, just email me at [billvid@comcast.net](mailto:billvid@comcast.net)*

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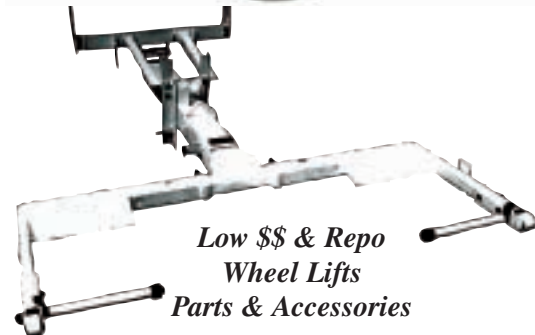
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## ON THE MOVE

# A New Old Motor Club

*Could they offer  
towers a better deal? We'll see.*

**By Cyndi Kight**

This July, it is possible that there might be a “breath of fresh air” for towers from the motor club industry when Nation Safe Drivers Motor Club shifts into gear.

While their name may not be readily familiar, Nation Safe Drivers (NSD) has been around since 1962. The company, which describes itself as “one of the largest suppliers of auto-related, supplemental products,” was founded in Boston, MA. In 1978, the operation moved to Boca Raton, FL where its headquarters is located today.

Towers may be more likely to recognize their work through one of NSD’s partners. “The towing community is being exposed to our business through GE,” said John Moore, NSD program manager and product director. “We’re not new to the motor club business, we’re new to the dispatch side of things.”

According to Moore, who has been with NSD for six years, the creation of NSD’s own provider network is not in any way intended to sever their relationship with GE. “We’re looking to complement what we already do,” he pointed out.

And they’re looking to be “easy to work with,” Moore said. He noted that NSD, over the years, has had the opportunity to observe how other motor clubs operate. “It should be a

win-win situation,” he said, with service for motor club clients and a steady supply of business for towing companies. “But,” he continued, “there definitely seems to be a disconnect.” As a whole, he added, “I think we’ve lost sight that these towing companies are our clients.”

One of NSD’s core strengths as a business, Moore explained, has been their sensitivity to their customers’ needs. “We build very strong relationships,” he said. As product director, Moore said that his job is to balance the needs of the company and the needs of their clients. He jokingly added, “I have a huge customer-service beacon on my forehead.”

Moore said that they also rely on the expertise of their people, such as Ralph Sacco, the regional field manager for the West Coast.

Sacco, said Moore, owned a towing company for many years and is a former police officer as well. Moore has also gotten out of the office to meet prospective service providers in person, beginning last November at the tow show in Baltimore.

When asked what towers told him they expected from a motor club, Moore said that they mainly wanted three things. The first was fair, accurate payment. The second was the best information available from dispatchers. “And the one word I kept hearing from them,” said Moore, “was ‘respect.’”

While he said that he wasn’t sure of the full definition of the term



NSD’s John Moore



NSD headquarters in Boca Raton

“respect,” Moore stated, “I do feel that it means that they are business people, not grunt people doing grunt work.” For Moore, that means incorporating an attitude of treating their service providers – from the person who answers the phone to the owner of the company – with consideration.

In addition to that, “They can expect quick payment, fair payment, without a lot of hoops,” Moore said. “Certainly, we’ll have competitive rates.” Plus, there will be several options available for prompt compensation and, since NSD has been a long-established business, Moore noted that there is plenty of capital for payments.

*“They can expect quick payment, fair payment”*

Using the most up-to-date technologies, such as digital dispatching and integrating the use of GPS, Moore explained, is considered a responsibility, allowing NSD to be efficient and cost-effective. Currently, he said, “We’re working with the dispatch software companies that towers use so our programs can talk to theirs.”

Moore anticipates that NSD’s blend will ultimately enrich the towing industry and soon have other motor clubs taking notice. As a company, “We are known for raising the bar,” Moore said. “We don’t want to do business the same old way.”

Want to learn more? Visit NSD on the Web at [www.nationsafedrivers.com](http://www.nationsafedrivers.com) and click on the “Providers” link for an online application or visit NSD’s booth at the PWO’s 2008 Florida Tow Show in April.

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# TOWING LAW

## A Few Bad Apples

*Have they spoiled everything for New Jersey towers?*

By **Linda Peiffer**  
**GSTA Executive Director**

The Garden State Towman's Association (GSTA) of New Jersey met in January to discuss the effects of the Predatory Towing Prevention Act (NJ Senate Bill S2759) that was signed into law by the Governor in October. The GSTA membership agreed that this law is the worst to hit the industry since the Insurance Reform Act, which was repealed in 1997 according to Peter O'Connell, attorney for the TRAA.

The Predatory Towing Prevention Act was initially drafted by then-Assemblyman Robert Gordon to protect consumers from what he called "unscrupulous towing companies" whose rates for towing consumers from private property were uncontrolled. Consensual towing is an agreement between the consumer and the towing company that includes the fees charged.

A legitimate form of non-consensual towing is when municipalities contract with towing companies to remove vehicles from public roads and highways. These contracts are based on municipal ordinances that set the fees and conditions for the towing company. This practice of New Jersey municipalities working with the towing companies has been ongoing for 20 years.

*"The law is flawed and NJ legislators know this"*

The GSTA believes the solution lies in applying the same or similar rules to private property towers as now apply to municipal contracts with towing companies for removal of vehicles from public roads and highways. An alternative would be to have the state regulate private property non-consensual towing only and not try to regulate the entire towing industry.

The bill originally did address only private property non-consensual towing, but within days — even before the bill went to the New Jersey Senate — the language was drastically changed to include rate regulation of



The GSTA's John Glass

the entire New Jersey towing industry, a feat that insurance companies have been unsuccessfully attempting to accomplish for years.

The new law requires all towing companies statewide to submit a tariff, or fee schedule, to the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the agency that will oversee and license the towing companies. Then the agency will set the towing fees that all licensed towing companies can charge, basing them on New Jersey county averages, and post those fees on a public web site. Anyone not licensed by the DCA will be fined and suspended from towing in New Jersey.

The result is that the DCA will now regulate every aspect of the towing industry, including but not limited to the existing private contracts and municipal contracts that towing companies have had for years. In New Jersey's attempt to regulate the industry, the state is not considering what towing really is, how it is defined as an industry, or other related particulars such as highway clean-up, storage, etc.

The cost of implementing and maintaining this program will be paid for by the towing companies through the licensing fees. In essence, New Jersey towing company owners will be paying for their own regulation by the state, and yet towers are not sure at this time just how those fees will be assessed and what they will be.

The GSTA has from the beginning been a supporter of the need to regulate predatory private property non-consensual towing. There are only a few towers whose actions created the public outrage against unregulated towing fees, but their transgressions have led to the regulation of the entire New Jersey towing industry. And the result is a case of a good law that was taken too far.

Since last year, the GSTA has consulted with TRAA Attorney Peter O'Connell as well as the GSTA's own attorney, Robert Martin. In addition, an opinion from attorney Mike McGovern was obtained that has noted the adverse affects this law will have on the towing industry.

Members of the GSTA Executive Board have met with representatives of the Governor's office numerous times, and more recently with the DCA in an effort to work through the regulatory process to prevent as many of the adverse affects of the law on the industry as possible. The GSTA has committed to the time and money necessary to see this effort through to the desired end: regulating only private property non-consensual towing. The GSTA feels that the law itself is flawed and the NJ legislators know this; the GSTA asserts that the law is in violation of the Federal ICC Termination Act of 1995 (ICCTA).

GSTA is asking its members to become informed, get involved, and spread the word about this law and the association's efforts. It is necessary to become familiar with this law and how it will change our industry. It's important then to relay that information to the municipalities and to state lawmakers.

Beyond this, the GSTA fears that if the State of New Jersey is able to regulate an entire industry as a result of the actions of a few, it may be only a matter of time before other states adopt such a policy. If that happens, the regulation of the towing industry could spread and adversely affect our entire industry nationwide. ❖

### Read All About It!!

#### New Jersey Legislation

- Governor signs predatory towing legislation on 10/24/07: <http://www.phillyburbs.com/pb-dyn/news/104-10242007-1429196.html>
- More detailed info here: <http://www.politicsnj.com/governor-signs-predatory-towing-prevention-act-13185>
- Another article here: <http://www.pressofatlanticcity.com/news/newjersey/story/7486890p-7382151c.html>
- See the Garden State Towman's Association (GSTA) homepage at <http://www.gsta.org/> Peter O'Connell's letter about the legislation is also on that page.

#### Oregon Legislation

- Media Release from the Oregon Department of Justice on Oregon's private property towing regulations passed on June 25, 2007: <http://www.doj.state.or.us/releases/2007/rel062507.shtml>
- Private property towing regulation in OR seemed to get its push from Sean Cruz, a legislative aide for the sponsoring Senator Avel Gordly. Here's info from Cruz's blog: <http://blogoliticalsean.blogspot.com/2007/05/oregon-senate-passes-2nd-towing-reform.html>
- The Oregon Tow Truck Association home page: <http://www.oregontow.org/only/OTTA%20Members.html>

## The Laugh List

### Gender At The ATM

#### Male technique:

- Drive up to the cash machine
- Put down car window
- Insert card into machine and enter PIN
- Enter amount of cash required and withdraw
- Retrieve card, cash, and receipt
- Put window up
- Drive off

#### Female technique:

- Drive up to cash machine
- Back car up to align car window to machine
- Set parking brake
- Put window down
- Find handbag, dump contents onto passenger seat to locate card
- Turn radio down
- Attempt to insert card into machine
- Open car door to allow access to machine due to distance from car
- Insert card
- Re-insert card right side up
- Dig through handbag to find diary with PIN written on inside back page
- Enter PIN
- Press cancel and re-enter correct PIN
- Enter amount of cash required
- Check makeup in rear view mirror
- Retrieve cash and receipt
- Search handbag contents on seat for wallet
- Place cash inside
- Put receipt in back of checkbook
- Re-check make-up
- Drive forward two feet
- Back up to cash machine
- Retrieve card
- Put card in card slot in wallet
- Shrug for benefit of irate drivers behind car
- Re-start stalled car and drive away
- Drive for two miles
- Release parking brake

# The Laugh List

## Why I Had A Wreck

The following are statements from insurance forms on which drivers attempted to summarize the details of their accident in the fewest possible words:

- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment
- Coming home I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have
- The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intention
- I thought my window was down, but I found it was up when I put my head through it
- I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way
- A truck backed through my windshield into my wife's face
- The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.
- In an attempt to kill a fly I drove into a telephone pole
- I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision, and I did not see the other car.
- I had been driving for forty years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident
- I was on the way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way, causing me to have an accident
- As I approached an intersection, a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no stop sign had ever appeared before. I was unable to stop in time to avoid the accident.
- To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front I struck a pedestrian
- My car was legally parked as it backed into another vehicle
- An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished
- I told the police that I was not injured but on removing my hat I found that I had a fractured skull
- I was sure the old fellow would never make it to the other side of the road when I struck him
- The pedestrian had no idea which way to run so I ran over him
- I saw a slow-moving, sad-faced old gentleman as he bounced off the roof of my car
- I was thrown from my car as it left the road. I was later found in a ditch by some stray cows.

# Snow Daze

One wintry March morning a couple was listening to the radio while eating breakfast. The announcer said, "We are going to have eight to 10 inches of snow today. Be sure to park your car on the even-numbered side of the street, so the snowplows can get through."

The wife went out and moved her car. A week later, again while they were eating breakfast, the radio announcer said, "We are expecting 10 to 12 inches of snow today. Don't forget to park your car on the odd-numbered side of the street, so the snowplows can get through."

Again, the wife went out and moved her car.

The next week during breakfast, the radio announcer said, "We are again expecting 12 to 14 inches of snow. You must park..."

Then the electric power went off. With that, the wife became very upset, and, clearly worried, said to her husband, "Honey, I don't know what to do. Which side of the street should I park on so the snowplows can get through?"

With the love and understanding in his voice required of all husbands of blondes, the husband said, "Why don't you just leave it in the garage this time?"

# Cruisin' With Holmes



The Holmes wrecker never looked so good!



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# THE REPO MAN

## Who Is Your Client?

*You may think you know  
but you might be wrong*

**By David Gandal**

A lot has been happening in the repossession industry. It's no secret that the changes in repo-related laws in early 2007 have caused skip tracers to drop some of their tools. It is also no secret that repossessions are up right now, about 15 percent from two years ago. Satellite location systems are becoming more common and that is no secret as well.

So, do you want to know a real secret? Here's a good one: Do you know who your clients are now? This is the biggest change the repossession industry has seen in decades. The fact is, your client list has changed whether you like it or not.

For example, you may have dozens of opened assignments where the lien holder is a well-known automobile financier. However, this lien holder is not your client. Your client, the one who

assigned this repossession request to your office, is probably a third-party account-forwarding office.

There are three main forwarding companies and there will be more to follow. I will not name them here but if you are repossessing in America, you know who they are. These forwarding companies came from money. They are owned by the large national auction companies who sell the repossessed units. They have swooped down upon all of your biggest clients and made them a deal they could not refuse.

Now, these forwarding companies went to all the big auto financiers and told them that they would handle the recovery of their past-due vehicles from A to Z. The game was on. The forwarders promised to assign the accounts out for repossession with qualified repossessors across the U.S. They also promised to take these units and sell them at auction. The

plan was to take their recovery and handling fees out of the sale proceeds at the auction and that is just what they did.

However, in between these two promises was another promise: to locate the units that were not being found at the given addresses. Yes, that's right. They promised to skip trace.

### Here's The Problem

There is a problem with this. These account-forwarding powerhouses can hire people to assign these accounts out for repossession. Their representatives might even know a little about the industry and would also obtain updates and process the condition reports. Of course, these forwarding companies were already experts in the field of automobile re-marketing so that went along smoothly enough.

The problem starts when large auction companies decide to pretend that they have professional skip tracers on board to find the skipped-out debtors and their units. As a result, the auto financiers are repossessing about 28 percent of their vehicles.

When I heard this figure, I laughed and thought that it would just be a few months before the lien holders would need a better recovery percentage and would look elsewhere to get the job done. Well, that was over a year ago and the forwarding companies are still going strong...and they are still at about a 28-percent success rate.


It seems that the financiers have decided that it is worth the loss since

many of these companies have rid themselves of entire departments that handled the recoveries before the forwarders came into the picture. On top of that, they are just creating additional profit and loss as the lost cars get charged back on paper.

Am I suggesting that we fight to once again get our repossession orders straight from the lien holder? No, I am not. Sadly, it seems that these "big three" repossession forwarding companies are here to stay. What I am suggesting is that all repossession companies had better be skip tracing the account themselves if they want to find the unit at all. In the process, you will be making the forwarding company look even better but it comes down to one final question: Do you want the car?

The good news is that with forwarding companies, a good, effective repossession company can work for lien holders they never had a chance to work for before. The forwarding companies will look at your company even if you are a little new in the business. They will rate your effectiveness and your speed of service and they will pour work on those with the highest ratings who want to do their work.

I would like to think that think that in time things with the forwarding companies will change and recovery agencies can once again have more control over their own operation. In the meantime, I will find their cars and make them look good and pay my bills. Hang in there. 🐾




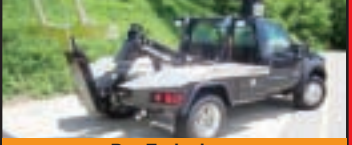


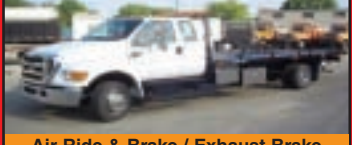


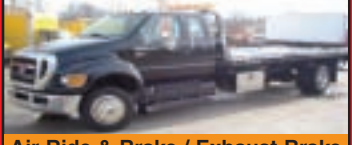
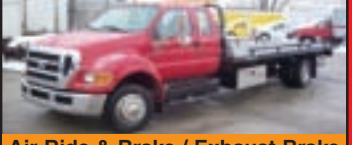
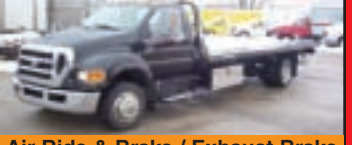



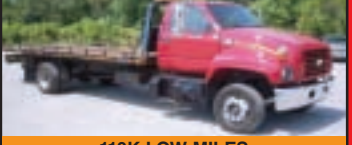

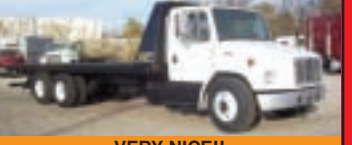

## [New] Truck Sales

866-469-1308

## [Used] Truck Sales

866-469-1310

[www.badgertruck.com](http://www.badgertruck.com)

 <p><b>Pre-Emissions</b> 2007 STERLING MBE 330 hp, Jerr-Dan [28' Rollback]</p>	 <p><b>Pre-Emissions</b> 2007 FORD F450 [4x4], Automatic Jerr-Dan [MPL] Single Line</p>	 <p><b>LOADED TRUCK</b> 2008 FORD F650 Super Cab, 300 hp, Jerr-Dan [HPL60] Twin Line</p>	 <p><b>Pre-Emissions</b> 2007 INTERNATIONAL 4400, DT466, 10 Spd Alum. Wheels Jerr-Dan MDL 280/110 14 Ton, It's Got It All, <b>Needs to go to work!!, \$ALE \$104,672.53</b></p>	
 <p><b>Air Ride &amp; Brake / Exhaust Brake</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins 260 hp Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>Also Avail. In White &amp; Black</b> 2008 STERLING, MBE, Auto, Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>ON AIR SUSPENSION</b> 2008 FORD F750 Cat 300 hp, Auto Jerr-Dan [MDL 281/110 14 Ton]</p>		
 <p><b>Air Ride &amp; Brake / Exhaust Brake</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins, 260 hp Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>Air Ride &amp; Brake / Exhaust Brake</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins 260 hp, Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>Air Ride &amp; Brake / Exhaust Brake</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins 260 hp Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>Hyd. Brake / Spring Suspension</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins 240 hp Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>	 <p><b>Air Ride &amp; Brake / Exhaust Brake</b> 2008 FORD F650, Cummins 260 hp Jerr-Dan 21' Steel Carrier</p>
 <p><b>VERY CLEAN!!</b> 2000 FORD F450, 7.3L, Diesel, 6 sp. Vulcan Wheel Lift</p>	 <p><b>110K LOW MILES</b> (2) 2002 CHEVROLET C6500, Cat, 6sp., 21' Steel Century Carrier</p>	 <p><b>NICE / REALLY CLEAN 4X4!!!</b> 2002 FORD F550 4X4, 7.3L, 6sp., Century 411 Twin Line Wrecker</p>	 <p><b>VERY NICE!!</b> 2003 FREIGHTLINER FL80 28' Ledwell 30,000lb Rollback</p>	 <p><b>FRESH PAINT</b> 2002 LEDWELL 35 TON, Hyd. Beaver Tail, Pony Motor</p>

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Select the link for advance purchase savings. This discount offer expires March 29, 2008, so buy these tickets today!

**THURSDAY, APRIL 3  
Pre-Show Kickoff Party**

Free food, drinks, entertainment and demos

Sponsored by: **GM** Fleet and Commercial

**FRIDAY, APRIL 4  
Customer Appreciation Party**

Free drinks, demos, entertainment and demos

Sponsored by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES

**SATURDAY, APRIL 5  
Awards Banquet**

Awards presentation, dinner and entertainment

Sponsored by: **JEFFERDAN**

**DON'T MISS THE POPULAR  
BRAINSTORMING WITH THE PROS**

Hosted by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES

Refrainments provided by: **Tow Times**  
We'll have industry leaders, top towing business executives, pointing out the "do's and don'ts" and sharing their personal experiences from years of owning a towing and recovery business.

**THURSDAY, APRIL 3  
AND FRIDAY, APRIL 4**

Fiesta 5-6



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**THE ONE AND ONLY**  
**"FLORIDA TOW SHOW"**  
**APRIL 3-6**  
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CHROME SHOP MAFIA.  
AUTOGRAPHS AND PHOTO  
OPPORTUNITY FRIDAY & SATURDAY.  
CHECK OUT ONE OF THEIR RIGS.**



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ONE TOW SHOW IN 2008,  
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THE FLORIDA TOW SHOW**

**THURSDAY - April 3**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. **JEEP/MEDIUM DUTY DRIVER TRAINING**  
Cerrada 8-C (Day 1 of 3-day class) With Dave Leebert  
Call 407-296-3316 to Register  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. **FREE REGISTRATION OPEN**  
Sponsored by: **GM** Fleet and Commercial  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TRAINING WITH THE PROS**  
Sponsored by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TOP GUN TOWER AWARDS**  
Fiesta 1-3  
Sponsored by: **Alstate**  
**asutlon** **USA** **AMERICA**

**FRIDAY - April 4**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. **JEEP/MEDIUM DUTY DRIVER TRAINING**  
Cerrada 8-C (Day 2 of 3-day class) With Dave Leebert  
Call 407-296-3316 to Register  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. **FREE REGISTRATION OPEN**  
Sponsored by: **GM** Fleet and Commercial  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TRAINING WITH THE PROS**  
Sponsored by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TOP GUN TOWER AWARDS**  
Fiesta 1-3  
Sponsored by: **Alstate**  
**USA** **AMERICA**

**FRIDAY - April 4 (continued)**

10 a.m. **BMW and Porsche Training**  
GE Outside Booth  
10:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. **2007 USAC/MD AWARDS AND LUNCHEON**  
Fiesta 6  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. **LODGET CLASS**  
With Steve Young of Lockwood Inc.  
12:30 - 2:30 p.m. **LODGET CLASS**  
With Steve Young of Lockwood Inc.  
1:30 - 2:30 p.m. **FLORIDA UEM AND TITLE WORKSHOP**  
Fiesta 1-3  
1 - 3 p.m. **"10 WAYS TO ROLL VEHICLES"**  
Video and photo presentation showing different methods to roll light and medium-duty vehicles  
With Dave Leebert  
1 - 2 p.m. **"10 WAYS TO ROLL VEHICLES"**  
Video and photo presentation showing different methods to roll light and medium-duty vehicles  
With Dave Leebert  
1:30 - 3 p.m. **PLUMBING SERVICE EXCELLENCE**  
With Christine Leebert  
3:30 - 5 p.m. **PROFESSIONAL USER GROUP**  
Cerrada 8-C  
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. **RAISE YOURS WITH THE PROS**  
Sponsored by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES  
7 p.m. - 10 p.m. **FREE AWARDS BANQUET**  
Sponsored by: **USA** **AMERICA**  
8 p.m. - 10 p.m. **GM FLEET AND MILLER INDUSTRIES PARTY**  
Outside Lot A  
Sponsored by: **GM** Fleet and Commercial  
**mieleA** **INDUSTRIES**

**SATURDAY - April 5 (continued)**

10 a.m. **SHOW TRUCK CONTEST NIGHTS**  
Cerrada 8-C  
10:30 a.m. - Noon **ROTAR CLUB SYMPOSIUM**  
Cerrada 8-C With Jim Smith  
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. **FLORIDA UEM AND TITLE WORKSHOP**  
Cerrada 8-1  
11 - Noon **"10 WAYS TO ROLL VEHICLES"**  
Video and photo presentation showing different methods to roll light and medium-duty vehicles  
With Dave Leebert  
12:30 - 3 p.m. **AWARDS OF THE TOW AND RECOVERY SHOW**  
With Christine Leebert  
Sponsored by: **USA** **AMERICA**  
1 - 3 p.m. **LODGET CLASS**  
With Steve Young of Lockwood Inc.  
Sponsored by: **USA** **AMERICA**  
1 - 5 p.m. **NOT FLAGEER CERTIFICATION CLASS**  
Sponsored in Part by: **USA** **AMERICA**  
2 p.m. **BMW and Porsche Training**  
GE Outside Booth  
6 p.m. - 12 a.m. **PRESIDENT: SELECTION AND AWARDS DINNER** (Dish best in lobby)  
Sponsored by: **JEFFERDAN**

**SATURDAY - April 5**

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. **JEEP/MEDIUM DUTY DRIVER TRAINING**  
Cerrada 8-C (Day 3 of 3-day class) With Dave Leebert  
Call 407-296-3316 to Register  
9 a.m. - 5 p.m. **FREE REGISTRATION OPEN**  
Sponsored by: **GM** Fleet and Commercial  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TRAINING WITH THE PROS**  
Sponsored by: **mieleA** INDUSTRIES  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. **TOP GUN TOWER AWARDS**  
Fiesta 1-3  
Sponsored by: **Alstate**  
**USA** **AMERICA**

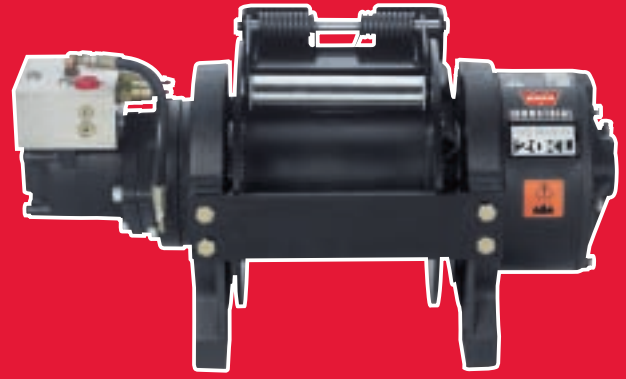
**SUNDAY - April 6**

8 - 9 a.m. **CHURCH SERVICE**  
Fiesta 1-2  
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. **EXHIBITS OPEN**  
10 a.m. **BMW and Porsche Training**  
GE Outside Booth  
11 a.m. - 12 p.m. **BMW and Porsche Training and Certification**  
Sponsored by: **USA** **AMERICA**

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Como en otros anteriores, continuaremos ofreciendo servicios de traducción, y servicios de asistencia para las visitantes que hablan español en nuestro "Tow Show" en Orlando, Florida. Para información por favor llame a Roberta Carris al (407) 463-8257.

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