

TOWING & RECOVERY FOOTNOTES

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SURVEY
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The Human Element

Fuel prices impact more than your company's bottom line

By Allan T. Duffin

The country's current economic crunch is putting a crimp into the budgets of many businesses across the nation — and by extension the customers and families who depend on those businesses for products, services, and paychecks. As reported in a recent edition of *Footnotes* ("Diesel Damage Control," Aug. 2008, pg. 1) towers are adding fuel surcharges and increasing their rates to keep their businesses up and running.

But what about the human cost? How are higher fuel prices affecting the people who run the towing companies and drive the trucks? How are towers coping with an economic downturn that President Bush called "a difficult time for many American families"?

Curt Sharp, a tower from Grand Rapids, Michigan, has heard from many operators around the country who are concerned with the higher cost of living and lower call volumes. "Unfortunately the economy is taking a beating right now, and it is difficult on every level," he said.

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The staff of I-70 Towing and Recovery, Columbia, Missouri: Terry Reams, Joe Lanktree, David Edmiston, John Berghager, Jennifer Furlong, Doug O'Connor, Justin Rose, Don Lake

New York towman George Bakker echoed Sharp's comments: "A lot of towing companies that I know of cut back on man-hours, have closed down shifts, hired answering services where they used to have full-time dispatchers, cut their insurance rates, and are running equipment longer — rebuilding it, refurbishing it — just to try to weather the storm."

Efficiency Counts

A flexible business plan may be the difference between staying busy and shutting down. "The efficiently run companies are weathering it a lot better," said Ralph Weber, a 10-year towing veteran who runs Route Three Life Health Disability, Inc. Route Three offers business planning, financial services, and insurance planning for towers.

"The evolution of the average tower goes like this: one man, one truck, and sometimes the spouse will take calls," explained Weber. In the beginning the business is not tremendously sophis-

ticated, "but that comes with time." Those small companies, he added, are the ones that hurt more during periods of economic strife.

By contrast, the average company — one with seven to 10 trucks — will weather the storm a bit better, said Weber. "They're able to pass on to most of their clients a fuel charge, or raise their rates. Everyone understands. They know it's going to cost more to send a UPS parcel. They know it's going to cost more to hail a cab. And they know it's going to cost more to hire a truck for towing."

Watching Expenses

So far, employees are biting the bullet. According to Gary Coe, a former president of the Towing and Recovery Association of America and owner of Retriever Towing in Portland, Oregon, "No one has called to say that they cannot afford the fuel to come to work. Certainly there are comments about prices in general, but no overwhelming effect."

But at home, "people are going to be hard-pressed," said Bakker. Some items in the family budget — vacations, clothing and gifts, for example — will be scaled back or eliminated altogether.

"When the economy is bad, our business picks up"

Employees are keeping their supervisors apprised of their concerns at I-70 Towing and Recovery in Columbia, MO. "Our employees' commute to work and back home is obviously making everyone complain," said Jennifer Furlong, dispatcher/secretary for the

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Brainstormin

with stormin' norman

What's Your Exit Strategy?

*There's no age limit on successful
succession planning*

By Norman Horton

My father-in-law recently passed away. It hit home. As I look at the different towing publications every month, I see more and more of our own passing away. Many of us who are aging in this industry are faced with the challenges of business succession.

For those of you who are younger and starting out in the business, you need to be thinking about this ahead of time instead of waiting until it's forced upon you. What are you going to do with your business when you are ready to retire or move on or make a change in life?

Most of us get into the towing business because we love it. This unfortunately brings about its own set of problems if we need to transition from the towing business to retirement or another career. Most of us are so wrapped up in our towing life that we don't know anything else, we can't do anything else, and we have no other challenge ahead of us when the business is passed on, which incidentally is why non-compete agreements are often violated or circumvented.

Some Choices

What can you do with your business when it's time to move on? Well, one choice is to just close the doors and let the chips fall where they may.

Another is to sell your trucks as individual items and then close the

doors. Selling the trucks is often a route people take simply because the barriers to entry into the towing industry are so low.

I've maintained for many years that a real problem in our industry is that one can go out and spend what amounts to the price of a modest house on a rollback or the price of a pretty decent house on a big wrecker, and because no training or certification is required, anybody can do it.

They buy a business license (or not), get insurance, jump in the truck, and away they go with a 20-ton lethal weapon that can get somebody hurt or killed, including themselves. The person who cuts your hair or styles your wife's hair has to go to school and have a beauty license — "Oops, I made a mistake!" Hair grows back out in three weeks. No long-term problem.

Contrast that with our business. "Oops, I made a mistake!" Somebody's hurt, maimed for life, killed. Yet there are no barriers to entry, which unfortunately makes the hard-earned value of our business much less than what it should be at sales time. Where's the value if anyone can get in on their own cheaply, easily, and quickly.

Don't Mention It

A third method of succession is to pass the business on to your family. This can be tricky. If you raise your kids right, they're going to want to please you as parents, but please re-

member the towing business is your dream and your business. While it can be a good tool to teach your kids how to work and to be productive members of society, in many cases, it is not what they want to do with their life.

They may tell you what you want to hear, but the best thing to do is not even bring it up. Build your business and if they want to be a part of it, you'll know. They'll tell you. They'll ask you. If not, don't even hint about it. A hint, a comment in passing, is a very powerful suggestion and almost taken as an edict or a command from parents to a child who really loves you and cares about seeing parents happy and well taken care of.

We have four kids. The last one is heading off to college. None of them have expressed any desire or any interest in going in the towing business. All of them had something to do with it for years, whether it was paperwork or dispatching to going out on a tow truck occasionally. All of them are good hard workers. But none of them wanted to be in the towing business. I'm glad we didn't impose our thoughts, our ideas, and our will on them as they entered adult life.

Selling Out

Of course, you can also sell your business. If you plan on doing this, you need to start preparing to sell years before you hang a For Sale sign on it.

One of the things we did to prepare our towing business for sale was to brand it, use a consistent logo, use consistent color schemes on the trucks, and most importantly, to have good people. I told my drivers, when they step out of that truck, they are Stormin's; they are the towing company. And during the time we were in the towing business, our company was consistently voted "Best in the Wiregrass" of all the towing companies, which showed me that we were on the right track.

The best time to sell the business is when everything is going great. If you try to sell it when things are not going great, then it's not going to happen. There's a saying on Wall Street: "You feed the ducks while they're quacking."

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The Human Element

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company. "The cost of fuel has made it difficult for all of us. I would say they are watching their spending habits more than ever."

Nick Schade hears the same concerns at his company, Tony's Wrecker Service, Inc., of Louisville, KY. "Our employees are watching their pennies and not overspending. Discretionary spending is affected — people are postponing purchases instead of just going out and buying them." Schade has also noticed an uptick in employees' saving habits: "They're taking their paychecks, buying what they need, and saving the rest for a rainy day."

While some tow company employees may be concerned about keeping their jobs, Coe remains upbeat: "We certainly have no control over inflation," he said, "but we have not laid anyone off, so other than some higher costs of living, our people should not

be affected unless we have a reduction in force."

To keep going with an existing workforce, Sharp recommends that instead of hiring new employees, company owners consider adjusting schedules or adding responsibilities to their current staff.

Fewer Out There

Towers who track their competitors' businesses gain a useful snapshot of how the economy is affecting their local area. On the outskirts of Louisville, Schade has seen fewer wreckers on the road. "But when I do see them," he said, "they're loaded. Gas might be \$3.50 or four dollars a gallon, but towing must go on."

To accommodate the rising cost of fuel, I-70 Towing instructed its staff to drive their trucks only for service calls. "We continually strive to dispatch our trucks promptly from one tow to the next, so unnecessary trips to the office and back out are eliminated," explained Furlong.

Tips: Planning Ahead

Curt Sharp from Grand Rapids, MI cautions that towers need to plan ahead, since quick reactions to the current economy might only serve as band-aids rather than permanent solutions. "While raising rates, fuel surcharges, budget cuts, and the like may help ease the pain temporarily, we need to start making large long-term plans to protect our businesses," he urged.

Sharp offers the following thoughts on how to beat the odds:

- **Price breaks.** Are you buying the fuel at the best price that you can? Check the local gas stations, commercial fueling locations, and bulk fuel suppliers and do some number crunching.
- **Trim fat.** Take a good look at your entire budget. Is there fat that can be trimmed?
- **Fuel alternatives.** Have you considered bio-diesel that may be less expensive, or hydrogen systems that can increase fuel economy?
- **Equipment care.** Do you maintain proper tire inflation and mechanical care of your trucks? The next time you purchase tires, talk with your supplier about fuel economy. Most tire manufacturers will have study data that compares the different tire compounds and tread designs. Is that deep mud/snow lug tire really the best purchase when you come to realize that you are only in mud or snow for 20 percent of your mileage?
- **Scheduling jobs.** Tighten the reins a little on dispatching. Do you save much time by sending the next driver 15 miles across town when you may have another truck clear in the area in 30 minutes, or are you just donating fuel to the cause? Customer ETAs are important, but so is operating a sound business that will be here in 10 years.
- **Call analysis.** Review the types of calls that you actually run. Sometimes there may be a difference in the type of calls that your company is running and the type of calls that you think you are running. This will give you a better idea of your future needs.

- **Operator/dispatcher training.** How many times have we seen or heard drivers requesting a flatbed because the disabled vehicle is an AWD, or a wheel-lift truck because the vehicle is stuck in park? We will never get completely away from this; however, it's important to ask the right questions when the customer is on the phone, and to train your operators in different methods of handling the difficult calls. While all of this may seem small now, sending the wrong truck 10 miles across town and back can cost 10 dollars in fuel alone!
- **Other thoughts.** Do you need a new flatbed? Yes, I know that your call volume has picked up and your trucks are busy. But what are they busy doing? What percentage of your calls are service calls? Maybe the purchase of a small pick-up would serve you better as a service truck—and for a lot less money, better fuel mileage and lower insurance.

Sharp knows that some of these ideas might work better for larger companies than one- or two-truck operators, "but the idea is to take a good hard look at your actual business plan and prepare you for the long haul," he explained. "As industry professionals, we owe it to our customers and to ourselves to find new business practices to help control costs."

— Allan T. Duffin



Curt Sharp of Grand Rapids, MI

Because the company's lot sits next door to the main office, Furlong tries to schedule meetings with insurance adjusters at the exact time a tow truck is bringing that car to the lot. This saves time and energy for everyone involved, and allows the company to focus on its main line of work: rescuing disabled vehicles.

At Tony's Wrecker Service, Schade lists a number of changes undertaken to combat the pitfalls of hard economic times: a slight increase in rates, stricter scheduling of services, and doubling up on jobs. A tower might be dispatched as a two-car courier instead of sending two separate tow trucks to an accident scene.

Sharp has observed some interesting alliances forming in his Michigan town, including reluctant competitors working with each other and finding backhauls on long tows.

Broad Impact

Businesses that support the towing industry are also combating the effects of a faltering economy. "We have seen

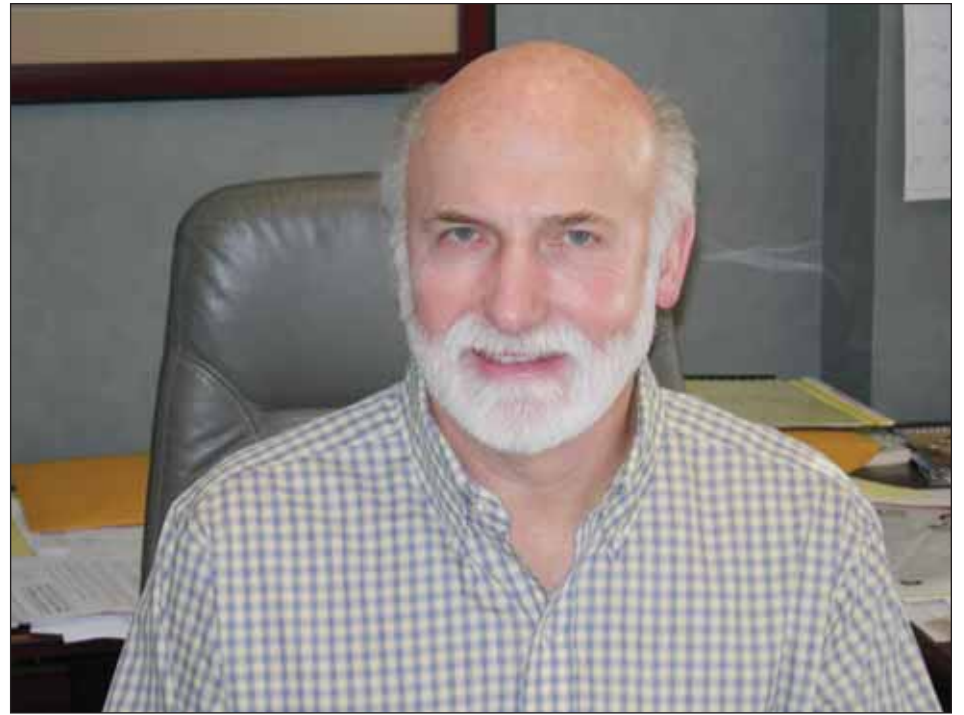
fuel surcharges from the laundry company and several parts suppliers," said Coe. "Everyone is affected."

Coe noted that his customers have been understanding about the all-around increase in prices: "Customers aren't complaining about the surcharge. They know what's going on. They all go to the gas pumps too."

Some towers continue to gain additional business. For example, I-70 Towing recently won a major local contract. "It's with the University of Missouri," said Furlong. For their small-truck business, this should ensure more work for the team — "and that means more money in their pockets," she added.

Can business owners afford to replace worn-out equipment or purchase new trucks? "There are many companies suffering," said Furlong, "not just the towing industry." She noted that several large truck lines have been forced to return their leased trucks to the dealerships due to the rising cost of fuel.

But for the towers we talked to, things aren't quite so bad. "When we



Gary Coe of Portland, OR

are busy, we wear out trucks," said Coe matter-of-factly. "So there is no effect on my plans to replace equipment as needed."

Furlong agreed: "We're the fastest-growing tow company in central Missouri," she said. "We just added another light-duty truck to our fleet in early July." Schade recently purchased a new rotator for his company.

Business Boost

One might assume that in a slow economy, business slows down as well. According to news reports, many people are driving less to save on fuel costs. But despite reduced traffic on the roads, Coe reported that his business has actually increased. Why?

"When fuel prices are up, people hang onto their cars longer," explained Weber. "The older the car, the more it breaks down. That helps balance things out."

In a good economy, a car owner might trade in his or her vehicle every three years, he said. If the economy is bad, older cars are no longer covered by the manufacturer's warranties. In addition, when the cost of gas increases, vehicle owners delay making repairs. This means higher call volumes for towers when older cars break down.

"The towing industry's success rate has always been an inverse to the state of the economy," explained Weber. "So when the economy is bad, our business picks up."

In such an unpredictable economic climate, how can towers plan ahead? "I think a lot of companies will be trying to figure out ways to be more efficient," said Furlong. "This will be better for fuel prices and, of course, the management of our businesses."

Steps To Take

Schade noted that continued aggressive advertising is important during the economic downturn. "We're still working at our steady pace, still continuing to market our services, making our calls like we're supposed to," he said. "We need to let people know we're still there and still moving." He added that a strong marketing push can help his company pick up

any slack from other towing businesses that have cut back or closed their doors.

Coe regularly monitors the additional cost of fuel against a two-year baseline and against revenue from the fuel surcharge. "We want to make certain that we are keeping up with the additional cost, yet not taking advantage of our customers."

In the end, adjusting to the country's roller-coaster economy can help sharp-en a towing company's efficiency — for management and for the work force. "I feel that our employees are making better decisions and making sacrifices in other areas to ensure that they make ends meet," said Furlong, adding that her company is more focused than ever on its core business. Despite some increased costs, "We still make sure that customer service is our first priority," she said.

Towing companies will weather the economic storm as they always have. Getting through it won't be easy, but a watchful eye and a careful plan will help towers stay afloat. After all, said Schade, "Towing will stay here, and we will too." ❖

Effects Of The Housing Slump

It seems that the rise in fuel prices, combined with the downturn in the real estate market, has put a crimp in the towing business in some vacation cities and wealthy resort areas.

Cities like Miami, FL are experiencing difficult economic situations. "Times are very tough for the average Miamian due to the real estate market and fuel prices," said Janie Coffey, owner of Papillon Real Estate LLC, a boutique brokerage based in Coral Gables. "An oversupply of luxury condos were (and still are being) built which did not have the supply of actual residents (owners or renters). Speculative 'investors' bought as greedy developers looked the other way, then when the market crashed, the investors walked away leaving building after luxury building empty or, worse, in receivership."

In Naples, a city in southwest Florida whose economy relies primarily on tourism, high fuel prices and a crashing real estate market are making things difficult for local towers. "Real estate has been really hot here," said Doug Young of Bumper to Bumper Towing. "That's really the only industry we have — building residential and commercial real estate, shopping centers, banks, high-end homes and condos." For the past decade, he added, "this place has been growing as fast as they can build it." Dump trucks, concrete trucks and supply trucks were a regular part of the landscape.

Then the bottom fell out of the real estate market. "It was a mass building project and it's all come to a complete stop," noted Young. With the number of construction and personal vehicles dwindling, there was little left to tow. "It's affected the guys who do heavy towing a lot," he said, "and even the people doing

the smaller rollback tows. The people aren't here. They're just not driving on the road. So the number of accidents has gone down dramatically."

Another regular source of business that has nearly disappeared came from the Naples police department. Young says that many migrant workers have left the city due to lack of employment. "They were constantly getting arrested and having problems with their drivers licenses and plates," he explained. Companies like Young's were busy responding to police calls to tow vehicles. But with the exodus of workers due to the sagging economy, those police calls have decreased dramatically.

What about a tourist spot like Las Vegas, where sales of luxury homes have fallen by more than 50 percent since last year? "The credit crunch is affecting all market segments," wrote Brian Wargo in a recent article in the *Las Vegas Sun*, "and pressure has tightened the most for high-end loans, analysts said. That is taking a lot of buyers out of the marketplace."

Despite the housing market crash in Vegas, Bobby Howell, vice president and owner of AA Action Towing, Inc., actually reported an *increase* in business over last year. Part of the reason is that the company's regular client base has remained relatively stable over time. "We've been in town for 22 years," said Howell. "Summertime is always our busiest time of the year because of the heat."

But why are Howell's numbers up in a down market? Unlike the situation in Naples, FL, the city of Las Vegas isn't built primarily on housing construction. "Vegas is Vegas," said Howell. "People are always going to come here."

— Allan T. Duffin

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CITY TOWING

The Chicago Chasers

City-wide predatory towing has gotten out of hand

By Andrea Evans

Rogue, unscrupulous, sleazy, and chasers are some of the nicer names given to dishonest towers who prey on motorists' misfortune and leave towing professionals with a poor public image in some areas of the country.

Just as Chicago is known for its sensational style of pizza and the blues, the city also has a bold bunch of bad-name towers. According to Lonnie (J.R.) Bramlett Jr., three-time past president of the Professional Towing and Recovery Operators of Illinois (PTROI), wreck chasing became obvious and



J.R. Bramlett Jr., three-time past president of the PTROI

of major concern seven years ago. Following accidents on Chicago's city streets, towing operators would quickly arrive on-scene, make promises and false claims to motorists, and then hold their vehicles for thousands of dollars in fees. With more than 40 years industry experience with Airline Towing in Chicago behind him, Bramlett said, "I've never seen anything like it in my life."

Many Illinois towers believe if Chicago police would crack down on wreck chasers at the scene, it would eliminate 90 percent of the problem. Yet it seems as though Chicago law enforcement often turns a blind eye to the matter.

How It Works

Phil Kadner, a journalist with the Southtown Star, a Chicago metropolitan area newspaper, has received dozens and dozens of complaints from towers who know of hundreds of customers stung by fraudulent wreck chasers. He has written more than a dozen articles about what is often called predatory towing. Every complaint Kadner has received about unscrupulous towers resulted from incidents that occurred within the Chicago city limits.

These accidents are usually fender benders where the vehicles may or may not be drivable and motorists' injuries are minimal or require only an emergency room check.

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BRAINSTORMIN

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The time to have sold a house in California or in Phoenix was two or three years ago when people were chasing you with the money. Try and sell a house or a towing company or anything when the market is dropping and the task becomes much, much

"Selling the trucks is often a route people take"

harder. Business goes in cycles. If you have an exit strategy to sell, then make sure that you sell in an up cycle if at all possible.

People pass away, things change, but life goes on. You are not going to be able to tow or live forever, so no matter what your age or company circumstances, start planning now by asking yourself this: What's my exit strategy?

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.



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1988 PETERBILT 379, CUMMINS 400, 13-SPD, AIR RIDE, 93 CENTURY 5030, ONE OWNER TRUCK.



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1980 PETERBILT 359 DAY CAB, DETROIT 8V92, 15 SP. CENTURY 1040 B, 3 STAGE BOOM, SDU UNDERLIFT. AFFORDABLE HEAVY. SEE PICTURE ON WEB.



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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 with any available photos and art.

Highway Heroes Wanted. The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is starting its second quarter-century of celebrating truck-driver heroics. A search is on for U.S. and Canadian drivers who come to the rescue of fellow motorists.



Nominations for the prestigious 26th-annual Goodyear North America Highway Hero Awards will be accepted through November 30, 2008. Nomination forms and program details may be obtained by calling the Goodyear Highway Hero Hotline at 330-796-8183. The nomination form also is available on the program's web site at <http://www.goodyear.com/truck/news/hero.html>.

Legislation In Effect. Signed into law last year, the Texas Tow Act went into effect on September 1. In NH, the amended "Move Over" law that now includes tow truck drivers went active on August 5.

Kudos. Congratulations to Scott Dilley, the 2008 San Dimas (CA) Citizen of the Year. The co-owner of Sanders Towing, Lock and Key and Automotive Shop was recognized for his civic contributions.

See SHORT HAULS, page 10

Our Lost Men

Bill Sutherland, one of the first presidents of the Virginia Association of Towing & Recovery Operators (VATRO), passed away at age 65.

Seth Hicks, 27, was killed after being struck on the side of the road. Hicks worked for Fletcher's Towing Service in Circleville, OH.

Jesse S. Gault, 44, of Gilbert, AZ died after being struck on the side of the road. The customer Gault was helping, Jean Bunch, was also killed. Gault worked for Thompson's Auto Repair and Towing in Mesa.

Mark Storer, the owner of Airport and Burien Towing of Tukwila, WA, and his youngest son Brian, were killed in a floatplane accident in late July.

Dennis McCarthy, employee of Competition Wheelift in Rancho Dominguez, CA, passed away in late June. He was formerly employed by Miller Industries and was in the towing industry for over 30 years.

A benevolent fund has been established to assist McCarthy's son, Benjamin. Contributions can be made at any Bank of America to the Benjamin McCarthy special funds account #21556-42352.

CITY TOWING

continued from page 6

According to Kadner, here's one way the predatory towing scam often works: An "accident scout" posing as a concerned citizen will arrive at the scene before the city police. This person will calm and soothe the unfortunate motorist, sympathize with the driver's misfortune, inquire about insurance coverage, and offer experienced advice.

A sample scenario of the spiel by the scammer: "When this happened to me it took hours to get my car towed by the city. Then the red tape to get my car out of city impound was unbelievable. What a hassle. Lucky for you, you've got really good insurance. In fact, I've got a friend in the towing business. If I give him a call, I can get him here quick. He owes me a favor or two. He'll treat you right. He'll deal directly with your insurance company. It won't cost you dime. You won't have a thing to worry about. I can call and he'll be here in minutes."

Bramlett, Kadner and Bill Howard, current president of PTROI, agreed that Chicago wreck chasers promise motorists a number of added conveniences, from saving time at the scene to avoiding the red-tape hassles at the city's impound yards.

Bramlett described the wreck chasers as slick operators with police scanners in their tow trucks. That's how they get to the accident before city police. The wreck chasers target motorists in newer high-value

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Bill Howard, PTROI president

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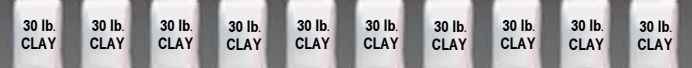


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vehicles. "If you've got a junk car, they will leave it right where it's at," said Bramlett. "They aren't going to tow you. Forget it."

Chasers tell motorists they have talked with motorists' insurance companies and assure motorists their insurance will pay for towing. It isn't going to cost them anything.

Exorbitant Fees

Whether wreck chasers send an accident scout (the "concerned citizen") or arrive on scene in a tow truck, they are very good at gaining the confidence of motorists following accidents.

So much so, according to Kadner, that a predatory tower succeeded in scamming a former law enforcement officer even after the officer drove his damaged vehicle home and parked it. The dishonest tower followed the ex-

"You should see one of these invoices"

officer from the scene to his house. The tow truck operator told the officer he would tow his car to the repair shop specified by the owner.

"And it's happened to thousands of motorists. The predatory operators tell motorists their vehicle will be towed to their requested body shop or the motorist's home," said Kadner. "Once on the hook, the towers take off in another direction. People have had family arrive on scene and follow the tow trucks. They (family members) even pulled up beside the driver at traffic lights and told him he was going in the wrong direction. He smiled, nodded, and continued [driving] to his lot."

Several years ago when predatory towing started in Chicago the going rate was \$1000. PTROI president Howard said, "Now the tow bill can be \$3000 and upwards. I had to deal with one through our company [Napperville Towing Service] that was \$6000 in overnight storage."

Kadner and Bramlett agreed that wreck-chaser rates can exceed \$5000.

See CITY TOWING, page 10



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#U-2296, VT 365, Auto Red, Loaded, 91,000 Miles, 21' Jerr-Dan Alum. Dual Angle, W/L, **\$39,995**



2005 INT. 4200

#U-2995, VT 365, Auto, Red, Loaded, 21' Jerr-Dan Alum. Dual Angle, W/L, **\$36,995**



1999 FORD F-450

#U-2273, Powerstroke Diesel, 5SPD, Red, XL, 19' Vulcan Steel, W/L, **\$18,995**



1995 CHEVY 3500, 6.5 DIESEL

#U-2302, 5SPD, Silverado, Black, 19' Jerr-Dan Alum. Elite, W/L, **\$17,995**



2004 CHEV C-5500

#U-2304, 6.6 Duramax Diesel, Auto, Black, Loaded, \$97,000 Miles, 21' Century Alum., W/L **\$39,995**



2003 INT. 4300

#U-2141, DT 466E, 6SPD, White, Loaded, 19' Champion Steel, W/L, **\$33,995**



1999 INT. 4700

#U-2299, T444E, Auto, Loaded, White, 19' Champion Steel, Removable Rails, W/L, **\$ 18,995**



2002 Chev C-6500

#U-2049, 3126 CAT, 6SPD, White, Loaded, 21' Vulcan Steel, Removable Rails, W/L, **\$29,995**



2001 INT. 4900

#U-2249C, DT466 250 HP, 7SPD, Gray, 28' Chevron Alum., Alum. Upper Rack, W/L, **\$29,995**



2001 INT. 4700

#U-2208C, T444E, 5SPD, Red, Loaded, 19' Jerr-Dan Alum. Vector, W/L, **\$19,995**



2000 CHEV C-6500

#U-2257, 427 Gas, 5SPD, White, 105,000 Miles, 19' Century Steel, Removable Rails, W/L, **\$24,995**



1994 CHEV K-3500

#U-2294C, 350 Gas, Auto, Silverado, Red, 88,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan Body and Wheel Lift, **\$14,995**



1997 CHEV C-6500

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



1991 GMC TOPKICK

#U-2277, 3116 CAT, Auto Green, 20' Chevron Steel, W/L, **\$14,995**



1991 GMC TOPKICK

#U2237, 366 GAS, Auto, White, 19' Jerr-Dan Alum. Stingray, **\$13,995**



2006 FORD F-350

#U-2293, PowerStroke Diesel, Auto XL, Black, 26,000 Miles, Dynamic 601, S/L, AutoLoader, **\$38,995**



2005 FORD F-550

#U-2266, Powerstroke Diesel, Auto, XL, White, Jerr Dan Alum. Body, T/L, W/L, 84" CA., **\$44,995**



2005 FORD F-450

#U-2271, Powerstroke Diesel, Auto, XLT, Black, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, Quick Pick, AutoLoader, S/L, **\$39,995**



2006 CHEV K-3500

#U-2297, 6.0 Gas, Auto, Silverado, Extended Cab, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, S/L, W/L, **\$39,995**



2002 FORD F-350

#U-2197, SUPER CAB, Powerstroke Diesel, Auto, XLT, White, 73,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, Quick Pick Auto Loader, S/L, **\$39,995**



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**



2000 CHEV K-3500

#U-2287, 454 Gas, Auto, Silverado, Red, Challenger 4301 Express, S/L, W/L, **\$16,995**



2001 CHEV K-3500

#U-2303, 454 Gas, Auto, Silverado, Red, 108,000 Miles, Century 412, Alum. Body, T/L, W/L **\$28,995**



1999 CHEV K-3500

#U-2102, 454 GAS, Auto Silverado, Red, Vulcan 881, S/L, W/L, Push Bumper, **\$14,995**



1999 CHEV K-3500

#U-2045, 454 GAS, Auto, Silverado, Red, Vulcan 882, T/L, W/L, Push Bumper, 84" CA, **\$16,995**



2005 FORD

#U-2291, F-750, 5.9 Cummins 260HP, 6DPD, XLT, Loaded, 23,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan MDL 280/11, 14 Ton, T/L, W/L, Dollies, **\$84,995**



2001 KENWORTH

#U 2286C, T-300, 3126 CAT 250HP, Auto, Maroon, 54,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan MDL 280/110, 14 Ton, Hydraulic Stiff Legs, T/L, W/L, 138" CA., **\$72,995**



2000 FREIGHTLINER FL-60

#U-2279, 5.9 Cummins, 6SPD, 109,000 Miles, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, 1210D Boom, HPL-60 W/L, 108" CA., **\$34,995**



1999 CHEVY C-6500

#U-2260, 3126 CAT, 6SPD, Red/White, Holmes 552, T/L, W/L, 108" CA., **\$29,995**



1997 INT. 4700

#U-2248, DT466, 7SPD, Red, Loaded, Jerr-Dan 1210D Boom, HPL-60 W/L, Dollies, 108" CA., **\$27,995**



1997 INT. 4700

#U-2029, T444E, 5SPD, Red, Loaded, Jerr-Dan Alum. Body, 0808D Boom T/L, Cougar W/L, **\$19,995**



1997 FORD SUPER DUTY

#U-2306, 7.3 Diesel, Auto, XL, White, 255,000 Miles, Vulcan 804, Intergrated Boom and Wheelift, Dollies, **\$9,995**



1993 GMC TOPKICK

#U-2167, 3116 CAT, 6SPD, Dk. Brown, Challenger 4812, T/L, W/L, 84" CA., **\$18,995**



1990 GMC 7000

#U-2225, 366 GAS, 5-2 SPD, Red, 123,000 Miles, Century 712, T/L, Formula 2 W/L, **\$14,995**



2002 KENWORTH

#U-2233, T-800, New Jerr-Dan, 700/300, SRS, W3555, 35 Ton. **\$\$\$\$\$**

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Chevron Underlift

Chevron, Inc. announced a new, optional heavy-duty underlift for the Series 40 industrial carrier. It operates in conjunction with the stabilizer and features a 10,000-pound extended lift rating at 75 inches of reach plus a 30,000-pound tow rating.

Optional accessories include three- and four-inch frame forks, frame fork holders, elevated fork holders, a pintle hitch attachment, spring shackle adapters and 4,000-pound car L-arms. An optional attachment holder can be installed behind the tool box, plus an optional frame-mount pintle hitch attachment holder is available. Contact Chevron at 800-886-6400.

Dynamic's Snatcher

Dynamic has introduced a slide-in wheel lift called the Snatcher, which is designed for the price-conscious tower looking for a heavy-duty alternative to a regular wrecker. The Snatcher adds versatility to any pick-up truck with proven wheel-lift components. The standard 601 offers a 3500-pound wheel-lift capacity and a 7500-pound tow capacity; optional is the 701 version with a 5000-pound



wheel-lift capacity. The unit comes complete with ratchets, straps, safety chains, and tow plug. Self-contained, it requires only a 12-volt power source for operation. An optional engine-driven hydraulic clutch pump is also available. For more information, call 757-624-1360.



Superwinch offers 3-year warranty

Superwinch Warranty

Superwinch offers a three-year warranty on the new S3 solenoid, a limited lifetime warranty on all mechanical components, and one year on electrical components. Superwinch produces AC and DC electric and hydraulic winches, mounting kits, 4WD locking hubs, winching accessories for racing, vehicle recovery, off-road, and industrial uses, plus power-drive systems. Call 860-928-7787 or see www.superwinch.com

"The proceeds go to the Survivor Fund"

Chevron's new heavy-duty underlift

Alignment System

A new 3D wheel alignment system from Snap-on ensures the best gas mileage and tire wear possible. Snap-on's Arago V3D3 Alignment Technology uses a system of cameras, snap-on plastic targets, and a roll-back and roll-forward technique for a fast result.



Business idea: Vehicle-wrap graphics

Using cameras, the system takes as little as one minute, 11 seconds to print out a wheel alignment report.

By getting a lube tech to do the easy inspection and adjustments, a service facility can use low-skilled labor to perform a high-value operation in the shop. Call 503-516-8457 for a list of participating Snap-on dealers or send an email to oppnow@yahoo.com for more info.

Wrap Your Trucks

Los Angeles vehicle graphics company Carwraps, co-producer of the car-wrapping promotional and instructional video RealWraps 101, specializes in adhering graphics to cars and trucks. Studies have suggested that people remember wrapped vehicles and have more of a response to them than almost any other kind of



Promotion idea: A restored car kiddie ride

outdoor advertising.

Carwraps designs, prints and installs vehicle-wrap graphics — wrapping trucks could be a good promotion for towing companies — and the RealWraps 101 video shows the possibilities for a new business by towers, describing all the details needed for a standard car-wrapping installation method that's easy to learn. See www.carwraps.net and www.realwraps.com

Restored Kiddie Rides

Here's a towing company promotion idea: A restored car kiddie ride at your office. Kiddie Rides USA in Denver, CO restores these nostalgic items and is the only stand-alone kiddie ride company left in America. They are equal parts 60-second amusement ride for kids and nostalgic American icons for adults. A themed kiddie ride can satisfy a collector or add to a corporate image. Call 303-399-7191, email damon@kiddieridesusa.com or visit www.kiddieridesusa.com

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Wall of the Fallen replica statues

Collector Statues

Our international towing museum in Chattanooga has commissioned the production of a very limited number of replica Wall of the Fallen statues. Cast in resin, the statue will stand nearly seven inches high and weigh just under one pound. It has the appearance of an aged-bronze patina and black marble.

Included will be a copy of the dedication plaque available with a self-adhesive brass plate suitable for

engraving. Simple assembly is required and each statue comes in a gift carton.

They are presently in production and are offered at the introductory price of \$79.95. The statues were first made available at the 2nd Annual Name Unveiling Ceremony on Saturday, September 20th, 2008 at 10 a.m. EST.

Anyone interested in a statue can have the statue shipped with the addition of shipping and handling charges. As indicated, quantities will be very limited so please order promptly. For information and ordering, contact Cheryl Mish at 423-267-3132, by fax at 423-267-0867, or email at www.internationaltowingmuseum.com

Kenworth Axle Lube

Kenworth customers will now get an estimated one percent fuel economy advantage when PACCAR becomes the first company to make a new, full-synthetic axle lube standard on its Class 5-8 models in the United States and Canada. Kenworth has put Cognis Emgard(R) FE 75W-90 into production at three plants.

Advantages over conventional gear lubricants include better operating performance, increased gear life, extended drain and all-season lubrication, and reduced maintenance and downtime. Cognis EMGARD SAE 50 full-synthetic transmission fluid is also standard on Kenworth Class 5-8 models. See www.cognis.com and www.kenworth.com

Survivor Support

Glen Lawres of Montana Dakota Towing is marketing the Project Survivor Fund Truck he co-created along with members of the Concerned and Caring Elite Towers Consortium that



Survivor Fund collector truck

he founded on www.Tow411.net. The proceeds go to the Survivor Fund.

The truck can be ordered by going to the General Towing Forum on that site, or Glen can be contacted by email at joyglen@midrivers.com, phone at 406-939-0036, or by fax at 406-377-

1825. The cost of each truck is \$95 and \$10 for shipping and handling. The trucks will also be available at the Baltimore Tow Expo in November at The Survivor Fund Banquet, an *American Towman*-sanctioned event on Thursday night of the show. 🚚



Kenworth: axle lube saves fuel

New At In The Ditch



SP8000 retrofit flipper foot (ITD4150). Retrofit a standard SP8000 Side Puller or any other application with a flipper foot design. Includes an integrated hook anchor point, a 3.5" x 3.5" tube to make a simple weld-on application, and a self-leveling foot. Comes with a bare metal finish.

Bungee cord holder (ITD1009). Stores nine-inch and 15-inch bungees in one convenient location; comes with mounting bracket and is pre-drilled for easy installation.

Hose rack for Century heavy-duty wreckers (ITD1013). Easy storage solution for hoses and cords. Contains five hooks and easily installs in the top channel of Century and Vulcan HD wrecker tool boxes. Painted gloss black.





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SHORT HAULS

continued from page 10

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See Footnotes' TowBlog at www.trfootnotes.com by clicking on the "TowBlog" icon. TowBlog features towing and recovery news, announcements, opinion, and other information of interest, including humor, all gleaned from the World Wide Web, press releases, and other sources.

More expansion for Zip's. Zip's Truck Equipment Inc. is holding the grand

opening of its newly expanded facility in New Hampton, Iowa on October 17-18 and 20-21. Visitors will view the newest model tow trucks and car carriers built at Zip's as well as browse Zip's on-site inventory of used and reconditioned units. Customers can have their truck serviced or repaired during their visit, view featured parts displays, and take advantage of special in-store discounts.

Zip's expansion, which includes manufacturing and operational facilities, boosts the size of its facility to 95,000 square feet, with 20 production bays, a 60-foot blast booth, four paint booths with baking capabilities and customer viewing windows, a huge showroom, a separate parts-department lobby, and an advanced training center. Anyone interested in attending can call Zip's at 800-222-6047. ☛

Rescue Down Under

On July 7, James Whimp, an Australian tow truck driver, helped save a woman from a house fire in Brisbane, Queensland. After I posted the ABC Regional online story on TowBlog, a surprised James Whimp contacted me. Here's his account of the incident:

"On Monday, the 7th of July 2008, I had just done a drop-off at Apex Smash Repairers. I started driving up Douglas Street and noticed a plume of black smoke....

"I put my foot down and ended up following the smoke to Railway Parade. I jumped out of my truck and ran across the road while on the phone to 000 (Emergency Services). I got connected to Firecomm Brisbane and was giving them details about the fire.

"I was making my way down the driveway which runs down the left side of the house. I get halfway and a lady sticks her head out of the window. Smoke comes gushing out the window and she is coughing. I tell 000 that there is someone in the house. They then hung up on me and I ran down to the back of the house to look for a ladder. I couldn't find one so I used my initiative and thought the only way I could

get access to the window was by using my truck.

"I sprinted back to my truck, reversed down the driveway at speed, stopped, jumped out, and climbed onto my tilt tray. At that time, two police officers, a paramedic, and myself proceeded to pull [the victim] out of the window.

"The raging fire at the front started to lick my truck and everyone got off my tray. I sped out of the driveway and parked across the road again. And that's when the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service arrived.

"I really love my job. I get involved in a lot of situations as Brisbane is a busy place. Over here, I work with a company called The Ready Towing Group. I get to work closely with emergency services every day also assisting people in need (RACQ [Breakdown Service]). It's like every day we are heroes in our own way. I don't ask for a lot of recognition, just a 'thank you' is enough."

Kudos to you, James, and congratulations on your marriage to Meegan this month from all of us at *Towing & Recovery Footnotes!*

— Cyndi Kight



Aussie Towman James Whimp

Our Tow Heroes

Special Delivery. In Toronto, Canada, an unnamed tow truck driver pulled over to help keep a family safe during an impromptu delivery of a baby on the side of a busy highway. From the *Toronto Star* report: "The driver parked his rig to protect the vehicle and even redirected traffic to avoid any potential crashes. Toronto Police Traffic Services expressed their gratitude to the driver. 'In cases like this, citizens do rise to the occasion and do help out,' said [an official with] Toronto Police Traffic Services. 'We'd like to say a thank you to the tow truck driver and to any citizens who were in the area who facilitated the safe delivery of the child.'"

Doggone Good. Near Eagle Creek, ID, another unnamed tow trucker came to the aid of a couple who were in a wreck with their dogs. From the *Times-News* story: "Two people were taken to St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center with injuries Saturday after a sports utility vehicle turned sideways and exploded into flames on Idaho Highway 75 north of Ketchum.

"[Ketchum Fire Department Capt. Tom] Ancona said a witness driving a tow truck had pulled over after the crash, then acted quickly. 'There were two occupants in the SUV,' Ancona said. 'This guy driving by in a wrecker took the windshield out and (removed) them along with two dogs.' Authorities had no names for the two hospitalized, nor had they identified the man in the tow truck. 'If they hadn't gotten out, it would have been ugly,' Ancona added."

Recognition Given. Congratulations to East County, Texas tow truck driver Timothy Knox on his award for heroism. From *The Courier of Montgomery County* story: "The Texas Department of Public Safety presented Timothy 'T.J.' Knox with the Director's Award...in New Caney at the office of Precinct 4 Commissioner Ed Rinehart. Knox was nominated for the award by Trooper Paul Kohleffel, who was also a part of the Nov. 26, 2007 rescue effort. In his letter of nomination, Kohleffel detailed how he and Knox forced open the damaged door of the 18-wheeler and freed the trapped and unconscious driver as flames spread toward the cab of the truck. 'Had it not been for Mr. Knox's personal disregard for his own safety, I have no doubt that Mr. Bailey would not have survived the accident on that day,' the letter states."

Everyday Hero. Mike Hipszky, a 32-year old former NAVY Seal who works as a body-shop worker and weekend tow truck driver for Lindner Chevrolet Cadillac in CO, rescued several people from flash flood waters in late July. Here's a portion of *The Daily Record* (CO) story: "'There were four or five cars that were stuck,' he (Hipszky) said, including one that had literally washed down the channel. 'People were out of and on their cars.' Others had left their vehicles and made their way to higher ground. 'The water was so deep, it was washing boulders down,' Hipszky said. 'It was really strong, really fast.' So, he did what any hero would do — quickly created a makeshift harness out of ratchet straps from the tow truck. He attached himself to the wrecker's cable and braved the rushing waters several times to bring others to safety."

And One From Saudi Arabia. From the *Arab News* story: "A groom making pre-wedding arrangements was dismayed when the truck carting the camels, cows and sheep broke down on the way to the abattoir. Fortunately for him a man driving a tow truck just happened to be passing by. According to yesterday's Okaz newspaper, the tow truck driver agreed to help the groom get his animals to the slaughterhouse. The groom said he couldn't believe his fortune to have a tow truck driver appear out of the blue just when he needed help. The camels, cows and sheep, on the other hand, weren't quite as happy about the situation."

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1997 357 PETERBILT, 12.7 Detroit, 15 Speed, 60 Ton Century Rotator. Stk# 43129

2001 KENWORTH 1800, 350hp, N14, 13 spd, 365,000 miles, a/c, dual chrome exhaust, dual alum fuel tanks, 36" flattop sleeper, Century model 5030, 30 ton boom, 2 30,000lb planetary winches, 3 stage underlift, federal amber light bar, upper floods, lower work lights, hyd rear spades, air & elec hook ups, air winch free spools, stk#882138

1987 359 PETERBILT, 18spd, 3406 CAT, hendrickson susp., sleeper, jake, 313" w/b, Driver's air seat, odometer shows 41,000. 1991 NRC 9035, 35 Ton Boom, 2-30,000lb winches, 3 stage underlift, 3 pr axle forks, Whelen strobe light bar, rear spades, work lights, air winch free spools, chrome hand rails. Stk# 67 Pete

1995 FREIGHTLINER, 350hp Cummins, 9 spd trans., 514K miles, Integrated sleeper, air ride, alum. wheels, engine brake, 266" WB, Vulcan 3025, 30 ton boom, 2-25,000lb. winches, 3 stage underlift, hyd. rear spades, air winch free spools, 4 pr. axle forks, amber light bar, lower work box, air & elec. hookups, lower work lights, steel tool box, stk#707409

1992 LANDOLL 300A, Slide axle trailer, 16,000 lb capacity, 7 degree load angle, 102" wide, steel floor, 38" loaded deck height, spring susp., 12,000lb winch, pin drop parking stands. Stk# 006257

2006 DODGE 4500, 6.4 Cummins, auto trans, pw, pl, 15,000lb GVW, ac, am/fm/cd stereo, stainless steel rims, tilt, cruise, Vulcan 302, 8 ton boom, composite modular body, 2-8,000 lb. winches, Ramsey level winders, 2 insert tool boxes, remote winch free spools, Whelen light bar, led bed lights, pop up dollies w/alum axles, stk#125855

1996 330 PETERBILT, 3126 HP CAT, 9spd, 32,700 GVW, a/c, am/fm/cd stereo, driver's air seat, Century model 4024, 20 ton boom, 2-20,000 lb winches, 24,000lb underlift 3 stage, 4 pr axle forks, air winch free spools, federal amber light bar, 6,000lb tire lift, hyd rear spades, air & elec hookups. Stk# 398495

1989 KENWORTH T400, 110 Cummins 9 Speed, Century 4024, 20 Ton. Stk# 518113

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CAPTURING HISTORY

The Photography Of Charles Rash

"Sometimes I do get to places just when God's ready to have somebody click the shutter." – Ansel Adams

Charles Rash of Fast Tow in Houston tells his story: "In the 1930s, my father H.C. Rash, Jr. bought a used army truck, built a homemade rig, and went to work towing in Houston. The towing rate was \$7.50 per tow and 50 cents a day storage. By the 1950s, my three brothers were working with him. Then I left school at 16 in order to drive.

"I met my wife Jeanette at church and we got married in 1966. Now we've been married more than 40 years. Back then, I drove 12 to 14 hours a day, six days a week. We raised three sons and a daughter. In 1987 my father passed away and I took over the business.

"Today, those three sons of ours manage Jeanette's and my business, Fast Tow in Houston. I do know without a doubt that when I go to that Big Compound in the Sky, our nine grandkids will carry on the family business.

We have three locations, 30 light-duty tow trucks, 45 employees and 24/7/365 days.

"So here's how I got into photography: I bought my first camera in 1970 and started shooting accident scenes while driving my tow truck. I was shooting every day and I saw many deaths and mangled vehicles.

"One day in the 1980s I was called out at three o'clock in the morning to shoot a scene with a fatality. I got to the location where a Blazer had hit a parked 18-wheeler. I shot my photos but at the same time I was crying inside. It was really an awful scene – six teens had been drinking and were killed.

"That's when I decided to change my style of shooting. Since then I have traveled and shot with *National Geographic* photographers, and trained with Nikon photographers Moose Peterson and Vincent Versace. My work

has been published in many magazines, including *Sports Illustrated*.

"The more I train the luckier I get"

"Well, that training and experience led me to East Texas to cover the Space Shuttle crash. I also spent two weeks in Louisiana wading in the swamps after Katrina and talking to people who had lost everything. I guess I am still documenting death and destruction but from a different angle.

"When you take a photo you are really capturing history. I still shoot accidents but now I choose the ones to

cover. My studio and gallery are located in Downtown Houston at my office. My choice of equipment is Nikon cameras and Sony HDV video.

"I still have people tell me, 'Man, that was a lucky shot.' My response to that is, Yeah, the more I train the luckier I get. I can tell you that until you have climbed to the top of a mountain in the Big Bend National Park just to take a sunset photo, or stood in the lower valley of Yosemite to get a sunrise shoot, or floated down Caddo Lake, you haven't really lived. We are currently working on a four-year film project about DWIs to be given to high schools to educate students about drinking and driving.

"Today almost everybody has a camera, so just keep on click-click-clicking away! Capturing history..."

Go to www.youtube.com, put "towtv" in the "search" box, and you will see several video and photo sequences of recoveries shot by Charles Rash. Also see www.charlesrash.com for more of his photography and video work

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CAPTURING HISTORY



The author's father, H.C. Rash Jr., in 1965



Tom Luciano shows 'em how to do it



IN MY VIEW

So How's Business?

What are you doing to beat the high cost of fuel?

By George Bakker

Americans clearly feel that the current high price of fuel is more important to them than most other negative aspects of today's economy. And as towers, we are well aware that the price of fuel and drivers' pay, followed by truck payments, insurance, rent, and taxes, are the bulk of the costs related to staying in business.

The old adage that "service is paramount" is still a valid point but most important to towers is proper pricing. It is the key to our survival. It is crucial to know your costs, and to ask your accountant for help if needed.

As we all know by now, China and India and other emerging economies are expanding at breakneck speed and their insatiable desire for cheap fuel has resulted in an ever-stronger demand for petroleum products. Giant ocean-going supertankers ply the world's oceans to deliver fuel to whoever will pay the highest price.

We Americans, however, have relied for far too long on cheap oil. We have been basically "asleep at the pump" when it comes to developing alternative energy resources. Now its catch-up time, painful as that will be, but it is well to keep in mind that Americans are known for their adaptability and, above all, creativity in response to national challenges.

We possess 27 percent of the world's coal supply, enough for the next 100 years, but because of government constraints and licensing issues, America is in the back seat again as countries all over the world line up to buy our coal, oil, iron, and copper ore.

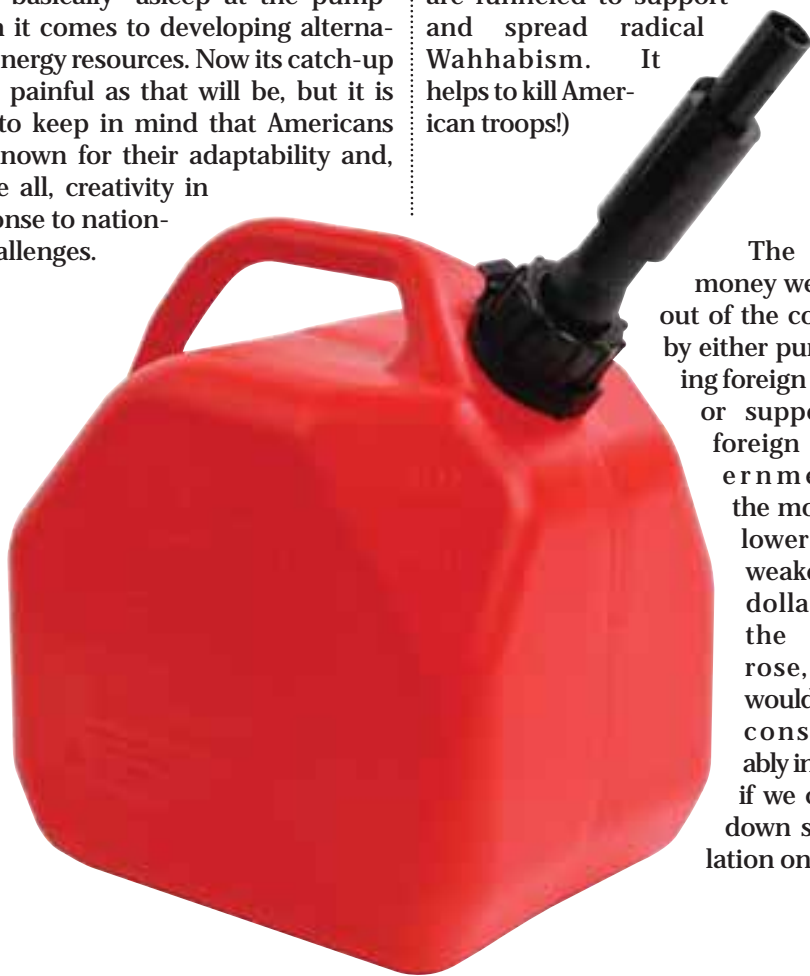
This is dead wrong! These products should be for "America First!"

We are slowly losing our manufacturing base. All world economies change cyclically, but when our turn finally comes back around, where will we get our minerals from? Again, there's no smart long-range planning by the government.

There are numerous wind farms and solar farms waiting for approval. Why? The money for the tax stimulus refund checks that people received recently to prop up the economy was borrowed from China. You tell me how that has helped us?

I do believe that oil eventually will come back down in price as we rid ourselves from reliance on foreign oil. (You would not believe the amount of Saudi oil revenues that are funneled to support and spread radical Wahhabism. It helps to kill American troops!)

The more money we send out of the country by either purchasing foreign goods or supporting foreign governments, the more we lower or weaken the dollar. If the dollar rose, oil would drop considerably in price; if we closed down speculation on oil by



AW Direct's gas can holds expensive stuff

Our biggest impediment to swift change, however, is, in my opinion, government regulation administered by an unwieldy bureaucracy and legislators who have their own personal agendas — by the time they agree on anything it's too late!

commodities and stock market traders, the same would happen — somewhere between 40 to 50 percent. I really think oil should be regulated by NYMEX.

Let's take a moment to look at ethanol. A plethora of plants were rap-

idly built or converted to produce it. Now note that it takes two gallons of ethanol to do the same job as one gallon of gasoline. And what about the pollution caused by manufacturing it?

Corn is an annual crop that is the primary source of ethanol, but by switching to sawgrass or prairie grass, we would have had an unlimited and sustainable supply and the cost of cereal, bread, milk, butter, and meat would not have gone through the roof. Smell something fishy here?

I have spoken to numerous towers who have either raised their rates or added a fuel surcharge. I am of the belief that a surcharge is the way to go. In these hard economic times, if a customer sees a rate increase, he is likely to start to shop around. So why give him any ideas? Almost all trucking firms have kept their rates the same but added a justifiable fuel rate surcharge of anywhere from 12 to 45 percent.

I price a job by time and then include a fuel surcharge. Let's say you take a job in the city and you go only 20

"Most important to towers is proper pricing"

miles, but it takes three hours. The result would be \$450 plus 20 miles at a one dollar per mile fuel surcharge.

Now do the same job outside the city for three hours at \$450 but you travel 120 miles round trip. A 25 percent fuel surcharge would equate to \$112. So a better rate would be to charge a dollar per mile for fuel.

I invite you to fill out the accompanying informal survey below and fax or mail it back to Footnotes to give us some insight into what is happening to you and others in the industry in these stressful economic times. ☛

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Please fax, mail, or email your response to: Bill Candler, Towing & Recovery Footnotes, 150 Granby St., Norfolk VA 23510. Fax number: 757-233-7047; phone: 757-351-8633; email: bcandler@traderonline.com

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Your Comments

We invite you to tell us how the slumping economy and high fuel prices are affecting you and your towing business.

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2008 HINO 258ALP

Stock #W890, 220HP Turbo diesel engine, Allison 2200RDS 5 speed automatic transmission, cold package, chrome bumper, air horn, exhaust brake, air suspension, Chevron 21'6" steel car carrier with wheel lift removable alum. Blade rails, alum. Tool box, led lights, 102 wide deck, light bar, work lights, hot shift PTO, stainless steel simulators.



Air Brakes

2008 HINO 268A

Stock #W889, 25,950lb GVW, 255/70R 22.5 tires, alum. wheels, 220HP turbo diesel, Allison 2200RDS 5 speed automatic transmission power windows, air suspension, chevron aluminum 22 foot car carrier with polished blade rails, alum tool box, led light package, hot shift PTO, light bar, work lights.



2006 GMC 5500 Red 26,000lb GVW

Stock #T4512, Dura max diesel engine, Allison automatic transmission, 150 AMP Alt. Power windows & locks, air conditioning, cloth seat, vulcan aluminum carrier, with strapless wheel lift, alum. Tool box, light bar, work lights, s/s simulators, never titled has full warranty.



4X4

2008 GMC 5500

Stock #T5242, Dura Max diesel Allison automatic trans, power windows & locks, appearance package, side mount fuel tank, heated mirrors. Chevron renegade 408 with auto grip wheel lift, twin 9,000lb planetary winches, stainless steel sides, light bar, switch panel, stainless steel simulators.



2006 GMC 5500 19,500 GVW

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TOW SAFETY

Reflection Required

By November, responders must wear reflective gear

By Jennifer C. O'Donnell

Beginning in November, highway workers as well as incident responders who go out to help clear up an accident or aid stranded motorists will have to carefully consider their wardrobe. The new requirements for anyone involved in highway work are part of a federal safety policy that is designed to reduce the number of highway struck-by incidents involving highway workers and emergency responders.

On November 24, the Federal Highway Administration's Worker Visibility Policy becomes official. The rule, which is part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Act (SAFETY), requires high-visibility safety gear for workers who are working within Federal-aid highway rights-of-way.

The rule requires compliance not only from police officers, firefighters, and EMTs but also tow truck operators, coroners, utility workers, construction crews. Surveyors, and even news reporters who show up to report on accidents, crash fatalities, or other traffic problems.

Daily Searches

The rule is the result of the efforts of the FHWA and various safety organizations to reduce injuries and fatalities suffered by emergency responders on the highways. If Internet searches are any indication of the problem of struck-by accidents, the ruling couldn't come at a better time, said safety advocates.

Steve Austin, a spokesman for respondersafety.com and a project manager for Emergency Responder Safety

Institute, conducts daily Internet searches for news stories regarding highway accidents involving emergency responders. On average, Austin said, at least two accidents occur per day involving policemen or EMTs responding to a scene. A number of those accidents are fatalities, he added.

That number could be even higher for those in the towing or wrecking industry, said Austin. "It's a rarity when towers make the news. Oftentimes the news media just doesn't report on those accidents."

Austin doesn't see the situation improving on its own. Despite efforts to educate the public and emergency responders to the dangers of highway accidents, the roads prove to be dangerous stomping grounds for anyone on foot. "The increased amount of traffic on the highways and the fast-paced lifestyle of drivers makes it all worse," he added.

Class Acts

To meet the requirements of the worker visibility rule, highway responders must wear reflective safety vests that meet the Class II requirements of ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 or ANSI/ISEA 207-2006. Those minimum requirements include the use of fluorescent background material and 360-degree visibility.

Fluorescent material may be yellow-green, orange-red, or red. The garments should also be labeled as compliant with the ANSI requirements and the label should be sewn into the garment, said Ron Moore, battalion chief for the McKinney, Texas fire department and a chief instructor with the Emergency Responder Safety Institute.

Austin and Moore also recommend workers opt for garments that offer four- or five-point breakaway features that add protection for the wearer should the garment become hooked on a passing vehicle, cable, or machinery.

Proper Focus

Reaction to the worker visibility rule has been mixed. "We've been getting some quizzical looks," said Doug Hecox, a spokesperson for the Federal Highway Administration. "Some see this is just another layer of bureaucracy."

But others in the industry say many workers are responding positively to the rule. Moore conducts classes once a month in McKinney, Texas for emergency responders, tow and recovery operators, and other highway responders. The purpose of the class is to help educate the workers on the new safety rule and assist them in troubleshooting any issues they might have in meeting the new requirements.

"What I found recently is that this issue is becoming the focus of the towing and recovery industry," he said. "Operators are wanting to be a part of the solution and they want to do this the right way."

Visibility Tips

Firefighter Ron Moore offers towing and recovery operators a few pointers to consider regarding the worker visibility policy:

- **Safety is always a consideration.** "Wearing the vest does not make you bulletproof, it does not make you invincible. You still have to do the right things. But the vest is a positive step to minimize your risk."
- **Regularly assess vest appearance.** "Towing and recovery operators find that their vests get dirtier quicker just by the nature of their work. But if your vest is muddy or greasy, it's not going to have any value to you at all." In addition to frequent washings, Moore suggests operators replace their vests frequently or as needed.
- **Consider color.** Moore said the ANSI red that is compliant with requirements might be a good choice for those in the towing or wrecking industry. "It's a vibrant red color and is going to hold up better in sunlight and over time than some of the other choices."
- **Stay clear of knock-offs.** Moore said some gear is not up to the ANSI requirements. Such items are often inexpensive and can be found at big box retailers. He cautions workers to avoid those garments and opt only for the ANSI-labeled vests or jackets.



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A proper vest in a truck's compartment

McKinney, TX Fire Department

“At least two accidents occur per day”

While failing to comply with the rule carries no criminal consequences, Hecox and Austin caution workers to make every effort to comply.


States that fail to enforce the rule's requirements could potentially lose federal funding. What's more, personal liability issues may come into play for those involved in accidents when they fail to darn proper visibility gear.

"If you get hit and you're not properly garbed, the tort liability is on you," warned Hecox. "That makes a strong case for wearing it."

For additional information regarding the worker visibility rule, contact respondersafety.com. The website offers a PDF and Powerpoint program on the new rule and offers tips on meeting the requirements. In addition, the program shows how the reflective gear makes a highway worker stand out from his peers who aren't wearing safety vests. Ron Moore of the McKinney, Texas fire department is also available to answer questions regarding the safety ruling. He can be reached at rmoore@mckinneytexas.org.

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Peterbilt Model 335 PX8 315HP 10 Speed
 w/Chevron Medium Duty 1016 Wrecker



Ford F650 Super Cab 260HP Auto
 w/Extreme Magna Pro Star & Chevron 21' Steel



Ford F750 Ext. Cab 300HP Cummins Auto
 w/Vulcan 21' Steel Carrier



Peterbilt Model 335 260HP Cummins 6 Speed
 w/Chevron 22' Aluminum Carrier



Sterling 5500 Cummins 305HP Auto
 w/Chevron 19' Aluminum Carrier



Navistar IH 4400 310HP Auto
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Kenworth T270 Paccar PX6 300HP 6 Speed
 w/Chevron 21.5' Steel Carrier



Ford F650 Cummins 260HP Auto
 w/Vulcan 892 Dual Line Medium Duty

Got Vests?

There are a number of companies that make reflective gear that meets or exceeds the ANSI requirements, including but not in anyway limited to the companies below. Quality reflective gear, said Austin, will cost between \$20 and \$50 each, depending on the style.

AW Direct:
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MUSEUM MATTERS

President Johnson

*Serving the industry he loves
at our towing museum*

By Tom Reimann

"I started out as an office person," Rolfe Johnson said. "I was working for a large police contractor, doing the inventory of the impounded vehicles and making the schedule." This was back when Johnson, now 59, was about 26 years old. "I started driving the trucks when it would get busy," he continued.

Johnson eventually became manager and purchased a competing firm named Road Runner Towing in 1978, which he ran until he sold the company to Speeds Towing in Portland, Oregon in 1995.

From his start in Seattle, Washington, Rolfe Johnson has grown into quite a figure in the industry. He owns Jim's Northgate Towing, based out of Washington. He has served as the president of both the Washington Tow Truck Association and, following the dissolution of that organization, served as the first president of the Towing and Recovery Association of Washington.

Today, Johnson is the president of the International Towing and Recovery Museum and Hall of Fame in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Without question, his influence is far reaching.

Buying In

Johnson's involvement with Jim's Northgate Towing arose from an unexpected tragedy. "The owner was a man named Bob Newcomb," Johnson said. "In December of 1999, he died very suddenly of a heart attack."

Johnson was working for an architectural sheet metal company at the time. "I knew his family," he continued, "and they asked me to come on as general manager." He took the posi-



Rolfe Johnson

tion in 2000, and by 2002 had become 50 percent owner of the company. "In 2004," Johnson said, "I purchased the other half."

Today, Jim's Northgate Towing runs 19 light- and medium-duty trucks. "Wheel lifts and flat beds," Johnson said. "We have 22 employees and we operate out of two different locations, one in north Seattle and the other in Kenmore."

New Ground

November of 2005 saw the inception of the Towing and Recovery Association of Washington. Johnson was the organization's first president, a position he admits was very challenging.

The purpose of the Association is to work with law enforcement and legislation to promote the well-being of tow truck drivers in the state of Washington, but Johnson points out that not everyone was immediately convinced. "We had a paid administrative staff and a lobbyist, but no members," he said. "Gaining membership was difficult because not everyone was optimistic that the organization would succeed."

The Association had members who wouldn't pay a full year of dues, and instead would pay monthly or quarterly to minimize any potential loss. "It made cash flow very difficult," Johnson said.

Despite this, the Towing and Recovery Association managed to gain 125 members by the end of 2006, its first year of operation. "I think that's what I'm most proud of," Johnson said of his time as president of the Association. "125 members within the first year is outstanding."

Museum Work

Johnson claims it was his interest in history that first brought him to the International Towing and Recovery Museum and Hall of Fame. "I was intrigued by the antiques," he said, "and by the preservation of that part of our history."

He visited the museum for the first time in 1998, and in 2001 was asked to serve on one of the museum's budget committees. "I became Treasurer in 2002," Johnson explains, "and from there I was second vice president and then first vice president."

He was elected president of the museum in September of 2007. "I was very excited about it," he said. "For my friends in the industry to have that strong a feeling that I was their man was overwhelming."

"He's quiet," George Connolly said



The world's only towing museum

of Johnson, "but he doesn't talk a lot of bull. When he does say something, it's thought-out common sense." Connolly, 57, is the current chairman of the museum's board of trustees.

Originally a member of the Friends of Towing, an organization begun in 1985 with the goal of recognizing individuals in the industry and documenting the industry's history, Connolly took over as president when the Friends of Towing became the International Towing and Recovery Museum and Hall of Fame. "I was president when Rolfe first came in as treasurer," Connolly said.

According to Connolly, Rolfe Johnson is more than suited for the job. "A president serves two years," he said, "but to be president you really have to know what's going on. That's part of the reason Rolfe was appointed — he's been involved with the museum for five or six years now, he's served his time on the board."

Jeffrey Godwin, 39, is the chairman of the Survivor Fund at the museum and has been working with Johnson for the past five years. "He's very level-headed, very patient," Godwin said of Johnson. "He thinks through things and looks for solutions that provide value to everyone...He brings a fresh perspective. I think the museum will expand its member base and its involvement with the towing community."

Future Plans

Johnson has several ambitions for the International Towing and Recovery Museum and Hall of Fame. "I have two main goals for my time as president," Johnson said. "First is awareness. I want a large number of industry people to have a desire to visit the museum."

One of the ways this can be accomplished, Johnson said, is more articles about the museum in a variety of publications. "I'm trying to get the word to everyone on the street that the only towing museum in the world is in this country," he said. "It's preserving a part of our heritage and I want people to feel they need to visit it at least once in their lifetime and enjoy it."

The other goal of Johnson's tenure as president is to provide the museum with some type of endowment or perpetuating funds. "I want the museum to be less dependent on raffles and major fundraisers," he said.

Understandably cautious about revealing too many details, Johnson simply stated, "I want people to remember the industry that took care

of them when they make their estates. Basically, to put a little bit back into an industry that has been so good to them."

Volunteer Effort

The position of president is not that of a mere figurehead, a point that George Connolly stressed. "You have to be in contact with the museum at least once a day," he said. "You sit on all the committees. There's always something going right or something going wrong. You're always trying to come up with an extra two or three thousand dollars for something."

Connolly pointed out that Johnson lives in Washington state, on the opposite side of the country from the museum. "It's very time-consuming to try to juggle your position at the museum with your business and family back home," Connolly said. "And something that a lot of people don't understand is that we are all volunteers — there are no paid positions at the museum except for the staff. Rolfe doesn't earn a

Fuel Effects

Johnson's deep involvement in the industry has unquestionably given him a solid perspective on the issues it currently faces. "Obviously, one of the big problems is fuel prices rising so rapidly," he said. "It's hard to keep up with the costs."

However, he feels the biggest issue is the general public's perception of the towing industry. "People don't understand how capitalized it is," Johnson said. "They have no idea what it costs to run a truck."

He is optimistic, though, that the industry is in no real danger. "I certainly hope fuel won't continue to rise at the rate it's been," he said, "but as long as there are automobiles, there will be a need for tows."

He concedes that more people may start to use public transportation in the face of high gas prices, which in turn could lead to fewer cars on the road and consequently fewer trucks to tow them.

"It's the same thing as the early '80s," Johnson said, referring to the gas shortage the country endured nearly three decades ago. "It'll slow down driving for a time while everyone adjusts, but I'm optimistic that it will return to prosperity."

“People have no idea what it costs to run a truck”

cent as president.”

Godwin also commented on the time-consuming nature of the job. “It’s hard to balance, because it’s time away from home and your family and your business,” he said. “But speaking for myself, in the grand scheme of things the time away from work and family doesn’t really matter. Everything I do in my life has been paid for by this industry, and there’s very little respect or recognition for the men and women who work in it.”

Giving Back

That, Godwin argued, is why the museum is so important, and why so many professionals are willing to dedicate their time and energy for no monetary compensation. “When you get involved with the museum, you find the cream of the crop of our industry,” Godwin said. “These are people who genuinely care about what happens, people that take their time and dedicate it to the museum and its efforts to make sure the industry gets the recognition and respect it deserves.”

Johnson has a similar perspective. “I feel obligated to try to give a little back,” he said. “The towing industry has been very, very good to me. As much as I hate the middle-of-the-night phone calls and that sort of thing, I enjoy my friends on the board and the various committees at the museum. There is a great sense of camaraderie.”

“Rolfe is a great guy,” Godwin said. “I think he has a lot to bring the museum. I’m glad he’s in that position.”

Parked In Plane Sight



Rob Dragt

What’s an airplane doing in a parking lot?! According to Dutch towman and professional photographer Rob Dragt, this is a Nimrod ex-RAF plane that was rebuilt as a flight simulator and was for sale in Holland. Gotta put it somewhere, we guess.

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TOW TECH

Electrical Specs

How to properly maintain your truck's power systems

By Scott Burrows

How many batteries does your tow truck need? How many cold-cranking amps to roll the engine on a cold winter's morning? How much amperage should your alternator put out?

Under-specing an electrical system can result in a maintenance nuisance and unnecessary downtime. Over-specing can waste your hard-earned money. The secret to a cost-effective, reliable electrical system is in understanding the operating environment of your vehicle and choosing the components best suited to it.

Batteries

Start by knowing the cold-cranking amp (CCA) requirements for your engines. CCA is a standard, "apples-to-apples" battery rating that tells how much current a battery can supply at zero degrees Fahrenheit. CCA requirements generally range from 700 for medium-duty diesels to 1800 for some

heavy-duty, big-bore engines. A list of CCA requirements, by engine model, can be found in the Technology and Maintenance Council's Recommended Practice (RP) 109A.

Three batteries, connected in parallel, each with a widely available rating of 625, will produce 1,875 CCA, more than enough to satisfy starting needs in most towing applications. Four batteries are recommended, however, for wreckers with multiple accessories, to provide more reserve capacity (RC). And I suggest you consider moving up to 900 CCA batteries for that extra reserve on that unseasonable winter morning when the thermometer has no visible mercury.

A battery's RC measures its ability to supply current (25 amps) at a low discharge rate. RC is expressed in minutes of low-current discharge, and typically ranges from 130 to 180 per battery. A battery with an RC rating of 180 can supply 25 amps for 180 minutes, with a terminal-post voltage of at least 10.5 volts. As with CCAs, more batter-



Electricity is the lifeblood of your engine

ies (connected in parallel) provide more RC.

The significance of RC is that, the greater the value, the less each battery is discharged while operating accessories with the engine off. The battery is like a barrel full of water. When the engine is off, and you're running electrical appliances or lighting, it's as if you were draining water out of the barrel. The closer to full you can keep the battery, the longer it will live.

Cycling ability is the term used to describe a battery's capability for surviving those power drains. Ultra-high CCA batteries tend to have limited cycling ability due to their thinner plates. A battery in a high-cycling application should have 650 to 700 CCA, and a 180- to 190-minute RC. This type of battery is referred to as a multi-purpose, combination, or high-cycle unit.

Starters

The specification decisions for starters are a bit simple. The application engineers know how much cranking power is needed for a given engine, and what they provide is adequate. You can specify over-crank protection if you need it; an over-crank protection usually extends the warranty of the starter for an additional year, and will offset a less-experienced operator who cranks and cranks and cranks and...!

"It's as if you were draining water out of the barrel"

Experts also recommend the gear-reduction type of starter, if available. These starters offer a soft-start feature that engages slower and is gentler on the flywheel ring-gear. There is also weight savings inherent in a gear-reduction starter.

Alternators

An alternator's job is to recharge a vehicle's batteries, while providing sufficient current to operate a vehicle's electrical accessories with the engine running. But how much current should an alternator be capable of producing?

To calculate your needs, conventional wisdom holds that you would add up the amperage of a vehicle's entire electrical loads – either on paper, using established values, or by turning everything on full-tilt, and using an ammeter to measure the total draw at the battery. You would then add 10 percent – some experts say as much as 25 percent – to the total and spec your alternator accordingly. So if everything added up to about 80 amps, you'd spec a 90-amp alternator.

The "110-percent rule" is a safe way to go. However, that same vehicle may be able to get by just as well on a less-expensive 75-amp alternator. The Maintenance Council (TMC) members have reported good experiences using mobile data acquisition to measure and record electrical loads, engine speeds, and temperatures on an operating vehicle to determine exact charging system requirements. Utilizing this data, their experts recommend specifying the "remote sensing-type" alternator.

These alternators regulate the voltage at the batteries, not at the alternator. There can be a significant difference; a remote-sensing alternator will help ensure that the batteries get what they need, and will help them live longer (by not overcharging or under-charging). Generally unheard of just a few short years ago, remote-sense alternators make good sense for towers.

On Lighting

One of the biggest decisions in choosing electrical systems involves lighting. Will it be LED or incandescent? LEDs (light-emitting diodes) do have distinct advantages over incandescent lighting. First, they live far longer than incandescent bulbs – by some estimates, they live as long as the vehicles they're installed on. They also draw less current and put a smaller load on a vehicle's alternator.

In addition, LED brake lights have somewhat of a safety advantage over incandescent bulbs because they light up approximately 200 milliseconds sooner than incandescent ones. Drivers following LED brake-light-equipped vehicles have a fraction of a second extra time to react in the event of a panic stop. The major drawback of LED lighting is cost, although increased sales volumes over the last



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several years have driven prices down and made them easier to justify.

According to a TMC survey conducted in the '90s, vehicle lighting systems accounted for the highest frequency of repair orders in fleet operations. Today, with the advent of the long-life LED lighting components, that dubious distinction is no longer applicable. ☘

Walking Tall

A cowboy rode into town and stopped at a saloon for a drink. The locals had a habit of messin' with strangers, so when he finished his drink, he went outside — only to find that his horse had been stolen!

He went back into the bar, twirled his gun in the air, caught it, and fired a shot into the ceiling. "Which one of you sidewinders stole my hoss?" he yelled.

No one answered.

"All right," he said. "I'm gonna have another beer, and if my hoss ain't back outside by the time I finish, I'm gonna do what I done in Texas when my hoss got stolen thar! And I don't like to have to do what I done in Texas!"

Some of the locals shifted nervously. The cowboy had another beer, walked outside and found that his horse was back. He saddled up and started to ride out of town.

The bartender came out of the bar and asked, "Say, partner, before you go, I'd like to know what you did have to do in Texas when your hoss got stolen."

The cowboy replied, "I had to walk home."

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- At a car dealership: "The best way to get back on your feet: Miss a car payment"
- Outside a muffler shop: "No appointment necessary. We hear you coming."
- At an electrical company: "We would be delighted if you send in your payment. However, if you don't, you will be."
- At a propane filling station: "Thank heaven for little grills"
- At a radiator shop: "Best place in town to take a leak"

FAMILY AFFAIR

Brothers Three

Diverse talents merge to create an industry success story

By Bruce Ebert

With one brother holding a degree in business and running a repair shop, another holding a degree in archaeology, and a third working as an aircraft mechanic, what could you expect brothers Jim, Joe and Charlie Mooney to do when they decided to enter business together?

They went into towing and recovery. "Either way you're picking up pieces," University of Arizona business grad Jim Mooney said, hinting that archaeology grad Joe Mooney might have been the best-prepared of all for their venture. "Joe had a friend who owned a tow truck and thought it was the greatest thing on the planet."

Picking up the pieces and turning them into a highly profitable — and highly respected — towing business is what the three brothers started out to do in 1993, taking over what Jim sheep-

"Our sales people go out and see customers"

ishly calls "a mature fleet" and, over about 15 years, investing about \$2.5 million to \$3 million in new equipment and additional storage property.

Some of the diverse equipment purchases — such as their clean-up vehicles: a backhoe, two dump trucks, and two loaders — place Frontier in select company among towing and recovery businesses in southern Arizona. "We fixed a lot of the old stuff, too," said Jim.

The infusion of cash was matched by an enormous amount of hard selling, carefully balanced pricing, and seeking to maintain high performance standards, Jim added.



Stuck with cement

Moving Fast

Of Frontier's marketing he said, "We have sales people who go out and see customers. They go to repair shops, auto dealerships, fleet accounts like Enterprise, Alamo and National Car Rental, construction companies, and delivery services and sell them on using us. We are one of only two towing and recovery companies in Tucson who do that."

Performance, he said, means fast response and competent execution. "It's having enough people to cover and getting in there quickly." Today, Frontier Towing has 35 employees and 33 towing and recovery vehicles.

According to Jim Mooney, Frontier handles about 2,000 calls per month — about 300 of them impoundment jobs contracted by the Pima County sheriff's office under an Arizona law known as ARS 28 3511, which mandates 30-day impoundment if the driver has a suspended license, is DUI, or is in a crash and doesn't have insurance or doesn't have a license. "Yes, we are making money under that," said Jim. "That's the goal of being in business. But there's more to it." (See sidebar)

As in numerous other states, towing is contractual in Arizona, and unless a driver has a preferred tower, the company under contract in a locality will be called to tow the vehicle. Frontier has been Pima County's contracted tower for the last 15 years. Not all towers qualify for a contract be-



Flying with Frontier

cause not all have property on which to store what they recover. Frontier's storage space covers a total of 16 acres.

On The Prowl

One of Frontier's contracted duties is work-specific to states that border Mexico: retrieving coyotes — but not the prairie-dog variety. "Coyotes" is the name given to the trucks and drivers who prowl along the Mexican border for Mexicans attempting to enter the U.S. illegally. For pay, the drivers pick them up, hide them in the backs of their trucks, and attempt to high-tail it to a location where the immigrants might be safely out of authorities' sight.

It sounds like the stuff of a movie thriller; the results are often violent and deadly. "When the Border Patrol catches them, the vehicles are impounded," Jim explained. But coyotes



Flying lessons

will do everything they can to avoid being caught. "They'll drive their trucks, usually a 4-by-4 or a 6-by-6, until the wheels fall off!" he said. "And then there's a gunfight."

Though law enforcement's priority is to avoid injuries and killings, anything can happen. "It's part of the towing and recovery process." ❖

Impound Income

To the outsider — or to the car owner whose car has just been impounded — the Arizona law mandating the confiscation of vehicles used in the commission of certain driving offenses looks like a bonanza for towing companies.

That's debatable, towing company owners said.

"Probably 60 to 70 percent of the cars that are impounded are driven by people other than the owner," said Joyce Capson, owner of Robins Towing in the Phoenix area. "The owner of the car gets in front of a judge and said, 'I didn't know my son had a suspended license,' and the judge lets the owner off the hook. Towers are doing okay, but we're making our money in storage. With fuel at \$4.15 a gallon and tow trucks averaging 8.5 miles a gallon, and insurance not being cheap, the towing part is marginal. But overall, towers are doing okay."

Jim Mooney, co-owner of Frontier Towing in Tucson, explained that some of the impounded cars have minimal value,

so little value that their owners decide to abandon them by not reclaiming them. And then they purchase a new vehicle. When that happens, it's left to the towing company to pay the \$150 administrative fee, plus it never collects the towing cost and storage fees. Storage can run as high as \$450, based on \$15 per day for 30 days.

Towers recoup some of the loss by selling the unclaimed vehicles to wrecking yards. Pete Colantoni, former president of the Arizona Professional Towing and Recovery Association, believes the impoundment law is working to the benefit of law enforcement agencies, towers and the public. "It's keeping vehicles off the street that ought to be off the street," he said.

Law-enforcement agencies may either contract with a single towing company for all the impoundment business, or they may rotate the work among qualified towers who agree to their terms.

Animal Act

What's not part of the towing-recovery process for most companies is hauling two rhinoceroses, something Frontier did for the Tucson Zoo in 2006. "The zoo had created a new habitat for two rhinoceroses, and our job was to transport them a distance of about a mile," said Jim. "When we were approached about doing this, I said, 'You're kidding, right?'"



Rhino aboard

The answer was no.

A male and a female rhino, each 35 years old and each 7,000 to 8,000 pounds, were hauled separately in 6,000-pound crates of solid steel along paths meant for golf carts. It was going fairly smoothly — for the Frontier crew, that is — until the first rhinoceros, leaning against a side of the tight-fitting cage, caused the wheels to lift off the ground and made for rough going. "It would lift from side to side."

The operation, moving both animals, took from six a.m. to four p.m., left the Frontier crew exhausted, and the two rhinos — who were born in the area of the zoo from which they were moved — a bit out of sorts.

After all that, towing a wrecked plane or a blown-out truck seems easy.

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 07 International, RED loaded chassis, DT466, auto, airbrakes, air ride, exhaust brake, alcoas, 21' Vulcan Steel, removable rails (vin 5930) **\$70,950**
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NEW Ford 450 Units
 08 Ford F450, SUPER CAB white loaded chassis, auto, diesel, 60CA (vin 6830), \$36,623 for chassis, you install own unit
NEW Ford 550 Units
 07 Ford F550, white loaded chassis, auto, diesel, 84CA (vin 3173) \$34,368 for chassis, you install own unit
 07 Ford F550, 4x4 - white loaded chassis, auto, diesel, 60 CA (vin 5762)\$37,792 for chassis, you install own unit

NEW GMC Units
 2007 Chev C6500, Black, Auto, Duramax Diesel, GWW 26,000, 21' Vulcan Steel, removable rails (vin 3132) **\$67,950**
 2007 Chev C6500, White, Auto, Duramax diesel, GWW 26,000, 21' Vulcan Steel, removable rails (vin 3227) **\$67,950**

NEW HINO Units
 2008 Hino, white loaded chassis, auto, air brakes, 102" 21' Century Steel Removable Rails (102")-(vin 0016) **\$70,950**

NEW Dodge Units
 2008 Dodge Ram 4500, auto, white loaded chassis 60CA (vin 5674) ready to build
 2008 Dodge Ram 4500, auto, white loaded chassis 60CA (vin 1279) ready to build
 2008 Dodge Ram 5500, auto, white loaded chassis 120CA (vin 0506) ready to build
 (2) 2008 Dodge Ram 5500, auto, 4 X 4, White (vin 3612), Red (vin 9910), loaded chassis, 84CA
 (1) 2008 Dodge Ram 5500, auto, white loaded chassis, 84CA (vin5510)

NEW Kenworth Units
 2008 Kenworth T300, auto, air ride, air brakes, alcoas, white loaded chassis (vin 0919) ready to build

All 2007 Units are pre-emission!
Want to install your own unit?
 Call us...our carryout prices will SURPRISE you! Over 35 Vulcan and Century Carriers or Wreckers in stock and ready to ship to your location.
Need a truck?
 We have the chassis' ready to build!
 We have the units on the ground ready to install!
 We have the staff to build 'em - usually in less than 10 days
CALL US - We can deliver!

Used Auto Loader
 2005 Ford F450 XLT, diesel, black loaded chassis, Century 301M Midnight Express (mileage 218,510) (vin 6573) **\$26,950**

Used Wreckers
 2000 International 4700, 6+1 speed, white chassis, Jerrdan 1210D twinline wrecker (vin 3301) **\$25,950**
 1999 UD 1800, 6 speed, white chassis, Vulcan 862 twinline wrecker (vin 0356) **\$23,950**

Used Carrier
 2000 FL60 Extend Cab, 19' Century Steel carrier, right approach (vin 9250) **Call for price**

WHOLESALE WRECKER
 1989 Ford F350, Holmes singleline wrecker (vin 3172) Truck runs, as is **\$4,950**
Need Parts for Vulcan, Century, American Wheel Lift, Holmes, Champion, Challenger? Need Parts for Ramsey or Warn Winches? Need Whelan, Federal Signal, Code3, BA Products, All Grip, Phoenix Accessories? No Problem...Call US - we can serve your towing needs!

The authorized dealer for Century, Challenger, Champion, Eagle, Holmes, Vulcan towing equipment and Ramsey and Warn winches. For over 45 years we have offered custom manufacturing and repairs in our 3 bay shop, parts and accessories with same day shipping, in-house leasing OAC. Wreckers are our only business! Call Daryl or Mike.

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50 Ton Century

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WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

Tri-Axis

1992 PETE 379 325" WB, 360-400 HP CENTURY 9055 50 TON, Detroit, jake brake, cruise, air ride, 4.11 rear ratio, front floatation tires, 85 MPH, 1997 Century 9055 50 ton plantary winches, 6 sets of forks, chain receivers and chains, spring hangers, Risers, corded remote, 6 receiver straps, 3 snatch blocks, strobe bar, 10 LED side lights, 11R 24.5 tires,



20 TON CHALLENGER

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

PRICE REDUCED

1994 FORD AEROMAX DETROIT 60 ENGINE, 9 SPEED, SINGLE AXLE, MILEAGE 850,000, 20 TON CHALLENGER, NEW TIRES, NEW BLACK PAINT, ALUMINUM, WHEELS, DUAL EXHAUST, WITHOUT WHEEL LIFT.



08 Jerr-Dan 25 Ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

2003 PETERBILT 379L New 2008 25 ton Jerrdan, 475 cat, jake, 13 speed, air ride, 355 rear ratio, 22.5 tires, all aluminum wheels, 571,000 mileage approx. 322" WB, factory built, 5th wheel, ball and pental hook up, Bus bars, extra long wheel lift w/storage brackets, wireless remote,



Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1990 PETERBILT 378, 3406 cat, 425 HP, 263" WB, 13 speed transmission, jake brake, aluminum 22.5 wheels, 2 - 100 gallon fuel tanks, 42" sleeper, Vulcan V 70 30ton wrecker, 2 - 25,000 lb winches, underlift 134" long, Corded remote, Whelan 60" strobe light bar, 6 pairs axle forks and extensions, spring hangers, chains, Recovery straps, pintle hitch, rear camera, steel body, color white,



35 Ton Challenger

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

AC Cold

1980 KW C50 CONSTRUCTOR 1988 35 ton Challenger, 350 cummins, 10 speed, jake brake, AC color, 256" WB, heavy suspension, 24" big tires, Aluminum wheels, , 3 stage boom, 3 stage underreach with forks,



Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

5TH WHEEL TRIPLE K WRECKER MFG. 3 sets of forks, electric remote, electric hyd power pack, black color, 2 stage 80,000 lb tow rating



660 Landoll

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

96 LANDOLL WITH 85 KENWORTH W-900, 3406 cat, 400 HP, 9 speed Fuller transmission, air ride, aluminum wheels, 3 - 150 gallon aluminum tanks, wet line kit, LED lighting, 1996 48 ft. landoll 660 trailer, 35 ton, 20,000 lb winch, steel deck, virgin tires 90% approx.



Century 602 10 ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

4x4 Automatic

2008 F450 USED 4X4 2005 CENTURY 602 10 TON - 4 door auto diesel, 6000 miles approx, simulators, black color, XLT, 6500-9000 wheel lift, 1 tunnel box, whelan strobe, 84 CA



Century 602 10 Ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

2004 4300 IHC CENTURY 602 10 TON, DT 466, 215-230 HP, 6 speed, new white and blue paint, mileage 83411 approx., cassette, tilt, Heated mirrors, electric windows and locks, new rear tires, front 70% approx., wrecker, Truck tow bar, 6500-9000 wheel lift, new straps, chains, rackets, tow lights,



Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1991 KW T-800, N14 CUMMINS, MANUAL, 400 HP - 15 speed, Holmes 750 25 ton, extendable booms, 2002 ZAC 402, 2 Stage

NEW KW SUSPENSION



45 ton Challenger

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1989 Freightliner FLD-120, 550 HP, cat, 9 speed, mileage 918,750 approx. 42" sleeper, 45 ton Challenger, 3 stage boom, 3 stage under reach.



12 Ton Chevron

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
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2006 4300 IHC, DT - 230 HP, 6 speed, extended cab, red color, air brakes, 47,000 miles approx. Aluminum wheels 22.5, 2 - 55 gallon tanks, new tires, 2 tunnel boxes, air driver seat, 12 ton Chevron 12,000 lb winches, 6500 - 9000 wheel lift, truck tow bar,



45 Ton Challenger

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1987 FREIGHTLINER, 1981 45 Ton Challenger, 3 stage boom, Zac 30 102" reach, 425 HP cat, jake brake, 13 speed Transmission, 60" sleeper, AC cold, tires 22.5, doubled framed, air ride, WB 288", new white paint, wheel lift 2 stage, 30,000 lb lift



35 TON CHALLENGER

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

Hydraulic Spades

1991 INTERNATIONAL 9300 w/1990 35-TON CHALLENGER. 60" sleeper, 350 Cummins engine, Jake brake, 9-speed, air ride, 300" WB, 700,000 miles, virgin tires, rear 70%, front 90%, 3-stage boom, 35-ton w/3-stage under reach, green color, hydraulic out-riggers.



New 25 Ton Jerr-Dan

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM


2003 KW-T600 MID ROOF, 12.7 Detroit, 430-470 HP, 10 speed, 545,000 miles approx, jake brake, 160 CA, 355 rear ratio, air ride, power windows, aluminum wheels 22.5 2 - 110 tanks, new 25 ton Jerrdan wireless remote, 8 functions, bus bars, forks, chain hook ups, spring hangers, 5th wheel and ball pental hook ups, extra long under reach, dual controls, trailer light bar and cord.



16 ton V 30 Vulcan

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

2007 M-2 FREIGHTLINER, automatic, Mercedes engine, black color, air ride, air brake, 29,000 GVW, air horns, air driver Seat, aluminum wheels, 16 ton V 30 Vulcan, aluminum body, large and small L arms, aluminum dress up kit, 3 sets of forks



60 Ton Rotator

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
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NEW 07 FREIGHTLINER, Glider Kit, N-14-400 Cummins, approximately 400,000 Miles. New Recon, 13 Speed Fuller Transmission, New Freightliner 46,000 rears with double lockers, New 20,000 lift axle. 07 Century 1060 Rotator SDU-3 Underreach 156 inches, weighs 5900 LB, Bus Bars.



Price Reduced

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

2002 ZACK 303 UNDERLIFT, 1995 WESTERN STAR 470 CAT 15 speed over, air ride, tires size 24.5, 355 rear ratio, mileage 932,000 approx. inframe at 500,00 2002 Zack 303 underlift, 32,000 lift, 85,000 tow rating, bus bars, and extensions. Can be Sold Separately.



Holmes 750 25 ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1977 FREIGHTLINER HOLMES 750 25 TON, 350 cummins, 13 speed w/4 speed brownie second transmission, 340000 miles approx. Hendrickson suspension with timbre rubber locks, super cold AC, power steering, dual exhaust, double framed, All aluminum wheels, IIR-24.4 tires approx 50%, Holmes 750 25 ton extendable booms, Zac 20 97" reach, remote control, Bus bars, 4 sets of forks, spring hangers, 3 snatch blocks, jumper cables,



Century 1060 60 Ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

1999 PETE 378 CENTURY 1060 - 60 Ton, day cab, 460 cummins - N-14, Miller spec chassis 13 speed, new tires, brakes, mufflers, All aluminum wheels, mileage 535887 approx. 315 wheelbase, 220 CA, w/new 55,000 wheel lift New 3/4" cable, miller chain package, bus bars, 7 sets of forks, spring hangers, trailer light bar, rotator Beacon, 2 - wing rotators,



30 Ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
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1989 FLD FREIGHTLINER 94 CENTURY 5030 T, 400 cummins, 15 speed, all aluminum wheels, white with gray, blue, and maroon stripes, 42 inch sleeper, 690,000 miles approx. 1994 Century 5030 T, 8 sets of forks, spring hangers, spade foot bads, chain hookups



45 Ton


Cecil Wilson, broker
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1981 PETE W/ 45 TON 3 STAGE NOMAR, big cam cummins 400 HP, 13 speed, jake brake, doubled framed, spring suspension, Wheel base 283", AC cold, 3 Stage Nomar wheel lift 83", four sets of forks, spring hangers, chains



Cecil Wilson, broker
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1995 PETE 379, BLACK COLOR, 60" SLEEPER, 3406 CAT, 425 HP, 15 SPEED, AIR RIDE, MILEAGE 966,050, NEW ENGINELAST 277,000. NEW FRONT TIRES, REARS 70%, 275" WB, CORNER STROBES, ZAC 30, 2 STAGE HD TRUCK AND BUS LIFT WITH HYD WINCH, REAR FENDERS, UNIT PERMANENT MOUNTED TO CHASSIS.



PRICE REDUCED

Cecil Wilson, broker
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2008 335 WHITE PETE, 330 HP Cummins, 8.3 10 speed, 2 - 50 gallon fuel tanks, aluminum wheels, 22.5 low pro, air ride, Peterbilt switch panel in dash, 145 CA, 212 WB, 18,000 miles NRC 15 ton 3 stage wheel lift



Century 1624 16 ton

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
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2003 PETE 330 - 300 HP, 3126 Cat, 9 speed, air ride, air brakes, alum. Body, alum wheels, 216,000 mileage approx. Dual exhaust, 2003 Century 1624, 16 ton, w/1 16,000 lb winch, all air hookups, tail boards control, Whelan strobe, Medium duty L arms, 4 sets of forks, chain receivers



Century 16 Ton

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1984 LTL 9000 FORD 1993 CENTURY 16 TON #3224, 400 Cummins engine w/jake, 13 speed, 560,000 miles approx, 2 air seats, 2 chrome stacks, Simulators, 33,000 GVW, 1992 - 2 16,000 lb winches 120 CA, 2 stage lift, 91" long, 12,000 extended, 24000 retracted, wire remote, 4 sets of forks, 6,000 lb grids, chain receivers and chains, steel body, mechanical Tilt, rotator light bar



Cecil Wilson, broker
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1997 #317 LANDOLL, 48 ft. 102" wide, 12000 Lb winch, white color, wood floor is excellent, tire condition 60% approx.



New 2007 75 Ton Century Rotator

Cecil Wilson, broker
205-956-2852
WWW.CECILWILSON.COM

NEW 2007 379 EXTENDED HOOD PETERBILT 75 TON CENTURY ROTATOR, 625 HP cat, 18 speed, factory spec truck, dual frame, tri axle, 372" wheelbase, 211" CA, 62" flat top sleeper, 11R 24.5 tires, 16,000 mileage approx., lite blue color, new century 75 ton rotator, 3 stage boom, 3 stage under reach 55,000 lb SDU - 2 under reach, 135" reach, 3 - 50,000lb winches, 20" tunnel box.

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