

24/7 ON CALL™

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A New Legacy**

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Rust in Your Fuel Tanks?

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The industry has experienced several notable changes recently that are impacting the way towing companies operate: Incident Management demands for fewer lane closures and faster recovery times and some passenger vehicles and SUVs becoming

more difficult to tow due to all-wheel drive and/or aerodynamic packages. The Holmes 600R 16-ton Rotator and new Century 75-ton rotator were designed to help meet these new recovery challenges. The introduction of the SP8000 Sidepuller, allowing carriers to be used for both towing and recovery, has seen a significant rise in popularity as towers try to better use their equipment for multiple applications.

Another change currently underway is the involvement of second and now third generations becoming involved in the towing businesses. Or maybe I've just been around too long! But it is refreshing to see some of the new insight and exuberance that the younger towers bring to the industry, along with the steady guiding hands that many of the elder towers offer as they pass the torch.

September 7 – 9, in Chattanooga, "Tow Fest" will bring together a blend of the past and present of both people and equipment. In addition to the great collection already on display at the museum, many older units, including the largest Holmes mechanical wrecker ever built being brought by Wreckmaster and The World's Fastest Wrecker will be available to see and touch. Equipment displays, demonstrations and tours of Miller's new plant will show many of the products that will help lead us into the future. The weekend will also honor some of the people who have made significant past contributions to the industry at the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and I am sure there will be a few of the younger towers in attendance who will someday join them in the Hall of Fame as they help mold the industry in years to come. The Wall of the Fallen Memorial will also be unveiled. This long overdue memorial, and the only one of its kind in the world, will honor towing professionals who have lost their lives in the line of service.

I look forward to seeing you all, young and old alike, in Chattanooga to remember and celebrate the great people and equipment of our wonderful industry - past and present - as we forge ahead into the future.

Randy Olson

Randy Olson, Editor On Call 24/7
Miller Industries Towing Equipment Inc.
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On The Cover



Our cover theme is "Takin' It to the Streets" and that's just what Miller Industries did at the Western States Tow Show in Reno, Nevada, May 31 – June 3. Miller equipment was visible for several city blocks – booms high and carriers low. On Friday evening, attendees were treated to Tom Luciano

demonstrating a little-known recovery technique ideal for certain emergency situations (see "A Little Lever Can Go a Long Way" on page 28.) See for yourself how Miller Industries took over the Reno city streets on pages 18 – 20.

A special thanks to the operators who volunteered their services, along with California Tow Truck Association members who assisted in helping arrange this special event. Pictured on the cover are David Cantu of Fortney Towing in Fresno, California and Peter Catron of United Road Towing in Las Vegas, Nevada.

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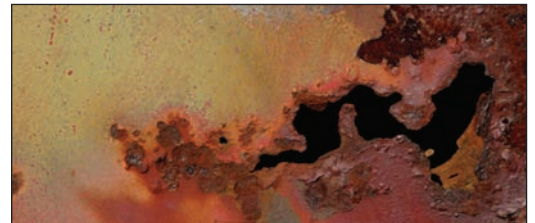
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Miller Industries did just that at the Western States Tow Show with Miller equipment visible for several city blocks – booms high and carriers low.

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Understanding levers is one foundation for all recoveries.

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Inside View

WE CARE

Miller Industries is comprised of people who care about the industry they serve.

Walk into our plant in Chattanooga and you'll soon learn that our company is not just about selling towing and recovery equipment and sinking profits back into the company coffers. It's also about our employees regularly "championing" industry projects that need either volunteer support or financial backing. Thus far, 2006 has become a "payback" banner year for Miller Industries.

Designing, manufacturing and distributing towing and recovery equipment is priority at Miller Industries, however, our people find time in their lives and busy schedules to extend themselves to the industry in a variety of ways. I am not only proud of our products' performance but also of our people's commitment. From our shop personnel who volunteer their personal time to assist in museum projects, to the financial contributions of employees who assist associations affiliated with the towing and recovery industry, the Miller Industries extended family cares about this industry.

For over 30 years I have worked for a manufacturer in the towing and recovery industry. I now arrive each day at the office with great pride in my heart knowing that Miller Industries and its people believe in our industry and



*By Jeff Badgley
President and Co-CEO*

“You must give some time to your fellow men. Even if it's a little thing, do something for others - something for which you get no pay but the privilege of doing it.”

Albert Schweitzer (1875 - 1965)

live this belief by donating their personal time and resources. In particular, I feel honored to recognize Tom Luciano for his industry training efforts as acknowledged by him receiving the Ford Eagle Leadership Award at this year's Florida Tow Show, Bill Miller for his financial contributions to erect the Wall of the Fallen in Chattanooga, and Randy Olson and Vince Tiano for their efforts to raise money for the Survivor Fund project. Although these gentlemen are committed to the efforts in each of these areas, we all understand that it takes a lot of behind-the-scenes players to win the game.

Our heartfelt thanks are extended to each and every one of you who contribute even a minute of your busy day to insure that the towing and recovery industry remains a strong, professional, viable contributor to our nation. I know that Miller Industries will continue to forge ahead with the best of intentions to create a forum and leave a footprint for upcoming generations to build upon. We feel blessed to be a part of the effort and we know you do as well.

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Survivor Fund Donations From the Industry Exceed \$230,000



Miller Industries is proud of the generous support from their suppliers and distributors to the I.T.R.H.F.M. Survivor Fund. Collectively, our suppliers and distributors have contributed over \$100,000 to the Survivor Fund. The fund has been established to provide financial assistance to the families of towing professionals who lose their life in the line of service.



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- ✦ Zip's Truck Equipment Inc.

We would also like to recognize the generous support of many of our partners and suppliers including the recent Platinum level donations from Ramsey Winch, Whelen Engineering and Sovereign Bank.

If you would like to make a donation to the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum Survivor Fund, visit their website at **www.thesurvivorfund.com** or you may call the museum at **423-267-3132** for more information.

The Kid of Swing: A New Legacy



The new Miller Industries 600R medium-duty rotator has met with great interest and success.

*By John L. Hawkins III
Vice President of Sales
Heavy-Duty Products*

One of the many things that I have been fortunate to experience in this industry over the past three decades is the opportunity to travel, not only domestically but also internationally. This has helped me tremendously to broaden my view of equipment, witness first-hand different environments the equipment must work in and translate those experiences from around the world into actual equipment design to better serve towers needs both here and abroad. One result of these journeys has been the creation of the Holmes 600R rotator.

A decade ago we knew there was a strong international market for a medium-duty rotator due to heavily congested urban areas often with narrow, older roads. Small cranes frequently were the equipment of choice. We felt that if we were to be successful in manufacturing a

unit for this purpose, it would also need a domestic following. As most of you know, in the past three years large rotators have stepped to the forefront of our product line. The Federally funded incident management program is part of the reason for their growing success, but the fact is, they make operators' lives a lot easier. You can argue any point on why they are not needed, but the simple fact is, ask anyone who operates a rotator and they will tell you that you are only fooling yourself. Rotators are very versatile and can perform a large variety of work more quickly and often more safely than conventional units. Thus we felt it was time to venture out and bring the "Kid of Swing" to reality.

The reasons were simple:

The need for this type of equipment was growing through federally mandated programs and the demand for quick clearance.

Miller Industries had committed to bring the industry the newest and most

innovative products to meet their needs.

In the spring of 2005, we earnestly began the project. We purposely wiped the slate clean (except for the knowledge and experience of building the most successful rotators for over a decade) and internally picked a new team of engineers to tackle the challenge. We wanted fresh ideas, but put strict guidelines on the project with weight and dollars at the top. We knew that you as the buyer were going to view these two factors as very important in making your decision along with performance. We picked an aggressive timeline for the project and started to design a unit to fit the world market, one common platform to fit many different places and conditions.

Our engineering team was far from new to the Century and Vulcan product lines (over 50 years of combined experience), but the outline was new. It was also one of two projects running at the same time that placed two of our newest engineers with the latest stress and finite



After completing computer simulated stress and finite analysis, a prototype unit is built. Miller Industries' engineering staff then conduct rigorous strain gauge tests to ensure the unit will perform to their tough standards.

design backgrounds with two team leaders. Every component went through stringent review before the first piece was ever manufactured because dollars and weight were so essential to the project's success. The ability to achieve what some thought was not possible drove the team harder to achieve these goals.

First they took the 3212 and V-30 platform and used the proven lightweight components of these designs to incorporate into the new unit. The recovery boom and underlift were tested and field proven around the world to perform under difficult conditions.

From here the platform took a different direction. We wanted to utilize our vast knowledge of building the "Big Boys" but needed to maintain our eye on the project goals of price and weight. We worked closely with our existing vendors to supply the right components to keep us on target. Halfway through the project, we brought in our "international partners." Their input was extremely important since our goal was to streamline design and maximize production for a unit that would be accepted globally. This turned out to be a huge challenge, but the team kept focus and, in the end, we achieved our goals.

By May, with the Florida Show around the corner, rumors about the new rotator started to surface on several online towing chat rooms. The factory phones were ringing as well. Never in the history of a Miller Industries' new product has anything drawn so

much interest. Yes, we are in the "era of information," which helps drive interest, but it was still amazing to see. Our web site hits went through the roof as data was released and to this date, downloads for information on this one product has exceeded any new product to date.

With Florida and the Western States trade shows behind us and demonstrations performed in front of thousands of tow operators from across the world, the success of the Holmes 600R product launch shows that we achieved all of our goals. The Holmes 600R brought back the heritage of a by-gone era as the Holmes 600 led the industry for decades as the most popular and versatile medium-duty wrecker. Now the Holmes 600R will continue that legacy for years to come as Holmes celebrates its 90th anniversary.

We achieved our weight projections by designing another Miller product with its weight forward foundation and kept rear axle weight at a minimum to help you achieve maximum payload. We have also kept cost to a minimum while supplying you with the equipment and features to place this unit in a class of its own.

Now, back to the beginning. You may argue or debate why or even if this unit has a place in your business. But here are some points you may want to consider about the Holmes 600R.

- It is the first production medium-duty rotator in its class that provides the capabilities and versatility of a rotator over a conventional unit but is small and maneuverable enough to operate in tight areas that may be difficult for a larger rotator.
- It can tow a variety of light- and medium-duty vehicles and achieve legal guidelines in many states.
- It further proves Miller Industries' continued efforts to bring new and well thought out projects to better enhance your business needs.

If you currently own a Miller or a competitor's rotator, you already



In a demonstration held at the Florida Tow Show, the Holmes 600R with its 8,500 lb. extended boom capacity easily lifts a van over a bar set up to represent a guardrail.

know the benefits these units bring to your fleet. In fact, many of the first Holmes 600R units sold went to existing rotator owners. If you have not experienced these benefits, you can now experience the value a rotator adds to your business for several hundreds of dollars less. The bottom line is this "Kid of Swing" is a cost-effective, versatile, functional, weight sensitive medium-duty rotator that can be a great addition to your fleet.

24/7

Play it Safe With Safety Sam

Operator safety is one of the most important factors we consider in the design of our equipment. Along with having the proper equipment, careful consideration of what you wear can also be crucial to your safety.

At the recent Florida Tow Show, we brought our Safety Sam model to display some of what today's well-dressed operator may be wearing. So let's check out Sam from head to toe.

Hard Hat

Many operators now use hard hats during recovery operations and hook-ups. They are required at many industrial and construction job sites. A hard hat can protect one of your most valuable assets, your head, from minor impacts or flying debris that can result in a bad headache or serious concussion. Most of us have bumped our heads a time or two and have seen stars or received a serious cut or wound that could have been prevented by wearing a hard hat.

Eye Protection

Safety glasses can help prevent eye injury from an exploding battery, dripping fluids, falling dirt or gravel under a vehicle, breaking glass or flying debris during a recovery. Safety glasses with side shields should be worn while jump-starting a car, hooking up a vehicle or handling a recovery.

Safety Vest

Safety vests are available in both fluorescent orange or lime, in many different styles and fabrics. Reflective options are also available in jackets, shirts and pants. The bright fluorescent colors help provide daytime visibility, while reflective strips are incorporated into the clothing for nighttime visibility. There are national standards developed to guide you in your safety garments with ANSI 3 offering the greatest conspicuity and normally specified for conditions when working near high-speed traffic.

Gloves

Many of you work in different climates, from freezing cold to extreme heat. It is wise to protect your hands from the elements. Many gloves have double panels in the palms that help protect from wire rope splinters or other sharp hazards. PVC-coated gloves help protect from oil, gas and chemicals. Carry several different pairs of gloves for a variety of working conditions.

Safety Sam says dress for safety and you can decrease your chances of an injury on the job. Always be cautious and alert to your surroundings, use correct equipment and wear the proper attire. Remember you are the company's most valuable asset.

Boots

A good sturdy pair of boots with oil resistant soles and cleats or lugs can help you maintain sure footing and prevent falls. In addition, Safety Sam's boots have steel toes to help prevent or reduce foot injury from dropped or falling objects.

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Versatility and ease-of-use make an autoloader ideal for any fleet.

Autoloads: Built with Ease and Speed in Mind

INITIALLY DESIGNED FOR REPOSSESSION, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND OTHER NON-CONSENT TOWS, AUTOLOADS ENJOY A WIDE RANGE OF USE TODAY.

By Paul Craze, Autoload Specialist

Miller Industries has a long history in the autoloader market, beginning with the Eagle, which was patented in 1984 and is still popular today.

Other Miller Industries' models using hydraulic arms developed over the years include the Century Formula Automatic, Chevron Auto Grip, Century Express and Vulcan Intruder. As these systems evolved, many towing operations began to see the benefits of self-loaders and they started to become popular for towers handling dealership and auto club work. Today over 50% of the light-duty units built by Miller Industries use an autoloader system.

Miller Industries recently introduced the next generation of autoloaders with the new modular design Century Express and Vulcan 807 series. The booms are totally fabricated using high tensile steel rather than steel tube,

allowing us to reduce the unit's weight while increasing its strength. This concept is similar to how most current heavy-duty units are built.

The winch buckets have been lowered to provide better visibility for the operator during hook up and twin lift cylinders power the boom up and down. The Express series is available with an extendable or non-extendable recovery boom and single or dual 8,000lb. recovery winches. The new subframe and body design also provide increased rear visibility. With the adjustable modular body sides, the unit can be mounted on a chassis from 88" to 94" wide, eliminating the need for fender flares that protrude out and often are broken or damaged. In the event your unit is in an accident, downtime can be kept to a minimum because you can easily remove and repair or replace the complete body side assembly. The body modules are also available in a number

of different materials including carbon steel, stainless steel or the tough, durable composite that comes in a white- or red-finished gel coat to eliminate painting.

The boom and autoloader wheel-lift can be operated from the safety and convenience of the cab with the hand-held lanyard control. Or manual controls are provided at the rear passenger and drivers side of the unit. The new control configurations, once again similar to the heavy-duty units, are in a straight line so they are easier to read and operate along with taking up less deck space. The new crossbar has recessed bolts and pins and is lowered to provide increased clearance when hooking up to a vehicle.

Stop by your local Century or Vulcan distributor and see how simple and easy the new autoloader is to operate and how it can help increase revenues in your operation. **24/7**

ADVANTAGES OF AUTOLOADS OVER CONVENTIONAL HOOK-UPS

CAN BE done from the safety and convenience of the cab. Driver is exposed less time in inclement weather or roadside dangers.

EASIER curb side hook-ups. Autoloads allow you to hook up to a vehicle even if the tire is tight against a curb, eliminating the need to pull a vehicle away from the curb to insert an L arm.

90 degree HOOK UP capability. The Century and Vulcan autoloads can hook up to a vehicle that is parallel parked and easily remove it, with very little clearance.

LESS CHANCE of driver injury or fatigue. The Autoload requires less bending or lifting of L arms, reducing pinched fingers or sore backs.

FEWER PARTS TO LOSE. You no longer have to worry about getting to a job only to find that you misplaced an L arm or left it behind at the last tow.

QUICKER HOOK-UPS AND UNLOADING TIME. The unit is faster to hook-up and unhook, making it ideal for moving large volumes of vehicles such as around a storage yard. Even on busy roadways, an operator can hook up a vehicle and move it to a safer location to add his safety chains, straps and tow lights.



The newly introduced Century Express and Vulcan 807 are stronger yet lighter due to the use of high-tensile steel booms.



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Florida Tow Show

IT'S ALL ABOUT EQUIPMENT



The Florida Tow Show begins long before the show actually starts. Tow operators from around the world call Miller Industries to ask about new equipment that will be displayed, if Tom and John will be demonstrating new techniques, what equipment mix we'll be bringing, etc. After a long winter, towing operators are excited about learning what's new in the industry and visiting with other operators. This year's show, May 11 – 14 in Orlando, was an equipment bonanza for attendees with Miller's new 75-ton rotator earning center stage.

Miller Industries doesn't believe in just showing their equipment, electing instead to show what their equipment can do. Florida weather permitted equipment demonstrations to be held into the evenings, offering attendees more time to see how Miller equipment could enhance their fleet.

A Vulcan Extreme Angle carrier with the right angle winch option demonstrates the proper technique for loading a new Porsche.



Tom Luciano's Brainstorming With the Pros has developed a loyal following among show attendees, often drawing record crowds. Miller Industries strongly supports industry education and training as evidenced by the many training classes and seminars we sponsor at trade shows and through associations.





Difficult recoveries are no problem for this Century Carrier equipped with a SP8000 Sidepuller



Crowds of towers from around the world fill the booth for some of Miller Industries legendary hospitality.



The Century 1075S 75-ton rotator demonstrated its strength and maneuverability by lifting a propane tank filled with water and a 50,000 lb. weight.



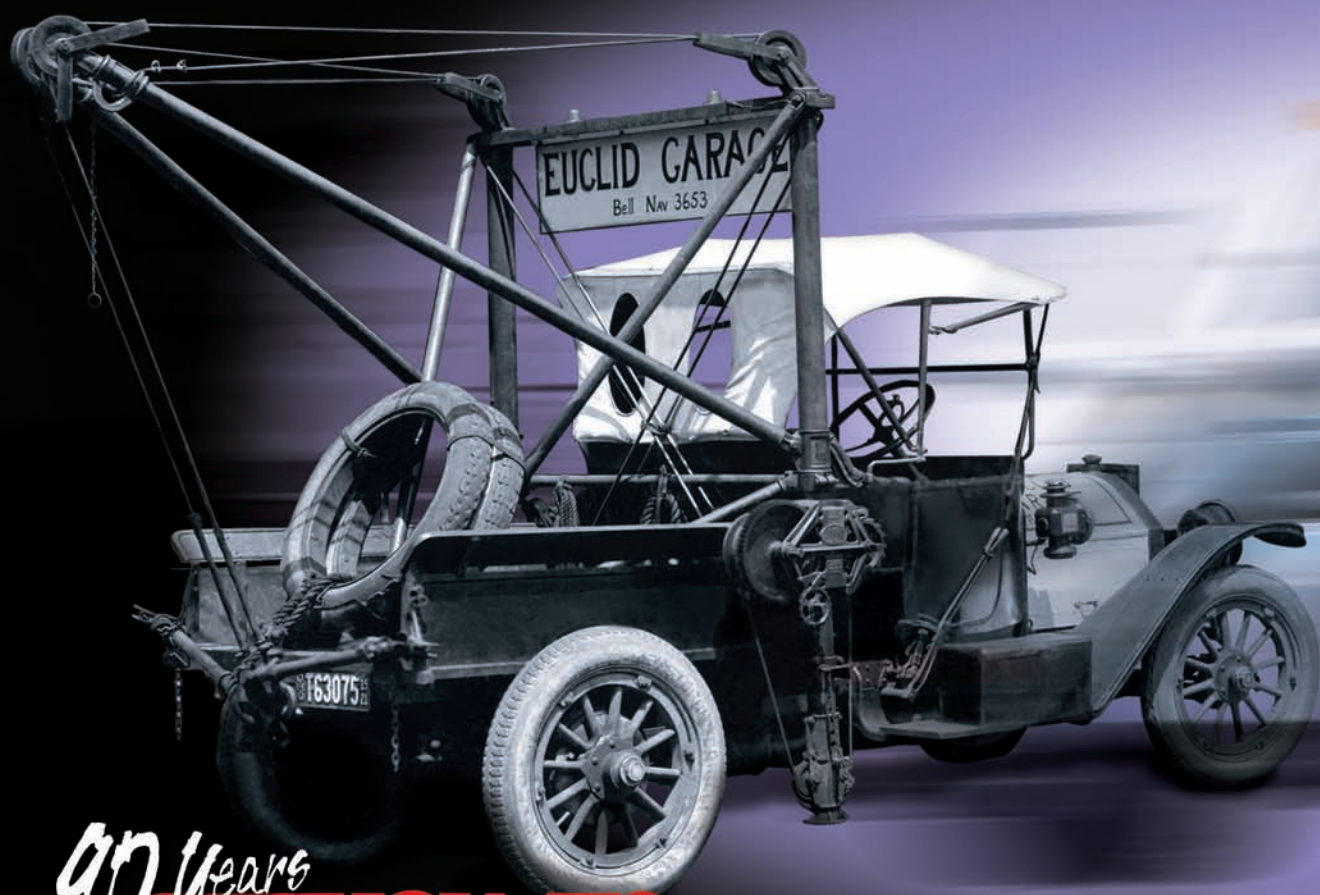
Miller Industries celebrated Holmes 90th Anniversary with the introduction of the Holmes 600R 16-ton rotator, continuing Holmes traditions of new and innovative technology towards the next century.



Twenty Miller Industries' rotators were present throughout the show, some of which were proudly displayed by their owners in the "Show 'n' Shine Contest".

24/7

HOLMES LED THE WAY IN THE LAST CENTURY'S LEADING T



90 Years
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Ninety years ago, in the small community of Chattanooga, Tennessee, Ernest Holmes built an invention to help motorists in need. This single piece of equipment led to the creation of a worldwide industry of men and women who continue to serve motorists.

Century towing equipment carries on the tradition of shaping today's towing and recovery industry by providing you with the most progressive and innovative products available. Innovators such as Ernest Holmes live forever through their legacies. The men and women at Miller Industries proudly carry on that legacy.

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to receive your copy of a commemorative Holmes 90th Anniversary Poster
highlighting some of the great innovations in towing equipment from the past
and present. Suitable for framing and hanging in your office or shop.

A must-have collectable for the towing enthusiast.

TAKIN' IT
TO THE STREETS

RENO *Tow Show*

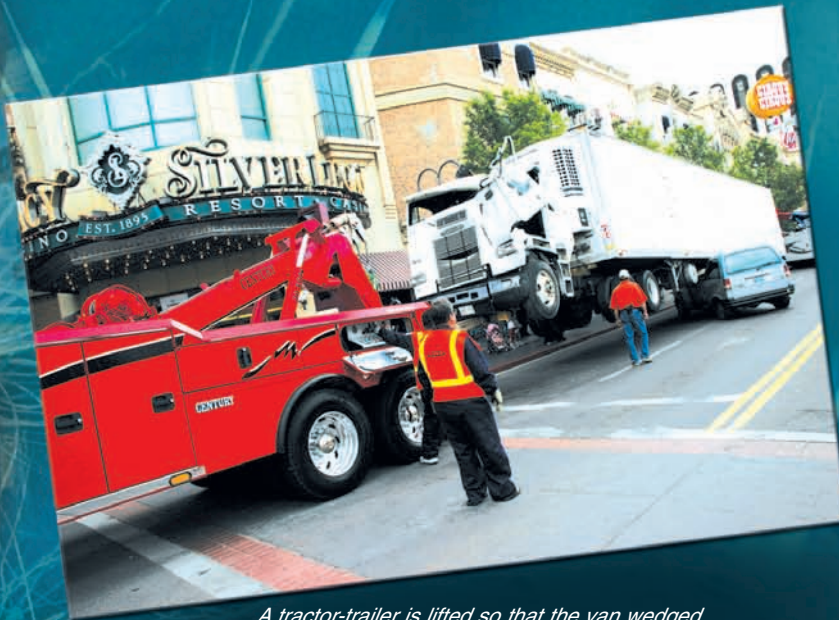
THE BIGGEST LITTLE CITY IN THE WORLD

THE RUSH IS ON
AT THE WESTERN STATES TOW SHOW
JUNE 1 - 3, 2006





An operator demonstrates the recovery capability that can be added to a carrier by equipping it with the SP8000 SidePuller. In this staged scenario, the SidePuller is removing a vehicle hung up on a simulated guardrail.



A tractor-trailer is lifted so that the van wedged underneath can be extracted using the lever method described in Tom Luciano's article on page 28.



Cal-Nevada's new Century 1060S rotator performs a reverse roll on an overturned propane truck.

Miller Industries and Freightliner recently awed a crowd of over 1,200 towing professionals at the Western States Tow Show in Reno, Nevada. The evening began with great food and fellowship followed by even greater action. The stage had been set on the main street of downtown Reno with a rolled-over tractor-trailer, a rolled-over school bus, a tipped-over propane truck with an auto under it and another tractor-trailer with a van wedged under the trailer. The recovery equipment consisted of a Century 1060S Rotator on a Peterbilt, a Vulcan V-100 SP850XP on a Kenworth, a Century 5230 and a Vulcan V-70 both on Freightliner Coronados, a new Holmes 600R Rotator on a Peterbilt, a Vulcan Intruder on a Ford, and a Chevron and a Century carrier, both on Freightliners. The crowd quickly turned its attention to the street as a pair of Reno motorcycle police officers and a fire engine from the Reno Fire Department raced onto the scene with lights and sirens blazing. A team of 12 operators then sprung into action as they demonstrated the capabilities of the equipment and the skills of trained professionals. Unlike demonstrations at other venues, this scenario posed some unique challenges. Working on city streets required the recoveries to be executed without damage to roadways or surroundings. The city required twenty-foot wide fire lanes as well, limiting working room. The recoveries went off without a hitch and in a matter of hours the vehicles were safely stored in a holding lot.

See Takin' It on Page 20



The new Holmes 600R 16-ton rotator recovers the vehicle that was crushed under the propane tank and rotates the load on to a waiting carrier to be transported.



Takin' It From Page 20

With the tractor-trailer lifted, a Vulcan Intruder autoloader grabs the van from under the trailer and pulls it to safety.



Miller Industries and Freightliner Trucks sponsored a barbeque dinner for attendees prior to the recovery demonstrations. Food and fellowship were part of the evening's fun.



The Vulcan V-100 equipped with an SP850XP SidePuller demonstrates its ability to work off the side and right an overturned tractor-trailer with minimal lane blockage.



With the bus back on its wheels, operators ready it for transport.



A V-70 Vulcan is hooked on one end while a Holmes 600R rotator is rigged at the opposite end of an overturned school bus to perform an end roll. This method requires no catch lines or additional lane blockage.

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Think of the potential of enabling
hundreds upon thousands of towers
to access what has previously been
inaccessible.

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Rust in your fuel tanks?

Maybe your truck has an infection.

*By Dayton Shepard
Vice-President of Sales and
Marketing, Lee-Smith, Inc.*

Have you heard of complaints regarding "rust" in the fuel tanks of trucks? If you have rust in your fuel tank, there's a very easy test. Simply tie a string to a magnet and drop it into the tank. Pull the magnet out and check to see if there are metal particles adhering to the magnet. If you find metal adhering to the magnet, you have contaminated fuel or a fuel tank problem.

If the fuel or the fuel filter looks as if it's "rusty" but nothing adheres to a magnet, then what you're seeing is not rust but in fact may be mold, bacteria or a fungus that has contaminated the fuel. Yes, believe it or not, your truck has an infection. There are 27 known bacteria, fungi and molds that can infect your diesel fuel. Bacteria contamination is the most common problem.

At some point these microorganisms are introduced into your diesel fuel. The source is usually previously contaminated fuel, but some are airborne. It takes the right circumstances of temperature and moisture but once the bacteria get started, they can reproduce at amazing rates. One bacteria cell can double every 20 minutes. In 8 hours, one cell turns into more than 35 million cells and suddenly you have a fuel contamination problem.

There are few early warning signs. If you drain the fuel filter and see or feel a slimy substance, you most likely are seeing the early stages of a contam-

ination. If you see what looks like rust, you may be looking at mold, fungi or bacterial contamination.

The bad news is that if left uncorrected the contamination can do significant damage to your diesel engine, none of which will be covered under warranty. The slime created by these contaminants can clog fuel filters, fuel lines and injectors. Uneven atomization of fuel by clogged injectors can cause cool spots inside the cylinders that can cause uneven wear to rings and cylinder bores. Some species of bacteria create acids that cause corrosion. These problems lead to poor fuel economy, premature failure of filters, injectors, pumps, tanks and fuel lines. Engines may smoke, exhibit decreased



Inexpensive and easy-to-use kits are available to test your fuel and help eliminate costly downtime or repairs.

power, run rough and eventually completely fail to run.

Test kits are available from many truck dealership parts departments. These kits allow

See Rust on Page 24



When magnified, what appears to be rust in your fuel tank may actually be bacteria contamination.

you to test for microbiological contamination in your fuel. You'll know whether it's bacteria, mold or a fungus problem. It's an affordable, easy test that produces results in 24 hours.

Unfortunately, fixing the problem isn't easy. Start by completely draining and flushing the fuel system and replace all fuel filters. Refill the fuel tank and treat the new fuel with a biocide conditioner. Repeat the use of the biocide fuel conditioner until you've gone through several tanks of fuel. This will assure the problem doesn't come back. Remember it only takes one bacteria, mold or fungus cell to start the problem

again. There are a number of fuel biocides and conditioners available from most truck parts stores.

If you use the biocide but don't drain your tanks, the dead bacteria will form sludge in the bottom of the tank. Live bacteria can hide under this sludge only to re-contaminate the fuel system later. The sludge will continue to clog your fuel filters and system. The recommendation is to drain the system completely and continue to treat the fuel if you don't want the problem to reoccur.

There are "filters" available that reportedly kill bacteria in the fuel system. This "filter" is nothing more than a strong magnet that

the fuel passes through. Allegedly the magnetic field damages the cell structure thereby killing the bacteria. Because most fuel systems return a large percentage of filtered fuel to the tank, eventually the fuel will be bacteria free. However, I have not seen the scientific proof of these claims. I'm not saying they don't work, just that I haven't seen the science behind the claim.

Inform your drivers and maintenance people. Test the vehicle if you think you have a problem. It's correctable, but if ignored can cost you thousands of dollars in repair costs and do lasting damage to your diesel engine. **24/7**

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From Tow Lot to Talledega

FLINT HILLS TOWING, INC. ESTABLISHED ITSELF INTO ONE OF THE LARGEST TOWING COMPANIES IN THE STATE OF KANSAS AND SUPPORTED A YOUNG MAN WHO NOW SPENDS HIS WEEKENDS RACING AMONG THE NASCAR ELITE.

By Andy Bowyer

Chris Bowyer arrived in Emporia, Kansas, in 1971 to finish pursuing a college degree. He began working at Lee Wrecking to support himself and his new wife, Jana. Along came three sons: Andy, Clint, and Casey, born in 1977, 1979, and 1981. In 1979, Chris and Jana scraped up what little money they could gather and founded Flint Hills Towing, Inc. In any business, the key to success contains a wide variety of variables, but none more important than three simple areas of focus: *hard work, establishing and reaching goals, and the desire to be competitive.*

Motocross Becomes a Passion

Just as Chris had used his competitive nature to grow Flint Hills Towing, competition in another area was emerging by way of racing motocross with his three boys. Owning and operating a 24-hour towing business the size and magnitude of Flint Hills Towing took every ounce of energy from Chris and Jana.

But by 1986, the Bowyer family began spending over 40 weekends a year traveling across the country racing motocross with their boys. To accomplish this, Mazie Beals, an elder lifetime Emporia resident, watched over the three boys raising them with a stern hand while Chris and Jana worked the weekday hours. Also, the Bowyer's worked hard on time and personnel management, and to maintain a dedicated staff of employees who were willing to cope with covering the week-end workload. Chris is one of the most honest and fair men you will encounter, a characteristic that rewarded him with dependable and capable employees.

Chris and his staff would spend the hard winter months taking advantage of the snowy weather and helping assist with the accidents that fell in their path. But when spring arrived, Chris spent more time training and coaching his boys on their motorcycles. After tough hours behind the wheel of a wrecker, Chris would spend the waning hours of the work day preparing the boy's machines

and organizing for the upcoming week-end of travel and racing.

All three of the boys reached the national level of competition and the eldest of the boys, Andy, went on to compete on the professional tour throughout the latter half of the 90s. At this time his middle son, Clint, then 14 years old, enjoyed a trip to the local dirt track car racing circuit with his grandparents. Chris had just towed in a beaten up four-cylinder Chevette that winter, and upon Clint's return from the race he asked a question that brought a new beginning to the Bowyer family's racing efforts: "Hey dad, do you think we can weld a roll cage in that old Chevette and try racing it?"

Shifting Gears to Car Racing

The years to come would see an all out effort on behalf of the Bowyer family and Flint Hills Towing as they put everything they had into Clint's car racing dreams. By his teen years Clint had become one of the fastest motorcycle riders in the country in his age

Large Photo:

Just like the towing business, hard work, talent and the right equipment proved to be the winning combination for NASCAR driver Clint Bowyer.

Inset Photo:

The Bowyer men from left: Casey, Clint, Andy and dad Chris.

bracket. Jumping was not his forte, but cornering was his masterpiece, a skill that carried over well to his dirt track auto racing. Soon Clint began winning races and track championships. As Clint began to show an interest in pursuing a career in car racing, Chris Bowyer's competitive fire was once again ablaze.

Motorcycle trailers were replaced with car haulers and the rear portion of the Flint Hills Towing shop was transformed into a race shop, complete with a set of scales and all of the tools and spare parts that come with the auto racing trade.

Winning Ways

In just three short seasons, Clint had established himself as one of the elite racecar drivers in the Midwest as he moved up through the ranks and into the highly competitive I.M.C.A. Modified division. Clint would spend every evening and every penny of his race winnings on his racecars but, by and large, most of the racing budget came from the towing business. Soon "Bowyer Racing" had reached a crossroads. Clint had a stable of racecars and spare engines. The cost of racing engines and parts associated with this level of racing created a strain upon the towing business that far exceeded the motocross years. Adding salt to the wound was the fading of the hard winter months from the Kansas region. Flint Hills Towing and Bowyer Racing would not be able to coexist much longer without a miracle of opportunity. And such an opportunity did arrive.

An Invitation to the Big League

One of Clint's racing friends had purchased a stock car from racing legend Kenny Schrader and was looking for a driver to compete at the Nashville ARCA race. To you racing newbies, ARCA is the equivalent of Triple A pro baseball to the big leagues. This opportunity required every available financial resource from Clint's sponsors, his race winnings, and of course, what Flint Hills Towing, Inc. could provide. There was very little left in each of the aforementioned categories but Bowyer Racing was able

to dig deep and get the 800-horsepower stock car ready to race.

The events that followed rival some of the most prolific "David vs. Goliath" stories. Clint would go on to lead 60 laps of the race and eventually finish second place. This effort caught the eye of legendary NASCAR owner Richard Childress as he watched the race via satellite from across the country. Without the privilege of this information, Bowyer Racing returned to Emporia and simply waited for the phone to ring. Two weeks later, Clint was busy rubbing dents out of a wrecked car at the local body shop where he worked and Chris was pulling unfortunates out of the ditch when the telephone rang. On the other end was Childress with an invitation to test one of his RCR stock cars. The rest is recent history.

NASCAR Success

Clint completed the test session with flying colors and was signed on as one of RCR's drivers for the 2004 season. A tumultuous rookie season had just enough high points to reward Clint with a full-time ride for the 2005 Busch season in the AC/Delco blue deuce. It was during this rookie season that Chris reached what would have to be the top of the mountain in his racing endeavors as he watched Clint capture the pole at Tallageda. As he stood on the same ground of the first NASCAR race he attended 20 years prior, Chris must have felt a wave of accomplishment most can only dream about.

Clint would finish up 2005 with two wins, two poles, and 22 top 10 finishes. He was immediately moved to the Cup circuit full-time for 2006 as driver of the 07 Jack Daniels Chevrolet Monte Carlo, in addition to another full season of Busch competition. Ringing in the background of this success are the three areas of focus Chris Bowyer, Flint Hills Towing, and his family have sur-

Author's note:

It has been one of the most incredible experiences of my life to watch my dad reach this point in his life. Most of Clint's, Casey's, and my childhoods were spent begging dad to let us ride with him in the "big truck" to go set up a rolled over 18-wheeler or pull a car out of a snowy ditch. This usually meant he would have us dragging cables and sometimes he would let us pull the hydraulic lever to pull in the winch. The winter nights of waiting for Dad to walk through the door and shake the snow and ice from his boots still run in my memory like it was yesterday. My father is to this day one of the hardest working, driven and big-hearted people I have ever been around. Although I was unable to make it to the top of our first passion in motocross, it fills my heart with light to see my mom and dad stand atop Clint's NASCAR hauler and wear proud smiles. When I was growing up, my friends and racing buddies would ask, "What does your dad do at work?" I always replied with my chest puffed out, "My dad is a tow truck driver!"

vived by: *hard work, establishing and reaching goals, and the desire to be competitive.*

Rising to a Racing Pinnacle

It has taken 30 years for Chris Bowyer and Flint Hills Towing, Inc. to arrive at this pinnacle. Today Chris and Jana do not spend as much time at Flint Hills Towing as they used to. They have brought the business to a point where it can run on its own in their absence with help from Jason Birk and his new family. The immediate future of Flint Hills Towing could see a second generation of ownership in the Birk family. Meanwhile, Chris and Jana still hold ownership as they travel the country in the wake of Clint's NASCAR racing circuit.

The efforts of a small town towing company have produced success and made dreams come true for a man who made his way in life helping people — just like all of you good people out there in the towing industry. Flint Hills Towing would like to extend special thanks to Miller Industries for their help through the years and their continued working relationship.

24/7



Like racing, the Bowyer family has known that the right equipment is important to a business's success. That's why they have chosen Miller Industries for their towing equipment. Part of the Flint Hills Towing fleet ready for the next call.



A Little Lever Can Go a Long Way

By Tom Luciano, District Sales Manager

Our goals at Miller Industries are two-fold: to provide innovative new products and to demonstrate new techniques that will help you use your equipment more efficiently. However, we always stress that safety is the most important aspect in any recovery and must not be sacrificed, no matter how much of a hurry emergency personnel are in.

For Safety's Sake

Very often a car can end up under a tractor-trailer, in most cases with the occupants still inside the vehicle. The car could be in an array of positions - from just between the tractor tandems and the landing legs to as far back as the trailer tandems. Or it may even be jammed under the middle. In this instance, the first concern of rescue personnel will be to extract the occupants. You may be asked to lift or suspend the trailer in a hurry. Most rescue personnel will expect you to extend your recovery boom out and over the top of the trailer to accomplish this, not realizing the time required to set-up straps, chains, snatch blocks or cables so you have a place to attach winch lines. This procedure takes time and creates too many terminations that you have to worry about slipping or coming loose. This procedure also raises additional questions:

- ◆ *Did the police call for just a heavy-duty wrecker?*
- ◆ *Does your recovery boom have enough reach?*
- ◆ *Does the load exceed the boom's rated capacity extended?*
- ◆ *Were the winch lines wound tightly when last used?*
- ◆ *What is your liability, having victims trapped while lifting the load?*

One could ask many more questions but now is the time to **"work smarter not harder."**



TIME TO THINK LEVERS

Handling recoveries is a true test of a towing operator's ability, knowledge and resourcefulness. It's a time when you can tell who truly understands the engineering of a recovery; by that I mean who can analyze a situation and apply logic, not brute force, to best get the job done.

For instance, understanding levers is one foundation for all recoveries. In a situation like this, a great question would be: "What type of lever can I use to assist in this recovery?"

In the past several years, I have been showing firefighters a technique that until recently has not been widely shown in the towing industry. At this year's Western States Tow Show in Reno, Miller Industries demonstrated this technique on the city's streets.

Situation: A car with victims is wedged under a semi in a city environment. The condition of the trailer and any damage dictates if this procedure can be used. If the trailer is stable, the following procedure applies whether the semi is loaded, partially loaded or empty.

We are using a second-class lever in this hook-up. Remember that a second-class lever is like a wheelbarrow and can be one of a towing operator's best friends.



First you need to eliminate the hinging or flexibility of the fifth wheel. Use only hard wood and place it between the leading edge of the trailer and the frame of the truck. This should be blocked as tightly as possible.



Next you must cross-chain the tractor frame rail ends to the highest point of the trailer landing legs cross members. The chain size that best fits will be 3/8" Grade 8 or better. Next install ratchet-type chain binders on each chain. This removes the slack from the chains and firmly secures them. Notice the chains are positioned so they exit the underside of the truck's frame rail ends. This is very important. Notice the chain goes over the top of the truck frame and is terminated around the rear differential of the tractor being lifted. The combination of the front of the fifth wheel being blocked and the cross chaining on the rear eliminates flexibility in the fifth wheel. At this point the truck and trailer are locked as one long lever.

See Lever on Page 30



Now let's go to the rear of the trailer. We again use only hard wood blocking. The rear ICC bumper usually has two vertical uprights welded to the frame. The blocking is positioned on the ground so that a box is formed; there are OSHA standards that fire services use. These standards dictate that the height of a box shall not exceed three times its footprint. Also, none of the configured box's legs shall have hardwood stacked any more than two pieces in the same direction. Try to crib as tightly as possible to the ICC bumper. Notice the upper blocks have two legs the same direction and this is normal.

Now it's time to back up your tow truck as if you were going to hook-up and tow the whole rig into a dealer. After installing your fork receivers, install your short 3-inch forks. Extend your under-reach under the front steer axle of the tractor. Leave all brakes locked on the tractor and trailer. Before lifting, extend your jacklegs down until they are within 2 inches of the ground. If your tow truck has air ride, leave the suspension inflated. Start the lift until the tractor front steering tires are 1 inch off the ground. At this point, you must release the brakes on your tow truck and allow it to roll. As you raise your under-lift, the arch that it takes will allow the tow truck to inch backwards. If you do not release the brakes, as you raise the unit, it will pull the rig forward off the blocking at the rear ICC bumper. The rear jacks being lowered 2 inches off the ground gives you the advantage to quickly stabilize if needed.



Using the second-class lever procedure eliminates chain, strap or termination worries while you are lifting the unit. In a real situation, you have a limited working area at recovery scenes. The tow truck can never get into position at rescue sites because the firefighters and emergency medical teams are always right around the casualty work area. This technique allows you to work at the front of the semi where you can back right in and be out of the way while working directly off the back of your tow truck, where it is in the strongest lifting position.

As you continually raise the underlift, the once combination rig now reacts as if it is one long, straight truck, pivoting on the rear ICC bumper. This keeps the rear trailer suspension from compressing and you can immediately lift the trailer off the car. In most rescue situations, firefighters only need a maximum of 4 to 6 inches of lift to free a victim. In this demo, we actually lifted excessively high, about 18 inches, to show how it works.

As the unit was lifted off the car, a small autoloader was backed into position to attach to the car and pull it free so the rig could be lowered back to the ground. This may seem like a lot of work but with two men who have practiced, it will take about twenty-five minutes to set up. I strongly encourage you to practice this with your local fire department before trying to execute this technique at an actual recovery scene. If the fire personnel know what you are going to do, they will be very glad to assist you with handling the cribbing and blocking if necessary.

I sincerely hope this step-by-step recount of our demonstration will assist you in future recovery situations. As always, feel free to call me with any questions or thoughts. 24/7



A man with a mustache, wearing a grey t-shirt, is smiling and holding the foot of a young boy sitting on the red fender of a tow truck. The boy is wearing a striped shirt and dark shorts, and is also smiling. The tow truck is red with a black crane arm and a large headlight. The background shows green trees and a clear blue sky.

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