

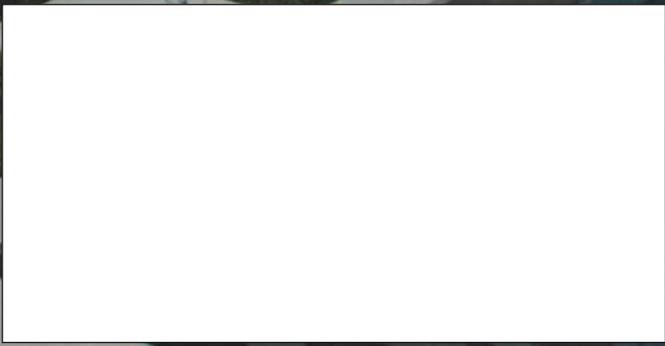


# ON CALL™

*Collector's Edition*

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4  
WINTER 2006  
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**Wall of the Fallen** page 10  
**Plant Expansions** page 22  
**Tow Fest 2006** page 26



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As I begin assembling articles, choosing pictures and writing commentary for this copy of On Call 24/7, I feel pressure to do my absolute best in making this a special issue. Sure,

everyone enjoys challenging recoveries and great looking equipment, but this issue has more of a personal and emotional impact on me with the unveiling of "The Wall" (see pages 10 – 12).

As with any good artwork, the sculpture is open to the viewer's interpretation and will mean different things to different people. What do I see as I gaze at the sculpture? I see the strength and fortitude of the individuals who make up this great industry, unselfishly putting themselves in harm's way to assist others, often receiving no thanks or recognition for what they have done. I feel sadness and loss for the friends through the years who I have seen perish in the line of service and for the families they've left behind. But mostly I am proud to be part of this great industry and to see it come together as one big family in a unified cause to honor and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice. I am also proud of the industry's generosity with over \$300,000 donated to the Survivor Fund, a fund created so we can help take care of our own.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions and hope you find this issue lives up to my goal of making you feel a part of the Miller family as well as the towing family worldwide. Best wishes for a safe, happy holiday season.

*Randy Olson*

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### On The Cover

The American Flag billows in the breeze, creating a dramatic backdrop to the Wall of the Fallen monument, which honors and remembers those in the towing profession who have made the ultimate sacrifice during the line of duty. This new monument will hopefully raise awareness to the dangers towers face daily, and lead to better creation and enforcement of laws to protect towers performing their duties on the roadsides such as the "Move Over" laws currently in place throughout the U.S. In addition, we hope the monument will improve public perception and understanding of the important role the towing industry plays for motorists worldwide.

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*On Call 24/7* is published periodically by Miller Industries Towing Equipment Inc., 8503 Hilltop Drive, Ooltewah, TN 37363. Phone: (423) 238-4171, Fax: (423) 238-5371, [www.millerind.com](http://www.millerind.com). Copyright ©2006 Miller Industries Towing Equipment Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Miller Industries Towing Equipment Inc.

# Inside View

## PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS MAKE US NUMBER ONE

### Improving quality is our motivation to better serve you.

The recent Tow Fest show gave us an opportunity to conduct plant tours of our new facility here in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The new facility, which is over 59,000 square feet, and other plant modernization projects this year are a result of listening to our distributors and customers concerning product enhancements and processes to improve overall quality. Our investments reflect our commitment to remain the world's leading provider of towing and recovery equipment.

I hope the people who experienced the tours enjoyed their visit to our new plant. We certainly appreciate the time they spent with us. The visitors with whom I was able to meet individually voiced extremely positive comments about our new robotic welding machines, paint and blast booths and drying oven. I was especially impressed with the comments I heard from customers about our people.

From the engineering staff to the plant personnel who conducted tours, our visitors were impressed with their commitment to improve the level of service we provide to our customers.

But at Miller Industries, serving our customer is not a new concept. Since the company's founding, we have looked at the towing industry as our extended family. We celebrate their joys and share in their pain. Miller Industries employees are proud when we can help you succeed by providing you with quality service and equipment.

To those of you who took the time to visit us, I say thank you. For those of you who have not yet had the opportunity to visit and see our plant modernization projects here in Chattanooga, or at our carrier plant in Sharon, Pennsylvania, I whole-heartedly extend an open invitation for you to visit at your convenience. Simply put, we are proud of our investments to serve you in a more efficient manner and would appreciate the opportunity to show you our commitment to the industry we serve.



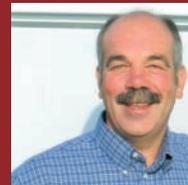
By Jeff Badgley  
President and Co-CEO

“ Since the company's founding, we have looked at the towing industry as our extended family. ”

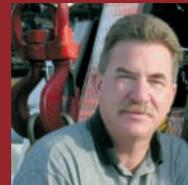


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Best Wishes for a  
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These photos were taken at the request of Bruce Hussey of T&B Motor Sales to demonstrate to his drivers some advantages of their new V-100 XP850.

# Ingenuity Should Never Stop

By Tom Luciano, District Sales Manager

I have a goal for every article I write: To provide useful tips and techniques. But it's up to you, our reader, to be open-minded and willing to expand your knowledge. The late Donnie Cruse had a great saying about placing another tool into your toolbox. Obviously every article I write doesn't apply to every job, but it might have just the right tool for the next job or the one after that.

In most recoveries, a true professional mentally evaluates the recovery at hand, relying on his mental "tools." That way, he limits the number of times he must reposition his recovery vehicles. Repositioning takes time and time is money in the towing industry.

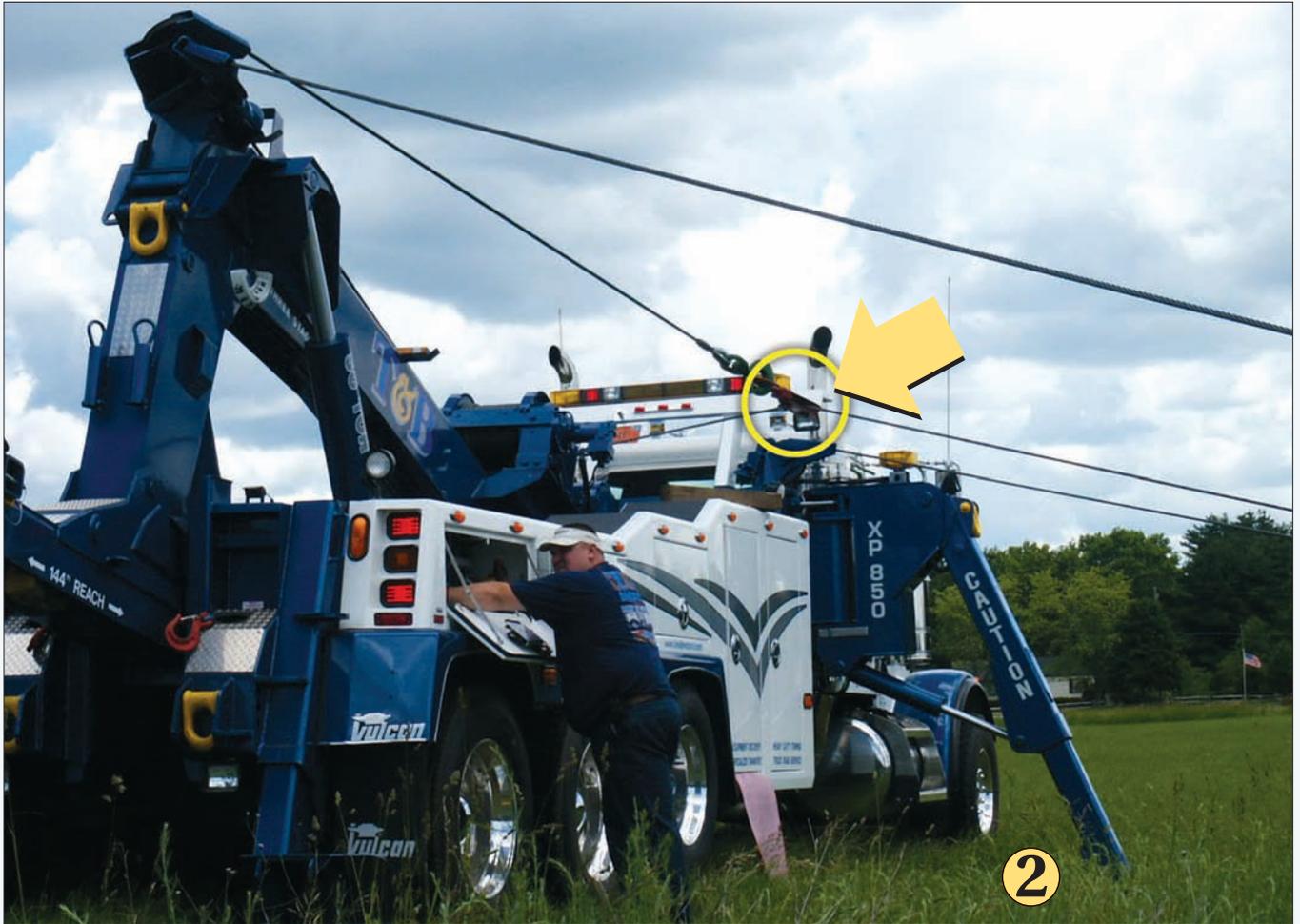
This article is about being flexible, specifically with regards to operating a XP850. Thanks to T & B Motors in Mansfield, Connecticut, for the use of their trucks. **24/7**

**“** This recovery demonstrates that equipment is only as good as the operator running it. **”**



An empty tractor and trailer combination is on its side down 35 feet and about 85 feet from the recovery unit. Due to limited working space, recovery from the side was the best option.

Rigging was determined by the distance from the recovery unit to the casualty, the length of wire rope needed from each winch, the number of lines needed and the number of times the recovery truck would have to be moved. Now this is where flexibility comes in. Notice one winch was positioned from the XP to the top of the tire on the tractor. First, the axle was chained tightly to the frame of the tractor with a separate chain. Another chain was then attached around the axle and routed through the rim hole to be pulled on. This eliminated the possibility of pulling the axle out of the chassis.



The second winch line off the left side of the XP was placed on the rear of the trailer and attached to a recovery strap routed around the rear of the trailer. I turned the swivel head over the top of the recovery boom on one of the rear main winches to guide the line and placed a snatch block into the hook end. This allowed me to use either the XP winch or the main winch to become a third line to the casualty.

By winching in or out on the traveling snatch block, I could position the winch line into a desirable position on the casualty. This also allowed the left XP winch not to interfere with the body, front main winch or right XP winch.

Lastly, the right main rear winch was attached to a recovery strap positioned around the very front of the trailer and gift-wrapped around the nose. At this point the main recovery boom could be raised high enough to get the desired height but still left within the guides so as not to side load the boom.

Why were the winch lines on the trailer crossed? Because when the winches are applied, the straps on the front and rear will be pulled around the ends thus keeping them from slipping off. NOTE: This should be done when in soft ground and not on hard pavement or your straps will be damaged.

See Ingenuity on Page 8

The unit is now uprighted and the winch lines on the trailer were lowered, taken out of the recovery straps and repositioned lower. The left XP winch line was attached with a Grade 8, 1/2 inch chain to the rear frame rails of the tractor. The main rear winch line was attached to the rear frame rails of the trailer using a Grade 8, 1/2 inch chain. The front [right] XP winch was attached to the central pull pin on the front of the tractor.



The complete unit was now winched sideways up the embankment. With the positioning of the three winches, we were able to turn the rear of the trailer towards the roadway when desired.



With the rear of the trailer on the roadway, the left XP winch that was fed through the traveling snatch block could be positioned to pull and lift most of the casualty up onto the roadway without repositioning the recovery truck.

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in the middle  
of downtown . . .

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generous  
description.

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up to you . . .

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# UNVEILING A MONUMENT

**TOWERS AND INDUSTRY SUPPORTERS SHARED  
AN EMOTIONAL MOMENT AT THIS HISTORIC EVENT.**

After a year of planning, preparation and construction, the Wall of the Fallen was unveiled September 9, 2006, to a large crowd at the monument's location in front of The International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Emotions ran deep as towing operators, families, friends, local politicians and industry supporters gathered to watch the ceremony.

The memorial, donated by the Miller Family Foundation, is the only monument in the world to honor and remember the brave professionals in the towing and recovery industry who lost their lives in the line of service. It is hoped that increasing public awareness to the dangers towers face while servicing the motoring public will help gain respect for the towing industry comparable to the respect first responders such as firefighters and law enforcement officers receive. It is also hoped that the recognition for the dangers faced daily by towers will lead to

better enforcement of existing laws and the creation of new laws to protect towers on the roadside.

Cessna DeCosimo, a well-respected artist who has also designed monuments for fallen police officers, created the sculpture. The sculpture depicts a tower rescuing a man and child from a vehicle that is being swept away in rushing water. The situation is meant to represent the perils towers face in their duties such as helping a stranded motorist on a dangerous roadside as well as the courage and strength they possess.

Names of towers who have lost their lives are now being collected and will be added to the Wall, to be unveiled in September 2007. For more information visit [www.towingmuseum.org](http://www.towingmuseum.org).

Visit the museum and experience for yourself this moving tribute to the industry we call home. **24/7**





Yates Towing provided their services to deliver the monument's pedestal from the fabricating shop. Their rotator was then used to place the pedestal into the reflecting pond. Patrick Anglea of AES Manufacturing (left) and Shannon Yates of Yates Towing rig the pedestal to be lifted.



After being delivered from the foundry in Canton, Georgia, on the back of a car carrier from Marietta Wrecker Service, a rotator from Ponderosa Heavy Duty Trucks lifted the monument and positioned it onto its base.



Prior to the unveiling ceremony, Marc Valentine, curator of the National Flag Exhibit, and ITRHFM executive officers Jerry Bullock, George Connolly, Rolfe Johnson and Bill Height reviewed the flag before the raising.



Audience volunteers assisted in holding the flag as a crane lifted the 90-foot-long flag weighing 300 pounds.

Several speakers addressed the crowd of over 1,000 before the unveiling of this towing industry milestone.

See Unveiling on Page 12

# UNVEILING A MONUMENT

From Page 11



Sixty members of the audience released balloons every 45 seconds to symbolize the estimated 60 towing industry lives lost in the U.S. alone every year in the line of duty.



Tom Tedford of United Road Towing was Master of Ceremonies for the unveiling, and spoke of his personal experience with the recent loss of two drivers. Just days before the unveiling, a driver for his company had been killed on the roadside by a hit-and-run vehicle.



Ken Cruse of WreckMaster led the invocation as a rotator from Roberts Heavy Duty Towing suspended the cover over the top of the sculpture.

Bill Miller related how he was in awe of and humbled by the many people he has met in the towing industry who are willing to put their lives on the line to assist others without receiving the appreciation or respect associated with other rescue professions. The Miller Family Foundation donated the monument to the industry in hopes that it will be an important step in gaining the public recognition and support the towing profession deserves.



Marc Valentine shakes hands with Greg Reynolds of Reynolds Towing Service in front of the National Flag Truck. The National Flag Truck is one of the country's most honored vehicles, transporting a historic collection of flags to official events and ceremonies around the world on this specially-equipped International 4400 with a Century 20 Series carrier. Marc has always been a true friend to the towing industry and passed up other events to join the industry in this unveiling.

# ➔ All in a Day's Work ➔



When a loaded diesel fuel tanker rolled over in the Cincinnati area, they called Delhi Towing because they have the equipment and experience to get the job done. Owner Don Korte said they responded with their 9055 and proceeded to rig one line with several snatch blocks for the lift while the other cable served as a catch line to perform a reverse roll of the tanker back on its wheels. Don said the 3-stage boom on his 9055 has been awesome in providing increased reach and versatility in many recovery scenarios.



When it comes to handling heavy tows, the employees at Phillip's Towing in Fayetteville, North Carolina, are no strangers to receiving calls and getting the job done. One of the calls received at their Wilmington, North Carolina location was to move a disabled 175-ton crane 28 miles. Owner Phillip McCorquodale said, "We were very satisfied with the performance of our 9055/SP850XP to lift the front three axles and maintain good front axle weight on our unit." After installing airlines, a BrakeBuddy and safety chains, the load was ready to roll back home with an escort vehicle in front and back for the oversized load.

With over 30 years in the towing business, Bosco's Automotive in Enfield, Connecticut, knows quality equipment. So when it came time to purchase a new heavy-duty, they worked closely with their Miller district manager to insure they got the right combination to meet their requirements. Charlie Bosco, one of the four brothers who owns and

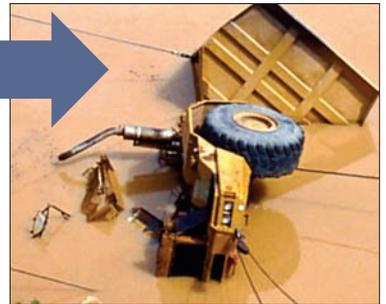


operates the family business, praised Miller Industries District Manager Tom Luciano, saying, "Tom's the best. We couldn't be happier with his guidance in helping us spec our new Century 7035." Charlie said they towed a 76,000-lb. airport fire truck with a blown engine back to Springfield and the unit handled the load beautifully, performing beyond their expectations.

See Day's Work on Page 14



Rieks Towing handles difficult recoveries of heavy mining and construction equipment in the rugged terrain of South Africa. Owner Louwrens Riekert needs equipment he can rely on to tackle these tough jobs, that's why he chooses Century. When a 40-ton dump went over an embankment and submerged in water at the bottom of a dam, Rieks responded with several heavy-duties to handle the call including his



Century 1060S rotator and a pair of Century 9055s. The 1060S was used to get the dump back on its wheels and hold the unit as it was winched up the steep incline by the 9055s using a bulldozer and an excavator as deadmen. After completing the recovery, the unit was hooked up to the Century SDU2 underlift and towed to a solid road where it could be loaded, onto a low-bed trailer and hauled away. All in a days work for the recovery specialists and their dependable Century heavy-duties at Rieks.



When a fertilizer spreader's engine blew in the middle of a field, there was no hesitation on who to call in the rural farm area around Carlisle, Pennsylvania. John's Mobile Repair Service Inc., with a fleet that has grown to 32 units over the past 15 years, responded with a Vulcan V-100 SP850 XP to tow the unit some 20 miles to be repaired. Although the V-100 SP850 XP handles tows effortlessly, it is the recovery capabilities that owner John Cunningham loves. John said he recently handled several loaded rollovers with just the one recovery unit. With the additional winches and front hydraulic stiff legs, John said it was almost like having a second unit on the job.





If you have the right team and equipment, you can get almost any job done. Johnson's Wrecker Service in Orlando, Florida, had both bases covered when they received a call to pull a 225,000-lb. dredge out of the water to be dismantled and moved to a new location. Darrell Johnson Jr., his brother Dennis and two of their experienced operators, Robert Hicks and Byron Coleman, responded with their Century 1060S and 9055 to handle the tough job. One of the challenges was to hold the two trucks on the soft, loose sand, but the rear spades on both trucks "bit" in and the 100-foot-long sand dredge was soon on dry land with no problems. After taking the time to properly rig the snatch blocks and lines, there isn't much that an operator can't move with his Century unit. **24/7**



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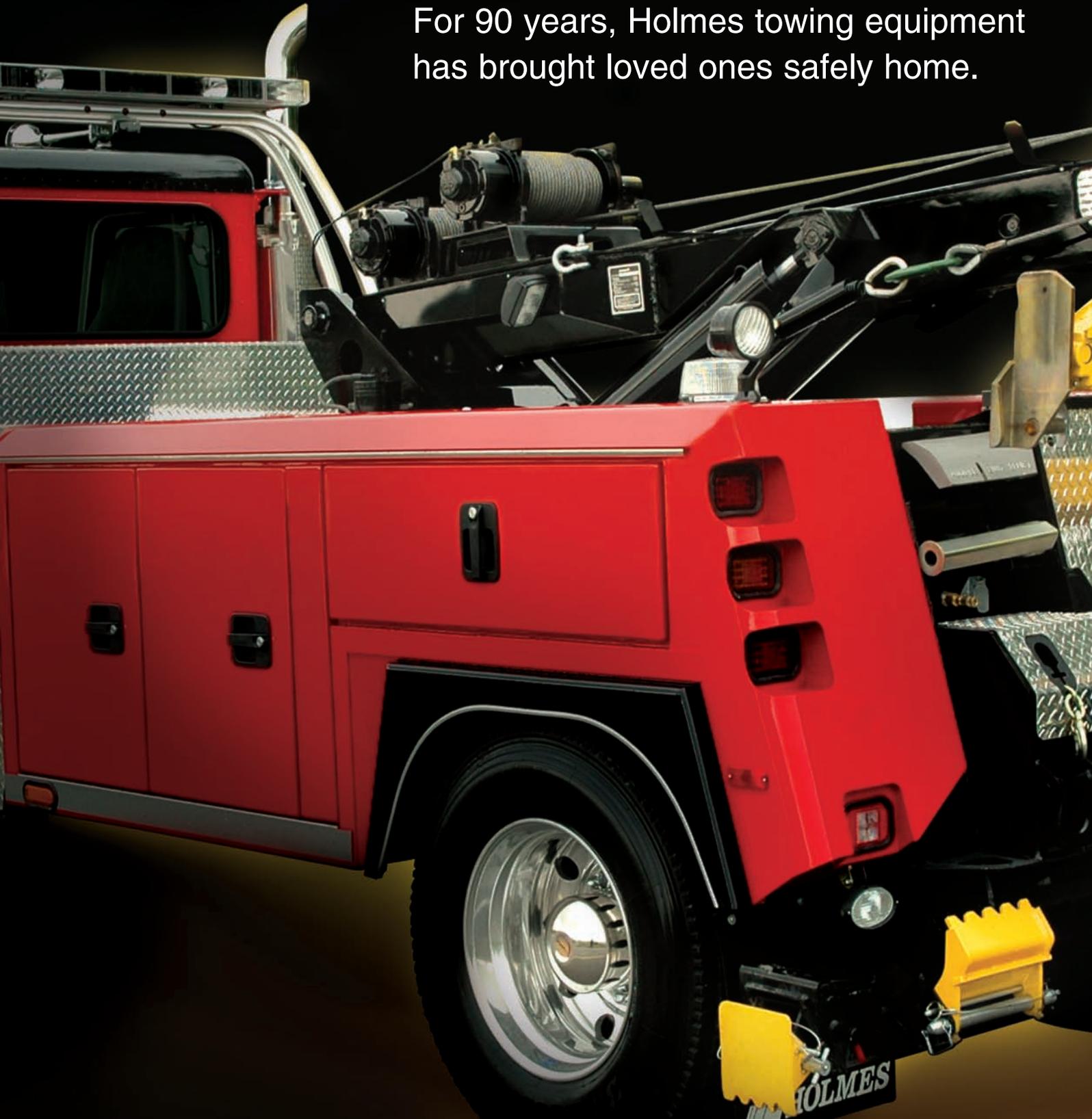
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If you would like to support the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum Survivor Fund, visit their Web site at [www.thesurvivorfund.com](http://www.thesurvivorfund.com) or call the museum at **423-267-3132**.

- |                                    |  |
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The Miller Industries family worldwide wishes you and your loved ones a safe holiday season.



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*The Low Rider option provides the additional reach sometimes needed in difficult towing applications such as fire trucks with set back axles, extended front bumpers, and ladders, buckets or snorkels protruding past the front of the vehicle. The low profile of the stinger also allows for additional clearance between low hanging pumps, bumpers or oil pans.*

## Underlifts: 25 Years and Counting

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

It is hard to believe that a quarter of a century has passed since the first EKA invaded the United States at the Massachusetts show in 1981. A towing and recovery technique was demonstrated that few of us in North America had ever seen - lift and secure a vehicle for tow by means of an underlift and frame fork. Over the next several years, EKA and BRO, another Swedish manufacturer, would sell their products to our market with little or no competition. In 1986, all this would change - in a big way.

Within a short period of time of each other, the Century SDU, the Challenger T-1 (as a fixed boom wrecker with an independent underlift), and the Vulcan 940 (North America's first integrated boom and underlift unit) were introduced. Over the next decade, these units have evolved. The SDU (though still built on a limited basis) was combined with the T-50 (updated from the T-1) to make the SDU-2 and now the latest version SDU-3 Fat Boy. This three-stage unit can reach 143 inches, lift 17,000 lbs. at full extension and 55,000 lbs. retracted with a safe tow rating of 80,000 lbs.

These earlier versions of the North American underlifts were far superior to the European models. They had a greater tow rating, greater reach (the units from Europe had only one hydraulic extension and a

manually-added stinger), but most important, they offered the power to extend and retract lifted loads at rated capacities. This was because of the power the piggyback cylinder design offered. These cylinders also provided another great advantage; when applying or even spiking the brakes with a load in tow, the cylinder could handle the compression. Earlier European versions had plunger pins that had to be engaged in a limited amount of holes to keep the cylinder from extending while in tow or being bent in a compression load.

With the consolidation of equipment manufacturers under the Miller umbrella, one of the many assets we gained was the cross engineering of products. Some of the most significant cross engineering examples are the first-design SP 850s that came from Boniface Engineering and the Right Approach carrier from Jige, while Century supplied the rotator to both of their markets. But in 2003, at the first International Towing Expo at Lemington Spa near Warwick, England, Michael Boniface unveiled the Maxi Reach, an underlift stinger that was revolutionary in design. Available in two lengths, 3.5 and 4.2 meters, it took the concept of the U.S. piggyback cylinders and placed them in an envelope that was lower in profile than any underlift ever manufactured (nearly 30 percent lower than the SDU-3 and 9055, which has one of the lowest and clearest profiles in the industry) and creatively applied

the power to extend and retract rated loads. This was an industry first and from the moment I saw this, I knew we would find a home in the U.S. for its application. At the 2004 Florida Tow Show, we introduced the patented Low Rider on the 9055 and shortly thereafter the SDU-3 was modified allowing it to accept the Low Rider option. Since then we have been off to the races.

Our domestic applications still differ than those in Europe. Michael Boniface's primary need was to handle motor coaches because mass transit is much more widely used on that continent. Their coaches may not be as long as what we see in the U.S., but the axles are set back further to allow for better navigation on their century-old streets. This is why we see lifts like the Maxi Reach (Boniface) and Mega (Jige) that reach 4.2-plus meters, or in excess of 178 inches. Domestically we do not see the need for that much reach. When you increase your reach, you increase your maximum retracted distance, which means you increase rear axle weight and decrease front axle weight. You have to find the happy medium. The optional stinger we selected provides 160 inches of reach on the 9055 and 165 inches on the SDU-3. We feel this fits that medium perfectly.

Since the Low Rider's introduction to the marketplace, we have found homes in transit, heavy equipment, fire/rescue, Pacific Rim and normal domestic applications. We just

placed a Low Rider on a Freightliner all-wheel-drive, tri-drive chassis with a Century 9055 SP850 XP and front winch bumper combination into service at the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. This unit is responsible for clearing and servicing this airport, which has some of the most demanding airport weather in the world. Lake effect snow can dump as much as six to eight inches in an hour. They have specially-built, all-wheel-drive chassis that push 25-foot plows and pull 30-foot brushes. This underlift's low profile was able to get under the plow and reach a supported pick point (nearly fully extended), elevate 18,000 plus lbs. and safely tow the disabled unit.

No matter what your need might be - whether an integrated model or fixed boom unit - our standard underlifts or upgraded Low Rider offer a clear, unobstructed outer housing, the greatest clearance and the power to lift, extend and retract rated loads. This, along with the time and tested crossbar/pivot combination from Century and the wide variety of towing attachments offered by Miller Industries, gives us confidence that we have the world covered. But, as always, we're still looking and listening for new and better ideas. **24/7**



*The Cleveland Hopkins International Airport has some of the most demanding airport snow conditions in the world. It is cleared by an all-wheel-drive chassis to push 25-foot plows and pull 30-foot brushes. The Low Rider's low profile enables it to get under the plow, lift 18,000-plus lbs. and safely tow the unit*



*This all-wheel-drive, tri-axle Freightliner chassis with a Century 9055 SP850 XP, front winch bumper and Low Rider underlift is in service for the Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.*

# Industry News

## TRAA Honors Industry Leaders

Towing and Recovery Association of America (TRAA), the national association representing the towing industry, presented their **Presidential Award** to **Randy Olson**, Vice President of Marketing for Miller Industries. At its Fall Board of Directors meeting held at the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum, TRAA President Sam Brewer presented the awards recognizing those who have supported TRAA and the industry this past year. Additional award recipients included the **TRAA Distinguished Service Award** to **Peter O'Connell**, TRAA, ESTRA and CNTA Counsel; the **TRAA Citizenship Award** to **Scott Burrows**, Burrows Wrecker Service; the **TRAA Certification Award** to **Terry Johnson**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Towing Association.

"The award is testament for Randy's dedication to the industry he serves," said Jeff Badgley, Miller Industries President and Co-CEO. "All of us at Miller Industries are honored to have him as part of our team."

In addition, **Stacey Tucker**, Chairwoman of the WTRAA Scholarship Committee, was named the **WTRAA Tow Woman of the Year**.

Awards of appreciation were given to **Captain Tom Martin**, Virginia State Police, and **Geri and Jeff Roskopf**, President of WTRAA and Chairman of TRAA Membership respectively. In appreciation for his constant ability to "stir the pot" on most any issue, the "Agitator's Award" was presented to **Jerry Riggs**, President of the Tennessee Towing and Recovery Association.



TRAA President Sam Brewer (left) honors Randy Olson with the association's Presidential Award.



## International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame Class of 2006

Nine outstanding industry leaders were recently inducted into the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame as the Class of 2006.

From right: **Charles S. Beard III** (York, Pennsylvania), **Virginia Bertling** (Coralville, Iowa), **Samuel Brewer** (Brooksville, Florida), **Michael DeHaan** (Madison, Wisconsin), **John Giroux** (Welland, Ontario, Canada), **Elwin P. Hyatt** (Hopewell Junction, New York), **Darrell Johnson Senior** (Orlando, Florida), **George W. Little** (Sacramento, California) and **Lloyd R. Yates** (Chattanooga, Tennessee) were nominated by members of the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum (ITRHFM) for their many contributions to the towing and recovery industry, their families and their communities.

Miller Industries congratulates each of the inductees and their families. Without the support of their families, these individuals would not have had the time or energy to so generously contribute to their business, industry and community.





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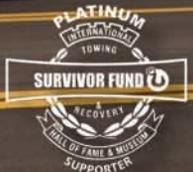
Industries Distributor to find out why Peterbilt is the number one choice of professional towers for their heavy duty chassis needs.



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Miller Industries new 59,000 square foot, state-of-the-art light-duty manufacturing plant in Ooltewah, Tennessee, nears completion.

# Customers Win with Miller Industries Plant Expansions

*By Joe Brown, Vice President of Engineering and Quality Assurance*

It's an exciting time for Miller Industries with the current expansion and renovation projects at our Hermitage, Pennsylvania and Ooltewah, Tennessee facilities. We're expecting to spend about \$14,000,000 on these projects with the goal of providing product improvement, higher quality and shorter lead times for our customers.

## Hermitage Carrier Factory

Due to increased demand for our aluminum and industrial carriers, we're adding 22,500 square feet to our existing building. Bridge cranes are being added to better move material through the new addition. Two state-of-the-art paint booths are being added to improve paint quality and flow through the paint process. We're expecting this expansion to be completed this month, November 2006. Watch future issues of On Call 24/7 for more information.

## Ooltewah Light-duty Equipment

Construction of the new 59,000-square-foot light-duty equipment facility began in April 2006 after about six months of planning and design. Currently the building is complete and equipment is installed.

Again, full production is planned for this month. The facility includes welding, metal preparation and paint, assembly, covered storage and office use.

The process design is a "U" shaped flow through the facility. This facility was designed using Lean Manufacturing concepts, a practice where waste in manufacturing processes is identified and eliminated. In this case activities to reduce waste were defined as:

- Reduce amounts of raw materials and finished goods on site
- Reduce unnecessary handling or movement of materials or products
- Improve processing of materials
- Improve efficiency of welding, assembly, metal preparation, and painting methods
- Reduce lead times for production
- Visual controls in the factory

## Ooltewah Delivery Building and Site Work

The Ooltewah facility previously had 11 acres of unpaved area for employee parking and chassis storage. As part of the overall effort to improve the working environment and quality of the finished product, this area is being converted to pave-

ment, concrete and landscaping, eliminating any dust created from gravel or unpaved areas, assuring the factory and products are clean. Additionally, a 5,000 square foot customer delivery building is being constructed that will include a wash bay to accommodate our largest wreckers and chassis and an inspection/delivery bay. When a factory-installed unit is ready for delivery, it will be washed and inspected in this building. We've also added a customer reception area for those of you electing to pick up your installed wrecker at the factory. We're expecting completion of this project by year-end.

## Ooltewah Heavy-duty Products

After the light-duty equipment group moves to the new facility, the vacated space will be refurbished to accommodate materials, warehousing and robotic manufacturing equipment for the heavy-duty line comparable to the light-duty equipment. Watch for additional information in future issues of On Call 24/7.

In combination with our exceptional product line, distributor network, and employees, this expansion and renovation effort will ensure that Miller Industries Towing Equipment continues to be the industry leader. **24/7**



Half of the building (shown) will be dedicated to assembly while the rest of the plant will include fabrication, welding, metal prep and paint.



Welding cells will perform finish welding on major components such as booms and subframes.



The six-axis articulated arm welding robot welds a boom while the technician loads a second boom on the opposite side of the robot for continuous welding operation.



Welded components are loaded onto carts and brought through a grit blast booth to remove rust, mill scale or weld spatter from the surface for better paint adhesion.



After the blast process, the cart is rolled into the paint booth where an epoxy primer and gloss urethane enamel is applied.



Before heading to the assembly line, the cart is pulled through a tunnel oven and cool-down area.



# New Automatic Transmissions Increase Efficiency

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

The modern automatic transmission first appeared in 1940 when Oldsmobile introduced the Hydra-Matic. Today most cars and light trucks in the U.S. are built with automatic transmissions. What you may not realize is that the use of automatic transmissions has continued to grow in the medium and heavy truck segments to the point that they now dominate production in all but Class 8 trucks. Due to this widespread popularity of automatics in trucks, more manufacturers have entered the market. Allison has dominated for years but Caterpillar, Eaton, Mercedes Benz and Volvo now build and market automatic transmissions for trucks.

## **CONVENTIONAL AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSIONS**

Two types of automatics are used in medium- and heavy-duty trucks. Conventional automatic transmissions are the most common. These sophisticated components blend computers, hydraulics and mechanical gears. The clutch is replaced by a torque converter. The torque converter is a type of fluid coupler that provides a variable amount of torque multiplication at low engine speeds. The torque converter is very similar in design to a turbine. The converter is attached to the flywheel and as the engine RPM increases, fluid in the torque converter collides with the vanes and is redirected causing an increasing engagement with the transmission gears.

In modern automatics, most torque converters are full "lock-up." A clutch in the torque converter will "lock-up" when the vehicle reaches a particular speed. This causes the direct full engagement of the engine and transmission. The torque converter works with the valve body and gear sets to smoothly and reliably move the vehicle down the road.

Allison dominates the conventional automatic transmission business in trucks and buses. Models start with the smallest of truck engines and progress all the way up to 680 HP, 1,950 ft. lbs. torque capacity. Allison divides their transmission models into application-related groups. Towing and recovery operators must specify the Rugged Duty model. Allison's Rugged Duty series

are for on-off highway applications. They are compatible with PTOs and feature a larger, deep sump oil pan. Not all Allison models are compatible with PTOs and retrofitting a transmission with a PTO gear and deep sump is cost prohibitive.

## **AUTOMATED TRANSMISSIONS**

A new series of automatics have come on the scene over the past several years. These automatic transmissions are sometimes referred to as automated transmissions. They share many components with standard manual transmissions but they operate like automatics.

Over ten years ago Eaton introduced the first automated transmission. The AutoShift was the first of these new automated transmissions that didn't use a torque converter or fluid coupler; it retained the traditional clutch. The AutoShift is a three-pedal transmission, because it still has all three foot pedals: the accelerator, brake and clutch. It still requires the driver to engage and disengage the clutch when starting or stopping. All the other up-shifts and down-shifts are completed automatically.

A computer monitors engine RPM, road speed and numerous other conditions to control the clutch and electro-mechanical shifter mounted on top of the gearbox. What results is a transmission that is always in the correct gear and up-shifts and down-shifts smoothly. The computer selects the optimum shift points to insure maximum efficiency and to prevent damage to the transmission from abuse by incorrect or missed shifts.

Freightliner introduced the AGS two-pedal automated 6-speed transmission in 2003 in their medium-duty lineup. Volvo introduced the I-Shift automated transmission in their heavy-duty truck line to the American market in September, 2006. Recently Eaton introduced a new series of two-pedal automatic transmissions called UltraShifts. These new models, just like the automatic transmission in your car, only have the accelerator and brake pedals.

The new UltraShift operates much like the AutoShift but all the clutch functions are now automated. The driver manages the transmission with an easy-to-understand keypad. The driver can shift automatically by pressing the "D" for drive or use the arrow buttons to shift up

or down manually. The "Low" button raises the RPM of shift points so that the transmission downshifts at a higher RPM to maximize engine brake efficiency.

The new UltraShift HV transmissions are offered in 5- and 6-speed versions for medium-duty applications up to 660 ft. lbs. torque and 33,000 lb. gross vehicle weight ratings. They are perfectly suited for carrier and medium wrecker applications. Other UltraShift transmission models are offered for heavy-duty over-the-road applications. These 10- and 13-speed transmissions offer the same driver conveniences and operating efficiencies as the medium-duty HV version.

## **AUTOMATED ADVANTAGES**

You may ask, why not a conventional automatic? Conventional automatics are good, but the new automated type transmissions like the UltraShift have a few advantages.

The new UltraShift is more fuel-efficient than a conventional automatic. Torque converters provide smooth acceleration

but they do it at the expense of higher fuel costs. Conventional automatic transmissions don't "lock-up" or become fully engaged until about 24 miles per hour. The UltraShift is "locked-up" at 3 miles per hour. An independent firm recently completed a SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) certified test that concluded that the UltraShift provided as much as 19% better fuel economy in urban, start and stop driving conditions.

It will allow the least experienced driver to shift as expertly as the best driver. This pays off by reducing driveline stress and maintenance and improving fuel economy.

The UltraShift is "lubed for life" and requires no scheduled maintenance for the first 500,000 miles. It's true that the UltraShift does have a clutch that may need replacement at some point but tests and early users indicate excellent wear rates. Conventional automatic transmissions require an initial filter change at 5,000 miles and filter changes every 50,000 miles thereafter. Fluid change in a conventional automatic is required at 100,000 miles or every four years.

Are automatic transmissions safer? Automatic transmissions allow the driver to maintain full attention and focus on the road ahead and not on gauges and gearshifts. Your driver will be more alert and less tired at the end of a work day.

Eaton, Miller and International have developed unique software to safeguard PTO operation in UltraShifts. The PTO functions are monitored and controlled so that there is little or no chance of abuse to the transmission. Interlocks prevent the PTO from being engaged prematurely or forgotten and left engaged after the job's done. Furthermore the program allows the use of the less expensive, clutch-less type PTOs.

Regardless of whether it's a conventional automatic like the Allison, or one of the new automated transmissions like Eaton's UltraShift, automatic transmissions are becoming the transmission of choice for a majority of truck owners. Low maintenance costs, excellent reliability and higher resale are important considerations. Added safety and improved driver retention help bring efficiencies to any size fleet. Will your fleet be next? **24/7**

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# be a part of history... **'06 TOWFEST** CHATTANOOGA, TN



**W**elcome to Chattanooga, Tennessee, an area rich in towing history. It's the birthplace of the towing industry, thanks to Ernest Holmes building the first wrecker here in 1916. It's home to the International Towing & Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum (ITRHF) and the Wall of the Fallen, the only monument to honor towing operators who have lost their lives in the line of service. And, of course, it's home to the world's largest manufacturer of towing and recovery equipment, Miller Industries.

## WHAT BETTER LOCATION TO HOST A TOW SHOW?

Tow Fest 2006 began Wednesday, September 6, with several training classes including one held by WreckMaster, and a rotator seminar conducted by John Hawkins and Tom Luciano of Miller Industries. Education and training have become more important in the past several years for several reasons, including a stronger interest on the part of local and state police agencies and Departments of Transportation, the efforts of state and national associations such as TRAA to promote better industry practices and safety, and the growing number of roadside fatalities. The interest in training and education was evident by the large number of towers who arrived from across the globe to hone their skills and learn new methods and procedures.

Thursday evening's activities ended with the Hall of Fame's largest ever meet and greet where towers enjoyed socializing, swapping stories and visiting with this year's Hall of Fame inductees.

On Friday, attendees could browse the many exhibits on display at the convention center or catch one of the shuttle vans to Miller Industries for a tour of the manufacturing facilities and to watch towing and recovery equipment being built. This tour included an early peek at the newly constructed light-duty production plant complete with robotic welders and state-of-the-art blast and paint booths. If you didn't get an opportunity to visit

during Tow Fest, stop by on your next trip through Chattanooga. Miller Industries employees are always more than happy to give you a tour.

Friday's events capped off with the Hall of Fame Induction ceremony and dinner as this year's class of 2006 were honored for their contributions to the industry.

Saturday brought more seminars on topics including finance, engine emissions, raising rates and traffic safety led by several industry experts. On the exhibit floor, equipment demonstrations were held and attendees enjoyed some of the many beautiful trucks in the Show 'n Shine. Of course the highlight of Tow Fest was Saturday evening and the unfurling of a giant American flag followed by several moving speeches and the unveiling of the Wall of the Fallen monument (see story on pages 10 - 12). As a perfect end to a great weekend, show attendees were able to relax and dance to the sounds of the "Swingin Medallions," sponsored by Miller Industries and Ford, along with food and refreshments courtesy of Rush Peterbilt Truck Centers.

If you missed this milestone event, mark your calendar for next September when the ITRHF will again host their Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, and you will be able to honor and pay your respects to our industry brothers and sisters as names collected throughout the year are unveiled on the Wall of the Fallen.

**24/7**

The third rotator seminar held by Miller Industries this year included classroom sessions discussing rotator construction, component technology, maintenance, rigging and the popular hands-on demonstrations.



Tow Fest activities began with a heavy-duty rotator training seminar hosted by Miller Industries and a WreckMaster Level 2/3 Certification Class. Over 165 operators attended the rotator seminar including operators from as far away as England, South Africa and Japan.



While the classroom sessions were held in the Learning Center of the International Towing & Recovery Museum, Yates Towing provided their storage yard and the casualties used during afternoon recovery scenarios.



On the convention show floor, Wes Wilburn conducted an auction of old towing memorabilia and collectibles to benefit the Survivor Fund. A limited edition bronze diecast carrier (one of 36) donated by Miller Industries drew a winning bid of over \$1,000. Wes has been conducting auctions at shows throughout the year for the Survivor Fund. A second bronze Miller diecast model brought over \$900 the following week at the Massachusetts show.



The WreckMaster crew provided hands-on training for their program at the museum location. WreckMaster instructors rigged a school bus to demonstrate an end roll with minimal lane blockage.

See Tow Fest on Page 28



Live demonstrations, including Miller Industries self-loaders doing 90-degree hook-ups and recoveries utilizing the SP8000 Sidepuller mounted on a Century carrier, were conducted outside the show hall.



There was no shortage of beautiful equipment to view in the Show and Shine. "Rotator Row" included units proudly displayed by owners from seven states.



## HOLMES LEGENDS HEAD HOME

As Holmes celebrates its 90th Anniversary, several old Holmes units returned home to Chattanooga in time to be displayed at Tow Fest.

The first legend, a 1979 Chevrolet with a Holmes 440 Hi-Power, holds the title "The World's Fastest Wrecker" (see above photo). The truck completed its world record-setting run at Talladega Motor Speedway in August 1979 and was then displayed at the International Motor Sports Hall of Fame in Alabama for several years until being moved outside to make room for new displays. It deteriorated over the next 25 years before Miller Industries purchased the vehicle and had it restored to preserve a piece of towing and racing history for future generations.

The second legend, a Holmes W-70, is one of only a handful of 70-ton mechanical wreckers ever produced by the Ernest Holmes Co. WreckMaster purchased the unit and restored it to its original glory. Rusty's Towing Service of Columbus, Ohio, delivered it to Tow Fest after a recent appearance at the Michigan Tow Show.

We would also like to thank Roddy Pellow of Twin Cities Wrecker Sales for the great restoration job on the Holmes 440 and to Kevin Mellon of Magnum Towing for helping deliver the unit to the show. A big thanks goes to WreckMaster for sharing the W-70 and to Rusty's for his services in getting it there. Both the "World's Fastest Wrecker" and the "World's Largest Mechanical Wrecker" are presently on display at the International Towing and Recovery Hall of Fame and Museum in Chattanooga for all to enjoy. For more information and museum hours, visit their Web site at [www.towingmuseum.org](http://www.towingmuseum.org).

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## Santa Sighting Reported

It has been reported that Santa Claus was recently seen moonlighting in the off-season towing racecars. Actually it was none other than Al Gregg of Dakota Service & Repair in Brookings S. D. lending his services during the NASCAR race at the Kansas Speedway.

Throughout the racing season, towing operators like Al man the Miller race recovery equipment at major races across the country.

At the start of the race, one driver told Al, "Hey Santa, all I want for Christmas is to win the race." **24/7**

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