

24/7 ON CALL

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2
SUMMER 2006
COVER PRICE \$5 each



**You've Got To Know
When To Hold 'Em** page 6
Up, Up and Away page 18

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The multiple tie-off locations on the Sidepuller allow the operator to use a snatch block to easily perform recoveries, such as rolling over this vehicle, that would be difficult with a standard carrier.



The carrier is positioned on the shoulder of the road for this recovery, preventing the operator from having to block any lanes of traffic.

The Perfect Union

WHEN CARRIER MEETS WRECKER

By Randy Olson, Vice President of Marketing

You may remember from the last issue of ON CALL 24/7, John Hawkins discussed the side pulling capabilities of the SP-850 XP on heavy-duty units. He walked us down memory lane comparing the SP-850 XP to the capabilities of the old split boom mechanical wreckers Holmes manufactured decades ago. Our industry has indeed changed quite a bit over the past years, with one of the most dramatic changes being the use of car carriers.

Several decades ago, a fleet may have consisted of six to ten wreckers and one carrier. In many instances today, that number is reversed. A carrier provides the ability to haul a wide variety of loads, eliminates the need for dollies with crashed, 4-wheel or all-wheel drive vehicles, and has the ability to transport more than one vehicle at a time. The carrier's one downside is the lack of true recovery capabilities. Although some towers may use it as a recovery tool, most carrier manufacturers don't condone nor recommend it for recovery and many law enforcement

agencies will not allow it in place of a tow truck for contracts or rotation.

Although many of you may be quick to point out it has the same winch as your tow truck, let's look at how it is attached to the vehicle. On a recovery boom, the winch is bolted into a winch bucket that is bolted or welded securely to the boom, boom pylon or body subframe. The body has a structural subframe designed to have winching forces exerted on it, which is then securely bolted to your truck chassis.

Now let's examine a car carrier. The winch is bolted to the carrier deck which may be constructed of steel or aluminum, and that deck is held on by a single cylinder, pinned on each end, that slides back and forth on a subframe which also tilts and is attached with a single pivot pin at the rear and two lift cylinders at the front of the unit. Since the deck needs the ability to tilt and slide, it is not rigidly secured to your truck chassis like a recovery boom. And even if a winch was securely mounted on a carrier deck, having the space to winch off the rear of a carrier would require extra lane closures due to the length of a car carrier compared to that of a light-duty tow truck.

Located in the small town of Mountain Home, Idaho, Chuck Ceccarelli of Idaho Wrecker Sales, a distributor for both Century and Chevron products, pondered these questions as he analyzed the equipment in his own towing fleet. Out there, it's not uncommon to send a truck over 90 miles in this rural area only to find the vehicle or location is not quite as described and you have the wrong equipment for the job. Chuck's dream was to combine the transport capability of a car carrier with the recovery capability to handle a vehicle down a steep embankment on a narrow mountain road.

Chuck, who has several other patents to his credit, sat down and began to draw up plans for his first Sidepuller: A unit with a winch rigidly mounted in a framework that bolted securely to the truck chassis in front of the carrier deck, and featured a removable sheave head that allowed the operator to winch off either side of the truck using a hydraulic or manual stiff leg. Chuck's vision became reality and over the past several years, the popularity of the SP8000™ Sidepuller has continued to grow, with many customers returning for a second and even third unit. Besides the increased versatility of being able to use a carrier for both recovery and transport, towers expressed feelings of added safety since they could work a recovery from the shoulder of the road.

With his years of recovery experience and his knowledge from being a certified WreckMaster instructor, Chuck knew the features important for rigging many recoveries, such as plenty of tie-off points for snatch blocks and a low pull D ring. Optional features



The SP8000™ is designed so the sheave head attachment can be moved easily so the operator can winch off either side of the truck. A D ring mounted on the bottom foot of the stiff leg, along with additional anchor points to accommodate shackles and snatch blocks, allow for a variety of rigging possibilities during difficult recoveries.

included a wireless winch remote and an ice grouser for extra holding power on those cold Idaho mornings. In addition to the benefits of the SP8000™ on a carrier, customers were now requesting it be installed on light- and medium-duty towing and recovery units and, late last year, a 20,000-lb. version was introduced that can be mounted on a heavy industrial carrier or on a heavy-duty tow truck for side recoveries with minimal lane blockage.

With close to 200 units in the field and

continue to work closely with our engineers on this project along with some exciting new concepts yet to come.

"We have always found that the best ideas - starting with Ernest Holmes' original twin boom wrecker - originate with an idea on how to solve a problem or need for an operator trying to complete a difficult task," Badgley said. "The Sidepuller is one of those products that could have significant impact on the future of the towing industry in years to come."

24/7



From east to west, the side-pull capability is an essential addition to fleets. Ron Pullen from Big Red Towing in Syracuse, New York, says, "Recovery work from the side of the truck with minimal lane blockage makes Incident Management simple."



High Sierra Towing in Donner's Pass, California, is no stranger to handling tough recoveries off busy, often narrow ice- and snow-covered roads. "The SP8000 added so much versatility to our carriers, we had to add a second unit," says owner Russ Harris. "I no longer have to worry if I send the right truck for the job. We feel the SP8000 is one of the best equipment investments for the money we made."