

# Tow Canada

November-December 2007

## Monster Dollies

— bringing home the  
wreck no matter what

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(Right) Fred says that the casualty's engine and transmission was pushed back, and that taking the driveline off under pressure was too dangerous. There were also no intact airlines to supply air. Backing off the brakes and removing the axels was another option, but a lot more work than dollying.



# Monster Dollies

Fred Sparrowhawk of Yorkton Towing has taken dollies to a whole new level.

When I first saw a picture of Fred Sparrowhawk's "monster dollies" on the Tow411 message board, I shook my head and said, "Did I just see what I saw?"

Fred, of Yorkton Towing in Yorkton, Sask., saw a set of dollies made from some one-ton axles by Dave Washburn of Vista Towing in Battleford, Sask. Fred took Dave's idea and went one step (or

maybe a few steps) further. Fred added the pans, and he

"Did I just see what I saw?"

had Leon's Manufacturing in Yorkton spec the dollies out properly. The result of this sharing of ideas between two professional operators was a new set of dollies that enables Fred to attend big rig collisions and bring the wreck home no matter what kind of damage has been done to



Photos: Fred Sparrowhawk



Photos: Larry Styba

A closer look at Fred Sparrowhawk's "monster dolly."

A new set of dollies enables Fred to attend big rig collisions and bring the wreck home no matter what kind of damage has been done to it.

In today's towing world, one has to be an engineer, a physicist, a psychologist, a scientist, a manager, an accountant, and even a risk management specialist in order to get the job done.

it. Sometimes the hookup is even quicker than pulling the driveline or the axles on the tractor. Fred can even dolly a trailer's landing gear and reverse tow the trailer.

Let's have a look at the numbers:

- four-inch by four inch by three-eighths-inch-thick steel cross tubes, placed on an angle for strength
- one-inch steel plating on the sides for reinforcement
- 16-inch wheels
- a load rating of 1,700 kilograms per tire
- the curve of the dolly shaped by the 22.5-inch rubber that semi trucks run on
- computer-assisted design by Leon's Manufacturing
- overall weight of the dollies a whopping 1,500 pounds

Fred's dollies are transported to the scene on the under lift forks of an equally impressive Western Star tandem wrecker. Fred then off-loads the dollies and rolls them to the back axle of the truck. He places his wrecker behind the casualty, vertically raises the vehicle, rolls the wheels under the back axle, and then lowers the vehicle down. Fred then hooks up the other end of the wreck and lifts it to its correct towing height. The critical part is the criss-cross pattern of the chain and binders. This must be done at the correct towing height; if it is not, the load will be loose, and it can bounce out of the pans.

Fred once towed a grain truck that had been in a collision with a train. The wheels had been ripped clean away from

the lead trailer, and only the trailer legs were left. Enter the "monster dollies" to save the day! Using the same hook up procedure as a tractor, this trailer was tamed and taken to the tow yard.

Fred says there are limitations—the tire sizes. "When they bulge, the load is too heavy."

A professional towing operator has to be much more than just a warm body babysitting a steering wheel. In today's towing world, one has to be an engineer, a physicist, a psychologist, a scientist, a manager, an accountant, and even a risk management specialist in order to get the job done. In Fred's case, he has gone beyond all that. His dollies are certainly "outside the box"! 🚛

By Larry Styba

If you have any questions or comments for Larry, feel free to contact him at [towinstructorlarry@hotmail.com](mailto:towinstructorlarry@hotmail.com).

Yorkton Towing's Western Star tandem wrecker.



Photo: Larry Styba