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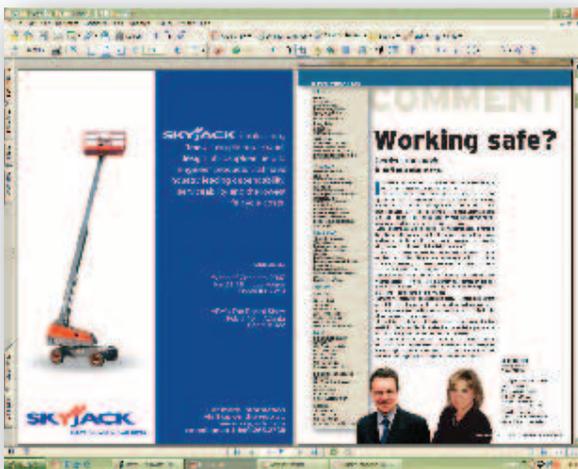
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AMERICAN Lift & Handlers

July-August 2007
Volume 2 ■ Issue 4

A KHL Group
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COMMENT

Good home for Snorkel?

UpRight's acquisition of Snorkel could be good news for both.

This month's issue of *ALH* has plenty of variety - we hope - covering a wide spectrum of equipment. We consider the novel use of mast climbing work platforms at a site in Grand Rapids, MI; the new generation of mega-scissor lifts that may (or may not) soon be available in North America; and look at the increasing popularity of small, compact telehandlers.

Also this month we provide some guidance on the issue of insurance. If you are worried about ever-rising premiums, then read the advice of insurance insiders on how to reduce your costs (and claims).

There is no escaping the big news this month - UpRight's acquisition of Snorkel. It's a deal that looks great on paper, giving UpRight the US manufacturing base that it has been seeking and for Snorkel a new owner that will respect its brand.

Of course, it won't be easy for UpRight in North America. Some owners remember being let down by the company when it retreated from the market several years ago. It is under new management now, but memories are long in business. It is to UpRight's considerable benefit - no doubt calculated - that it has allied itself to such a well-regarded company.

We also return to the subject of harnesses and scissor lifts. Genie's clear statement on its policy - read our news story on page 7 - is to be welcomed. Even so, the topic is far from closed, with another safety specialist, writing in this issue, arguing for harnesses to be used by operators of scissors - read Robert Vetter's article on page 40. As ever, we welcome readers' views on these and any other matter.

Finally, we recommend to you our interview with Simplex, Canada's biggest independent rental company. The Montreal-based firm has invested heavily in self-propelled booms in recent years and is growing rapidly. We talk to company president André Véronneau.

We hope you enjoy the issue!

John Wyatt
Deputy Editor



Murray Pollok
Executive Editor



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MEC's rough terrain scissor 3072RT on a job site in California. Photo by Megan Butts and Diane Tjerrild

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American Lift & Handlers is published 6 times a year by KHL Group USA LLC, 27992 N 115th Place, Scottsdale, AZ 85262. SUBSCRIPTIONS: Annual subscription rate for non-qualified North American readers is \$50.00 and the Rest of the World is \$95.00. Free subscriptions are given on a controlled circulation basis to readers who fully complete a Reader Subscription Form and qualify under our terms of control. The publisher reserves the right to refuse subscription to non-qualified readers.

Members of



Published by



KHL Group USA LLC
27992 N 115th Place
Scottsdale, AZ 85262
Tel: 480-659-0578,
Fax: 480-659-0678
www.khl.com

ISSN 1753-5999

Printed by Publishers Press, US

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UpRight owners acquire Snorkel; Genie's clear position on harness use; Load Lifter announces new vertical mast machine series

RENTAL INTERVIEW: ANDRÉ VÉRONNEAU, SIMPLEX

Canada's largest independent rental yard Simplex celebrates its centennial this year. **John Wyatt** reports from Montreal on the decision by the fourth-generation family business to move into earthmoving and on its many acquisitions.

TELEHANDLERS: HOW LOW CAN IT GO?

Once considered a niche product, compact telehandlers are the fastest growing segment of the market. **John Wyatt** reports



AERIAL PLATFORMS: IS NORTH AMERICA READY FOR THE BIG DECK SCISSOR?

End users and manufacturers say the larger deck scissors are great when used for commercial and industrial work, with several trades using the units for multiple applications. But is the North American market ready for bigger rough terrain scissors? **John Wyatt** reports



INSURANCE

Insurance experts in the telehandler and access field advise on the best practices for rental yards and contractors to minimize insurance premiums. **ALH** reports



MANUFACTURER INTERVIEW: CHUCK HUTCHINSON, BIL-JAX

Bil-Jax is best known for its scaffolding and trailer-mounted platforms, but this year the Ohio-based company has entered the self-propelled access market with the release of its X-Boom Series. **John Wyatt** reports

ACCESS-50 SUMMARY

ALH sister publication *Access International* releases the results of this year's poll of the largest aerial yards in the world. **Murray Pollok** reports

MAST CLIMBERS AND HOIST NEWS

Klimber installs complex atrium job in Michigan; Avro Hoist Co. has begun manufacturing 7,500 and 8,000 pound cages in-house; AWPT's new mast climbing members.

SAFETY CORNER: ROBERT VETTER, IVES TRAINING GROUP

Twenty-four-year safety veteran Robert Vetter explains why he believes the use of a safety harness on scissor lifts should be worn.



OPINION PIECE: JEFF STACHOWIAK, SUNBELT RENTAL

Sunbelt's Safety Director says rental yards should equip their field technicians with a laptop. The investment is well worth it.

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New rental show set for Amsterdam



The first International Rental Exhibition (IRE) will be held at the RAI exhibition center in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, on June 3-5 2008.

The new show is being organized in cooperation with the European Rental Association (ERA), and an integral part of the event will be the European Rental Association's annual conference (June 4-5).

The exhibition will be open to all suppliers to the rental sector: equipment manufacturers, including both global companies and small local suppliers, and suppliers of specialist services to the rental sector such as software and asset tracking technology.

The IRE also has the official support of *International Rental News (IRN)* and the magazine's publisher, KHL Group, (publisher of *American Lift & Handlers*).

UpRight owner to buy Snorkel

UK-based Tanfield Group, owner of UpRight Powered Access, has agreed to buy Snorkel for \$100 million, plus \$25 million of debt.

Estimated to be completed July 24, the deal will make Tanfield the owner of two of the oldest and most recognized brand names in the powered access business, and give it the US manufacturing base it has been seeking for the past year.

The Snorkel brand will be retained and included in the deal is the company's manufacturing facilities in St Joseph, US, and in New Zealand.

Tanfield Chief Executive Darren Kell said, "This is a transformational acquisition for Tanfield, significantly strengthening our position as a leading global manufacturer of aerial work platforms and commercial electric vehicles."

Snorkel has been sold by its five private shareholders, including chief executive officer Al Havlin, who will remain involved in the business in a part-time consultancy role.

The deal also brings back to UpRight its long-time former US sales director, Frank Scarborough, who

Darren Kell



is Snorkel's vice president of operations, sales and marketing and COO. He will stay in this role under Tanfield. Both Kell and Scarborough said there will be no change in Snorkel's staff.

"The guys have done a very good job with business. They are very well thought of by its customers, they are very well thought of as a group of individuals. So, it would be remiss of us to change that," said Kell.

The product fit between UpRight and Snorkel appears to be very good. Snorkel brings the larger self-propelled booms and rough terrain scissors that UpRight was hoping to re-introduce - and which now may not be developed. UpRight did not have any telescopic booms.

Although Kell couldn't give in-depth information on future product lines,

he did confirm that UpRight was looking at a number of niche product opportunities. "We are looking to strengthen the rough terrain scissor range and add models to that collectively to UpRight and Snorkel. We are looking to introduce more to the telescopic boom range," Kell said.

Kell told *ALH* that the two product lines would continue to be sold under their respective brands, although there would be opportunities for double branding of the same products in particular countries or depending on the customer. He said there would be "no rash decisions on branding."

According to both companies, Snorkel customers and dealers should have no worries about the deal. "No reason to be concerned," said Scarborough. "It's going to allow Snorkel to rapidly add new products [and give us] the financial wherewithal to grow the new product offering to the future."

Kell added that Tanfield would immediately invest in growing the Snorkel and UpRight business. One-third of Snorkel's main facility in St Joseph is currently leased out, and this will be taken back for Snorkel/UpRight use. He said that he hoped the first UpRight products would flow off the production line within four months.

Tanfield will retain Snorkel's recently opened distribution facility in the Netherlands, as well as UpRight's existing facility in Fresno, CA, which currently acts as a distribution and service location.

The acquisition solidifies Tanfield's position as a serious player in the powered access business. Snorkel's sales for the year 2006 were \$131.5 million with profits before tax of \$9.6 million.



New to the North American marketplace, Palfinger has announced its CR 55 4-way truck mounted forklift. The machine, with a lift capacity up to 5,500 pounds, allows operators to move materials over rugged terrain and through crowded work sites by turning all wheels sideways (crab steer). The unit has a short truck-mount overhang that allows easy and safe transport. The center seat positioning gives the operator easier on-and-off access, a more stable feel and a much better view for judging load centers or mounting the truck, according to the company. The assembly of the CR 55 4-way units will begin in September 2007 at the Crayler forklift assembly plant in Tiffin, OH.

HIGHLIGHTS

→ Titan Equipment has been appointed a full service authorized dealer for MEC Aerial Platforms scissor lifts and telescopic handlers in Western and Central Michigan, announced the manufacturer's President Jim Tolle. Titan's co-owner Paul Roussey said Michigan historically has had a "strong interest to the MEC product," he told *ALH*. "There are a lot of the contractors in the state that own the products because of [MEC's] performance and reliability." Titan, which has offices in Bryon Center (Grand Rapids area) and Lansing, will provide on site service and maintenance for older MEC machines.

→ United Rentals once again tops the list of the largest aerial platform rental companies in the world, with a fleet of 73,555 units and leading the Access-50 listing published by our sister magazine *Access International*. US companies take the top five places, with RSC second with a fleet of 35,705 machines and Ashtead Group (owner of Sunbelt Rentals) third with 31,510 units. See page 34 for our report.

→ Truck mounted aerial platform manufacturer Bronto Skylift has appointed NESCO Sales and Rental of Bluffton, IN as a dealer to provide sales and service coverage in the Midwest. The first Bronto aerial work platform added to NESCO's fleet is a 156 ft working height SI 156 HDT, which has an insulated platform allowing live-line working on power lines up to 500kV.

→ DBI-SALA has introduced the Hydration System, a liquid carrying attachment for use with full body harnesses. The Hydration System holds 50 ounces of liquid and clips to the back of a harness, below the D-ring. It will keep a fluid source close to the body without getting in the worker's way.

Genie's view on harnesses and safe scissor usage

Genie Industries has made a clear statement on the use of harnesses with scissor lifts, stating that harnesses are not required in addition to the scissor's guardrails.

Luke Webber, Genie's product manager, in a statement to *ALH*, added that where an employer or local authority required the use of a harness on a scissor, then only

dedicated harness anchor points should be used, and never the guardrails.

Webber said the correct use of the harness is the responsibility of the platform user and his or her employer.

Genie's position is generally in line with that taken by the International Powered Access Federation's North



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editors,

With regards to your article entitled "Tie-off or not?" in the May/June edition of *ALH*, I wish to clarify the date of the ANSI standard referred to in your article.

You have correctly identified the standard applicable to scissor lifts as being ANSI A92.6, however, the standard has been revised and recently re-issued at the end of last year. The new standard, ANSI A92.6-2006, became effective May 20, 2007, unfortunately during the period of your article. So, while your reference to ANSI A92.6-1999 is correct, at least for the first part of May, I wanted to ensure that your readers were aware that this transition period has passed, and as I write this, the 2006 revision is now in effect. Fortunately, there are no changes within the revised standard with regard to the content of your article.

Further to the point of having a new revision of the standard, there is also a new revision to the Manual of Responsibilities. Paragraph 5.2.2 of the new standard states: "The current Manual of Responsibilities for Dealers, Owners, Users, Operators, Lessors, Lessees, and Brokers of Self-Propelled Elevating Work Platforms shall be provided and stored in the weather resistant storage compartment."

This requires that every scissor lift working in the United States now must have a copy of the 2006 version of the Manual of Responsibilities. Beyond this, the A92.3 and A92.5 standards were also revised in 2006, and therefore all of these units (pusharounds, boom lifts) must also have new Manuals of Responsibilities placed within their storage compartments. These documents are available for purchase from the Scaffold Industry Association.

I hope this clarifies the effective date of the newly revised standard and I would ask that you encourage everyone in the industry to acquire a copy of these standards or at least the Manual of Responsibilities to ensure that they are aware of what their responsibilities are, as defined by these new versions.



Brad Boehler, P.Eng
Director, Product Safety
Linamar (owner of Skyjack)

American subsidiary, AWPT, which recommends that harnesses are not required when working in a scissor (except where recommended by the lift's manufacturer).

Although most manufacturers take the same view, there is still no consensus, with both JLG Industries and Sunbelt Rentals, for example, recommending the use of harnesses in scissors.

UpRight sees both sides of the argument, recommending harnesses in larger scissors but not in smaller scissors where "we believe, like OSHA, that wearing a harness and lanyard is actually more dangerous."

■ In this issue of *ALH* we carry an article by platform safety expert Robert Vetter who argues that harnesses should indeed be worn by scissor lift occupants (see page 40). *ALH* welcomes feedback from readers on the topic.

Load Lifter's new vertical mast series released

Canada's Load Lifter has released the first of its new 4400 F Series with the 4414-20 straight mast model.

The 4WD/4WS rough terrain forklift with capacities of 20,000 pounds replaces the 14-year old 4400 D Series, said Operations Manager Dave Tughan.

The new unit has enhanced cab features, with better operator visibility and is fully isolated. The operator module includes seat mounted controls, full swivel and suspension seat, telescopic and tilt steering, and full cab pressurization. Its module tilts forward for unit service. Adjustable ventilation nozzles surround the operator and DBA ratings below 80 are achieved with advanced insulation material. The machine is equipped with a "See Thru" mast and a full range of carriages and attachments.

The machine will primarily be marketed in North America, though Tughan said the 4400 F Series will be available "anywhere in the world" through its distributor network. This series will have machines ranging from 5,000 to 30,000 pound capacities.

"All manufacturing is performed at our current address in Toronto but this manufacturing will be

moved in about eight months' time to a new state of the art facility a short distance north of Toronto," Tughan told *ALH*. "The new facility will house all engineering, R&D, vehicle testing, and full manufacturing capabilities." The company plans to keep its current facility, which will give it more than 100,000 square feet of manufacturing space.



Load Lifter's 4400 F Series replaces the 14 year old D Series



KHL Group announces China office

American Lift & Handler's publisher KHL Group has set up an office in China. The new office, managed by KHL's China Chief Representative Cathy Yao, is in the Dong Cheng district of Beijing. The office will be the focus of KHL's increasing business activity in China and will be a local point of contact for manufacturers in the region.

Full contact details are: KHL Group LLP Beijing Representative Office Room 768, Poly Plaza, No.14, South Dong Zhi Men Street, Dong Cheng District, Beijing, P.R.C. Tel: +86 10 65536676; Fax: +86 10 65536690; and e-mail: cathy.yao@khl.com.

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www.icuee.com

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APEX 2008

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Maastricht, The Netherlands

www.apexshow.com

AWPT hits with new safety campaign

Translating IPAF's "Clunk Clunk!" campaign stateside, the AWPT announced its North American mantra "Click It!" The safety campaign encourages all users of boom type platforms to wear a full body harness with a short lanyard attached to a suitable anchor point.

To remind operators to wear a harness, AWPT has printed stickers that can be placed on the boom lift where they can be seen by all occupants in the platform. In addition, AWPT has made available a document titled "Technical Guidance Note AWPT H1" that provides information on its recommendation for the proper use of harnesses and lanyards on different types of aerial platforms.

At Bauma, international versions of the program were launched at the IPAF stand including the German "Click Clack!", Italian "Clic Clac!", French "Un petit Clic!" and other versions of the program in



The "Click It!" campaign is a result of companies advocating harness use while operating boom type lifts to avoid catapulting from the platform.

Dutch and Spanish.

"In countries where the program has already been introduced, major rental companies and others took the initiative to promote the program because unnecessary fatal accidents were happening when occupants were catapulted out of boom platforms because they were not wearing harnesses," said IPAF

managing director Tim Whiteman. "These simple stickers can save lives."

Skyjack has committed to placing the "Click It!" stickers on all boom lifts that leave its factory and a number of major rental companies have expressed interest in placing the stickers on all boom lifts in their rental fleet.

ICUEE set to be 'largest ever'

A new 'ride and drive' program at this year's ICUEE show in Louisville will give equipment buyers the opportunity to try out on-road commercial vehicles for the

first time. The expo is being held October 16-18.

ICUEE said the program would give visitors a better opportunity to evaluate and purchase trucks,



engines and components. The show, which is targeted at power, phone, gas, sewer and general contractors, already includes demo areas for shallow and deep digging equipment.

Aerial platform manufacturers will again be out in force at the show, with companies including Terex Utilities, Altec Industries and Time Manufacturing among those exhibiting.

This year's ICUEE is on target to be the largest ever, said organizer AEM, with more than 1.1 million net square feet of exhibits. Attendees can register in advance online (www.icuee.com).



Simplex Rental Equipment's staff Daniel Hatin, Junior Bergeron, Chistian Ion, Michel Lemire, Francois Guilbeault, and Francois Cloutier pledged to shave their heads given enough money was raised for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation's special fundraising day in June. Staff at the Montreal company's head office marked the event in June by spending their lunch break with clippers and a razor after the branch raised \$1,400 for the cause. See page 11 for ALH's interview with André Véronneau, president of the fast growing rental company.



HIGHLIGHTS

→ NES Rentals, Bil-Jax and Fraco Products are among new North American members of the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), parent company of Aerial Work Platform Training Inc (AWPT). The new members are set to boost AWPT's operator training scheme in North America, with NES planning to open multiple training centers in big city areas and Midwest Aerials having applied to open a training center in St Louis.

→ Hamden, CT-based All Reach Equipment LLC has been named the latest dealer to carry JLG's Lull telehandlers. The rental yard, which is already a dealer for JLG's SkyTrak range, will provide sales and service coverage throughout southeastern Connecticut. The nine-year old New England company, which also serves New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, will represent the 6,000 to 10,000 pound Lull models.



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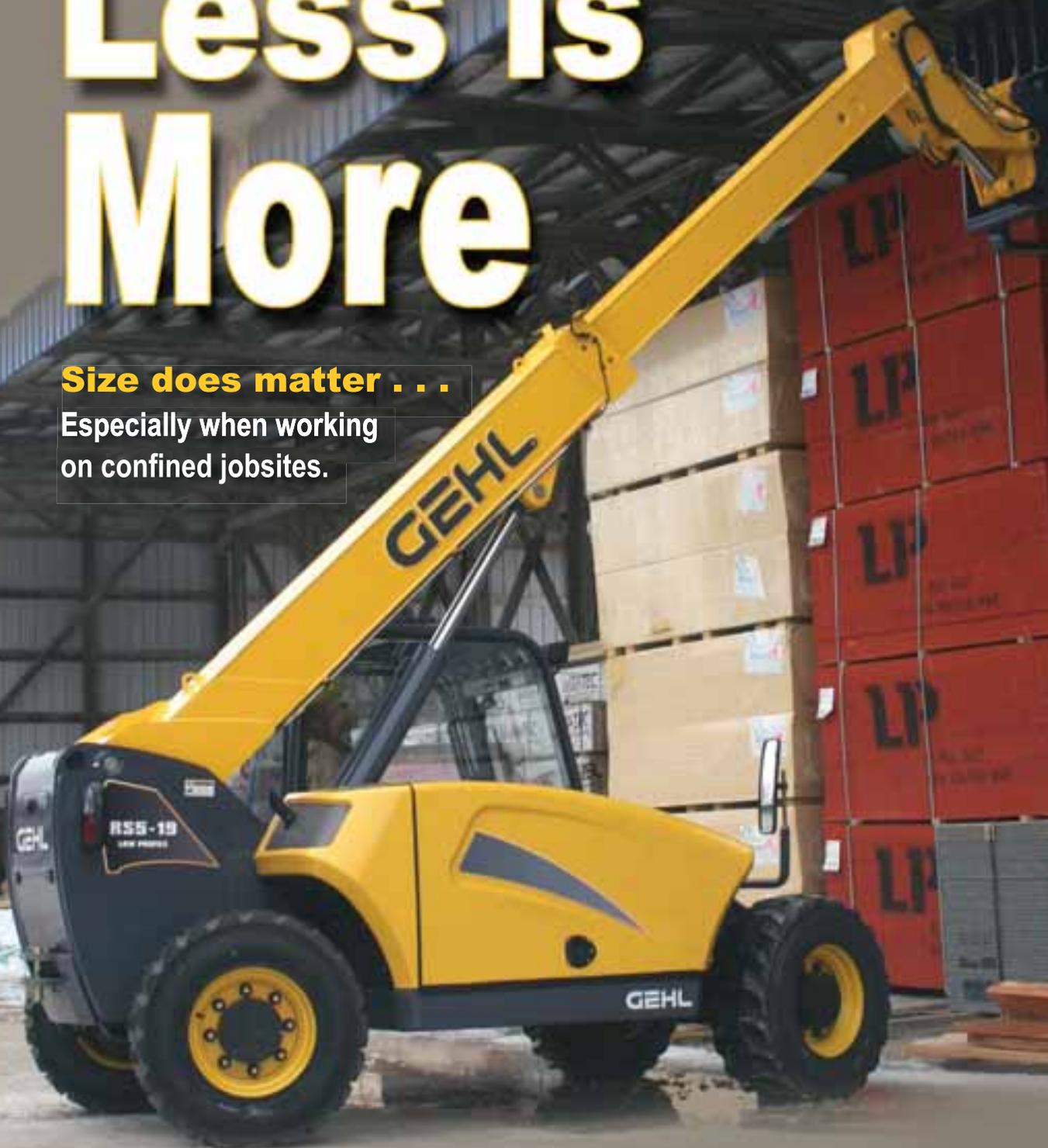
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All in the family

Celebrating its centennial, Montreal-based Simplex Equipment Rental is an industry role model.

John Wyatt **talks with President** André Véronneau **about the company's entry into the earthmoving market, multiple acquisitions, fleet investment and what it means to be a fourth generation family business.**

André Véronneau,
president of Simplex,
inside the company's
office in
L'Acadie in



A JCB 520 mini handler is among the many units Simplex carries in its fleet.

What a way to turn 100. Since his great grandfather Louis Henry Véronneau began Simplex in 1907 as a floor sanding business, André Véronneau has helped - along with the generations in between - transform the business from a small tools rental house to a one-stop rental shop with a big fleet including aerials and handlers. Within the last year, the company introduced earthmoving equipment into its massive catalog, and has already proven to be a lucrative market. With approximately 30 models in its fleet, JCB loaders and Kubota compact excavators among those, the company says it hopes to further expand its earthmoving product line.

Strong growth

In the last 10 years, the Montreal-based rental firm has tripled sales. Hard to imagine, but in 1998, the company had 55 workers and sales of C\$18 million (US\$17.2 million). This fiscal year, ending in April 2007, revenue was C\$65 million (US\$62.3 million) and the company has a staff of 525. *ALH's* sister publication *Access International* ranked the company 32 in its Access 50 poll of the biggest fifty aerial fleets in the world. Furthermore, the feature reported the rental yard had a 62% growth of its aerial fleet.

When finishing school in the late 1970s,



Director of the workshop at the company's Des Futailles branch is Bruno Siros.

Véronneau and his brother Louis started Jalon Tool Rentals in Ville d'Anjou, Montreal. This was a way for the siblings to get their feet wet separate from the family business. After running this tool rental house, Véronneau was invited by his father Louis to be the general manager at Simplex's L'Acadie location, and in 1992 the brothers reunited by merging Jalon Tools with Simplex.

Strong management

Now, Simplex is the largest independent rental yard in Canada, running 32 outlets in the Quebec region, which includes largely Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa and Sherbrooke. According to the company's Director of Marketing Dany Gosselin, the past 10 years has seen continuous annual sales growth of 10 to 15%. This strong financial streak has allowed the acquisition of several smaller rental yards in their local Canadian region and the launching of new branches in Quebec.

For fiscal year 2008, the company projects sales revenue of C\$70 to 72 million (US\$67 to \$69 million).

"The way we run the company, we don't give any financial goals," says Véronneau. "You cannot expect 25 to 30% growth each year. That is unreasonable and we wouldn't be able to manage it. I'd say anywhere from 8 to 10% is very decent."

Simplex views its management as key to company development. Both Véronneau and Gosselin cite that strong employer/employee relations are important, emphasizing that it asks its workers to do the best they can rather than simply asking them to meet financial quotas each period. Véronneau strives to know each name of his workers, though he admits that now with 32 outlets, it's become a difficult task.

Aside from brand identity, the company can credit other factors to its high growth rate. For one, it has 20,000 open accounts; out of this number, approximately 4,000 to 5,000 are active. According to Véronneau, his client base is 50%

construction, 20% industrial, 20% services and 10% walk in. The "walk ins" mainly use the tool rentals business, which supplies items such as concrete saws, paint removers, fasteners, and much more, where either customers with or without an open account can rent.

Simplex also has found some niche markets. When the US dollar had some mileage, Canada was heavily used by Hollywood where Montreal and Toronto studios were used as filming locations. Gosselin cites *Catch Me if You Can*, *The Mummy* and most recently, *The Fountain* as productions in which Simplex has rented scissors, booms and telehandlers. Although it's a lucrative market, it's also a tough contract.

"It's quite demanding, to be honest," says Gosselin. "They need a lot of equipment, so we better be able to supply them for a couple weeks." He says there is a lot of quoting involved, as well as management of equipment on the film sets. Sometimes, the film's production staff ask for technical expertise.

For its boom and scissor line, Simplex is an authorized Genie dealer. Its outlet branch has several rough terrain and electric scissors in its inventory. Most recently, Simplex added to its catalog Genie's BIG Z-135/70 articulating boom. For telehandlers, the company has Ontario's CareLift ZoomBoom models, and the JCB 520 compact unit.

Unlike other rental yards that buy both new and used machines to add to their fleet, Simplex says that "all" models purchased are new.

"It's all new," says Véronneau. "But when the US had a recession in 2001, the price of used equipment was so low we bought a lot." Gosselin says that the company has renewed a lot of its older products.

The fleet is evolving, of course, but Gosselin says that in his opinion, not much has changed in the market. However, he says that as soon as JLG brings into North America its big European-built scissors - formerly known as Liftlux - Simplex will be in the market for one.

Simplex management views acquisitions as the primarily element to the company's growth strategy. Since 1998, the company has acquired 10 small rental businesses.

"There's actually two or three ways to do this," says Véronneau, when asked about the company's growth. "You can buy actual existing rental houses - that's the way we prefer to approach it.

"But also if there is no expansion on the branch standpoint...we can expand by adding new equipment. To be specific, the manlifts [self-propelled booms]. Ten years ago, we had 150. Now we have over 600."

Fleet investment

This begs the question: what products, if any, Simplex is removing from its fleet? The company is quick to point out that it doesn't operate like the large rental houses by selling off its older machines a few years after purchased. Simplex typically holds on to its products for eight to ten years. Throughout its 32 locations, the company carries 550 forklifts, 1,000 scissors and 650 man lifts.

Véronneau says the company has largely invested in its mechanics team, which currently is 150 technicians. The company wants its units to look new, so it spends its time and resources rebuilding machines, painting, etc., so the fleet always looks like it came off the factory line.

One of the biggest challenges the company



The company has 150 technicians scattered throughout all of its branches.

faces is its extreme seasonal changes. With its latest venture in earthmoving, the company can only rent this equipment six to seven months of the year, as the winter lasts longer in Quebec. According to Véronneau, the biggest challenge the company faces is not enough equipment. During the late fall, he says a lot of contractors are rushing to complete outside projects before the end of the season. He says that pretty much all equipment is rented out during this period.

"October and November is the big period and everyone wants to finish before winter," says Véronneau, adding that scissors are never idle. "But if you have too much equipment just for these two months of the year, you will have it in your yard."

Another factor that has impacted Simplex is the presence of the US rental consolidators and profit centers, competition the company views as "hard and solid." Véronneau says these companies drive Simplex's prices downward. However, Simplex will not be wooed into the lowball game, and is trying instead to maintain its prices.

The company believes its advantage is not only well-maintained machines, but fast transportation

Throughout its 32 locations, the company carries 550 forklifts, 1,000 scissors and 650 booms.



and quick turnaround when a mechanic is needed for on site repair. In regards to rental rates, the company lists all rates online as well as in its catalog. Four rates are given: day, week, weekend and month. Véronneau believes this is the most honest approach to price, with customers viewed equally and no side deals and favoritism coming into play.

There is no question that business for the company is at its peak. The lure of the United States is just south of Montreal, and opening branches in Vermont and Maine isn't the most outrageous suggestion. Véronneau has thought of this, and confesses that given the right opportunity it isn't impossible. However, that's not the company's ambition right now.

No, its focus is to remain in the Quebec region and build its earthmoving product line. It also has no plans to go west in Canada and open more outlets but to expand in its regional territory.

At this point in Simplex's long and profitable history, the company seems committed to its home roots. Since the late 1990s, the company has focused its growth by acquiring small yards and opening new outlets. With its 30 plus locations and now entering a new market in earthmoving equipment, the company is in good health.

Véronneau hints that fifth generation ownership is quite possible. Given that many family run businesses fold after the third generation, reaching the fourth is a milestone. A fifth would be remarkable.

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John Wyatt talks to manufacturers and rental yards about the strengths of the mini handlers.



Mustang's 519, released at this year's World of Concrete, is a 5,500 pound machine and has a maximum lift height of 19 feet 1 inch.

Sometimes, less is more. The growth of the "European-style" telehandler, those compact units that have far less lift height and capacity, have built a reputation as both a pick and place machine as well as material handler. With the smaller unit's ability to maneuver into the tightest of jobsites and still offer a decent load capacity with several different attachments, such as augers, grapples and buckets, more rental yards and end users are asking for this sized machine.

As JLG's Product Parent, North American Telehandlers' Brian Boeckman tells *ALH*, AEM data suggests that the less-than-5,500 pound class of telehandlers is the fastest growing segment in the market. Pretty much all the major producers have telehandler models in this range, the oldest being JCB's 520 and the most recent being the latest offerings from Mustang and Gehl, released

this year. So, it hardly seems a niche market anymore but a versatile product that can be found in several applications.

When asked what advantages the smaller models have over the mid to large range machines, the obvious answer was that end users are asking for more compact sizes, narrower dimensions and lower heights. This is because anything larger is viewed as overkill. The applications for these machines include but are not limited to parking structures, nurseries, landscapers, some general construction and residential. That being said, it's understood why a larger range machine is too much.

"What end users want is a decent capacity on a small machine," says Boeckman. "On large job sites, they'll use this machine as a yard machine for material receiving and handling." JLG's smallest range models are the G5-23A the G5-19A, 16>

released in North America at World of Concrete in 2005. Boeckman says the G5-19A's 79 inch height is ideal for parking lot construction. The unit has a maximum reach of 19 feet with a total weight capacity of 5,000 pounds.

JCB prides itself as one of the first to introduce a smaller range machine in the US, roughly 10 years ago. Mid Range Product Marketing Manager James Blower says its 520 model, with a lift height of 16½ feet and 4,400 pound maximum capacity, is found in parking job construction and "small barns, that's where it really shines." He says that customers are asking more and more for narrower and lower profiles to allow access through doorways and tight buildings. Blower says the company is looking into the production of a smaller model than the 520 but plans are at the "beginning phase." The company manufactures the smaller Teletruk, but this is more of an industrial forklift.

Another advantage to the smaller machine is its light weight. Mustang's Region Sales Manager Steve Challoner says this is important for a couple reasons. The company's 519 model weighs 10,000 pounds, meaning it is easily transported on a trailer hauled by a larger pick up truck. The other benefit is the high floatation tires that will not sink on muddy jobsites, whereas a larger telehandler could be stuck when maneuvering in this type of surface.

Challoner also says the unit is used as a "feeding machine," carrying smaller pallets of mortar and block to a crane or larger telehandler.

And of course, the compact machines are less expensive. According to Challoner, roughly speaking, the less-than-5,500 pound machines are two-thirds of the cost of the next sized range machine. Plus, the smaller machines he adds have further cost saving in maintenance.

"It has different components that are less costly than the larger machines to keep up," he says.

In St. George, UT, H&E Equipment Services has been selling several small units, in particular Genie's GTH-5519 and Gehl's RS5-19. Joe McKeenan, a sales manager at



"A smaller compact telehandler is not only less expensive to own or rent, but in most cases is quicker, safer, and less expensive to operate," says Steve Kirst, telehandler product manager at Gehl.

H&E, says in his region, landscapers are using the smaller machines complete with all the attachment options, such as buckets, rotating fork carriage and work lights. Most sales he says have gone to the brick and block masons, material yards and the cultured stone contractors. He says its strongest benefit is its ease of transportation.

"Since it is a 10,000 pound machine, it can be hauled on a trailer behind a pick up truck, which does not require a Commercial Drivers License license. Once you cross that line (gross vehicle weight is 26,000 pounds for your truck,

trailer and cargo), the world changes: Insurance is more, vehicles cost more," McKeenan says. He explains his branch location is only miles from Arizona's border and that the branch does a lot of interstate work. When entering other states, there's a point of entry that requires permits to travel. Commercial transport drivers have to track miles and pay a highway tax based on the mileage.

"So, these little [compact telehandler] machines will go right behind a pick up truck and allow you to basically run exempt from those requirements that heavy haul trucks are encumbered with," he says.

In the Heartland, ACME Electric's rental division ACME Rents in Bismarck, ND doesn't carry a large number of handlers, but of the 10 it has in its fleet, the Genie GTH-5519 hasn't been idle since the company ordered two models several months ago. In June, the company ordered two more.

"The niche we've figured out is there is a great 19>

JCB's 520 has been available for more than 10 years, and according to Mid Range Product Marketing Manager James Blower, is popular in landscape applications, rental markets and urban areas.





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“As our subdivisions grow closer and closer and buildings become more compact, it’s natural that the [compact telehandler] machines will follow suit to perform the same job,” says Joe McKeenan, sales manager, H&E Equipment Services in Utah, where Genie’s compact GTH-5519 model is carried.

retail market there. People want to own those once they rent them. They’re able to justify the purchase of that versus just renting it,” says Blair Ihmels, general manager at ACME Rents. He says the end users have been quite varied, from roofers who can operate the machine on a driveway (a midrange would exceed the asphalt’s weight), to asbestos abatement contractors that place pallets underneath the removal of the material.

Genie’s Product Manager Luke Webber calls the machines “chameleons.”

“Just a few years ago, you didn’t see very many compact telehandlers on jobsites,” Webber says. “Now you can find them on nearly every one. From the construction of garages, with access restrictions in some cases less than 6 feet 8 inches, to the running of augers and sweepers, to being a heavily utilized material mover, there are as many possible applications as there are jobsites.” He says at this time, Genie has no plans to produce a smaller unit than its 5519.

The compact unit is not just an outdoor machine, and more and more contractors are utilizing these indoors, says Telehandler Product Manager Steve Kirst with Gehl. He says industrial applications are becoming popular because the machine can transition from outdoor work to inside work.

“Many of these businesses have dirt or snow covered yards where a 4WD/4WS machine is very handy, yet equipped with an exhaust purifier that can operate indoors, as well,” says Kirst. “With these qualities, along with the fact that the Gehl RS5-19 can fit under a doorway, also makes the machine very popular



for contractors doing interior renovation and restoration.”

Far out east in Sterling, VA Sunbelt Rental’s Profit Center branch carries the JCB 520, and each year within its annual budget, it makes sure to place an order of four to six of this model. Currently his branch has 20 of this model in the fleet. Manager Barry Holdcroft says the market for compact units in his region is 70% construction; 30% landscaping.

JLG’s Product Parent, North American Telehandlers Brian Boeckman says smaller telehandlers are great tool carriers, using buckets and non traditional attachments, as well as forks and carriages. He says the company sells about 50 percent of these machines with buckets, truss booms, manure buckets, lifting hooks, and more.

“The market is excellent for these. It’s very strong and continues to grow,” says Holdcroft,

The market does sound strong. As ALH reported in its first supplement (“Market maturity” feature, October 2006), the smaller unit is a rental machine, with 75% of sales to that market. However, all manufacturers and dealers say the machine is going to both, as the contractor finds the machine affordable and easy to transport. The compact unit is appearing on more and differing types of jobsites, from residential, commercial and industrial applications to agriculture and farming to material yards. It looks like the mini-handler is definitely here to stay. **ALH**



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Snorkel

Big deck the walls

End users and manufacturers say the larger deck scissors are ideal for commercial and industrial work, with all trades employing these units for a number of applications. However, is North America ready for bigger rough terrain units when the return on investment is less than great? John Wyatt reports

MEC says it will be releasing various rough terrain models that will exceed the 50-foot mark soon.

According to JT Sutton, operations manager for Area Equipment Rental & Sales in Norfolk, VA, the construction of the "big box" stores is the application where one is most likely to see big deck scissors. These machines, with a very spacious platform and typically heavier weight capacity, can be used on an endless list of job applications by several different trades.

Area Equipment serves the southeastern portion of Virginia and northeast North Carolina. Its largest big scissor is the Snorkel SR4084 rough terrain model. The rental company carries "several units" of this machine in its fleet and Sutton says the machines are kept busy.

"The machines go across the board to a lot of end users - steel guys, the mechanical contractors, sheet metal," says Sutton. "The machines are pretty universal, especially if they're dual fuel (meaning they'll go inside and out); you can run them on propane."

New heights

But will Area Equipment consider the next phase of height on these machines? At this time, it doesn't think so. Sutton says anything above 50 feet and he feels there are safety concerns. "With any aerial unit, there are safety precautions that need to be taken. But 100 feet high—that's a long way up there for a scissor lift," he says.

At this time, the big deck scissors market is mostly rental fleets. However, Jim Tolle, president of MEC Aerial Work Platforms reports a shift in buyers. "As with most scissor lifts



JLG currently is test marketing Liftflux models 67SL and the 80SL in North America. The release of these models stateside could be as early as 2008.

produced, they are being consumed by rental companies. However, we are starting to see a trend of end-users buying scissors, mainly a result of specialized contractors performing the same task again and again, thus needing the same unit over and over. Though this point could be argued, it is a trend we feel will continue.”

He says the large deck is a multiple purpose unit and could be used in many applications, such as joining walls, setting ceilings, installing fire sprinklers, installing heating and air-conditioning, even putting up drywall.

At this year’s ARA show, MEC introduced three models that fit within the “big deck” range: 259IRT, 339IRT and 419IRT, the last model being the largest the company manufactures with a working height of 47 feet and a platform height of 41 feet. The deck measures 91 inches wide by 180 inches long once extended.

Market strength

Tolle says the market for these units varies depending on the area. Currently, he says it’s a popular unit in both North America and Europe. “We find North America requires a lighter (gross weight) machine and customers in North America are willing to sacrifice some load carrying capacity in order to gain better terrain-ability. Whereas in Europe, the heavier (increased load capacity) is more important than the terrain-ability. This unit is traditionally the first on, last off unit at most construction sites.”

MEC has plans to release a low cost 50-foot model that is able to reach the 50-foot mark and still remain drivable. The company will also



Skyjack says its product development on larger scissor decks is ongoing, but nothing imminent.

release an “extreme duty,” more than 50-foot model with “unmatched” deck capacity, says Tolle. This unit utilizes MEC’s Quad-Trax drive system and is expected to be drivable at full height.

“This unit is designed for the European market, which requires extreme deck load capabilities. It will also be offered in North America and throughout the world. MEC customers can also expect our large deck models in electric drive,” says Tolle.

The GS-5390 is Genie’s largest rough terrain scissor, released in 2000. This is a 90-inch wide machine that has a maximum deck height of 53 feet. The company has found the unit is used on construction sites for two to five story office buildings. Eric Ludwig, product manager with the company, says the rough terrain capabilities of these machines make them easy to transport across muddy areas to building worksites.

Agility plus

The company feels that there is an expanding market for machines with a 1,500-pound capacity that can work in a variety of jobsite conditions. Ludwig says as real estate has become more expensive, the need for medium height office buildings has increased dramatically. At this point, Genie “will continue to evaluate our large deck offerings,” he says.

Skyjack offers two 50 foot models: its SJ9250 with 24 inch long platform with optional dual powered extension decks and its lower priced 8850, which is a more agile model driveable at full height but has a smaller platform. The company’s Senior Product Marketing Manager Paul Kreutzweiser says it is selling these large scissor units primarily to rental companies, that

This Italian-made scissor lift - from Iteco - isn’t available in North America, but it does show a different approach to platform extensions. The IT 4680 model has a 1 ft 2 in platform extension over the length of the machine rather than at the short ends. That feature, when combined with drive capability at its full working height of 21 ft 4 in, makes it ideal for warehouse and other applications where increased outreach over a longer length will be valuable. The machine has a 570 pound payload and measures just over 5 ft long by 2 ft 6 in wide.





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are renting to end users in the construction sector. He says the applications include external building finishing such as cladding, glazing, stucco and indoor trade work such as HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and more.

"The market for these lifts has been strong," says Kreutzwiser. "Strong commercial sector construction in North America has continued to drive demand for large rough terrain scissors."

Super scissors?

But does he feel North America is ready for larger scissors exceeding what it already carries? He says market demand will dictate this but feels there is not the same need for vertical access in the US and Canada as there is in Europe where several suppliers already produce scissors up to 100 feet. He says the capacity, drive heights, stowed heights, and overall machine weights are still important specifications in the North American market, whereas Europe's super scissors are extremely heavy, are very tall when stowed, and have limited capacities and drive heights. His thought is that a 60 foot unit would be practical stateside.

So it will be interesting to see what JLG decides with the much anticipated release of



the Liftflux line in North America. Currently, the manufacturer's largest rough terrain scissor in the US is the 4394RT, which has a 43 foot platform height and 1,500 pound capacity. The company's Product Market Champion, Scissor Lifts Bill Dovey says the biggest market is in the rental fleets.

"It goes to end users but the biggest market by far is the rental houses and they in turn rent those to electrical and mechanical contractors, drywallers, painters, sheathing and insulation companies, and anywhere where you need a large platform with a high capacity to handle workers," says Dovey.

The current status is two Liftflux models, 67SL and the 80SL (67 feet and 80 feet, respectively), are being test marketed in North America now. JLG is evaluating the market potential for those products, says Dovey. "We're pretty early in the evaluation process at this point." However, he says depending on the market response to the field trial machines and customer evaluations, the products could be launched in North America as early as next calendar year.

If JLG's Liftflux range is one high-reach scissor option, one other possibility is European company Holland Lift (based, not surprisingly, in Holland). Holland Lift is another company that makes a wide range of scissors, going up to working heights of 110 feet - the same as the largest JLG Liftflux model. Holland Lift has considered the North American market in past, but hasn't so far done anything about it.

Although the manufacturers state the larger scissor deck line is expanding, one concern is the return on investment the rental yards get from these. "Here's one thing that's kind of unfortunate about them: they don't command a high rental rate but they do have a high demand. It's paradoxical," says Dovey.

Tolle states likewise. He says unfortunately for MEC's rental dealer customers, the large deck units often produce the lowest ROI of any scissor, the worst case being the 40 foot market.

"We have discovered that the 40 foot market often yields single digit returns for our customers, yet they are required to have

Skyjack says its product development on larger scissor decks is ongoing, but nothing imminent.

them in their rental fleet due to demands from their customers. To solve this problem, we have developed the 3772RT. This model fits between the compact and large deck series. Once the deck extension is slid out it fits very well in the large deck application. With a working height of 43 feet, it more than meets the demands of a 40 foot required height," says Tolle. According to him, the solution for the customer is the cost. The 3772RT is a lower costing machine and he says this model has become a popular machine in the company's line up.

The reports suggest the larger scissor market is good for manufacturers, based on that the rental yards need them and continue to keep the units on the job site. But the question is if the return on investment is so modest, what will manufacturers do to help its customer base? Is the answer a higher working unit or a greater weight capacity that rental yards can demand better rates for and stumble on a niche market? Given these concerns on larger deck machines, it will be most interesting to see if North America is ready for a much larger machine.

As in the case of Area Equipment, bigger models may well scare away some customers, but others seem willing. Simplex Rental Equipment, the largest independent rental yard in Canada, says it will be purchasing Liftflux models if they become available in North America (see feature on page 11).

Coin toss

And with the recent acquisition of Snorkel by UpRight's owners the Tanfield Group, Tanfield CEO Darren Kell says he couldn't be specific but that the company is looking to strengthen the rough terrain scissor range in both of the company's product lines. As it stands, it's a coin toss whether the manufacturers and rental yards in North America are excited for the larger units the Europeans are having success with. If the Liftflux models pop up within the next year, then JLG must think so.

ALH



Holland Lift a Netherlands-based manufacturer of very big scissor lifts that has considered the North American market in the past, but has still to decide what to do (partly because demand is so high in Europe right now). The company makes scissors with working heights of up to 110 ft, and pictured here is its largest electric model, the 92 ft working height N-265 EL13 4WDS, which is designed to be drivable at full height. It uses a 1150 Ahr battery pack and features an automatic lubrication system designed to protect the machine when it is rented on long-duration projects.

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Insurance experts in the telehandler and access field advise on the best practices for rental yards and contractors to minimize insurance premiums. ALH reports.

ALH spoke to insurance professionals that specialize in providing insurance services to the aerial and telehandler community. We asked each participant to share their knowledge on how to help the industry with insurance costs.

Our experts are: Ellen Conner (senior account executive at Neace Lukens Insurance); Phil Kelling (president and CEO of ARA Insurance Services); Randy Proos, (director of construction services at USI Inc.); and R. Jeffrey McGeary (executive vice president, sales of Allied Insurance Brokers Inc.).

How much have insurance rates climbed in the construction industry, in particular those for the lift and handler companies, over the last five years?

Ellen Conner: Actually, this particular class of business should have started to see rates decline last year and should see a further reduction upon their respective renewals depending upon their state. The insurance marketplace is currently experiencing a down cycle and carriers are hungry

to write new business and also maintain their renewals. For insureds with a good loss history, there should be some options being offered by their brokers.

Randy Proos: In Florida, I would tell you that we've seen the General Liability rates remain stable and/or decrease to some degree. The rental companies in Florida have enjoyed stark increases in rentals over the past five years due to the construction boom. Premiums have increased as a function of that, however those increases were proportionally lower due to decreases in rates based on much larger rental revenue. The economic boom has ended, however we believe the lower rate structures will hold based on a softening insurance market. Equipment rates also appear to be trending down.

What are important loss prevention control measures that an aerial work platform or rough terrain forklift owning company can take to lessen risk, prevent accidents and ultimately lower their insurance premiums?

Conner: Understanding of the safety rules that govern the safe operation of this type of equipment would by far be the single most important loss control measure. Proper initial training along with frequent continuing education goes a long way in reducing accidents, promoting confidence in the work place and ultimately reducing the

overall insurance costs.

Phil Kelling: Most importantly it comes down to age and maintenance of the equipment along with good operator training. Operator error is usually a major component of any accident, but older equipment without the newest safety devices is less forgiving.

Proos: Running MVRs (motor vehicle reports) more frequently on company drivers is a good idea. From a liability standpoint, training the lessee operator is an important function. Some of my clients require a list of operators that the lessee intends to use on the lift equipment. Each operator is required to be trained and sign off that he has been instructed on all safety measures. Photos of the operators are taken and sales personnel are required to inspect job sites for adherence to safety procedures and proper use of the equipment. Warnings are given for improper use and repeat violations will terminate the rental.



Jeff McGeary, executive vice president, sales of Allied Insurance Brokers Inc.

What are obvious and not so obvious measures that aerial and telehandler rental yards can take to reduce their insurance costs?

Kelling: Insurance costs are relative. You really don't know the cost of your insurance until all the claims are paid or not paid.

So, attention needs to be paid to the insurance coverage. An underwriter tries to select the best risk in the business. How do you convince the underwriter that you are that best risk and deserve the lowest rates? To the underwriter, the proof is not having any losses, but also what steps you are taking to prevent losses. Take the time to explain how you run your business better than anyone else. I had an insurance agent tell me that he has a tougher time selling the underwriter on the merits of a risk than he had in selling the client. Find a company that understands the business and an agent that understands you.

Proos: Not so obvious might include periodic meetings with your agent or broker to review claims reserves. Losses and claims are valued on the total incurred loss amounts which include the portions of a claim that have been paid as well as the reserve amounts (what the insurance company anticipates it will pay at a later date). Claims that are over reserved could have an adverse effect on the renewal premiums.

R. Jeffrey McGeary: Maybe not so obvious is that the safety details be updated on their aerial reach equipment. A lot of times, decals are rubbed off and not put back on. And we also recommend those decals be in Spanish or a universal language people can understand.

What are the most important elements in claims reporting? Should a company establish set procedures in the case of claims reporting? Why is speed in the reporting process important?

Kelling: In any incident speed is critical. First and foremost treating the injuries and preventing further damage. Employees need to be trained on what to do in an emergency situation: how to get help; how to prevent further injuries or damage; what information to gather; what not to say; what evidence needs to be preserved and how. It has been shown that the faster the insurance adjusters can get to a claimant the lower the settlement. No matter who is at fault.

McGeary: Paper trail. I would have in everyone's truck a disposable camera, updated on an annual basis. Pictures should be taken in the event of a claim. Have your employees only interviewed by you, not someone else. Statements should be controlled by one person within the organization to avoid miscommunication.

How often should a company complete some sort of risk assessment program? Should risk assessment be done by a third-party?

Conner: In this type of high risk industry, a risk assessment program should be reviewed at least annually. Risk assessment is an on-going process that changes as the business changes, the laws governing business changes and the marketplace changes. Hazards that are both insurable and uninsurable (at least at a reasonable cost) should be identified and reasonable methods for controlling/containing or financing those hazards should be formulated. A third-party who is knowledgeable in this industry and in the insurance industry could be employed, however engaging your own employees to become involved in the risk identification and risk management processes can be very beneficial to both the employees and the business.

Kelling: Risk assessment should be built into the job description of every employee. It should be part of their nature. Without the employees' buy in, a manager or owner cannot make the progress he needs to make. I suggest daily, weekly, monthly and annual inspections covering different areas. Again employees should be part of the process, helping to design the inspection process and any forms to document it. A third party audit can often point out the blind spots or at least highlight the importance.

What types of initiatives can you recommend to aerial platform and telehandler operating companies to lower their insurance premiums, or at least stabilize them?

Conner: Safety training, driver training, certification, fleet safety program, drug testing and incentive programs all could serve to reduce costs and an overall program should be established on an individual company basis depending on the company and the resources available.

Kelling: Your best run businesses pay the lowest insurance premiums over time and your best run companies have the best employees. It starts with hiring the best and then investing in their training. In the education area, driver education is under appreciated. Your drivers can be the source of your highest



Randy Proos, director of construction services at USI Inc.



liability. It is serious and often fatal if a person falls from a platform, but a whole family can be wiped out with one auto accident.

Pros: Documented risk assessments and safety training are important. Additionally, bare rental contracts should be reviewed periodically to ensure their enforceability. Have you analyzed your certificate procedures recently? Does your broker review your



Ellen Conner, senior account executive at Neace Lukens Insurance

your insurance carrier. The carriers will credit a well documented safety and training program.

What should you look for when pursuing the right coverage/insurance company? How often should your insurance program be reviewed?

certificate procedures? When was the last time an attorney reviewed your lease agreement? Does it conform to the indemnity statutes in the states that you do business in? In the world of bare rental of equipment, it is imperative that you have a valid and enforceable lease agreement. You must also obtain certificates of insurance naming your firm as an additional insured on your lessees general liability coverage. The insurance companies want to know that you have your two best risk transfer tools tuned up and in place. When your lessee tips the lift over and you get sued, your insurance carrier will seek to tender the claim to the lessee for handling. This can only be achieved via an enforceable lease agreement or via the additional insured status granted to you by your lessee. Insurance companies will charge less when you can demonstrate that you have lessened your exposure to claims.

McGeary: I would always encourage the manufacturers do repairs on your work. All the major manufacturers offer them. That's another paper trail item that can be put in their hat. Another thing from an auto standpoint, aerial reach people, although not considered truckers, are considered truckers in some states. Make sure your drivers are filed in a DOT format. This includes but not limited to physicals, drug testing and motor vehicles reports.

Can establishing and maintaining a formal safety and training program help a company get better insurance rates? How does this work?

Conner: Establishing and maintaining formal safety and training programs are essential for getting the lowest rates from the preferred circle of insurance carriers. A company can be provided with a "shell" program for both safety and training that can be tailored to the needs of the individual company.

Kelling: The underwriter is trying to insure the best of the best. A formal safety and training program tells the underwriter that you are doing everything you can to be the best. Over time the loss history will prove it.

Pros: Yes. The key is formalized safety and training. Telling your insurance carrier that you are safe won't work. Your safety manuals should be organized and in good order. Document your training so this can be conveyed in writing to

arena and have claims representatives local to your area. Your agent will play a key role in the selection of carriers and the soundness of the overall insurance program. Your program should be monitored all year and reviewed in depth annually.

Kelling: Find an insurance company that understands your business and develop a relationship. I suggest that the insurance be bid about every three years or if there is a major change in market conditions. The underwriters have a long memory and remember the shoppers. They won't sharpen their pencil for them. In the long run, they end up paying a higher rate. An occasional testing of the market is good too. Every three years is about right. Don't take the job of changing companies lightly. And whatever you do, make the competition between the companies fair. Sharing rates with competing companies to

Conner: Specifically, a carrier should be AM Best Rated "A" or higher and should be licensed to do business in your state. The carrier should also have specialization in the lift and access

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lower premiums will be seen by the underwriter as not playing fair.

McGeary: First thing is what is the financial rating or lack thereof. The most common rating companies are AM Best and Moodys. Make sure this insurance carrier is going to be around five years down the road to pay a claim that may take up to five years to settle.

Ask what other telehandler companies the specialty brokers insure. Ask for referrals. You should review your insurance policy every year. There's a negative impact to marketing your company to several brokers every other year. Many have a large workload. If they see the same submission from multiple insurance agencies, they know their chances of writing the business is less likely.

How can a company ensure that its insurance coverage is comprehensive - that in the event of an accident there are no hidden surprises of incomplete coverage?

Conner: As stated above, your agent plays a key role in helping you understand your insurance program, what is typically covered and not covered, the application of deductibles, the choice of council should that become necessary and specific areas of concern for your industry. Neace Lukens is equipped with a proprietary



Phil Kelling, president and CEO of ARA Insurance Services

"checklist" for the aerial and telehandlers industries.

Proos: While you can never be guaranteed that you have zero coverage gaps, you can certainly minimize your exposure to incomplete coverage by utilizing insurance programs and brokers who specialize in your industry. Specialty brokers know the right questions to ask and

typically will have supplemental applications that drill down into your scope of operations.

McGeary: By dealing with a broker that has accounts in your industry group. As your representative to the insurance company, offer advice on certificate wording. We're getting more primary and non contributory certificate requests. They are very tough to subrogate against their customer in the event of a claim that may not have anything to do with their equipment.

How important is it to contract with an insurance company that specializes in covering aerial work platforms and rough terrain forklifts, rather than just a general insurer?

Conner: It is essential to be covered with a carrier experienced in this industry. Most

importantly at the time of a loss, the carrier's experience in the handling, negotiating and settling claims will serve to reduce the overall cost, time and frustration involved.

Kelling: It is of ultimate importance. A company that understands the business and is prepared to write this relatively high risk business is in it for the long haul and won't cut and run when the market hardens and you need help the most. You may save some money in the short run with a company that doesn't understand the business and underestimates the cost. This will be short lived. The coverages are probably lacking and they will be the first to bale out.

Proos: If the insurance company doesn't understand your industry how can they manage your claims effectively? Preferably the insurance carrier and broker are involved pre-loss with respect to managing the lease agreements and providing industry specific loss control services. Post-loss the insurance carrier should be capable of deploying their claims resources immediately after being informed of the loss. It's critical that the adjuster and defense counsel understand your companies' operations and have ample experience in defending claims in your industry group. Additionally, coverages need to be specifically tailored for your industry exposures. Your equipment floater policy should contain a waiver of subrogation if you are charging for and granting damage waivers to your customers. Your lessee is certainly not expecting your insurance carrier to seek reimbursement for the damaged lift they paid you for if your lessee bought the damage waiver.



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Bil-Jax is best known for its scaffolding and trailer-mounted platforms, but this year sees the Ohio company enter the self-propelled access market and also look seriously at export markets. John Wyatt spoke to the company's

Chuck Hutchinson.



Chuck Hutchinson, vice president of sales and co-owner, says the company's main focus right now is to complete its Summit Series development project, releasing several new products over this year and 2008.

To be one of the largest scaffold manufacturers in North America isn't good enough for Bil-Jax. The company's management team has ambitions to offer the widest range of trailer-mounted booms in the country, even Europe. As it continues to develop its Summit Series of trailer-mounted products, the company also has now entered the self propelled market with its new X-Boom Series.

With the company name going strong now for 60 years as of 2007, Bil-Jax has been in the lift industry for approximately 25 years. Its product line of equipment, from scaffolding to its lift lines (trailer-mounted and the new telescopic booms), equipment trailers and staging, exceeds 6,000 end items.

However, it wasn't until 2003 when the company reached a crossroads with its lift line. When the company's current management team and a private US investment group purchased the business from German scaffold company Plettac, the team had to decide what to do with the line.

"We decided in 2003 when we bought the company that we either needed to get involved in a big way in lifts or get out of lifts," says co-owner and Vice President of Sales Chuck Hutchinson, who has been with the company for almost 15 years. "And we decided to get involved in lifts.



We redesigned our product line so we could offer industry-leading features to our customers so we could in fact dominate the category of trailer-mounted boom lifts, at least in the United States and hopefully around the world."

Product line expansion

The company has introduced five new trailer models since 2003, says Hutchinson, and this year sees the company enter the self-propelled boom lift market with its new X-Boom series. The first model is the 43 1/2 foot working height model SLT 3632, introduced at this year's World of Concrete in Las Vegas, which will be released in October to coincide with the company's 60th anniversary.

Hutchinson says the self-propelled line is different because it is a lightweight, four wheel drive machine with hydraulic outriggers. The SLT 3632 machine features 32 feet maximum outreach, 3.5 mph speed, 4WD, oscillating axles, a grade capability of 45°, and auto-leveling up to 12.5°.

"Its advantage is weight, which affects transportability and cost. With the combination of a trailer and machine, it will weigh less than 10,000 pounds with no special licensing required," Hutchinson says.

In addition to the launch of the X-Boom Series, the company continues to develop its Summit



The X-Boom model 45XA will be released in October.

Series towable lifts. This range is now being marketed in Europe, with a CE-marked European version of the 3632T shown on the IPAF booth at the massive Bauma exhibition in Munich, Germany in April. The company continued to build greater awareness of the product line at the UK's SED show in May.

file

Bil-Jax's main office, in Archbold, OH. The 350,000 square foot facility, built in 1995, is where the company's product lines are all manufactured.



The new SLT-3632 is the company's "first" product in the X-Boom line. The company says the product is built to industry standards but is less expensive and light weight. More products in this line will be released next year.



"Bauma gave us exposure to people we haven't met before and gave them an opportunity to see our machines, get to meet us, and find out what our intentions are," says Hutchinson. "From our standpoint, it was a very good show. We created lots of interest in our products, generated lots of leads from people who wanted to represent us. And since that time, we signed five dealers." These dealers are in Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.

Bil-Jax is also now entering the Latin American market, with a dealer already in Colombia. The company has a dealer in Beijing, China, and Hutchinson says talks are underway with a distributor in Australia. "We haven't completed our Australian certifications yet but as soon as we do that, we'll probably sign an Australian dealer," he says.

With its expansion plans and increased product lines, you might think the company has been growing. However, it is difficult to know by how much: because the company is privately-owned, Hutchinson declined to give annual sales numbers but says the last three years have been records for the company. He says this year's sales will be similar to last year's and with its emergence into the international market, next year will also be high sales.

"We expect to do more outside the US next year than obviously we're going to do this year," Hutchinson says. "That will help continue to fuel the growth. And we expect further growth in the domestic market, as well."

Lift line growth

He adds that although its sales are stronger in scaffolding, the lift line is a faster-growing market. The company expects at some point that the sales will be evenly split between scaffolding and lifts.

The residential slowdown in the US hasn't much impacted sales of the lift line, says Hutchinson, who reports that commercial and industrial business is still "red hot."

Can the company's manufacturing facility keep up with demand? Hutchinson says the company's facility in Archbold, OH, which comprises 350,000 square feet and was completed in 1995, is still relatively new. The facility has capabilities of producing 1,500 to 2,000 units per year, he says.

The company's strategy is to complete its X-Boom and Summit Series. As reported in *ALH*'s January/February issue, the X-Boom model SLT-3632 (aka 36XT) is the company's "first" product in the series. The next model, the 45 foot, self-propelled 45XA will be released in October. Next year, two more X-Booms will be released, one

of which is the SLT 5533XA, as well as two models in the "trailer mounted area," says Hutchinson, and adds there are field test units of the X-Boom Series being tested at its plant, with dealers and rental yards.

"I think our strategy is pretty apparent and simple: we intend to complete our Summit Series development project, which will include the traditional trailer-mounted boom products, and we've carried that one step forward into the four wheel drive, what we call the X-Boom," says Hutchinson. He says there are similarities between those two series, such as that all the lift structures are identical. The only thing that changes between the trailer-mounted and the self-propelled products is the chassis.

Expansion plans?

He says the company may move into tracked machines once the X-Boom line is complete. Does Bil-Jax have any thoughts to enter the scissor lift market? Hutchinson says at this time there are no plans, but the company isn't ruling it out. "We got a big enough project on our plate right now finishing out the development of our Summit Series machines. Once we get that completed, we'll take a look at what other options are out there and attractive." **ALH**

Survey says

Heavy investment over the past 12 months has resulted in a not unexpected 20% jump in the size of the world's biggest access fleets. ALH summarizes the results of the latest Access-50 survey from our sister publication, *Access International*.

Fifteen of the world's biggest aerial platform owners grew their fleets by over 20% last year, and eight of them broke the 40% growth barrier. Acquisitions played a big part in this - notably in the case of Ashtead Group (owner of Sunbelt Rentals)- but organic growth and big spending on fleets played

an equally important role, with companies as diverse as Simplex in Canada simply spending a lot on lifts.

The overall impact of this heavy investment has been a 21% increase in the size of the world's Access-50 fleet, to 402,900 units. An almost equal rise in the biggest fleets sees

+1,000 telehandler fleets

1	United Rentals	10,445
2	Loxam	3,400
3	Ahern Rentals	3,130
4	RSC	3,000 (Est)
5	Ashtead Group	3,000 (Est)
6	NES Rentals	2,275
7	H&E	2,050
8	Hertz	2,000 (Est)
9	Nikken	1,966
10	GAM	1,508
11	Neff Rental	1,397
12	Sunstate Equip	1,300
13	UK Forks (VP plc)	1,200

Rank	Company	Country	Fleet size		%	Countries of Operation	web site
07			2007	2006	+/-		
1	United Rentals	US	73,555	71,093	3.5%	USA, Canada, Mexico	www.unitedrentals.com
2	RSC Equipment Rental	US	35,705	29,000 ^(E)	19%	US, Canada	www.rscrental.com
3	Ashtead Group	UK	31,510	19,355	63.0%	UK, US	www.ashtead-group.com
	<i>Includes Sunbelt Rentals and A-Plant, and NationsRent acquisition.</i>						
4	Hertz Equipment Rental Co	US	19,900 ^(E)	17,000 ^(E)	17.1%	US, Canada, France, Spain	www.hertzequip.com
5	NES Rentals	US	19,210	16,375	17.3%	US	www.nesrentals.com
6	Nikken Corp	Japan	17,961	3,000 ^(E)	-	Japan	www.rental.co.jp
7	Ahern Rentals	US	13,995	11,400	22.8%	US	www.ahernrentals.com
8	Lavendon Group	UK	13,760	12,784	7.6%	UK, Fr, Sp, Ge, Middle East	www.lavendongroup.com
9	H&E Equipment Services	US	13,322	12,869	3.5%	US	www.he-equipment.com
10	Nishio Rent All	Japan	10,300	7,000 ^(E)	47.1%	Japan, Malayasia, Thailand, Singapore	www.nishio-rent.co.jp
11	Ramirent	Finland	9,265	6,701	38.3%	Ukraine	www.ramirent.com
12	GAM	Spain	9,125	3,562	256%	Spain, Portugal	www.gamalquiler.com
13	Loxam	France	9,100	7,500	21.3%	Fr, UK, Ire Ge, Swiz, Be, Sp, H, Lux	www.loxam.fr
14	Cramo	Fin/Swe	8,195	6,661	23.0%	Scandinavia, Est, Lat, Lit, Pol, Cz, Russia	www.cramo.com
15	Riwal	Netherlands	7,895	5,283	49.4%	Europe and Middle East	www.riwal.com
16	Pekkaniska	Finland	6,000	-	-	Finland, Russia, Baltics	www.pekkanska.com
17	Aktio Corp	Japan	6,000 ^(E)	4,000 ^(E)	-	Japan	www.aktio.co.jp
18	UMESA	Spain	5,200	3,600	44.4%	Spain	www.umesa.com
19	AVS Systemlift	Germany	4,662	4,513	3.3%	Germany, Austria	www.systemlift.de
20	Sunstate Equipment	US	4,500	4,177	7.7%	US	www.sunstateequip.com
21	Sumisho Rental Support (Bluetec)	Japan	4,500 ^(E)	4,500 ^(E)	0.0%	Japan	www.srscorp.co.jp
22	Kiloutou	France	4,400	4,000	10.0%	France	www.kiloutou.fr
23	Coates Hire	Australia	4,316	4,448	-3.0%	Australia, UK, Indonesia	www.coates.com.au

Top 20 Mast climber fleets

One innovation in the Access-50 this year is a list of the top 20 mast climber rental companies. This was compiled from information from various industry sources, and we are confident of the reliability of the figures.

1	Ramirent (Finland)	1,150
2	Alimak Hek (Global)	975
3	SGB Mastclimbers (UK)	837
4	Ibemaq (Spain)	650
5	Sante (Singapore)	500
6	Ates (Spain)	450
7	Fraco (USA, Ca, Fr)	450
8	Mainco- Forza Gruas (Sp)	400
9	Jaso (Spain)	350
10	TNT (USA)	350
11	CME (Singapore)	250
12	Soverign Access (UK)	180
13	Al Laith (Dubai)	150
14	Sun Scaffold (US)	150
15	Sunbelt Rentals (US)	127
16	MidWest (US)	120
17	ATL (France)	100
18	Safeway (US)	100
19	Select Equipment (US)	100
20	CCM (Singapore)	90

Be a part of the ALH20/20

American Lift & Handlers will be conducting its first ALH20/20 poll in the September/October issue. The 20/20 will be a list of the top 20 aerial lift fleets and the top 20 telehandler fleets in North America.

ALH is asking readers to submit information on their aerial and telehandler fleet sizes by the end of August. All we need are the unit sizes of the fleets, with the aerials category including scissor lifts, self-propelled booms, truck mounted aerials, vertical personnel lifts, construction hoists and mast climbers (number of drive units).

The telehandler category includes standard telehandlers and rough terrain vertical mast units, but should not include industrial forklifts.

ALH will send out inquiries for the 20/20 and forms will posted on www.khl.com/alh.

■ For more information, contact John Wyatt at 313-894-2303 or e-mail john.wyatt@khl.com

the top 5 fleet - all US companies - rise to a whopping 179,880 units, and the top 10 reaching more than 250,000 machines.

Number one again is United Rentals, with a relatively modest 3.5% increase to just over 73,555 machines. It is not-so-closely followed by RSC with 35,705 units and Ashtead Group (combining A-Plant, Sunbelt and NationsRent)

with 31,510 aerials. Ahern Rentals also had significant growth with an increase of 22.8%, bringing its fleet size of aerials and booms to 13,995.

This year for the first time, ALH had a look at telehandler fleets, as well (see box below). Not everyone was willing to part with this information. Listed are those companies that have more than 1,000 telehandlers. **ALH**

Rank 07	Company	Country	Fleet size 2007	Fleet size 2006	% +/-	Countries of Operation	web site
24	AFI-Uplift	UK	4,075	2800	45.5%	UK	www.afi-platforms.co.uk
25	The Platform Company	UK	3,785	2845	33.0%	UK	www.platformcompany.co.uk
26	Acces Industrie	France	3,733	2928	27.5%	France, Spain, Portugal	www.acces-industrie.com
27	Gruppo Venpa	Italy	3,300	3300	0.0%	Italy, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenja, Montenegro	www.gruppoventpa3.it
28	Euroloc	Spain	3,000	-	-	Spain, Portugal, Morocco	www.euroloc.es
=29	All Erection	US	3,000 ^(E)	2800 ^(E)	-	USA, Canada	www.allcrane.com
=29	Star Rentals	US	3,000 ^(E)	2000 ^(E)	-	Western USA	www.starrentals.com
=29	Kanamoto	Japan	3,000 ^(E)	-	-	Japan	www.kanamoto.co.jp
32	Simplex Equipment Rental	Canada	2,916	1800	62.0%	Canada	www.simplex.ca
33	Boels BV	Netherlands	2,760	1892	45.9%	Neth, Bel, Ge, Aust, Cz.	www.boels.com
34	Partnerlift	Germany	2,750	2270	21.1%	Germany	www.partnerlift.com
35	Hewden Stuart plc	UK	2,700	2600	3.8%	UK	www.hewden.co.uk
36	Neff Rental	US	2,613	-	-	US	www.neffrental.com
37	DK Rental	Belgium	2,600 ^(E)	2600	-	Bel, Fr, Sp	www.dkrental.be
38	Mateco	Germany	2,513	2446	2.7%	Ge, Bel, Fr, Swiz, Aus, Pol, Slov, Cz, Den, Lux	www.mateco.de
39	Boom Logistics	Australia	2,500	-	-	Australia	www.boomlogistics.com.au
=40	Recnos (Gecoss Corp)	Japan	2,500 ^(E)	2500 ^(E)	-	Japan	www.gecoss.co.jp
=40	Vamasa	Spain	2,500 ^(E)	2200 ^(E)	-	Spain	www.vamasa.com
42	Height for Hire/Easi-Uplifts	Ireland	2,251	-	-	Ireland, UK	www.heightforhire.com
43	SGB Group	UK	2,200 ^(E)	2200 ^(E)	-	Europe, Asia, Middle East	www.sgb.co.uk
44	Groupe Salti	France	2,135	2071	3.1%	France	www.groupesalti.fr
45	Lev	France	2,000	-	-	France	www.lev.fr
=46	Tokyo Rental	Japan	2,000 ^(E)	2000 ^(E)	-	Japan	www.t-ren.com
=46	Ryoki Co Ltd	Japan	2,000 ^(E)	2000 ^(E)	-	Japan	www.ryoki-japan.co.jp
48	Midwest Aerials & Equipment	US	1,800	1650	9.1%	US	www.midwestaerials.com
49	Clem Group	Spain	1,732	-	-	Spain	www.clem.es
50	Alimak Hek Group	Sweden	1,640	1625	0.9%	Europe, US, Asia, Australia	www.alimakhek.com



Atrium double decker



Canada's Klimer Manufacturing has successfully completed a challenging atrium mast climber installation on the new Marriott Hotel in Grand Rapids, MI.

The glaziers, Antamex International, needed to glaze a 26 floor atrium, and required a 17 feet by 27 feet trapezoidal shaped work platform that fitted exactly the contours of the atrium. It wasn't possible to use a more conventional externally mounted climber because of the inability to attach to the curtain wall system.

In addition to the main platform, a much narrower upper platform - 5 feet wide and supported 9 1/2 feet above the main platform - was installed at the outer edge of the main deck

to allow glaziers to make the top connections for the 600 pound, 9 1/2 foot high panels. A small traveling hoist to lift and horizontally position the panels was also installed on the platform.

Scheduling constraints meant that the glazing panels could not be stored on the upper floors, so the platform was loaded at the ground and raised

Beta Max Inc. releases its Maxial Track Hoist for the industrial painting market. Designed to provide an easier and safer method of lifting general building materials, the track hoist is for confined spaces where frame or scaffolding is used. Created lightweight to allow easy transport, assembly and break down, its aluminum track weighs 3 pounds per foot and is available in dimensions of 3 feet 3 inches, 6 feet 6 inches and 9 feet 9 inches and has a payload capacity of 450 pounds. The hoist is equipped with upper and lower limit switches, an electromagnetic disc brake, and universal carriage locking device in the event of cable breakage. A hand-held pendant is also included with the controller, for added safety.



AWPT scores new mast climbing members

Two mast climber specialist companies are among new members of the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), parent company of Aerial Work Platform Training Inc (AWPT).

Canadian manufacturer Fraco Products and Boston-based mast climber training company, Northeast Work Platform Training, have both joined the organization and are planning to offer AWPT training for erectors and dismantlers of mast climbers.

Northeast Work Platform Training's Principal Tom Lawler said he joined IPAF because there was no mast climbing training in his region, where the training company officially opened this January in Dorchester, MA just outside of Boston.

"We're really in the early stages and trying to

get the word out that we're open," said Lawler, who said the advantages of AWPT is that the training offers legitimacy and that the training materials are available in international standards. "Plus all the information is available in several languages, so having it in Spanish is a benefit," he said.

Fraco, along with longer-standing IPAF members Alimak Hek and Mastclimbers LLC, both of Atlanta, GA, are opening or already have opened training centers for mast climbing work platforms.

AWPT training is designed to meet state and federal requirements for operator training and includes a mix of theory, practice and testing. Successful trainees receive a Powered Access Licensed-Registration (PAL) card. **ALH**



Avro develops new prototype

Ontario's Avro Hoist Co. has begun manufacturing its own hoist cages in-house. Prototypes have been engineered in Canada for 7,500 and 8,000 pound capacity hoists, available counterweighted and non-counterweighted. The company has its

own industrial control shop, which also retrofits control panels and completely refurbishes used hoists for customers. Avro has previously imported hoists from China and installed the electrical components in Canada. **ALH**

Fraco Products has supplied platforms to complete the "Water Cube," the National Swimming Center that will form part of the Beijing Olympic Park for the 2008 Olympic Games. Its mast climbers were first used to install parts of a frame comprising 22,000 steel beams connected at 12,000 nodes.

In the second phase, the platforms were used to tighten a semi-transparent lightweight plastic polymer skin wrapping around the frame. This project follows Fraco's involvement two years ago in the construction of the National Grand Theatre in Beijing.



with all the personnel and materials required for that shift. The platform's capacity was 12,000 pounds plus five men, and maximum traveling speed was 30 feet/min.

One final requirement for the platform was four hydraulically propelled folding arms - one upper and one lower at each end of the platform, 8 feet long and 3 feet wide - to give access to the exterior 8 foot wing walls.

The platforms were on site for five months, but the glazing component of the project was completed within eight weeks. **ALH**

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United's new leader

United Rental's **new interim CEO is Michael J. Kneeland, who took up the post on 4 June following the retirement of Wayland Hicks. He talked to ALH about growth, and the company's vast access fleet.**

ALH: United is already the world's biggest equipment rental company, so where do you see further growth coming from?

MJK: From an operational standpoint, we have numerous avenues for growth. The North American marketplace is still under-penetrated when it comes to equipment rental; industry sources estimate less than 40% penetration in the construction sector. Some of the most exciting opportunities exist within the government sector and industry. We announced in May that United Rentals has earned GSA status, which allows us to do business with branches of the US government.

Private manufacturing and industry have been even more prone to owning their own equipment. This is partly a habit, and partly due to labor agreements that constrain certain types of change. We have seen many situations where a change of ownership triggers a paradigm shift. The sector presents some challenges, but there is still ample opportunity for us to pursue this business.

Everyone in our company understands that our mission is growth. Truck drivers have as much information about a territory as sales reps or branch managers. Our drivers are out there every day on jobsites where the trends begin,

United Rentals' new interim CEO, Mike Kneeland.

where competitors are, where opportunities are. They can help grow the company.

ALH: Right now, your fleet mix is about 40% aerials. Do you intend to keep that percent intact as you make future fleet investments?

MJK: We try not to make assumptions about future fleet mix until the capital investment period – that's when demand is analyzed. The mix really is determined by the needs of our customers. What I can tell you is that we are very comfortable with access equipment accounting for about 40% of our fleet at this time. Aerial was one of the top performing regions in our company in 2006. This looks like it will be another strong year. It's a business where scale matters; we are often asked to provide 50 or more lifts to large projects that require months or even years of construction.

ALH: What future opportunities do you see for United Rentals? Will you look at expanding into rental markets overseas?

MJK: We have always been open to attractive growth opportunities beyond our current markets, although we are not actively pursuing them at this time. As I mentioned earlier, there is plenty of growth to be found in our own backyard. United Rentals has had an aggressive and highly successful cold start program in place since 2005. We established more than 70 new branches in the last two years and plan another 30 to 35 openings by December.

ALH: What is the overall operating environment like in North America?

MJK: Every indication is that United Rentals and the customers we serve will be operating in a positive construction environment for some time. We constantly take the temperature of market conditions in our regions, and we're very comfortable with what we see at this point. We have reasonable visibility through 2007 and into 2008, with a number of large project commitments in place.

ALH: So construction spending is still strong?

MJK: Our primary market in the US and Canada is private non-residential construction. This market spent 15.6% more in the first quarter compared with first quarter 2006. Our expectation is that spending will

continue to increase this year, and in fact through 2008, although we do agree with industry analysts who feel that the growth rate will likely moderate.

Within private non-residential construction, we have seen the strongest demand for equipment come from the retail, manufacturing and healthcare sectors. These are the same sectors that drove market demand last year – not only with new construction, but also equipment used for facility expansion, refurbishing and maintenance. Residential construction, on the other hand, has been weak to moderate at best in the States. Homebuilding is a secondary market for us, but we do see the impact in areas such as southern California where we have a high concentration of branches that serve those contractors.

ALH: You recently announced that you plan to increase your capital expenditures in rental fleet this year, beyond the original plan. What prompted that decision?

MJK: We purchased US\$265 million of fleet in the first quarter, about 30% of our rental capex plan. Most of this fleet was absorbed into our branches by mid-March when we began to see time utilisation trend upwards. During April time utilisation was up more than two percentage points year over year.

Given our confidence in the current operating environment and our visibility into 2008, we decided in May to increase growth capital by another \$50 million this year. When we improve time utilisation on an expanded fleet, as we are doing now, it indicates that there is a strong, underlying demand for our equipment. Our focus, as always, is on our customers and our ability to meet their needs.

"We are very comfortable with access equipment accounting for about 40% of our fleet at this time. Aerial was one of the top performing regions in our company in 2006. This looks like it will be another strong year."

Note: A longer version of this interview appeared in the June issue of ALH's sister publication, *International Rental News (IRN)*.

Scissor Lifts + Humanity = Harnesses

In this latest installment of the discussion on the use of personal fall protection systems by occupants of scissor lifts, I am going to try a different approach. Instead of attempting to qualify my pro harness opinion with a list of items designed to augment my side of the issue or diminish the other, I am going to take a broader view.

Fall protection, in all of its forms, is designed to protect a person from injuries that may be sustained as the result of a fall. It does this by either stopping the fall before impact with the ground occurs or by preventing a fall from even happening at all.

In order to justify the use of fall protection, one must first concede that a fall hazard presenting a risk of serious injury to a person is indeed present. Considering the frailty of the human body with respect to absorbing the impact of a fall, I think we can all agree that just standing on the deck of most scissor lifts, even with the platform lowered, places the body at a height that presents a significant risk of injury should a fall occur. Ergo, fall protection is required - hence guardrails are present.

To many, that is where it ends, with occupants of scissor lifts surrounded by sturdy guardrails that prevents them from moving beyond the perimeter of the platform and in doing so, prevents a fall from occurring. But it appears that since so many people are falling from scissor lifts, guardrails alone are not adequate

Anchorage installed on scissor lift platform deck.



fall protection. Some answers to this may be higher guardrails (just a thought), a supplemental fall protection system (harness/lanyard), providing occupants with meaningful training and meticulously maintaining it and so on.

In a perfect world, scissor lift operations would be conducted in a secluded area on hard level ground with no need to move and/or relocate the unit. However, scissor lifts operate in the real world where there are bumps, potholes, grades, moving vehicles, and other obstructions. Any of which may cause the unit to lurch, move abruptly or tip over. In many

These will probably be showing up on more scissor lifts soon.



Robert Vetter, an experienced training professional with the IVES Training Group, believes that operators in scissor lifts should wear harnesses. Here, he explains why he disagrees with many in the industry.

instances where this has occurred, the guardrails were rendered useless as the occupant(s) sailed over them.

Another unpredictable element is the human factor. Since scissor lift occupants are people we have to accept that they are potentially unpredictable. With this in mind, a scissor lift occupant/operator could react incorrectly to a situation or just make a bad decision in spite of their training and operate a control incorrectly, reach too far out of the platform, climb guardrails, etc., and find themselves on their way down.

Our instincts as a species have gotten us this far so it is not likely that humanity will overcome this inexplicable behavior in which we choose to do the wrong thing by process and/or reflex. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to expect any amount of training and/or practice will eliminate it.

That being the case, a supplemental fall protection system to augment the primary guardrail system ostensibly protects us from ourselves. This type of pro back-up system thinking has become evident in technology as close to us as automobiles fitted with brakes that engage automatically under certain conditions, computers with features that prevent us from destroying data and/or systems, even industrial mobile equipment systems that monitor and govern everything constantly. This technology allows operators to manipulate the controls however they wish, however they also override the operator when certain parameters are exceeded.

These types of automatic



THE AUTHOR: Rob Vetter has been involved in the safety training field for 24 years and is particularly noted for his expertise with industrial mobile equipment. For the past 11 years, he has been with the IVES Training Group where he currently serves as technical director. He can be reached at 800-643-1144 or rob@ivestraining.com



we must first concede that a fall hazard exists, which it does and that's why we have guardrails. In order to justify the need for a supplemental fall protection (such as a harness) we must then concede that a risk of a fall beyond the guardrails ability to stop it is warranted and that's where I think we're all having a bit of trouble. Many believe that risk exists and many others do not.

I have heard most all of the arguments against the use of harnesses on scissors and actually agree with some of them. However, I do feel that supplemental fall protection for scissor lift occupants is warranted and at the moment, a personal fall restraint system (harness and lanyard) seems to be the best way to get it done. Ultimately, I firmly believe that harnesses will save more lives than not.



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override/backup systems are what I think of a harness as being, in a metaphorical sort of way. They will (arguably) allow you to operate the unit as you please but will prevent you from falling if you should do something wrong.

In order to justify the need for fall protection,

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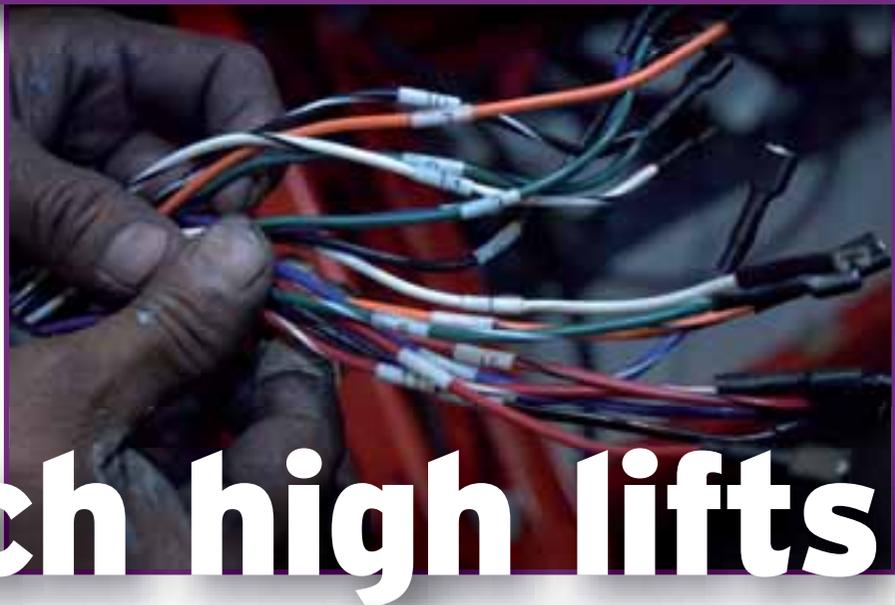
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Equip your service technicians with a laptop, that's the advice of Sunbelt's Director of Safety, Jeff Stachowiak.



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Hi-tech high lifts

As you have found out with your car, if you open the hood there is very little you can recognize any more. Of course the battery, radiator, air cleaner, and windshield washer are still there, somewhere, but what about the spark plugs, spark plug wires, oil filter, and distributor (now I'm really dating myself)? Heaven forbid if the car stops running.

Aerial work platforms have gone high tech as well, since quite a few years ago. For example, JLG introduced ADE (advanced design electronics) back in 1995.

The days of a mechanic using a test light and trying to isolate the problem through a process of elimination are gone, replaced by laptops, software, firmware, interfaces, analyzers, and self diagnostics. Of course, problems can still be diagnosed the old way, but you will spend a lot of time (labor) and money on parts trying to fix a problem that could be fixed immediately with the right diagnostic help.

Even the cost of purchasing and maintaining maintenance manuals for all the different brands, models and years is costly versus downloading the searchable, selectable and up-to-date manuals for free if your techs have the laptop internet connection. Yes, free.

If the traditional paper maintenance manual costs \$45 each and you have to maintain a stock of say 40 manuals, those 40 traditional manuals would pay for a nice high-end laptop of roughly \$1,800 with almost unlimited capacity. Your tech can search for parts, order parts, directly from

the pictures on the laptop manuals, as well as schedule regular maintenance items like filters, hoses, and such, in anticipation of upcoming service. Just in time, ordering exactly what you need when you need it. This can reduce parts inventories and those pesky outdated leftover parts that every parts room ends up with.

This also helps the manufacturers keep manuals updated (electronically) so fixes, warranty fixes and safety bulletins are now in one place updated regularly right on the computer. Techs don't waste time looking in old, dated manuals going down the wrong road to fix what was already figured out after the paper manual was printed by the manufacturer.

Richard Mondelli, veteran aerial technician for Sunbelt Rentals in Jacksonville, FL relates this story. "Recently here in Jacksonville one of our best road techs was called to a job site. A new JLG 400S was running pretty bad. The lift was blowing black smoke, was running rough and was hard to start once the engine was hot. He hooked up the JLG hand analyzer but no error code was showing. So, he tried changing some parts out with what he had on the service truck but still no luck.

"By this time, the customer was getting pretty upset. The tech made a phone call to dispatch and we decided to swap out the unit and bring it into the shop. When the machine arrived, we hooked up the laptop. But no error code was indicated. So, after looking at the data on the laptop for a few minutes, we noticed the water temperature was not coming up to where it should. A faulty temperature sending unit had the lift's computer in the cold start mode causing a rich fuel condition. So why was there not an error code? This is what is called an inside parameter fault.



THE AUTHOR:
Jeff Stachowiak is Sunbelt Rental's National Safety Director. He regularly speaks at various trade shows, most recently at the SAF-T Conference held during the SIA's annual convention in Long Beach, CA. He can be e-mailed at jstachowiak@sunbeltrentals.com.

"After the correct diagnosis, the total time of the repair was about one hour, most of which involved the time needed to let the engine cool down. The cost of travel time for the road tech, the cost of the tractor trailer and driver time to swap out the unit for the customer and crediting the customer back for the down time, would have probably bought a laptop for the road tech to be able to diagnose this in the field and make the repair in an hour in the field instead of at the shop. If you are a manager who has not embraced the high tech world of lift and engine diagnostics, you are paying for it even if you don't buy the technology."

Gary Riley, safety director at Midwest Aerial & Equipment out of St. Louis, MO had a similar high tech experience recently.

"A service call came in on a Genie Z-135 boom at a power plant somewhere in the middle of nowhere. After traveling almost two hours to the plant, the tech found a software problem and Genie informed him that he could download the updated software off Genie's internet site. Unfortunately for the tech, he was an hour from any kind of place that would offer internet connection. So, he climbed back into the service truck and drove to a McDonald's an hour away to get WiFi connection and download the updated software and then an hour back to upload it to the Z-135 boom's brain. It was after this upload the boom was fixed."

Whatever the method there are two things to remember: first, know the method of diagnostics before committing to buying the lift, because additional high tech equipment can change initial costs of the unit, and second, go and buy the high tech equipment to properly and efficiently diagnose the problem. You will pay for it either way.

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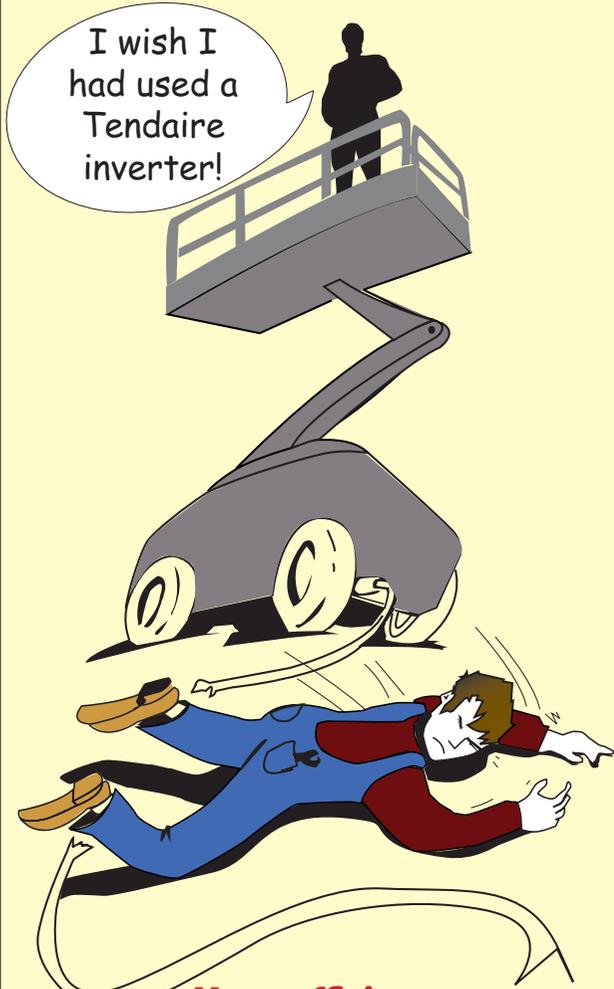
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