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Technical Article

Cleasby Manufacturing Inc.

It Just Makes Sense Conveyors Mounted on Power Beds

by Karen and John Cleasby, Western Roofing Magazine, Jan/Feb 2007

(Editor's Note: Karen and John Cleasby are a brother and sister team whom represent Cleasby Manufacturing's third generation of Cleasby's. Together, they share over 35 years of experience working at the manufacturing level. Product development, technical support, safety training, sales and marketing are just a few of the responsibilities they share. John or Karen may be reached at (800) 253-2729.)

It seems like it was only yesterday, okay, so it was more like 15 years ago, when "fiberglass" quite literally revolutionized the conveyor manufacturing business. In fact, today, it is unusual if not nearly unheard of to order anything but a fiberglass conveyor. Perhaps, this too, will be the story told about "power beds," the latest in truck bed design and a natural option on all conveyor trucks.

So what is a power bed? A new or existing truck bed can easily be converted into a power bed, which, by our definition, simply means that the truck bed has power to it, power that is used to move palletized roofing materials across the bed to the conveyor for easy loading.

Fatigue: The ergonomic value alone was worth the price according to Eric Thomas, operations manager for Allied Building Materials, Salt Lake City, Utah. "It just makes sense." The power bed minimizes the exhaustive and demanding physical requirements needed to lift, carry, and load materials onto the conveyor. In fact, one of Allied's most valued conveyor operators, a seventeen year industry veteran, said the power bed will extend his career four to five years, according to Thomas.

Time: "It saves time," said Thomas, "... about 45 minutes to an hour per truck load, sometimes even as much as an hour and a half. By reducing the walking, lifting, and carrying distance on the truck bed when loading materials onto the conveyor, the job is completed in less time increasing the number of deliveries per day.

Economic Value: Though not immediately recognizable, the proof presents itself in the form of reduced injuries related to the moving and lifting of materials which can cost the company big bucks in terms of downtime and workers' compensation claims. Conveyor operators are also more likely to stay with the job longer and perform more efficiently if they aren't in pain at the end of each day. Lower employee turnover translates into dollars saved in the hiring and training of new employees. Then, of course, since the power bed has proven to expedite the process of roof loading, more roofs are loaded per day adding to bottom line profits.

What's Involved: Power beds can be installed on most existing and new truck beds 24' - 28', preferably those made of steel. And since there are few moving parts installation is easy and maintenance is minimal. Power to the bed is supplied via the existing hydraulic system that runs off of the truck's PTO and provides power to the conveyor. A heavy-duty gearbox houses the drive system, and it's easily accessible for service and maintenance. The power bed is chain driven using heavy-duty logging chain that has been tested to move up to 40,000 lbs. of roofing material across the bed. Near the truck's headboard and at the point where the chain begins is a square steel bar made of tubing that moves with the chain and helps push the materials forward. According

to Thomas, if there is a drawback to having a power bed, "... it is that it takes up a small portion of the truck bed, but that doesn't really break my heart at all." If they had been loading the bed that full to where there would be no room for the power unit then as Thomas said, "chances are we would be close to overloading the bed."

If you had the "power" to reduce worker fatigue and save time and money wouldn't you do it? •••

This article Reprinted from Western Roofing magazine, January/February 2007, Volume 30, number 1