After buying a used center pivot, Loron Skretteberg towed each section behind his pickup down the highway to his farm.

A loader tractor lifted each tower axle onto a saddle on top of a modified truck axle. Tower wheels were removed for transport.

Center Pivot Irrigator Hits The Highway

Drivers passing through the Carson, N. Dak., area last summer were treated to a strange sight - a 165-ft. long section of a center pivot irrigator being pulled by a pickup down the highway.

The operator was Loron Skretteberg, who had recently bought a used center pivot system with the intention of moving it to his farm. He had taken the 8-tower pivot system apart and was moving it one span at a time to his farm 35 miles away. He pulled it at speeds up to 50 mph.

"I got lots of strange looks from people who wondered just what was going on," says Skretteberg. "It took eight trips to move the eight towers. I made two trips a day. Most farmers who buy used center pivots dismantle the systems piece by piece, which is a very labor intensive job. I couldn't do that because it was summer and I needed to start irrigating my crops. I didn't have much time so I came up with this idea."

To support each tower as he towed it, he made a saddle out of channel iron that fits on top of a 2-ton front truck axle. A battery-operated winch, with its cable tied to a steering rod at each end of the truck axle, was used to steer the irrigator around corners. Skretteberg sat on the truck axle and operated the winch, while another person drove the pickup.

"It worked great. I find it's much cheaper to buy a used center pivot irrigator and move it than it is to buy a new one," says Skretteberg. "If I hadn't used this idea, I would've had to remove all braces from the irrigator, mark each piece, put them on a truck, and then put everything back together again. It would have been a labor intensive and time-consuming job. The bolts on old center pivots get old and rusty, so sometimes you have to use a torch to cut them off. Also, it's always easier to take something apart than it is to put it back together again.

"I also bought a used 5-tower center pivot equipped with 185-ft. spans and moved it even farther - 110 miles. For much of the way I had to travel on an interstate freeway."

He used 8-in. sq. tubing to build the frame of the center pivot mover. A steel tongue comes forward off the axle and supports a pipe, which is secured to the center pivot's main pipe to hold the entire frame rigid. He welded channel iron to the back side of the axle to form a "saddle" for the center pivot axle that keeps it about 3 ft. off the ground.

He cut the truck axle in half and welded in new material to lengthen it by 3 ft. for more stability. He also lengthened the truck's tie rods.

To move each tower span, he first disassembled the tower spans. Then he used a front-end loader and chain to lift the center pivot axle high enough that he could remove the pivot wheels and back the truck axle under it. The two axles were chained together. Then he used the loader to lift the opposite end of the span onto a fifth wheel-type hitch on the pickup flatbed.

"I was able to set up fast. I could come into the field and be ready to leave in only about 45 minutes," says Skretteberg. "For safety I had another pickup driving behind me with flashers. No special permits were required.

Two-way toggle switch on battery-operated winch was used to make truck wheels steer left or right when turning corners.

"The center pivot axle is 14 ft. wide, so on the highway I tried to stay over to one side as much as I could. Whenever I came to a corner, I used a two-way toggle switch on the winch to make the wheels steer left or right. Once I got home I took everything off the truck axle, set it back on the ground, and put the irrigator wheels back on. Then I went back to the field to get another span."

He paid $500 per span for both center pivots. Most of the electrical components weren't usable so he had to install new tower boxes. "I had to invest some money in the center pivots but it was still cheaper than buying new. My total cost was about one fourth the cost of buying new."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Loron Skretteberg, 5880 54th Ave. S.W., Carson, N. Dak. 58529 (ph 701 622-3261; email: cabin@westriv.com).

Vol. 29, No. 3, 2005

Harold M. Johnson
Founder & Publisher Emeritus

Editor/Publisher
Mark Newhall (*mark@farmshow.com*)
Senior Editor
Bill Gergen (*bill@farmshow.com*)
Associate Editor
Dawn Throener (*dawn@farmshow.com*)
Contributing Editors
Janis Schole (*jschole@west-teq.net*)
Jim Ruen (*edgecom@acegroup.cc*)
C.F. Marley (*ph 217 563-2588*)
Office Manager
Anne Lash (*anne@farmshow.com*)
Circulation
Peg Nagel, Shelly Mende,
Mary Lunde (*circulation@farmshow.com*)

FARM SHOW (ISSN #01634518) is published bimonthly (6 times a year) for $19.95 per year ($29.95 in Canada and foreign countries) by Farm Show Publishing, Inc., P.O. Box 1029, 20088 Kenwood Trail, Lakeville, Minn. 55044. Periodicals postage paid at Lakeville, Minn., and Madelia, Minn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 952 469-5572; fax 952 469-5575). E-Mail: Circulation@FARMSHOW.com. Website: www.FARMSHOW.com. Single copy price is $5.00 ($7.00 in Canada). Publication No. 469490.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40032660
Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses To:
Dycom Mail Svcs.
495 Berry St.
Winnipeg, MB R3J 1N6
Email: circulation@farmshow.com

May-June, 2005

Wheel-Mounted Hole Puncher Helps Plant Trees

Planting tree seedlings is fast and easy for Larry Zenz, Parks, Ark., ever since he rigged up this device that bolts onto one of the rear wheels on his 16 hp utility tractor. It works as both a precise marker and as a hole puncher.

"It punches holes in the ground at exact 10-ft. intervals," says Zenz.

He used 3 by 3-in. angle iron to make a frame that bolts onto the tractor wheel using holes already in the wheel. He welded a metal pipe onto the frame, then inserted a 2-in. dia. solid steel shaft that's pointed at one end inside the pipe. The shaft is held secure by a steel pin.

As the tractor drives down the field, the pointed shaft makes a 2-in. dia., 8-in. deep hole every 10 ft. Tree seedlings are then inserted by hand.

"I can't use it on fields with a lot of stumps and rocks, but on open fields it works perfect," says Zenz, who operates a tree farm. "The wheel measures 37 in. in diameter and happened to be just the right size for spacing the holes 8 ft. apart. We had been stepping off the distance between holes and then using a shovel-like device to punch a hole in the ground. Using a wheel-mounted device is a lot faster and simpler and also more accurate. If the ground is in normal condition the device punches a hole without raising the tractor at all. However, if the wheel hits a rock or tree stump it can really vibrate the tractor.

"It punches holes in the ground at exact 10-ft. intervals," says Larry Zenz, who rigged up this device that bolts to one of the rear wheels on his utility tractor.

"When I'm done using the device I just pull the pin out of the shaft and pull it out. The angle iron bracket stays on the tractor."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Zenz, HC 60, 5779 E. Hwy. 28, Parks, Ark. 72950 (ph 479 577-2677).