

Propane Tank Trailer Handles Tough Hauling Jobs

Lyle Carpenter offers cleanup services to folks around Walhalla, N. Dak., and he needed a trailer to haul rocks, stumps, trees and scrap metal. When he and his son, Leeroy, couldn't find any commercial trailers rugged enough, they decided to build their own out of a propane semi tanker.

Carpenter contacted propane companies to find an old tank trailer that no longer passed certification.

"It has to be an over-the-road propane tank, not the bulk propane tanks you see in back yards," Carpenter emphasizes. The bulk tanks are mild steel but the semi tankers are 3/8-in. high-tensile steel.

"When we dump 5-ft. dia. rocks we don't have a scratch anywhere," he says.

Before they used a cutting torch to cut the tank in two, the Carpenters removed the tank's cap, opened the vents and blew air from a fan through the tanker for three days. If it had held anhydrous, they would have run vinegar through it to neutralize it. The Carpenters cut the 7-ft. dia. trailer in half leaving one rounded end on each half tank so they got two 32-ft. long boxes — big enough to hold 22 yards of gravel.

The Carpenters made the frame just as tough, using 80,000-lb. tensile strength steel for the beams to meet DOT specifications; 4-in. high tensile, square tubing; three axles and five-leaf springs.

"Having five main leaves in the spring is very important," Carpenter emphasizes. "You have to stiffen the springs up." He's seen too many three-leaf spring dump trailers out of commission.

They welded the trailer together with 7018 welding rods, sandblasted, primed and painted it and built a side swinging gate for the back out of 2-in. square tubing and 1/8-in. AR steel sheeting to be light yet tough.



Lyle Carpenter and his son Leeroy built this huge dump trailer out of an old over-the-road propane semi tanker. They use it to haul rocks, stumps, scrap metal and more.

The tires are 8 1/2 ft. apart so the tank fits down in the frame, which adds to the trailer's stability when it's dumped. A large hydraulic cylinder raises the bed up to a 48-degree angle and the tank's curved shape helps everything slide out easily.

"We've hauled a 45-ft. tree on a stump and even an old milk delivery truck in it," Carpenter says. "This trailer is heavy duty for the rugged jobs."

The Carpenters have been using the trailer for nearly 15 years. They sold the trailer they made out of the other half of the tank to a man who hauled huge chunks of concrete from an air base when missile silos were dismantled.

Though the trailer is heavy, it pulls easily behind a Peterbilt semi, and it continues to perform well.

"We did our homework," Carpenter says. "I just wish we'd had it 30 years ago."

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They cut the 7-ft. dia. trailer tank in half to make two 32-ft. long boxes.



Side swinging gate (left) on back (left) was built out of 2-in. sq. tubing and 1/8-in. thick steel.



A large hydraulic cylinder raises bed up to a 48-degree angle. Tank's curved shape helps material slide out easily.

Car Ramps Make Great "Hillers"

A couple of car ramps, mounted on the back of a tractor, eliminated hours of labor preparing Ron Rosandich's pumpkin patch.

The Granton, Wis., man used to spend two days with a shovel hilling between 3 and 3 1/2 acres before planting. With the 3-point mounted car ramps, it's a 2-hr. job.

He started with an old spot cultivator his neighbor planned to junk. Rosandich removed the teeth and bolted his ramps to it.

"I reinforced and added weight to the ramps with heavy metal inside, and on the bottom I bolted old iron fence posts for skid shoes so they don't wear out," he explains.

He bolted the ramps to the arms of the former cultivator, spaced about 15 in. apart.

"The car ramps are mounted so the angles point forward. They pull in the dirt, which comes out the back, building up the row," Rosandich says. "The soil gets worked up

pretty good."

He hills the field a couple days before he plants. Rosandich and his wife work about 5 1/2 hours to plant the patch by hand in a checked pattern every 6 ft. so the plot can be cultivated both ways.

Planting pumpkins is a job Rosandich enjoys - especially now that he isn't all tired out from hilling by hand.

The Rosandiches set up a self-serve stand in the fall to sell their pumpkins.

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Ron Rosandich bolted a pair of modified car ramps on an old cultivator to make "hillers" for his pumpkin patch. Ramps are spaced about 15 in. apart.



Idea Keeps Fenceposts Looking Good

"I had trouble for years trimming grass around the base of treated wood fenceposts on my property. After only a few trimmings, the black fence coating would be eaten away by the trimmer string, leaving an unsightly gap at the bottom of each post," says James Columbia, Maysville, Ky.

"I tried wrapping the post bases with plastic tubing and wire mesh but I didn't like the way that looked. Then I happened to find Plasti-Kote Truck Bed Liner on sale at Wal-Mart. I bought a couple of cans and

sprayed a coating over the bottom 6 to 8 in. of each post. The spray dried to the same color as the post coating and has stood up to weekly trimmings for the past two years without a scratch. The spray is available in gallon paint containers, but I prefer aerosol cans for simpler application. I can spray a double coating on 5 to 6 posts per can."

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Angled ramps pull in dirt to build up the rows.