

WELDING EQUIPMENT

30% Increase in Productivity

Rogue Truck Body, LLC Kerby, OR

Rogue Truck Body LLC has been building custom, quality transfers, pups and heavy haulers since 1990. Each unit is special ordered and built in-house to customer's specifications and satisfaction.

- CHALLENGE -

- Update Rogue's welding equipment at both its Kerby headquarters and second location in Cave Junction, where it manufactures and houses its own parts and supplies.
- Welding equipment was needed that provided versatility, adaptability, and was easy to use by Rogue's team of 20 welders.
- All welding is performed by hand, and it was critical their new equipment stand up to their demands and the high level of quality the company is known for.

- SOLUTION -

Power MIG® 255Cs with Magnum® spool guns, Invertec® V350-PRO machines with LN-10 wire feeders and a Precision TIG® 275.

- RESULTS -

- The Lincoln® welders allowed Rogue to deliver product faster without making one compromise in quality.
- 30% increase in productivity.

"Easy to train our guys on. They're always up and ready to go as soon as we are."

"They deliver a solid bead every time."



TRUCK AS ART

New welding equipment provides precision and versatility for manufacturer's handcrafted truck transfer trailers

When was the last time you considered any large, commercial truck part art? The answer is probably not last week. More likely it's never.

But in Kerby, Ore., owners who drive their truck and transfer trailer out of Rogue Truck Body often think just that – they're driving a work of art. We're not just talking about bright colors and unique paint jobs, though you will see the occasional sunny yellow, Kermit green and Pepto Bismol® pink truck rolling down Finch Road towards Redwood Highway.

The transfer trailers, manufactured one at a time, by Rogue Truck Body's team require the same skill, detail and finesse as any large, sculpted art installation. Each trailer, made from light, durable steel, is special ordered and cut, joined, welded and painted to each owner's individual specifications. Rogue Truck even "signs" its pieces by deliberately leaving external welds visible using its unique "stitch" weld.

"Every trailer we build is handcrafted, a labor of love, both for us and the new owner," explains Ryan Lewis, Rogue's shop foreman and weld team leader. "It's not uncommon for a customer to pull up a chair and hang out in the shop for the week to watch their new transfer being built."

Welding is integral to Rogue Truck's success. Welding is performed at nearly every stage of the construction process for the truck transfers, pups and heavy haulers, which start at \$80,000 and can climb to \$250,000 (not including the truck).

In late 2006, the family-owned company was looking to update its welding equipment at both its Kerby headquarters and second location in Cave Junction, where it manufactures and houses its own parts and supplies. The company needed welding equipment that provided versatility, adaptability and was easy to use by its team of 20 welders. Ryan Lewis and the company's second Shop Foreman Gregorio

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Martinez turned to Rogue's long-time partner Industrial Source, one of Oregon's leading gas and welding suppliers, for advice and guidance.

"With all welding performed by hand, it was critical their new equipment stand up to their demands and the high level of quality the company is known for," says Industrial Source's Bruce Sampson, who has worked with Lewis and Rogue Truck since 2001.

Sampson partnered with The Lincoln Electric Company and its local technical sales representative Al Steiner to provide Rogue with a Lincoln Power MIG® 255C test machine. The welder was on site for a couple of weeks, while Lewis and his team put it through the paces.

"The Power MIG® did exactly what we needed it to do," Lewis states. "And Al and Bruce were on site, helping us make adjustments as needed and answering questions that arose. They provided the level of customer service that we pride ourselves on – hands-on, serving as a partner, not a vendor."

Rogue's machine trial led to its purchase of 17 machines, including Power MIG® 255Cs with Magnum® spool guns, Invertec® V350-PRO multi-process welders with LN-10 wire feeders and a Precision TIG® 275.

The Science Behind the Art

Rogue Truck's signature stitch weld was invented by company founder Keith Hill. He started out using the standard MIG process on thin gauge steel, which he was committed to using because it allowed him to create trailer boxes that weighed less and could haul more, meaning more money in the driver's pocket. But he found the steel warping.

"Thin gauge material, combined with 14- to 18-foot-long welds, led to the steel warping, so Keith did what he does best – created his own solution," Lewis explains. "That solution has become our signature on every trailer box we build. You know it's our product as soon as you look at it."

The stitch weld is created by the welder running a bead and pulling it towards him. He then jumps out of the weld and backs up the torch. This keeps the heat more consistent across the surface and heads off warping. The clean weld looks like an oblong-shaped dime stack.

"Our stitch weld is our calling card. Our welds are all done manually and are not ground off, so there is no room for imperfections," Lewis explains. "And we needed equipment that gave our welders the versatility and precision to ensure every weld is perfect."

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This attention to detail, customer focus, and high-quality products are what have kept Rogue Truck's customers coming to southwestern Oregon since it opened its doors 17 years ago. And more than 40 percent of the work the company performs is high-end custom projects, ranging from additions to the transfers, pups and heavy haulers such as aluminum tailgates, stainless fuel tanks and stainless steel rails. The company also takes one-of-a-kind special requests like a stainless steel box to hold a set of golf clubs and custom emblems.

"If our customers can think it, we can build it," Lewis states. "They typically spend more time in their trucks than their living room, so we want them to know they have the best equipment and it's exactly what they want."

All raw materials enter Rogue Truck's manufacturing process through the Cape Junction facility, which houses parts and handles forming, fabricating, machining



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and some assembly. The trailer transfers, pups and heavy haulers are made from a light, durable structural steel. The steel is designed to weigh less in order to allow for heavier loads to be carried and still remain within legal limits.

“The Lincoln welders allow us to deliver our product faster without making one compromise in quality.”
Lewis says.

The company cuts the sheet plates into needed sizes utilizing a 20' hydraulic shear. A hydraulic press break is used to form the floors and walls of each trailer. For parts, a plasma cutter provides the versatility to cut at least 5,000 different parts.

For a truck box, the first step is to build the floor. The floor of the truck stands on a table and is flipped upside down. The main frame structure is tacked and MIG welded using a Lincoln® Power MIG® 255C. The box is flipped right side up and passed to the box builder. The walls and front are created, jiggged up square, tacked and welded.

Next, the majority of Rogue Truck's boxes are then affixed with a skirt, which can be made from polished stainless steel, and top rail – both of which are typically TIG welded with the Lincoln® Precision TIG® 275. The trucks then head to the tailgate department.

At every step of this process, Rogue Truck's team is double checking the work against a build sheet, which is unique to each customer and trailer being constructed. The build sheet is carefully reviewed and all details are cross checked before it is sent to the sand blaster.

The sand blaster preps the trailer for paint, as well as completely removes any remaining weld spatter. The painting department then takes over, and the transfer trailer is primed and painted.

“And unlike our competitors, we paint on site and don't send the work out. We do everything in house, including painting and making our own parts,” Lewis explains. “This gives us great control over delivery time and quality.”

Additionally, according to Lewis, the Lincoln® machines have directly contributed to a 30-percent productivity increase for the company. Currently, it takes about day to tack a box, whereas previously it took a full day and a half.

“The Lincoln® welders allow us to deliver our product faster without making one compromise in quality,” Lewis says. “They're easy to train our guys on; they're always up and ready to go as soon as we are; and they deliver a solid bead every time.”

What started as a one-time escapade, soon turned into a lifetime adventure.

As demand grew, Hill gave up driving his own truck to focus on the business. During this time, he and his wife, Lana, also decided they didn't want to raise their three children in the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles, but wanted to put down roots in a less congested area. The Hills settled on southwestern Oregon to focus on their family and grow the new business.

In 1990, Rogue Truck Body opened its doors in Kerby, even while the majority of its customer base remained in Southern California. Over the years, the family business, which now includes their three children, grew and expanded, as did the company's reputation.



The Story Behind the Art

Keith Hill started his career running dump trucks in Southern California. When he went to buy a new transfer trailer, he got fed up with the prices manufacturers were quoting him, and decided he could do it cheaper and better.

He was right – he found he could do it better and less expensively. Then word spread. One friend, and then others, began asking him to build for them.

With a focus on hard work and crafting great products, Hill slowly built Rogue into a market leader. Today, the company employs more than 50 between three locations, including its Kerby headquarters and the Cape Junction plant and warehouse complex, which was built in 2004 when it outgrew the Kerby space.

Just opened, the most recent, and third location took Hill back to California to Lake Elsinore, about halfway between LA and San Diego.

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"Our largest customer base is in Southern California. And as the number of Rogue Truck-built transfers and heavy haulers on the road there continues to increase, our customers were clamoring for us to be on the ground and able to service their trucks," Lewis explains.

Prior to opening its Lake Elsinore facility, Rogue enjoyed about 40 percent market share in California. By having a presence there, the company anticipates that number to skyrocket to 60 percent.



And because of the success Lewis, Martinez and their team found with the Lincoln® welders, the company purchased five more machines for its Southern California service facility.

Featured Lincoln® Products



Power MIG® 255C

The Power MIG® 255C sets the standard for MIG and flux-cored welding in industrial production, job shop fabrication, maintenance or repair work. Diamond Core Technology™ delivers a wide voltage sweet spot across the welding range, low spatter levels and a forgiving arc on steel, stainless and aluminum – even for demanding out-of-position work. It's Spool Gun Ready, so it's fast and easy to tackle difficult aluminum applications. Exclusive 115 volt auxiliary power means you can power lights, grinders, and chargers right where you work! And, the rugged cast drive with a patented Split Wire Guide system and tachometer feedback ensures trouble-free wire delivery. Add the extra length 15 foot gun cable and innovative convenience features and you begin to understand why the Power MIG® 255C is considered The Professional's Choice™.



Inverterc® V350-PRO

The Inverterc® V350-PRO is a versatile, multi-purpose, multi-process power source that's lightweight and portable. Available in Construction, Factory, Factory (Tweco®), and Advanced Process models, the V350-PRO is capable of doing virtually any job, whether in the shop or on the construction site. The V350-PRO is capable of stick, DC TIG, MIG, Pulsed MIG, flux-cored and arc gouging, making it the most versatile inverter power source in its class. And it's built tough to handle the rigors of harsh environments.



Precision TIG® 275

With NEW patented Micro-Start II™ Technology and our New and Improved AC Auto Balance® on board, the Precision TIG® 275 delivers unrivaled starting and welding at low amperages and improved AC aluminum welding performance. New features, simple controls, innovative accessory storage, and attractive and consistent welds—it all adds up. Whatever the TIG welding application—fabrication, aerospace, production, motorsports, or vocational education—choose the Precision TIG® 275 for outstanding features and precise arc performance.