



Innovative Solutions for Material Handling

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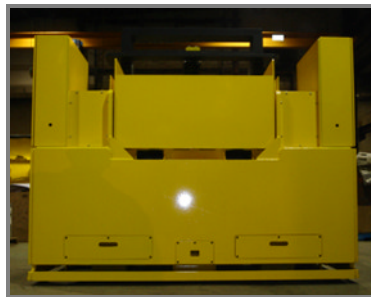
RICO INTRODUCES NEW ALL ELECTRIC - COIL HANDLING AGV DESIGN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(December 15, 2005 – Medina, Ohio) BPR/RICO Equipment, Inc. has just announced their completion of a revolutionary, high tonnage, all electric coil handling design for an AGV system to move massive steel coils weighing up to 23 metric tons. The system will handle steel coils moving through the manufacturing process for a major US steel producer located in the United States.

“As the premier leader in our industry, we pride ourselves on staying two steps ahead of the competition. Our newest generation of ram straddle trucks is no exception. Our engineers were intent on improving upon their previous designs,” says company president Dave Mueller.

There are several design features that set this vehicle apart from RICO’s competitors. Specifically, this is an all electric vehicle and therefore doesn’t require any hydraulics. Not only does this design improvement make the vehicle more efficient, it also allows us to reduce the vehicles overall size since we do not need to place any hydraulic components. Reduced size allows for increased maneuverability and a tighter turning radius.



Coil ram lift is precisely controlled via a linear ball screw and an electric motor coupled to a gear box. Each of the two steer-drives are electrically actuated and designed to be controlled independently through the use of an electronic Ackerman steering system. A traditional mechanical tie-bar is no longer required.

Other standard features include a single load wheel in each outrigger. “Simplistic as this may seem, we still have a competitor that insists on placing tandem wheels in each outrigger. They even feature these vehicles in their advertising. You absolutely can not do that in AGV applications. These vehicles are required to be highly maneuverable. Using tandem load wheels will cause catastrophic load wheel failures within months due to wheel scrubbing,” says Michael Ross, company Vice President.

The front of the vehicle was designed to protect the laser bumper by mounting the laser completely inside the chassis. Placing the laser bumper inside the vehicle allows a forklift operator to have unobstructed access to the removable battery box. The battery box can be lifted out during routine maintenance using a forklift and the conveniently located fork pockets. A more expensive battery rollout systems is not required.

RICO added AGV’s to its product line in 1999 as a natural extension of its high capacity industrial trucks. Since that time, RICO has partnered with automatic controls companies to design and fabricate these large capacity chassis. The largest RICO designed AGV has a capacity in excess of 250,000 lbs.

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