

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHY BERGREN SMITH

DIAMOND HAULS THE REALLY BIG STUFF



Debbie Cooke, Traffic Coordinator for Aida-Dayton Technologies, had a problem. She needed to get an Aida TMX 2000 transfer press from Aida's factory in Japan to its new home in Mooresville, IN. The Brobdingnagian press, used to stamp out automobile pieces, weighs around 1.4 million pounds. Aida breaks the machine down into the smallest practical components for transportation. But there were three press parts that could

not be taken apart: the bed, weighing 235,000 lbs., and the slightly smaller crown and slide. Breaking them down could jeopardize the integrity of the whole machine. Wallenius Wilhelmsen Lines had no problem getting the press to Baltimore. For over-the-road transportation, Cooke turned to Diamond Heavy Haul of Shandon, OH. "They were very helpful and informative in arranging this big move," says Cooke.





Big move, indeed. The load included 27 trucks, 48 permits and took almost a year to organize. “We specialize in moving ‘out of normal size and weight loads,” says company founder and president Steve Engel. Diamond sent three of its 20-axle trailers for the large pieces. When the press arrived on WWL’s *Tampa*, the pieces were picked from mafis by the Port’s 300-ton “Big Red” crane.

“We had it set up so that all the trailers were ready and we could load the pieces one after the other,” says Diamond Heavy Haul’s operations head, Rick DeRemer.

The large Aida press is just one example of the type of cargo Diamond Heavy Haul moves. Steve Engel says that many pieces of manufacturing equipment are built to such close tolerances that taking them apart to transport them would not be feasible. Add to that the fact that many of the nation’s bridges are showing signs of age, and the need for an operation like Engel’s becomes clear.

“I always loved trucking, my father had a wrecker and I was a trucker myself for years,” says Engel, “I found myself working my way up to larger and heavier loads.” According to Diamond’s DeRemer, Engel has a knack for figuring out how to manage a heavy haul. “We sometimes sit here and scratch our heads on a load and finally call Steve and he gives us a great solution. He is a real innovator,” he says.

It makes sense that an innovator like Engel would eventually begin to build a better mousetrap. “Basically, I couldn’t buy

the quality of trailer that I needed, so I had to start making them,” he says. Now, Diamond Heavy Haul has an 80,000-sq.-ft. Ohio facility capable of building the 20-axle super-trailers. The trailers have a built-in pusher motor that runs the hydraulics to the trailer and provides the extra power needed to pull steep hills. These monster 78-wheeler rigs are considered “super loads” even when they are empty. That means they fall outside the realm of the permits routinely issued. Engel has a new trailer in manufacture called a “Dual Lane Transporter,” which is targeted to loads starting at 250,000 pounds. Diamond’s “super fleet” consists of two dual-lane transporters, five 20-axle and four 13-axle units.

“We are always looking for better bridge-loading,” says Engel, referring to weight distribution over the truck’s axles that makes for safe transit.

“With the loads getting larger and larger and the states putting more limits on the bridges, it gets tougher and tougher to get the load through. But with Steve’s innovative trailer designs, we can bring the height and weight into line,” says DeRemer.

Just as Aida’s Cooke found Diamond Heavy Haul easy to work with, DeRemer finds the Port of Baltimore his preferred port for cargo loadouts. “I try to divert loads to Baltimore whenever I can,” says DeRemer, “mainly because of the attitude of the Port — it is hassle-free.” DeRemer adds that the cooperation from the City of Baltimore and State of Maryland on permit coordination and police escorts is exceptional. ↓





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