

## Local Business



### LaGrange company aids show

'Trick My Truck' gets help from Indiana Custom Truck LLC

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LaGRANGE -- When the TV show "Trick My Truck" hit a snag while adding some major bling-bling to a truck cab, the producers picked up the phone and dialed the LaGrange County area code.



The popular series, which airs on the CMT cable network, asked Indiana Custom Truck LLC to help redo the interior of a used Peterbilt 379.

The Hoosier company, on S.R. 9 between LaGrange and Howe, dispatched Tom Roose, Charlie Collyer and Blaine Gose to Joplin, Mo., where the episode, which will be shown tonight, was being taped.

"We sent a three-man crew down there and got them out of pickle," said Mike Baxley, ICT general manager.

The 52-member team at ICT has been adding "Wow!" (and sometimes, a "You've got to be kidding") to sleeper truck cabs since 1990.

These trucks, used to pull semitrailers, have an extended cab that includes living quarters for the drivers.

Limited only by the imagination and desires of the clients, ICT has produced sleepers with just a coffin-type bed to cabs measuring 30 feet in length and resembling an apartment on wheels complete with a bedroom, kitchen and bathroom.

Chandeliers, flat-screen TVs, reclining chairs, beds with 15-inch-thick mattresses, wood cabinets and a roll-top desk are among the comforts of home that ICT has installed.

Since some drivers take their pets along, the LaGrange team often cuts a small window in the bottom of the door so dogs can look out and, for one driver who traveled with his ferrets, ICT built a system of tubing in the interior for the furry creatures to scamper through.

For all the pizzazz added into the insides, however, Baxley estimated that 65 percent of the outsides are solid white.

Drivers need a plain surface because, Baxley explained, as they contract with different companies, they adhere different logos and graphics to the cab's exterior.

The sleeper cabs themselves cost between \$120,000 to \$140,000 and Baxley said the customization can run from \$5,500 up to \$180,000.

Typically "Trick My Truck" begins with the show's Chrome Shop Mafia convincing an unsuspecting but deserving truck driver to allow them to soup up the truck. Next the team tears the vehicle down to its bare bones and then rebuilds it.

"It's amazing what they do to an old truck," Baxley said.

The details of tonight's "Trick My Truck" episode have not been revealed but the work that the ICT crew did enticed the production company to spotlight the LaGrange facility in the season's grand finale.

Cameras and crew spent three days in July filming at ICT for a show which will air Nov. 24, the day after Thanksgiving.

Since customizing a cab can take from four to six weeks, the ICT shop had to accommodate the demands of time and television by recreating scenes from the rebuilding process and then having the show videotape it.

"It was interesting," Baxley said. "Hollywood is Hollywood."

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