



The Beacon

"Shedding Light On The Illinois Towing Industry"

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Board Meeting
Al's Steakhouse, Joliet
Tuesday Sept 1
Dinner at 6:00, Meeting at 7:00

TopGolf Event
Sunday Sept 21, 4:00 PM
Schaumburg, IL
Call or go online to
save your seat!!

Wreckmaster 2/3
Oct. 7-18, Crete, IL
Sign up now!



JOIN US
ON
facebook

OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Please direct all your questions and concerns to Ed at the number above.

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Letter from the President:

I am hoping that everyone is doing OK and has been having a busy summer. At the PTROI, we are looking forward to the 2026 TopGolf outing that will be taking place in Schaumburg on September 20, at 4:00PM. Last year everyone talked about the good time they had. You can come out and eat, play the games, and have a great time. Many of our vendors are planning to be there to just say hi and answer questions that you may have. So, look at the front page, as well as pages 4 and 5, then call us, tell us what you need, and we will get it all set up for you.

It currently has been quiet on the legislative front, except for the governor signing a bill that will give the state the option of suspending or revoking tow truck plates if they are obtained or used in an unlawful manner. The law will soon be posted on our new website.

I hope everyone has been making some money in this unpredictable business climate that we are seeing right now. We all need to be more careful and more deliberate when making big dollar decisions, whether it be for your home or business.

Bruce Pedigo, President, PTROI

PTROI Extends Sympathy

The PTROI extends sympathy and condolences to the friends and families of the drivers mentioned below. Neither died in the line of duty, both left us way too soon.

Jeff Cannon, 49

Larry's Towing, Carbondale

Jeff dedicated over 20 years of his life to Larry's Towing, where he was more than just a tow truck driver; he was a dependable presence in the local communities

Ben Newhouser, age 42

Dick's Towing Service, Joliet

Ben had a great demeanor and work ethic.

He did all of the night patrol relocations for Dick's, and some of them are not the best areas nor people. He enjoyed downtime riding his Harley,

The Importance of Accountability in the Towing Industry

Accountability is one of the most important qualities in the towing industry. At least once or twice a month the PTROI office receives calls regarding the dishonest or unethical actions of a towing company. The vast majority of these calls refer to a company that is not a member of the PTROI. We, as an association, must educate our employees as well as these substandard companies. Why, you say! If the towing industry as a whole could assume full accountability for its actions, we would be recognized the way that we should be, as hard-working people that are honest and dependable.

One of the primary reasons accountability is important is that towing professionals are responsible for the safe handling of vehicles. Whether towing a disabled car, recovering a vehicle after an accident, or transporting heavy equipment, operators must follow proper procedures and safety regulations. They are expected to inspect their equipment, secure vehicles correctly, and drive responsibly. When employees are accountable for their actions, they are more likely to follow company policies and industry standards, reducing the risk of accidents and costly mistakes.

Accountability also plays a major role in customer service. Vehicle owners often experience stress when they need a tow due to a breakdown or accident. They expect their vehicles to be treated with care and professionalism. Being accountable means communicating honestly with customers, arriving on time whenever possible, explaining the towing process, and accepting responsibility if a problem occurs. Companies that demonstrate accountability earn customer trust, receive positive reviews, and build long-term relationships within their communities.

In addition, accountability helps towing companies comply with laws and regulations. The towing industry is governed by state and local rules regarding licensing, insurance, vehicle storage, and documentation. Operators must accurately complete paperwork, maintain required certifications, and follow legal procedures when towing vehicles. Failure to meet these responsibilities can result in fines, legal action, or the loss of operating licenses. A culture of accountability encourages employees to remain informed about regulations and consistently meet legal requirements.

Workplace accountability also improves teamwork and efficiency. Every employee, from dispatchers to drivers and office staff, has a role in ensuring smooth operations. Dispatchers must provide accurate information, drivers must respond professionally, and managers must ensure that

equipment is maintained and employees receive proper training. When everyone accepts responsibility for their duties, communication improves, delays are reduced, and customers receive better service.

Safety is another critical area where accountability has a direct impact. Tow truck operators often work alongside busy highways, in poor weather conditions, or at accident scenes. Wearing proper safety gear, following traffic control procedures, and remaining alert are essential for protecting both workers and the public. Accountable employees understand that their actions affect not only themselves and their family, but also their coworkers, customers, law enforcement officers, and other motorists.

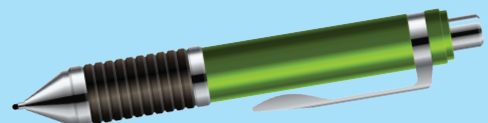
Finally, accountability strengthens the reputation and long-term success of your towing business. Companies known for honesty, reliability, and professionalism are more likely to receive repeat business, referrals, and contracts with law enforcement agencies, insurance companies, and roadside assistance providers. By accepting responsibility for their work, correcting mistakes, and continuously improving their performance, towing professionals demonstrate integrity and commitment to excellence. So step up and educate your competition, the faster the towing industry is looked as an industry full of honesty and integrity, the faster the insurance companies, police departments, and the general public will give us the respect we deserve.

In conclusion, accountability is essential to every aspect of the towing industry. It promotes safety, protects customers' property, ensures compliance with laws, improves teamwork, and builds public trust. Towing professionals who take responsibility for their actions contribute to a safer work environment and a stronger, more respected business.

DO YOU LIKE TO WRITE?

Do you feel you can contribute to our monthly newsletter?

Then send your articles to the PTROI Office and you may get to see your article in the Beacon!





SAVE THE DATE!



TOPGOLF *Outing*



**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 20,
2026**



**PRE-REGISTRATION
REQUIRED
START TIME
4:00 PM**



**TOPGOLF
2050 PROGRESS PKWY
SCHAUMBURG, IL**

★ REGISTRATION PRICING ★



**BAY (UP TO 6 PLAYERS)
\$575**



**INDIVIDUAL GOLFER
\$125**



**DINNER & DRINK TICKET
\$65**

≡ NO GOLF EXPERIENCE REQUIRED! ≡

Bring your family, coworkers, customers, or friends for an afternoon of networking, food, friendly competition, and fun!



FOOD



GAMES



PRIZES



RAFFLES



NETWORKING

★★★

Great People. Great Times. Stronger Together.

★★★

MORE THAN JUST GOLF

AN AFTERNOON OF CONNECTION, COMPETITION & FUN!

One of PTROI's goals is creating opportunities for members to connect outside of meetings and training classes. Last year's first-ever Topgolf outing proved to be one of our most enjoyable events of the year!

Topgolf is designed for everyone—not just golfers. The computerized games make it easy for beginners and experienced players to compete together while enjoying food, drinks, and great conversation.

Whether you're bringing your spouse, employees, customers, or simply looking to spend an afternoon with others in the towing and recovery industry, this event offers something for everyone.



“
GREAT PEOPLE.
GREAT TIMES.
STRONGER
TOGETHER.
”

5 REASONS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS PTROI'S TOPGOLF OUTING!



NO GOLF EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Topgolf is fun and easy for everyone!



NETWORK WITH TOWERS FROM ACROSS ILLINOIS

Build relationships that make a difference.



GREAT FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Enjoy delicious food and your favorite drinks.



AMAZING RAFFLE PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS

Win great prizes throughout the afternoon!



FUN, FRIENDLY COMPETITION FOR ALL

Games for all skill levels and ages.

LAST YEAR WAS A HIT!

We had an outstanding turnout during our first year at Topgolf. Members from across Illinois came together to reconnect with old friends, meet new people, and enjoy an afternoon away from work. The positive feedback made it an easy decision to bring the event back in 2026!



NEW THIS YEAR!

We're planning even more raffle prizes, giveaways, friendly competitions, and opportunities to win throughout the afternoon!



BRING YOUR TEAM!

Invite your office staff, dispatchers, drivers, family members, customers, insurance partners, vendors—anyone you'd enjoy spending an afternoon with. Topgolf is about building relationships while having fun!



Mark your calendar and plan to be there!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 • TOPGOLF SCHAUMBURG
PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED • START TIME: 4:00 PM

From the Executive Director

Here we are in the late stages of summer, and I know for many of you it has been the summer of unending rain and storms. I hope that you and your family made it through. The one casualty that I am aware of is J.R. Hubly in Kankakee lost his entire lot and building. Here is hoping that the insurance company pushes the rebuild along so he can have a roof in place before the snow flies. With all of this going on for J.R., it shows that we cannot beat the forces of nature. We wish him the best in his rebuild.

It is time for everyone to sign up for the 2nd Annual PTROI TopGolf event. It will be held on September 20, 2026, at the TopGolf in Schaumburg. This is not about golf, it is about having a good time and seeing old friends as well as meeting new ones. Last year everyone had a great time and were already looking forward to this year's event. The details are on the front page of this issue as well as page 4 and 5.

By the time you read this the new PTROI website should be up and running. It will have new features such as a payment portal for membership, events, and donations.

It will also have many of the features of our old website such as a list of laws pertaining to the Illinois towing industry. We are hoping that it will be easier to use and be a great new source of information. Log on to PTROI.com. If you have trouble getting on, call the office on 800-286-0519.

Finally, we have the officer's election coming up. The positions any member can run for include President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. We are needing someone to step up as Secretary as that position is currently vacant. We need you to nominate yourself or someone else prior to September 15. We also have a directors' position open; you will not need to run for this office but may be appointed with board approval. If you are interested in the board position, please call me at 800-286-0519.

Until next month, Ed

We want
**YOUR
PHOTOS!**

 Help us showcase our work and the changes coming to the PTROI website, in pamphlets, and on other projects!

 Send them to: office@ptroi.com


Website Updates


Pamphlets & Marketing


Project Spotlights


Telling Our Story

Thank you! 
Your photos help us build a better future together.



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DirectPost-Office from Auto Data Direct allows you to create, mail, and track your certified lien letters online! Reduce the time, effort, and expense of searching for records and going to the post office.

- **DMV Database Records** – Access real-time owner and lienholder records in 38+ states – more than any other company of its kind!
- **Title Check Reports** – Obtain vehicles' current state of title.
- **State-Specific Lien Letter Tools** – Your lien notification letter will be automatically filled out with the owner, lienholder, and title information from our inquiry tools.

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Billing for Safety: Why the Firebox Is a Justified and Essential Charge

Towing professionals operate in one of the most demanding sectors of transportation. With the rapid rise of electric vehicles (EVs), that challenge now includes managing new levels of risk, specifically, the fire hazards and containment requirements of compromised EVs.

A damaged EV isn't like any other vehicle. It can enter thermal runaway hours, days or even months after an incident, turning an ordinary storage yard into a potential hazard zone. Traditional storage methods simply aren't designed to address these risks.

That's where the Firebox comes in, and why billing for its use is not only reasonable but necessary. The Firebox isn't a modified container or temporary workaround; it's a purpose-built containment system engineered to isolate, contain, and safely store compromised EVs. For towing companies, it represents more than a safety upgrade. It's a liability shield, a risk-management solution and a revenue opportunity.

Yet some operators hesitate to bill for Firebox use, often due to concerns about insurance disputes or capped storage rates. That hesitation, while understandable, is misplaced.

The Firebox is not general storage. It's a specialty safety and mitigation service, and it's absolutely billable.

When questioned, the best response is to redirect the conversation to compliance. You're not inflating costs. You're following recognized safety procedures designed to protect property, people and insurers themselves.

This is where the Energy Security Agency (ESA) becomes your strongest ally. ESA is the national authority on EV fire risk and compromised EV handling. They provide free, on-scene guidance to towing, recovery and fire service professionals, offering detailed protocols for how EVs should be handled, transported and stored safely.

If an adjuster or customer challenges your invoice, your answer should be straightforward as follows: “We are following ESA-recommended safety and compliance procedures for handling a compromised EV.” You should then be able to bill accordingly. Here are three examples of billable line items for use of the Firebox.

Standard Vehicle Storage: Your normal daily rate applies to every vehicle in your care.

Isolation and Containment: A separate line item for the Firebox itself, representing its specialized safety function. This is not ordinary storage; it's controlled containment.

Additional Mitigation Measures: Any added precautions, such as thermal imaging, smoke detection or live monitoring, can be billed separately or bundled as a safety package tied to the Firebox's purpose.



In addition to fair compensation, the Firebox delivers two major advantages:

Preserved Storage Capacity: Without containment, a compromised EV could require a 50-foot safety perimeter, taking multiple storage spaces out of use. With the Firebox, you safely isolate the vehicle while maintaining full yard capacity and revenue.

Enhanced Reputation: Using the Firebox demonstrates to your community, safety partners and insurance carriers that you prioritize risk management and lead with best practices. It positions your company as forward-thinking and safety-first.

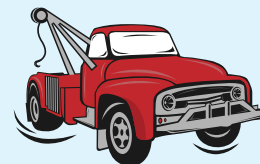
As EVs become more prevalent, the question isn't if you need a containment solution; it's when. Waiting until after a catastrophic event happens isn't an option. Investing in Firebox now protects your employees, your property and your bottom line.

The Firebox remains the only truly compliant, scalable and effective EV containment system available today. It's a smart business decision that combines safety with profitability, and it deserves to be billed accordingly.

This is not an ad for Firebox. It was just included to give you an idea of what is on the market and to get you thinking about Electric Vehicle containment.

Help your association grow.

Recruit a new member TODAY!



SLOW DOWN MOVE OVER

**PROTECT
YOURSELF**

**PROTECT
YOUR FAMILY**

**PROTECT
FIRST
RESPONDERS**



At Worldwide Equipment, we're proud to support the
#SLOWDOWNMOVEOVER Initiative.

Together, we can make a difference. Stand with us and our initiative to make roadways safer.

The “Move Over” law is crucial for the safety of first responders on the road. When an emergency vehicle is stopped with lights flashing, please change lanes if possible or slow down to a safe speed.

All 50 states have these laws, yet many drivers remain unaware of their existence.

Don't be part of the 71% who don't know—learn your state's specific rules today!

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- Rear Lower Work lights
- Diesel and gas units available
- Bed sizes, 20' & 22' with aluminum or steel beds.
- All units come with Fire Extinguisher, Wireless Tow Light, Triangles, 8-Point Tie Downs.
- Colors available from Black, White, Patriot Blue, Race Red, Granite Crystal, Billet Silver and More

HEAVIES

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- Kenworth & Peterbilt.
- Stocked with shackle kits & chain kits
- Automatic and manuals

WRECKERS

- Rams & fords available
- MPL-40, MPL-NG, MPL-NGS – New and old body style available
- 4X4 & 4X2 available. 22 head LED federal signal Lightbar S/T/T
- Diesel, and Gas available.
- All units come with Fire Extinguisher, Triangles, Wireless Tow Light, (2) basket straps & (2) ratchets, (2) tire spacers and hitch plate w/2pins



CATCH US @ UPCOMING EVENTS

Midwest Ohio Tow Show: Sept 12th-15th Wilmington, OH
Special Olympics Truck Convoy: Oct 12th Tinley Park, IL
Tow Trucks For Tots: Nov 10th Joliet, IL
Baltimore Tow Show: Nov 21-23 Baltimore, MD

THE “BIG ED” MERIT AWARD (Entry Form)

Once again PTROI is pleased to announce plans to present a very special award to an outstanding tower.

The “**Big Ed**” Merit Award was established as a memorial by Mary Heldt, Secretary/Treasurer of Powers 24-hour Towing Service, Inc., for Ed Batson, Powers 24-Hour Towing Service, Inc., Hillside, Illinois.

It’s the “**Big Ed Merit Award**” presented annually to **any owner or employee** from a PTROI member company who has:

- ☐ Brought a high level of professionalism and dignity to the Illinois Towing and Recovery Industry.
- ☐ Someone who is dedicated, loyal and can always be counted on to be there for you.
- ☐ Significant and consistent contributions to the advancement and recognition of the Professional Towing and Recovery Industry.
- ☐ Regular sharing of leadership services as PTROI volunteer, as well as an active role in civic and community affairs.

Yes, we want to submit an entry for the “Big Ed Merit Award” for 2026 and our nominee is listed below. A background statement of 300 words or less to support this nomination is attached.

The winner will be honored and receive a handsome plaque award at the PTROI October meeting, date and place to be determined.

Name of Nominee: _____

Submitted by: Name _____

Company _____

Date _____

All entries must be RETURNED TO THE PTROI OFFICE no later than October 1, 2026. Mail entries to PTROI, POB 1375, Bridgeview, IL 60455. If you wish, you can email a copy to office@ptroi.com.

PTROI SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Application Deadline is October 1, 2026

Scholarship awards are based on the following criteria:

1. Recipient is related to a PTROI member as: spouse, child, grandchild, of member in good standing; --- family member of employee of member in good standing.
2. Recipient is a high school senior and / or is enrolled and has been accepted in an accredited College or Trade School.
3. Recipient has a minimum grade average of B or above.
4. Application completely filled out and all supplemental materials attached.

I. Personal Information (please print)

Name _____
Address _____
City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____
Date of Birth _____ Social Security# _____

II. Member Information:

Name of Member Towing Company _____
Employee Name (If applicable) _____
Relationship to Applicant _____
Address of Company _____
City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____

III. Academic Information:

School you plan to attend _____
Location of School _____
Cumulative Grade Point Average _____
Intended Major _____

IV. Supplemental Materials

1. Letter of Recommendation from Dean, Principle, Counselor.
2. Letter of Recommendation from community or service group leader.
3. Last Report Card
4. List of community service and personal accomplishments.
5. List of goals and proposed academic future.

I hereby certify that the foregoing information is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and any intentional inaccuracies may be cause for disqualification.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____
Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Mail application to: PTROI, POB 1375, Bridgeview, IL 60455 or email to office@ptroi.com

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- ✓ **Bills as recovery.** Turn a cleanup cost into recovered margin.

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Maintaining and Using a Wire Rope on Your Winch for Towing and Winching

A winch is one of the most valuable pieces of equipment used in towing and vehicle recovery operations. When mounted on a tow truck, a winch provides the pulling power needed to move disabled vehicles, equipment, and other heavy loads. The effectiveness and safety of a winch depend greatly on the condition and proper use of its wire rope. Regular maintenance and correct operating procedures are essential to ensure safe towing operations, maximize equipment life, and prevent costly accidents.

Understanding Wire Rope

Wire rope is constructed from multiple strands of steel wire twisted together to form a strong, flexible cable. It is designed to withstand heavy loads while maintaining durability under harsh operating conditions. However, despite its strength, wire rope is subject to wear, fatigue, corrosion, and damage over time. Regular inspection and maintenance are necessary to ensure that the rope remains safe for towing applications.

Before each use, operators should visually inspect the entire length of the wire rope. Look for broken wires, kinks, flattened sections, bird-caging (where strands separate and bulge outward), corrosion, excessive wear, or signs of crushing. Any of these conditions can significantly reduce the rope's strength and increase the risk of failure during a towing operation. If severe damage, such as fraying, is found, the rope should be replaced immediately.

Proper Maintenance Procedures

Routine maintenance begins with keeping the wire rope clean. Dirt, mud, road salt, and other contaminants can become trapped between the strands, accelerating wear and corrosion. After use, especially in wet or muddy conditions, the rope should be cleaned using a wire brush and wiped down to remove debris. When wiping down a wire rope, always be sure to use methods to keep from picking up slivers in your hands. Avoid using harsh chemicals that may damage the rope or remove protective coatings.

Lubrication is another critical aspect of wire rope maintenance. Proper lubrication reduces friction between individual wires and strands, minimizes internal wear, and helps prevent rust. Manufacturers typically recommend specialized wire rope lubricants that penetrate deep into the cable while providing a protective outer coating. Lubrication should be applied periodically according to the manufacturer's guidelines and environmental conditions.

The winch drum should also be inspected regularly. Damaged drum surfaces, rough edges, or debris can cause premature wear on the wire rope. Ensure the rope is wound evenly on the drum to prevent crushing or pinching of lower layers. Uneven spooling can create pressure points that weaken the cable and shorten its service life.

towbook

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Operators of Illinois**

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Storage conditions play an important role in maintaining wire rope integrity. When not in use, equipment should be stored in a dry environment whenever possible. Prolonged exposure to moisture, chemicals, or salt can lead to corrosion that weakens the rope from both the inside and outside.

Safe Use During Towing Operations

Proper winch operation begins with selecting a wire rope and winch rated for the intended load. Operators should never exceed the working load limit established by the manufacturer. Overloading places excessive stress on the wire rope and increases the likelihood of equipment failure.

When preparing for a towing operation, inspect all connection points, hooks, shackles, and anchor points. The wire rope should be attached securely to a suitable recovery point capable of handling the anticipated load. Improper attachment methods can result in sudden separation under tension.

As tension is applied, the operator should maintain a safe distance from the wire rope and avoid standing directly in line with the pull. In the unlikely event of rope failure, stored energy can cause the rope and attached hardware to recoil violently. Many towing professionals place a inch line damper, heavy blanket, or recovery blanket over the wire rope during operation to reduce recoil energy if a break occurs.

The winch should be operated smoothly and steadily. Sudden jerking movements, shock loading, and rapid acceleration can place forces on the wire rope that far exceed its rated capacity. Gradual and controlled pulling not only protects the equipment but also improves overall towing safety.

Operators should monitor the wire rope continuously during use. If unusual noises, excessive stretching, visible damage, or improper winding occur, stop the operation immediately and inspect the equipment. Continuing to operate a damaged wire rope can lead to catastrophic failure.

Extending Service Life

Several practices can significantly extend the life of a wire rope. Avoid dragging the rope across sharp edges, rocks, or abrasive surfaces. Use protective sleeves or rollers when

necessary to prevent surface damage. Never allow vehicles to drive over the wire rope, as crushing forces can damage the internal structure of the cable even when no external damage is visible.

Regular inspections should be documented as part of a preventive maintenance program. Keeping records of inspections, lubrication schedules, and rope replacements helps ensure compliance with safety procedures and allows operators to identify wear patterns before they become serious problems.

The Wrap-Up

The wire rope on a towing winch is a critical component that directly affects both performance and safety. Proper inspection, cleaning, lubrication, storage, and operating practices can significantly extend its service life while reducing the risk of accidents. By following manufacturer recommendations and adhering to established safety procedures, operators can ensure reliable towing performance and maintain a safe working environment. Regular maintenance is not only an investment in equipment longevity but also an essential part of responsible towing operations.



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