

At your command

Opening and closing roll-up doors has never been easier

By James Menzies

BURLINGTON, Ont. – Much like garage door openers and automatic car windows have become the norm, Jim Webb, business development manager with Whiting is anticipating that his company's CommandLIFT remote door system will be the next big thing for straight trucks and trailers with roll-up doors.

The CommandLIFT system is controlled by a small handheld remote that doubles as a keychain. Drivers simply press a button to effortlessly open or close the door and a slide cover prevents the accidental opening while in transit.

The system first caught the attention of Whiting reps while at a trade show in Europe. Webb said the company purchased the North American licensing rights and then completely redesigned the system for use here.

"Over the past two years, we've re-engineered this entire product," said Webb, while demonstrating the system at Whiting's Burlington manufacturing plant. Whiting has put the CommandLIFT through its paces in hot and cold temperature extremes and has operated it continuously for more than 50,000 cycles without any problems, Webb says.

Initially, he felt delivery truck owner/operators would be the target market, but that has since expanded to include fleets as they have recognized the potential to lower employee injury rates and ideally their insurance costs. Suitable applications run the gamut, from couriers (which can make as many as 100 deliveries per shift) to food and beverage delivery companies to furniture retailers and rental companies. Webb says the system can

even help a company comply with regulations.

Food and Drug Administration regulations, for instance, don't allow food to be placed on the ground.

"I've seen this hundreds of times, you go to a restaurant and there's a truck there delivering hamburger patties. The driver opens the door, reaches in and takes out a box of patties, puts it on the ground and then closes the door. He's violated the law, because he's put it on the ground," Webb explains.

The CommandLIFT, however, saves the driver from having to grab the strap and latch the door, as it locks even without the traditional latch secured.

The added security is also appreciated by companies that deliver cargo such as tobacco and alcohol, which always represents a high risk of theft.

Webb is confident the CommandLIFT will become a valuable driver recruiting and retention tool, as the driver shortage once again rears its head. You don't need arms the size of Popeye's to open and close the door dozens of times over the course of a shift, which will be appreciated by an aging workforce.

The system boasts a few other benefits as well, which will be appreciated by drivers.

The interior LED lights travel with the door as it opens so unlike a traditional dome light, they are not blocked by the door when it's raised.

There's also an extra 3-inches of clearance, since the door rolls all the way up and doesn't bounce back to impede on the opening like roll-up doors often do. This should help minimize damage



EASY TO USE: The roll-up door on this straight truck is opened with the click of a button, using the handheld keychain-type remote control.



BRIGHT IDEA: The interior LED lights travel along the track on the ceiling so they're not blocked by the door when opened.

while loading and unloading by forklift.

Webb also says the system will prolong door life, although by just how much is difficult to say.

"I know a lot of drivers who have arms the size of my legs and they throw that door up so hard, the door panels, hinges and rollers take an absolute beating," Webb says. "Then they take it and slam it shut – I've seen it actually come down and bounce. The abuse those doors are taking – they get beat up."

Maintenance is virtually non-

existent – the tracks just need to be periodically wiped clean with a rag, Webb claims.

The CommandLIFT is available through most bodybuilders at a recommended price of around \$2,500 installed. Aftermarket installations will take about six hours, Webb predicts, although that can be reduced to about two hours with some experience.

The system requires a 12- or 24-volt power supply and weighs about 80 lbs. More info is available through bodybuilders and at www.commandlift.com. □