

# Material Transfer Deck Increases Crane Efficiency on the Jobsite

Veteran crane operator Kern Baxter was at the controls one day when a light bulb went off and he realized there had to be a better way to get material from the ground into a high-rise building. The LTD4000, a load lifting transfer deck from Baxter Cranes in Fort Meyers, Fla., is his brainchild. Acting as a material platform, it performs totally independently of a crane, freeing each piece of equipment to work more efficiently.

While a crane is able to place material on top of a building relatively easily, getting material into the interior of the building under construction or undergoing renovations is always a challenge. The crane's cable and hook are limited by the edge of the floor. As a result, crews have used devices such as forklifts and material platforms, with less than stellar results.

"Even if an outrigger platform is used, the crane has to work to load it with material, and that takes up a lot of the crane's time," explains Baxter. "Also, the workers have to come from inside the building onto the platform. They're automatically in harm's way, standing on a cantilevered platform moving materials back and forth inside and outside the structure."

## Autonomous platform

The LTD4000 is an outrigger platform working totally independently of the crane. The floor of the platform becomes as solid a structure as the building itself.

"People have always had a problem dragging material into a building," explains Baxter. "I realized there had to be a better way to do this and came up with the idea of a retractable platform that would allow a hoist to have clear access to the ground."

The high-strength steel retractable platform, 20' long x 8'4" wide, is lifted by crane to the desired floor of the building under construction and attached to the building via I-beams and jacks. Ten feet of the platform is inserted into the building, while 10 feet, lined with handrails, stands outside the building. Mounted on the apex of the platform's A-frame, a 4,000-pound capacity hoist raises and lowers materials with clear access to the ground, as well as the platform.

The platform's operator loads the material instead of the crane operator doing so. "It slides into the side of the building, half in and half out, and is positioned with temporary jacks," says Baxter of the platform. "It stays in place by itself for as long as it is needed. Material is put onto the hoisting platform via the hoist or a crane, and the retractable platform delivers material in and out of the building." The LTD4000, then, is free to pick up another load at the same time.

The standard model can handle the majority of materials that need to go into a building, including glass, cabinets, tile, loads of block, and bundles of drywall, says Baxter. Accessory platforms, without the A-frame hoist, are available as well. Designed with a retractable deck like the standard model, the secondary platform can be placed into position on a lower level of the building. The hook



As an accessory, Kern Baxter's LTD4000 load lifting transfer deck operates independently, delivering materials into the building, and freeing the crane to perform more critical duties on a high-rise jobsite.

from the master unit can then pass through to the ground to bring materials to the lower level via the hoist on the master unit.

## Perfecting the concept

The LTD4000 was eight years in the making and was officially unveiled at ConExpo in March. "The show was short notice," says Baxter. "At the last minute, they said they could fit us in." Though the booth location was less than optimal, the showing in Las Vegas was a successful one. "We were chosen by ConExpo personnel as one of the Most Innovative Products," says Baxter. "We were one of five companies featured in the Innovations Zone."

At press time, the manufacturer had a smaller version of the transfer deck in development for other types of applications. Baxter says the device could be customized to meet specific needs. To view a video of the LTD4000 in action, visit the company website. ■

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