

Unique by marriage

A story that spans a continent



TCSZ 462979 at South Bethlehem, PA on March 22, 2006, Eric A. Neubauer



At first glance, TCSZ 462979 looks a lot like thousands of other Triple Crown Services aluminum plate RoadRailers.

Those familiar with Triple Crown's fleet might recognize that it belongs to one of four number series with Schneider National origins. If not, the bright orange paint showing through where the white paint has flaked off provides an obvious clue.

A closer examination shows that the side posts are bare aluminum rather than white, an unusual but hardly rare feature shared by about 1 out of every 6 former Schneider RoadRailers.

The unique nature of this trailer is revealed when one counts the protruding cups on the side and discovers there are 22 rather than the usual 21 associated with Schneider RoadRailers. The cups near the front end are also in unusual locations.

The history of this trailer begins along the I-5 corridor in California and Oregon. Wabash National built a small group of Mark IV RoadRailers for the Schneider tests that began in December, 1992. At that time, the Mark VI RoadRailer was a new design which combined the running gear of the Mark V RoadRailer with the aluminum plate superstructure developed for Wabash National's regular trailers. Later, the superstructure of one of the Schneider test trailers was joined with the running gear of TCSZ 461710 which had apparently been wrecked. The result went into service as TCSZ 462979 in 1998.

As far as I know, the component parts of TCSZ 462979 are still happily married. On the other hand, the Mark VI designation never caught on. Regardless, the introduction of many new RoadRailer varieties in the mid 1990s would have made for an unmanageable succession of Marks.

*Eric A. Neubauer
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RoadRailer

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