

7
2010 MAR 19 AM 8:49[REDACTED]
Harrison Township, MI [REDACTED]
March 13, 2010

NHTSA Headquarters
Att: Associate Administrator for Safety Assurance
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the owner of a 1999 Dutchmen Travel Trailer. I recently had an incident occur that I would like to bring to your attention and that I believe should be investigated.

The leaf spring hanger that attaches the leaf spring to the frame of the trailer tore loose from the frame. The weld that secures the hanger to the trailer frame did not break, the frame of the trailer broke resulting in a hole in the 2' x 4" trailer frame. I had the trailer repaired at a trailer welding shop. The owner said that this was the results of a combination of: Too thin of a trailer frame along with too hot of a weld used to secure the leaf spring hanger to the frame. He also indicated that this was not the first trailer that he has repaired with this nature of a problem, which leads me to believe that this should definitely be looked into.

This may be a case where the manufacturer is trying to build these trailers as light as possible, but may be sacrificing safety as a result.

On November 21, 2009, I wrote Dutchmen, regarding my concern. For your information, I have enclosed a copy of my letter, as well as a copy of their response, including photos.

I don't believe Dutchmen realizes the seriousness of this nature of a problem. This incident could have resulted in a terrible traffic accident.

Any assistance you can give regarding this concern would be very much appreciated. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Encs.

MC
032510
TGW

[REDACTED]
Harrison Township, MI [REDACTED]
November 21, 2009

Dutchmen
2164 Caragana Court
Goshen, Indiana 46526

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the original owner of a 1999 Dutchmen Lite Travel Trailer, Model 26FLL-C, Serial #47CT20M20XM [REDACTED] which I purchased new from General Trailer in Mount Clemens, Michigan.

I am requesting reimbursement for a repair that should have never been needed in the lifetime of the trailer. A spring hanger broke loose from the frame. The hanger nor the weld broke, instead the frame of the trailer tore open leaving a hole in the frame where the spring hanger was attached. I have had several professionals verify that this was the result of a combination of: two things:

1. Too hot of a weld used to attach the spring hanger to the frame
2. Too thin of a frame to support a 7700 lb. GVW trailer

This was not the first travel trailer the repair facility has seen with this nature of a problem. This is definitely an engineering/safety issue that should be investigated, including considering a possible recall. This could have resulted in a terrible traffic accident.

Please note the enclosed pictures along with a copy of the repair bill.

Any assistance you can give me regarding this problem would be very much appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Encs.

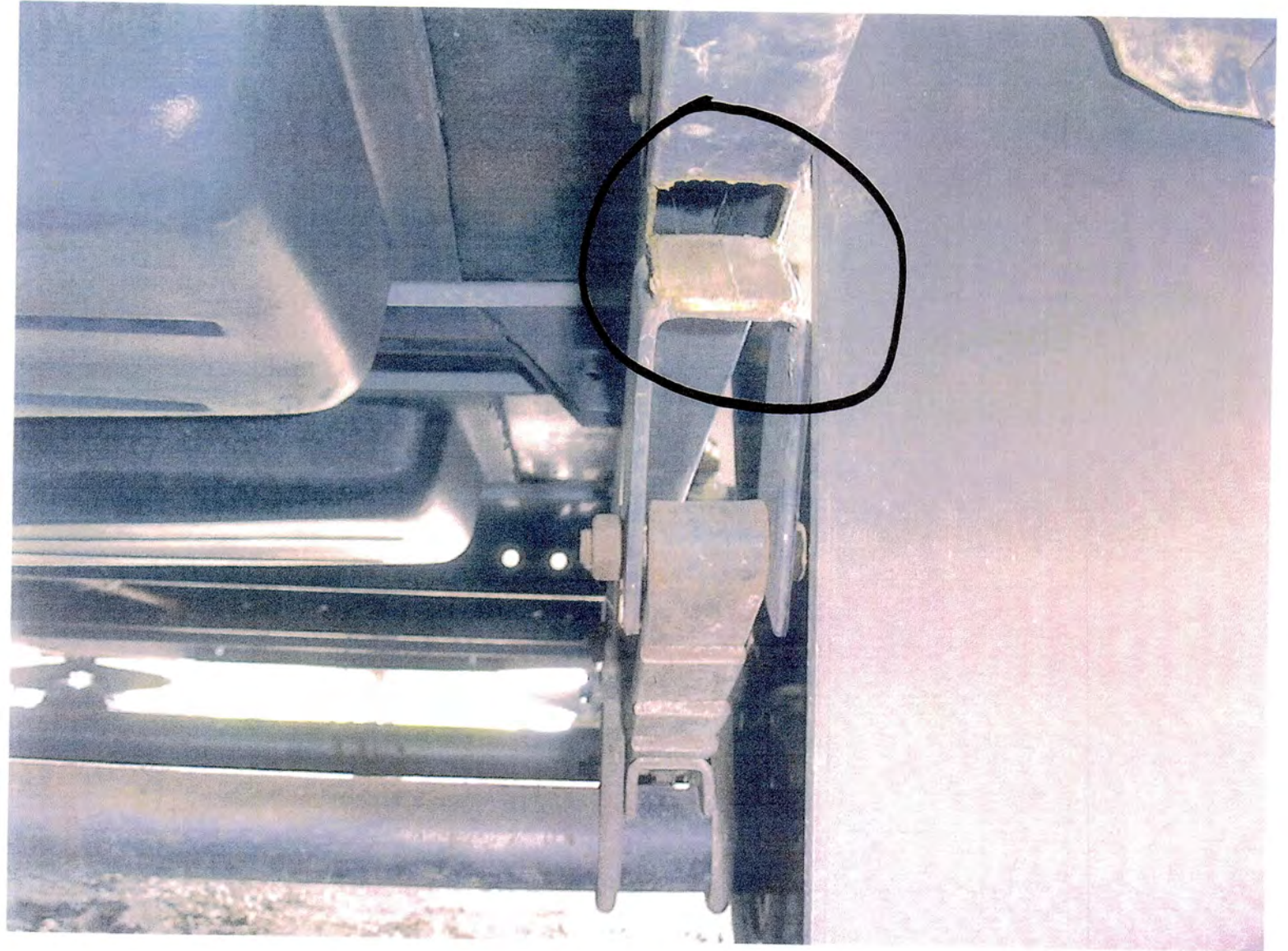




TOP

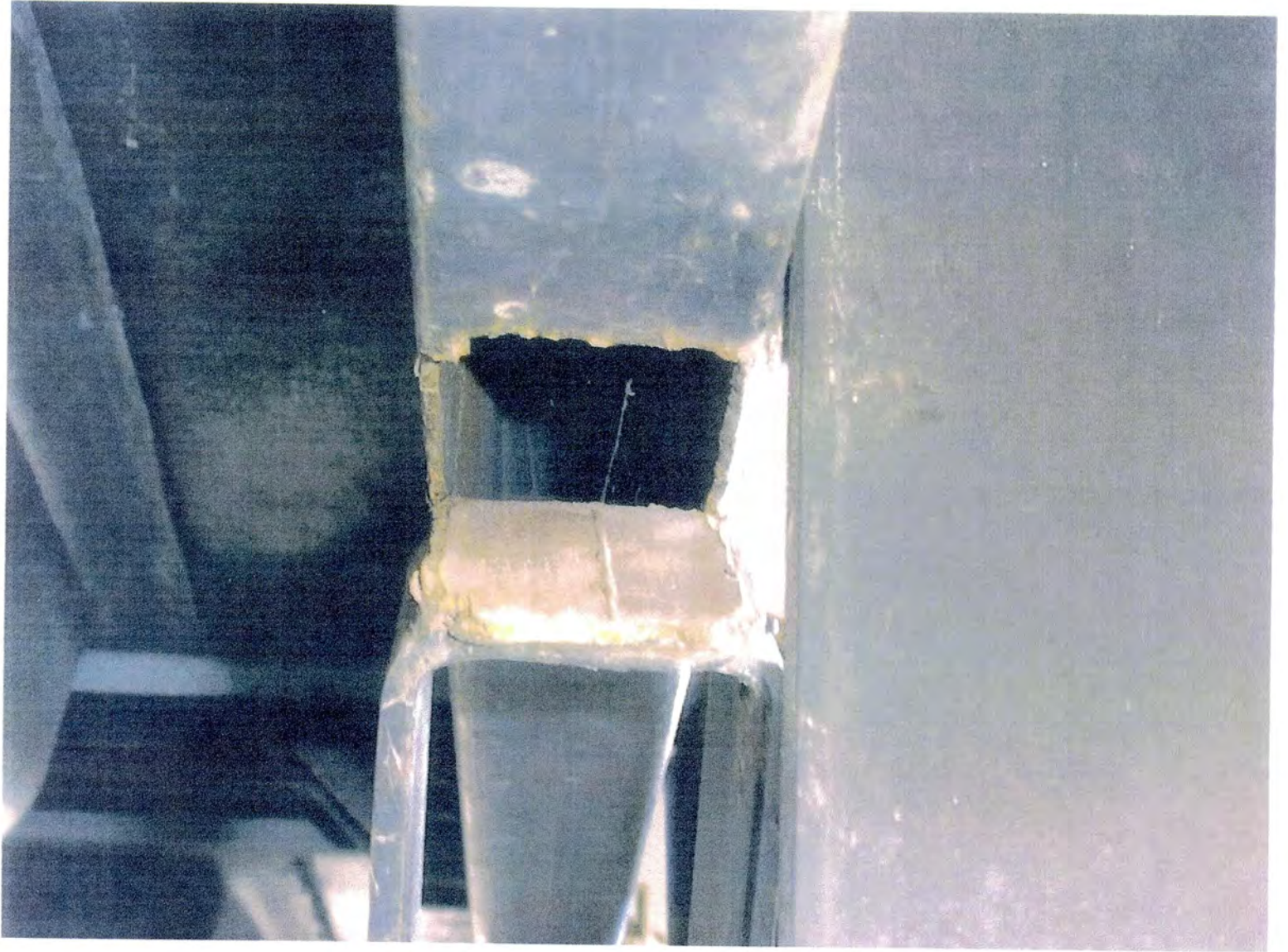


TOP



TOP

TOP



cc



(586) 781-0701 FAX (586) 781-2720
(800) 310-3027

JOB PHONE	DATE OF ORDER 10/12/09
JOB NAME / LOCATION [REDACTED]	

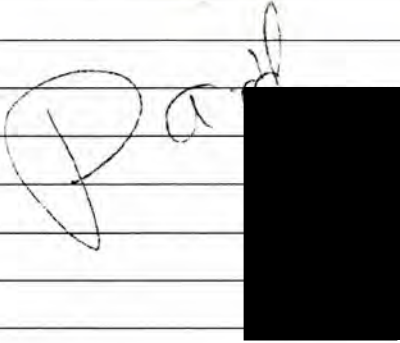
TO:

PHONE

ORDER TAKEN BY

TERMS:

~~Plotter~~ trailer. Dutchman.

DESCRIPTION OF WORK					AMOUNT	
Weld Spring Hangers & Coussot						
						
LABOR	HOURS	RATE	AMOUNT	TOTAL MATERIAL	20	93
				TOTAL LABOR	175	-
				SHOP SUPPLIES	10	-
WORK ORDERED BY		DATE COMPLETED		TAX	126	
SIGNATURE (I hereby acknowledge the satisfactory completion of the above described work).				Thank You! PAY THIS AMOUNT →		20719

Dutchmen

Manufacturing, Inc.

December 2, 2009

[REDACTED]
Harrison Township, Michigan

RE: Vin #47CT20M20XM [REDACTED]
1999 26FLL-C Dutchmen Lite

Dear [REDACTED]

We have received your letter dated November 21, 2009, along with the enclosed photos. We have also received paid invoice #32619 dated October 12, 2009, from Clark's Welding in the amount of \$207.19. This letter explains the condition of your trailer and the damage that has been found and repaired. The letter also requests assistance with trailer repairs, believing that this is a structural defect.

Your letter, photo, and invoice have been recorded in your units vin file.

The unit was accompanied with a limited one year bumper-to-hitch and two year structural warranty. The warranty has since expired.

The frame is sufficient for the trailer. Please remember to consider the hitch weight. The weights will be close, but with the hitch weight considered, the frame is fully capable of handling the weight specifications.

The frame was purchased as a complete and the trailer was built upon it. The warranty would have been held by the manufacturer of the frame. Dutchmen would have acted as the administrator for the first year of ownership.

We are sorry that your trailer was in need of repairs. We have found that this is not because of a structural or manufacturing defect. Unfortunately, we are unable to participate in the repair of your travel trailer.

Thank you for contacting Dutchmen Manufacturing.

Sincerely,

Cindy Walker
Cindy Walker
Customer Advocate, Retail
Dutchmen Manufacturing

Twp., Mich.



7009 0960 0000 2972 4553



W 48-226

MAR 18 2010

RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

SECURITY OPERATIONS

DO NOT BEND

NHTSA Headquarters
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1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

RETURN RECEIPT
REQUESTED

DO NOT BEND