Special Vehicles Company (SPEVCO) of Pfafftown, NC, is regarded as the innovative problem solver in the specialty vehicle industry. Many of its vehicles can be seen at high profile events around the country whether it’s the Speed TV display at NASCAR races or the Dunkin’ Donuts sampling truck or the John Frieda mobile hair salon.

During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, SPEVCO got its first taste of producing mobile medical facilities when it had to rush vehicles to FEMA on the Gulf Coast. More recently, SPEVCO was commissioned by the State of Minnesota to design and build a 53 ft long mobile hospital unit with three expandable slide-out areas – also known as PODs.

Whether it’s converting vehicles for advertising top names brands at NASCAR races or providing mobile medical facilities for FEMA, SPEVCO prides itself on space planning and load designs that significantly expand the size and capability of a customer’s vehicle.

Luigi Utili, a mechanical engineer at SPEVCO, the company has developed incredible expertise in the development of PODs, which are custom-built slide-out sections of trucks that immediately add extra square footage to any design.

Says Luigi, “For the larger PODs we have developed a custom in-house solution based hydraulic system, but one of the section of this vehicle was just 3ft by 10 ft so we looked into more cost effective linear bearing solutions for handling the POD movement.”

“The section is question contains a number of heavy cabinets for pharmaceuticals, refrigerators and analysis equipment, so the bearings had to be able to handle a weight of up to 2000lbs. As well as being expensive to produce, the positioning of the custom hydraulic system would have compromised the stiffness of the structure.”

Luigi and his team chose Rollon Corporation’s Compact Rail linear bearing system because of the low cost, ease of installation and the ability of the system to absorb positioning errors. “Not only was Compact Rail a structurally better solution, but its also ideally suited to a mobile installation where parts commonly move around and the rails have to be forgiving as misalignments occur.”
“We simply bolted the Compact Rail to the frame of the truck and one three-roller slider was more than capable of holding the 2000lb weight. This solution created an additional 36 square feet for the mobile hospital unit and, together with the pricing, really helped to sell the design to the customer.”

According to Thomas Osygus, regional sales manager at Rollon Corporation, “Compact Rail is designed to provide smooth movement whether mounting plane parallelism can be guaranteed or not,” reports Thomas, “so it was the ideal solution for this SPEVCO application.”

“In addition, Rollon has placed the raceways on the inside of the Compact Rail products to protect them from damage and contaminants while enabling the rail and slider to be mounted into small, compact, areas. Built-in, spring-loaded wipers in the heads and the lateral seals on the sides of the slider make it ideal for a mobile vehicle that may have to operate in extremely dirty environments.”

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