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Rhino Tool Company Donates Gas-powered Post Driver to “Flag Man”

KEWANEE — Larry "The Flag Man" Eckhardt's life just got a little easier thanks to a product engineered and manufactured in Kewanee.

Rhino Tool Company, 620 Andrews Ave., noticed the tireless volunteer who has lined streets with American flags at homecomings and funerals for American soldiers since 2006. Larry was using a homemade slide hammer to drive a three-quarter-inch steel rod manually to install flag posts.

Eckhardt, of Little York, IL, started his mission to make sure no soldier is forgotten with 150 flags. He can now provide up to 3,000 flags to line streets from the airport to the church, or the church to the cemetery, or both.

Friday, September 20th, Rhino Tool presented Eckhardt with a GPD-30 gas-powered post driver.

Bob Tellier, marketing manager,

explained the GPD-30 is a powerful, lightweight post driver that operates on regular gas. It's the perfect tool for t-posts, ground rod, form pins, grape stakes, and fence posts up to 1-7/8-inches in diameter. "It should help make flag installation much quicker and easier at the events Larry serves," said Tellier. Installing the flags takes time and Eckhardt relies local veterans groups, Boy Scouts, and ordinary volunteers to pound a hole into the ground to make a hole for the aluminum tube in which each flag is mounted.

"Rhino Tool Company is proud that our product will be used to install displays to honor military and public servants," Tellier said.



Friday, September 20, 2013, Larry “The Flag Man” Eckhardt was presented with GPD-30 Gas Powered Post Driver, donated by Rhino Tool Company of Kewanee. Representing Rhino was Marketing Manager, Bob Tellier.

Established in 1975, Rhino Tool Company is a manufacturer of top quality post drivers and post pullers." Our product line includes several models of air operated post drivers, gas powered post drivers, manual and hydraulic post pullers," Tellier said.

Rhino's post driver product line consists of eight air operated models covering the application range from medium-duty to heavy-duty, and two gas powered light-to medium-duty models. Rhino's Post Puller product line consists of three models of manual post pullers and one hydraulic.

Rhino serves many industries which include fence installation, sign installation, agriculture, vineyards, marine construction, construction, landscape construction, and more.

Located in Kewanee, IL, Rhino Tool Company is served by a sales network of distributors and dealers across the United States, Canada, and around the world.

This is not the first time Kewanee citizens have provided support for Eckhardt's efforts. In 2009, he was surprised with a 12-foot, enclosed trailer donated by the community at the homecoming for Kewanee National Guardsmen from Afghanistan. At that point, Eckhardt was up to about 530 flag poles which he carried in the back of his pickup. Since then, Fairfiled, Illinois community has presented him with a van.

For Eckhardt, a humble man who seldom attends the funerals where he installs the flags, placed 1,000 flags along the route President Obama took when entering Atkinson, Ill., for a speech on the economy at Wyffels Hybrids in 2011. Obama sent Eckhardt an autographed photo and a thank you for what he does for American soldiers, veterans and their families. But Larry states, "While planting flags for the President was truly a great honor, the highest honor we feel is when we are allowed to pay tribute to one our country's heroes."

Established in 1975, Rhino Tool Company, manufactures high quality, rugged Gas, Air, and Manual Operated Post Drivers and Manual and Hydraulic Post Pullers.