

Truckstop

Wow... The reader board on the interstate says 37 plows have been crunched so far this season. That's a lot of snowplows that have been put out of commission and leaves like only nine of them to do the whole state, or so it would seem. I thought I was going to watch #38 get smashed the other day as I was driving down a long straight stretch of interstate. Up in front of me a ways there was a small pickup that wasn't going very fast and I was catching up to him. Suddenly a car came by me going about Mach 1, passed the guy in front of me and then, strangely, disappeared. Then he re-appears out in the median doing a few cookies before coming to a stop. Turns out that there was a snowplow in the passing lane that he didn't know was there, and decided to try out the median instead of crunching the plow. About that time a "Super-Trucker" came by me going Mach 1.5. Whereas Super-Truckers don't have CB radios, I couldn't tell him he was about to crunch a plow, and not wanting to get in the fracas about to ensue, I started for the shoulder and hoped I would avoid the pieces of Supertruck and snowplow that were about litter this particular stretch of hi-way. Somehow they didn't collide, and everything turned out for the best. So yes, we have a visibility problem when a snowplow is working, especially when dealing with light fluffy snow. When you can't see them, then they are going to get crunched, especially when people refuse to slow down no matter what. I am sure there's been lots of discussion about this in Helena about what to do, but I think they're trying to fix stupid, and that cannot be fixed. People need to slow down, but they won't because they think they're invincible, probably from watching too many teevee commercials showing how well the latest and greatest snow-tires are, and how well them "new-fangled" crash avoider cars are.

One idea that they had was to put super bright lights on the back of the plow to make them more visible, but that's a fairly dumb idea because to get around the plow at night, one shouldn't have to put on sunglasses because one cannot see anything, thus increasing the chances of crunching into the plow, so I don't think that's the way to fix that particular problem, and when the snowplow gets in powdery snow you cannot see the bright lights either. I'd say put a plain ol' red light on a long piece of pipe and weld it to the snowplow and make that light about 20 feet in the air... Or maybe there should be a law that banishes you from Montana for life if you do crunch into one...

Well, I did it again... Just when one thinks that one has the whole border crossing thing mastered, they throw you a curve... Anyway, I pull up to the US Customs window the other day, just like I've done a bazillion times before. The routine is simple. Shut your truck off, and hand the nice Officer your Passport and Manifest for the load you're hauling, say hello to the nice officer, and answer the 3 quick questions. "Any guns or weapons?" "Any alcohol or tobacco?" "Any fruits or vegetables, meats, chickens, ducks or any other stuff that might be considered delicious?" Of course all three questions are answered with a jovial "No Sir", or "No Ma'am" whichever the case may be... Well this time I answered with the standard "No Sir" because it appeared that I was conversing with a person befitting of such a title. Question #4 back out the window toward the truck was "Just who exactly are you calling "Sir!" Oh boy... I've ticked off the person who holds my collective fate in their hands for the next 300 yards or so, the approximate distance to the out-gate at the far end of the parking lot, and I don't have a clue why. "Huh? Ummm yes I called you Sir, a rather respectable thing to do, as you're wearing a badge and have earned my respect for you." I explained. Then I got to thinking that perhaps I should have used Ma'am instead. I quickly did a review of information at hand about this nice officer. Looks young... Ok, check for earrings, sometimes that can indicate a Sir, or a Ma'am... Oh No! Earrings!!! But they aren't the dangly ones, so still, leaning towards the "Sir" as being proper... Then this person, in the window, with the badge, and earrings, gave me back my passport, my ok to leave blue thingy that you give to the guy at the out-gate, and said to me "You are a sexist!" and slammed the window shut. Soon as I got to the parking area I had to ask Google just what one of those was... Boy Howdy... From now on I'm saying "Yup" or "Nope" and nothing more...

That said, I must close now as the snow is finally melting here and I've got to go do something about the lake forming in my shop.

Until next time,

That is All.

Rich T.