

PERFECT BED MATES: CARGO MANAGEMENT BUYER'S GUIDE

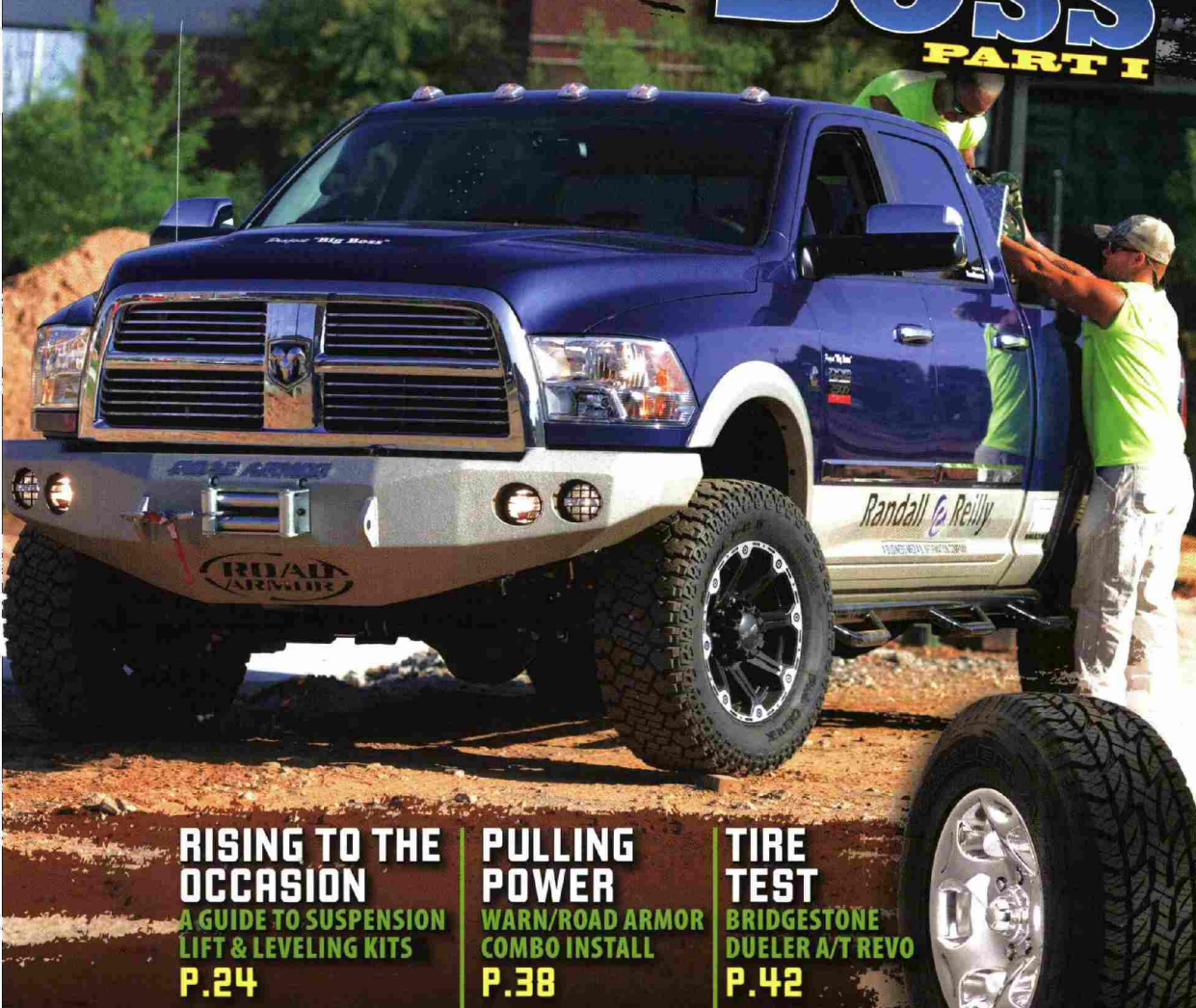
# PICKUP

IDEAS | EQUIPMENT | UPGRADES

Supplement to *Randall & Reilly*

SUMMER, 2010

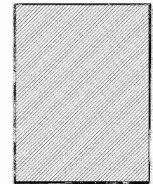
## PROJECT BIG BOSS PART I



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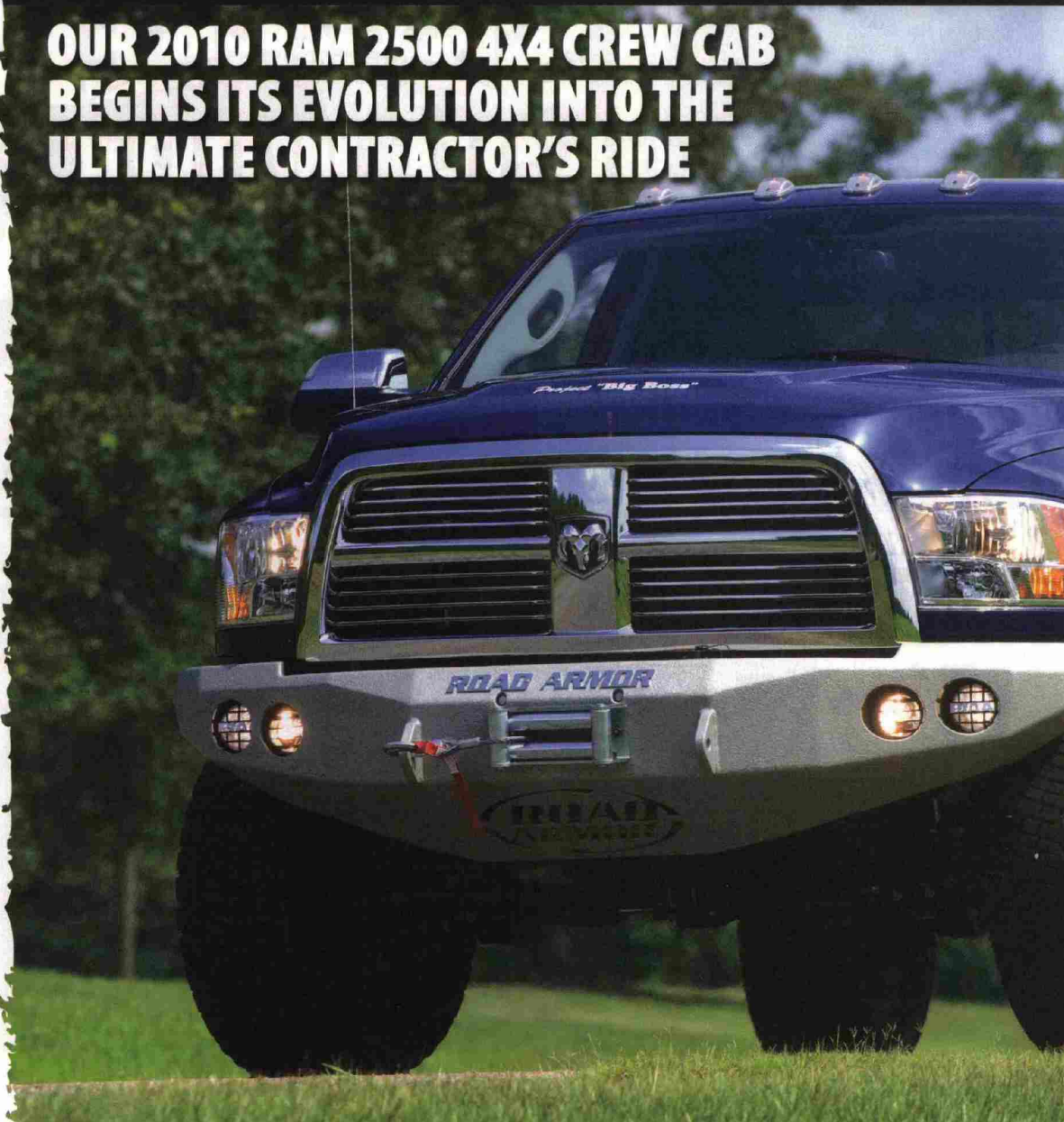
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# PROJECT BIG BOSS

**OUR 2010 RAM 2500 4X4 CREW CAB  
BEGINS ITS EVOLUTION INTO THE  
ULTIMATE CONTRACTOR'S RIDE**



# BOSS PART 1



By Bruce W. Smith

**E**very construction company owner likes to drive a vehicle that reflects their business. First impressions go a long way, and when it comes to corporate calling cards, nothing speaks to one's professionalism better than a well-appointed pickup.

That's the goal we are pursuing with our newest project pickup, a 2010 Ram 2500 Crew Cab 4x4 diesel we've dubbed the "Big Boss."

Over the next six months we will upgrade the Cummins-powered Ram with a number of aftermarket products to transform an already fine pickup into one with rugged looks and enhanced functionality that a boss would find invaluable during a week of work and a weekend of play.

When the upgrades are complete it will have a look that makes it stand a head above the majority of heavy-duty pickups on the road and at job sites.

We hope it also gives you a lot of ideas for personalizing and fine-tuning your own pro pickup.

## THE FOUNDATION

We chose the Ram Crew Cab 4x4 diesel for a number of reasons. A crew-cab is the truck to have if you're a boss who regularly shuttles co-workers, clients, friends and family during weekdays and weekends. The 2500 model provides plenty of towing/hauling muscle without sacrificing ride quality.

Four-wheel drive, with optional 3.73:1 limited-slip rear differential, is a must in any business where moving loads off road is part of the playbook. It's also an essential element for those who enjoy the outdoors in their free time.

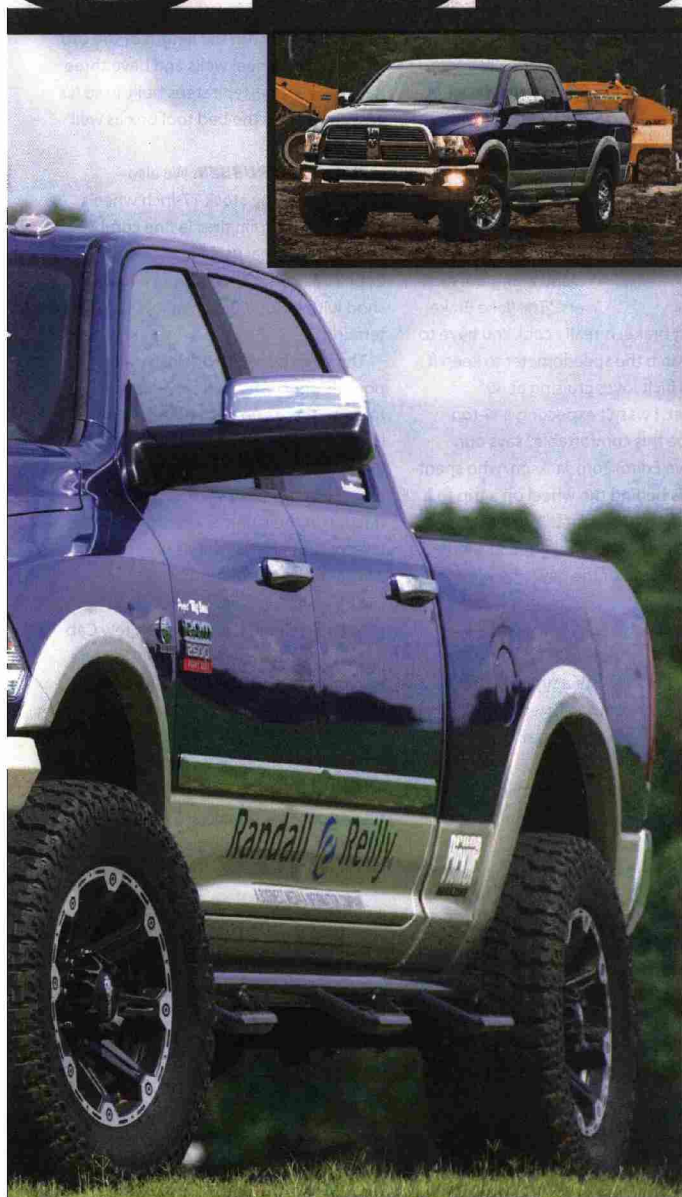
Of course, the \$8,000 Cummins option is a no-brainer for towing heavy loads, sharing a common fuel source with your heavier trucks—and maximizing long-term durability in hard use week in, week out.

The 2010 Ram 2500 Laramie Crew Cab 4x4 we purchased from our local Dodge dealer, Locklear Chrysler Jeep Dodge ([locklearcars.com](http://locklearcars.com)), provides all of those needs in a stylish and well-appointed package with a retail price of \$53,395.

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

To date our staff has logged just under 3,000 miles in the Big Boss. All have remarked in the logbook about its refined ride quality, roominess, interior comfort and awesome power. The only disappointment: somewhat dismal fuel economy. But we expect that to improve as the engine loosens up as miles pile on.

Dodge designers set up the interior as a working office for the person who spends a lot of time in the cab. There are



# PROJECT BIG BOSS



Ben Allen installs the 30-gallon Transfer Flow crossbed refuel tank/tool box at the TSO shop.



A fold-down gooseneck hitch from Curt Manufacturing is fitted into the bed prior to being sprayed with Line-X.

## SOURCES

Curt Manufacturing	<a href="http://www.curtmfg.com">www.curtmfg.com</a>
Daystar	<a href="http://www.daystarweb.com">www.daystarweb.com</a>
Dick Cepek	<a href="http://www.dickcepek.com">www.dickcepek.com</a>
Line-X	<a href="http://www.line-x.com">www.line-x.com</a>
Road Armor	<a href="http://www.roadarmor.com">www.roadarmor.com</a>
Transfer Flow	<a href="http://www.transferflow.com">www.transferflow.com</a>
Truck Supply & Outfitters	<a href="http://www.trucksupplyandoutfitters.com">www.trucksupplyandoutfitters.com</a>
Tuscablu	<a href="http://www.tuscablu.com">www.tuscablu.com</a>
USFleetTracking	<a href="http://www.usfleettracking.com">www.usfleettracking.com</a>
Warn Industries	<a href="http://www.warn.com">www.warn.com</a>

plenty of storage compartments and little touches inside and out that make it a fine working man's truck.

Overall, the Ram Crew Cab makes a good first impression. That feeling grows with seat time.

"I'm really beginning to like this truck," notes one staffer who took it on a 200 mile road trip to have the Line-X coating sprayed in the bed and along the rockers.

"The 'Jake Brake' (exhaust brake) is really cool. You have to really watch the speedometer to keep it reigned in. It loves cruising at 80."

"Sweet. I wasn't expecting a ¾-ton 4x4 to be this comfortable," says our Executive Editor Tom Jackson, who spent six hours behind the wheel on a trip to a Bobcat event in Atlanta. "You can drive it for long stretches and not feel saddle sore at the end of the day."

### ADDING FORM & FUNCTION

To meet the needs of a typical job site supervisor or company owner who is in the field a lot requires installing a variety of aftermarket products.

**BED LINER.** The first order of business was to add a layer of protection to the bed and lower rocker panels.

For that we turned to Line-X. Line-X

sprayed the bed and rocker panels with color-matched Line-X Xtra, a Kevlar-impregnated coating, developed jointly with DuPont, which can be color-matched to the vehicle's factory paint. It looks great and, as one would expect from its composition, is tough as nails.

**STEP BARS.** To further the rocker protection – and to make it easier to get in and out of the truck – we turned to N-Fab for a set of tubular nerf-bar/step setups.

The nerf bars run the length of the cab between the wheel wells and have three heavy duty tube-type steps built-in so it's easy to get into the bed tool box as well as the cab.

**OFF-ROAD RUBBER.** We also swapped out the stock 17-inch wheels and BFG All-Terrain tires (a fine combination for normal use) for a set of Dick Cepek 18x8.5-inch DC Torque wheels shod with LT305/60R18 Radial F-C II all-terrains.

The wheels are rated to carry 3,640 pounds per corner and the tires are "E"-rated so there's no detriment to our Ram's load-carrying or towing capabilities. The wider footprint and hybrid tread pattern provide better sand, rock, dirt and gravel traction in the summer months than the factory rubber. The wheels give the Big Boss a distinctive flare.

**LEVEL KIT.** We added a 2 ½-inch Daystar leveling kit to give our Crew Cab a level stance, while adding a little more clearance for tire travel. We also added Daystar's longer travel shocks.

**BUMPER AND WINCH.** Speaking of travel, this is a pickup destined to see its fair share of winching and pulling situations, not to mention close encounters with trees, rocks and other objects that tend to do immediate harm to a front



N-Fab nerf steps add an extra layer of body protection to the Big Boss' rockers, while giving us a leg up getting in.

**PART 1**

bumper. So, we turned to Road Armor and Warn to give the Big Boss a bit more of an attitude up front.

Truck Supply & Outfitters, our local go-to parts, service and installation shop, installed a Road Armor Stealth bumper with a 12,000-pound-capacity Warn M12000 electric winch tucked inside the bumper's 3/8-inch steel shell. Now we have instant pulling power and bulldozer-like front-end protection.

**EXTRA LIGHTS.** A set of Warn fog lights and PIAA driving lights were also installed in the bumper to provide maximum auxiliary lighting at the flip of a switch.

**GOOSENECK TOWING.** TSO also installed a Curt Manufacturing Folding Ball gooseneck hitch kit in the bed so the Big Boss is ready to pull any type of trailer when the need arises. (The ball folds into the bed, leaving the floor flat for carrying cargo.) Curt also supplied us with a weight-distributing hitch kit, just in case we plan on towing a conventional trailered load weighing more than 5,000 pounds per Dodge's towing recommendations (<http://www.dodge.com/bodybuilder/2010/docs/ram/ram-mlup2500.pdf>).

**AUXILIARY FUEL.** Both bed cargo management and the ability to have extra fuel on hand was handled by a Transfer Flow combo cross-bed tool box/refueling tank. The upper third of the diamond-plated combo box is for tools and cargo. The lower section is a DOT-approved 30-gallon refuel tank with built-in pump and fuel hose.

**GPS TRACKING.** To make it easy for our

bosses to keep an eye on us and where the Big Boss is 24/7, USFleetTracking hid one of their new AT-X5 vehicle tracking devices on the truck. Anyone who wants to see where the Big Boss Ram is located can now log in to [USFleetTracking.Com](http://USFleetTracking.Com) to see its position in real time.

**MORE IN THE WORKS**

To date we've added about \$9,000 in upgrades to the Big Boss. But there are a lot more upgrades planned.

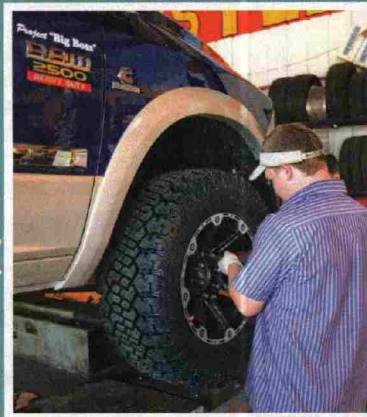
Still to come: making the interior a rolling office with the latest in wireless technology and upgrades to the engine, transmission and exhaust systems. There's a lot we will do to improve performance in those areas.

We've also put additional cargo management, safety items, on-board air, tools and specialty equipment on our to-do list.

To keep tabs on what's being added, how it's done, and our latest reports on the Big Boss, log in to our web site: [www.propick-upmag.com](http://www.propick-upmag.com). Then click on the "Big Boss" to go to our logbook, sponsors, products and install pages where you'll find everything you need to stay up on the latest with the project build. You'll also find a list of dates/locations where the Big Boss will be on display. 



Truck Supply & Outfitters fits our Crew Cab Ram with a Road Armor Bumper/Warn winch combo.



Stock tires and wheels are swapped out for Dick Cepek package for better summer performance and style.



Tuscabvue, our local graphics shop, lays on our corporate signage.



Line-X sprayed the bed and rockers with their new Xtra coating material, which is color-matched to our Ram.

**BIG BOSS: BY THE NUMBERS**

**B**ase track data for Project "Big Boss" as conducted at Holiday Raceway, Woodstock, Alabama, using a Stalker ATS computerized radar system. Track tests were conducted with full fuel tank, no load, and driver. Highway fuel economy test was conducted on a 110-mile run at steady-state 70mph on I-59 with full fuel tank, no load, driver and passenger. To see more test data, go to [propickupmag.com](http://propickupmag.com).

<b>PICKUP</b>	2010 Ram 2500 Crew Cab 4x4 Diesel, 3.73:1 axle ratio, automatic
<b>PERFORMANCE DATA</b>	0-30mph: 3.0 sec 0-60mph: 8.97 sec Braking, 60-0mph: 146.16 feet 1/8-mile: 10.86 sec @ 67.15mph
<b>FUEL ECONOMY</b>	Best: Hwy @ 70mph - 17.1mpg (110-mile test loop, I-59, steady state) Worst: City - 13.5mpg Observed average City/Hwy - 14.9mpg
<b>TOTAL MILES DRIVEN TO DATE</b>	2,491