



DALLAS SMITH CORP.®

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Wendy Mehringer
(317) 257-5225, x-16
wendy@willowmarketing.com

Dallas Smith Corp. Forms Alliances with Detroit Custom Chassis and Manning Equipment Manufacturer and converters make low-floor commercial vehicles. Products launched at NTEA.

GREENCASTLE, Ind. — Dallas Smith Corporation today announced alliances with Detroit Custom Chassis DC2 and Manning Equipment in what is the final step to making the Indiana-based engineering firm's low-floor chassis design available on Ford Super Duty F-450/F-550 truck series.

“Detroit Custom Chassis DC2 and Manning Equipment embody the two components we were looking for from manufacturers and converters – production quality and solid company reputation,” said Jud Smith, vice president of Dallas Smith Corporation. “Both companies’ long-time working relationships with Ford and the Ford Super Duty F- Series Truck platforms were key to our decision as well.”

Detroit Custom Chassis DC2 will exclusively manufacture what Dallas Smith Corp. calls the Z-Frame™. Named for its form where the low-floor rear chassis connects to the traditional frontal frame, the Z-Frame™ drops the floor height of the rear section or cargo area of the vehicle. Detroit Custom Chassis DC2 will also perform conversions on Ford F-450/550 trucks to be finished as low-floor shuttle buses and cargo vans by Supreme Corporation.

“With that first phone call when Dallas Smith introduced himself and the project, I knew that this was a well-engineered, well-planned opportunity,” said Detroit Custom Chassis DC2 Vice President of Strategic Business Development Chuck Kier. “(Dallas Smith Corp.) had done their homework. They knew of our history with Ford, building the Class A motor home chassis and right-hand drive Explorers for the post office, along with the Th!nk Neighbor electric vehicle. They wanted that same deliverable quality and processes with the Z-Frame™. “

Manning Equipment, a Ford-recognized QVM (Quality Vehicle Manufacturer) of more than 50 years, will convert all other orders for Ford F-450/550 trucks with Z-Frames™ shipped from Detroit Custom Chassis DC2. Manning Equipment is located next to the Ford Kentucky Truck Plant in Louisville where the F-Series Super-Duty pickups are manufactured. After the conversion, the truck is sent back to the neighboring Ford plant where it will be shipped directly to the dealer.

“Our part in this – taking the Ford Super Duty series low floor – comes from our relationship with Dallas Smith (Corp.) staff. From both sides, I believe, it is that level of comfort that will make this work,” said Vice President, Sales at Manning Equipment Mark Peyton.

“Manning is known throughout the industry for our conversions and upfits on Class 4-8 trucks of all manufacturers. The Z-Frame™ is a niche that will be a nice addition to our list of capabilities,” Peyton said.

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Making low-floor an option on Ford Super Duty F-450/550 trucks opens the technology to a range of front-wheel drive applications such as cargo vans, ambulances, utility units, first response vehicles and shuttle buses. The early designs of the low-floor chassis covered medium- to heavy-duty vehicles such as dump trucks, military command vehicles and commercial trailers.

Dallas Smith Corporation engineered the patented AXLELESS® suspensions system that enables vehicles to be converted to low-floor design. In total, the company has 15 U.S. patents at work in the design. The two most recent patents apply to the low floor chassis and vehicle suspensions utilized to convert the Ford Super Duty F-450/550 trucks to the low-floor design.

“We are proud to be announcing these strategic alliances and just as confident in the success of our working relationships with Detroit (Custom Chassis DC2) and Manning (Equipment),” said Jud Smith, Dallas Smith Corp. vice president.

Dallas Smith Corporation has driven automotive innovation for more than 50 years. The company’s latest contributions – Z-Frame™ and Axleless® suspensions – enable low floor systems on vehicles in Class II through Class VIII. Applications include military units, transit shuttle buses and other medium- and super-duty trucks and utility vehicles for municipalities, the federal government and private industry. Dallas Smith founded the company in 1954. The company remains family-owned and operated. For more information on Dallas Smith Corporation, visit the company online at www.dallassmithcorp.com or call the office at 765-653-1715.

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