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Truck invention takes stress off knees

JACOB BENNETT Courier & Press staff writer 464-7434 or be Sunday, April 23, 2006

Glen Reisinger was tired of making the three-foot climb into his truck bed and then jumping out and hurting his knees.

So the 53-year-old Newburgh man began searching for a step similar to the ones that give people a boost into their truck cabs. But he didn't find what he was looking for.

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Undeterred, Reisinger designed his own and called it Access Steps. "Doing it (climbing in and out) one time a day is not so bad, but doing it all day long (is hard on you)," said Reisinger, who spends his days as district sales manager for Pioneer Hi-Bred in Mount Vernon, Ind., driving a truck full of seed around a seven-county area.

Reisinger is in the process of patenting his invention, which he admits is not a high-tech device. It's an 8-inch by 5-inch metal tab, just big enough for the toes of a farm boot, rigged to attach to the frame of the truck. It fits over a pair of bolts on Ford pickup frames. Drivers of other models will have to do some drilling or rigging, but Reisinger figures that's not a problem for his target

audience.

He came up with the idea last summer, after driving a Ford F250 for a couple of years. It's a 30-inch step onto the bumper and six more inches onto the tailgate.

He took his design to retired engineer J.W. Shrode and

There are other items already on the market that attach to tailgates for use as ladders or steps. The Kwik Gate, for example, sells for about \$130 and also can lengthen a truck bed for more cargo space. Reisinger said Access Steps appeal to people who want the step but don't want the extra racks sticking out of their tailgates.

"People spend a lot of money to have attractive trucks and I think (my invention) is a little less obtrusive," Reisinger said.

Access Steps are available in a handful of Tri-State stores. Reisinger has sold about 100 for \$50 each since Christmas, many of those since an article about the step appeared this month in Indiana Agrinews, a farm-oriented newspaper.

But sales of Access Steps have been slow. Pat Melchiors, owner of Melchiors Trailers on Green River Road, said a few people have looked at the steps but haven't bought them. This could be because Melchiors' shop installs bed covers, which make climbing in a moot point.

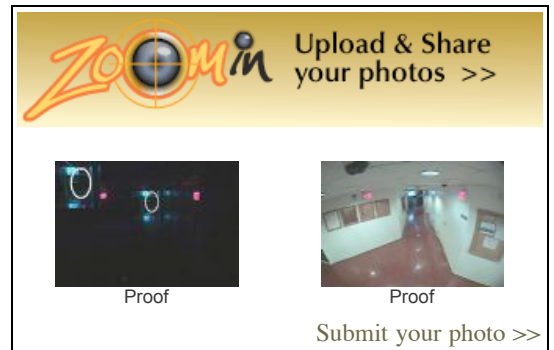
"It has potential," Melchiors said of the invention. "I think for farmers for people who get in and out of their truck all the time, they've got some merit."



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Reisinger said he thinks he could keep up with production if the demand increased. "That's a problem I hope I have to deal with," he said. "I'll figure out how to do it."

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