



# Taking your show on the road

## Minnesota dealer converts Indy Car trailer to mobile showroom

In May, we learned about an innovative sales tool adopted by Thompson's Garage Door & Openers in Rochester, Minn. To learn more about their mobile showroom, we talked to Kayla Thompson, advertising/marketing manager.

### **Who had the idea to convert the Indy Car trailer into a mobile showroom?**

It was Dustin's idea to buy a trailer and renovate it for a "mobile showroom." (Dustin Thompson is general manager.) Dustin and I thought up the ideas, what to include in it, and the graphics for the outside.

### **Where did you get the Indy Car trailer?**

Dustin drove to Indianapolis in January 2015 to pick it up from Eric Bachelart, a former Indy Car driver with the Conquest racing team.

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**What's special about an Indy Car trailer that makes it better than using a semi-trailer?**

It's set up with a gooseneck that allows us more storage than a regular trailer. It's also easier to maneuver and get into parking areas for the shows, and it's wheelchair accessible.

**When did you first put the finished showroom into use?**

We first used the trailer at the Winona County Fair, July 8-12, 2015.

**How much did it cost to buy and renovate the trailer?**

The base cost of the trailer was \$11,000, and we spent \$21,000 to renovate it. This includes all of the renovations inside, such as walls, flooring, all doors, openers, all outside graphics, etc.

**How often is it used each year?**

We use it about eight times a year for outdoor fairs, car shows, and some antique shows. Most of these events are one week long.

**How many doors are displayed in the trailer?**

There are five doors mounted on a wall and four movable doors that roll out in front of the trailer. We also have a fully functional garage screen door on the back end of the trailer with a working garage door. We have four working openers displayed in the trailer as well.

**What are some other noteworthy features?**

- There is air conditioning inside the trailer for the hot summer months, a 20' awning for shade, and full lighting when it gets dark.
- We have custom-made videos of before and after pictures that will continuously play on the TV inside the trailer, along with our commercial.
- The trailer has extra storage for literature and hand samples.

**What are the biggest benefits you've received from the mobile showroom?**

- The mobile showroom shows how big and professional we are for a small company.
- It gives customers a variety of different options to look at, feel, and hear instead of just looking at pictures.
- It's eye-catching, giving consumers a reason to stop by our booth. That leads to more leads and/or sales.
- We can give full demonstrations of working garage doors, openers, and screen doors.
- We are more inclined to take on extra fairs and shows, as it takes only minutes to set up for a show. Plus it's fun to work in and show off to our potential customers. Previously it would take us hours to set up for a show, and we had no shelter from the Minnesota weather.
- Since we started using the trailer, our sales have increased during the shows.

**If you had to do it all over again (renovate a trailer for the same purpose), what would you do differently?**

It would be nice to have taller sidewalls to give more headroom for the working garage doors. Other than that, it seems to be perfect. ■



**▲ ROLLING OUT:**

In addition to five doors mounted on interior walls, the trailer carries four movable doors that can roll out for display.

**◀ FINISHING TOUCHES:**

The trailer's rear door is a working garage door with a fully functional garage screen door behind it.

◀ Dustin (left) and Jim Thompson



**About Thompson's Garage Door & Openers**

- Founded in 1991 by Jim Thompson, the current president and owner
- IDEA accredited
- 8 installers
- 4 salespeople
- 3 office staff (a receptionist, accountant, and marketing manager)
- 7 service trucks



Kayla and Dustin Thompson