



Young "Green" Texas House Moving Company Grows using the "KISS" Principal

Come and Take It Structural Movers

2901 Bee Cave Road
Austin, Texas

512-328-6683 • Fax 502-327-1994

In the spring of 2003, the 30-something year old owners of Texas based Come & Take It Structural Movers, LLC., were toiling away blissfully in their respective careers in the legal and real estate fields. Neither owner had ever thought about or contemplated owning a structural moving company. In the fall of 2003, Come & Take It Structural Movers was born and now has become the largest structural moving company in the Austin, Texas metropolitan area.

The owners, Austin attorney Rhett Hoestenbach and Austin real estate broker Chris Kappmeyer, became friends in 2001. As their respect for one another grew, these new friends and future business partners started talking about investing in a business or finding a mutual project. They believed that combining their energy and skills learned in separate fields would be an asset in a new entrepreneurial pursuit. Among the various endeavors that these two young business men discussed, structural moving never entered the discussion. Why would it? Structural moving is an industry requiring unique skills not typically possessed by lawyers and real estate brokers. It is a field with natural barriers to entry which aside from the technical know-how required to lift and move heavy structures typically requires large amounts of money to fund





equipment, labor and insurance. Fortunately for Come & Take It, its owners did not know better.

After Kappmeyer purchased a small 1940's home to move to his ranch in the summer of 2003, Hoestenbach was called upon to help resolve a legal dispute with the house mover that Kappmeyer had hired to move the house. The case was resolved with Kappmeyer and Hoestenbach buying a 1979 International truck and a set of beams to finish the project. Of course, the natural next step was for these new owners of the most minimal of moving equipment was to plunge head first into the moving business. That is what they did.

Most likely due to being the products of hard-headed Germans, Hoestenbach and Kappmeyer fought through a number of early potential hazards that threatened to suck the life out of their spirit and kill the fledgling moving company. They quickly realized the hard way, that trusting the running of Come & Take It to others was a recipe for sure failure. It became evident that the only way to survive was to learn about the industry and be patient for success. Enter the Texas Association of Structural Movers.

Come & Take It became a member of the Texas Association of Structural Movers (TASM) when Hoestenbach and Kappmeyer attended the January, 2004, convention in Corpus Christi, Texas. They found out that the structural moving industry was like a large family and they were welcomed with open arms by the members. Since that time, Come & Take It has benefitted from the knowledge imparted to them by their fellow TASM members and has become educated in the industry by attending TASM seminars and equipment demonstrations. Hoestenbach now serves as a member of the Board of Directors for TASM.

When asked about what makes Come & Take It different from the traditional structural mover, Hoestenbach responded that "We're different because we are new. What we lack in

generational experience we make up for in applying fresh and innovative thinking to the old way of doing things.” Hoestenbach further explained that “Austin is a young, educated and highly energetic community and we want our company to reflect what makes Austin great.”

Austin, Texas is known as a high-tech city but is also known as a “green city” committed to protecting the environment. Come & Take It has embraced the city mantra of “keeping it green” and prides itself on being a leading recycler. Calling upon Kappmeyer’s experience and connections in the real estate world, Come & Take It acquires older homes slated for demolition, re-sells them and then moves them to new locations where they are wanted. “It’s really great, exclaimed Kappmeyer. For a fraction of the cost of new construction, we take a home that someone is ready to toss into the garbage and sell it to someone who loves the old hardwood floors and the quaint qualities that these older homes possess. On top of that, we take 40,000 pounds of material that was to be put in a landfill and re-use it.” The City of Austin helps promote these types of activities by awarding “Green Credits” to lot owners for environmentally friendly construction.

In keeping up with Austin’s high-tech population, Come & Take It has created a web-site that makes it easy for users to view homes for sale and to acquire bids for moves online. Kappmeyer added, “we are very committed to marketing and getting our name out to the public. We feel that the internet is great for spreading the word about our company and we take full advantage of all that the cyber world offers.” Kappmeyer credits much of Come & Take Its’ busy moving schedule to web based advertising. “We have developed a list of over 300 people and entities looking for houses and other structures. When we acquire something new, we develop a virtual flyer and virtual tour. We then put that on our website and email it to our waiting list. Lately, we have been selling new structures within 3-5 days of launching the marketing material.”

When asked if they are still using the old 1979 International truck and the original set of beams that they acquired five years ago, Hoestenbach proudly



answered “Of Course.” He went on to explain that “we have grown and acquired new equipment but we have adopted the ‘KISS’ theory, Keep It Simple Stupid. If we don’t need it, we don’t buy it.” Hoestenbach explained that the company is very careful not to overspend on unnecessary equipment. “Chris and I have chosen to not personally pocket profits over the last few years. Instead we have put those profits back into the business to build a financially strong debt free company. We try to avoid the temptation to purchase unneeded ‘showoff’ equipment. We recently fabricated a new lifting system that we first saw being used by a few other TASM members. We call it the ‘Green Giant’ because it is big and green like our company. Before spending the money for the Green Giant, we asked the same questions we always ask before purchasing new equipment; ‘Will it help make our company more efficient? Will it help make our company safer?’ The answer to both questions was yes. The Green Giant lifting system allows for heavy lifts to be slowly controlled in tight spaces while reducing the need for workers to be underneath heavy structures during lifting.

Come and Take It does not pride itself in moving the biggest structures nor the widest structures nor the tallest structures nor the most difficult structures. They take pride in being a leader in keeping the environment clean and green and being a responsible corporate citizen of the Austin community. Kappmeyer summed it best by saying, “we may not be the biggest or the oldest house mover, but we pride ourselves on professionalism and keeping our word.” That means a lot in today’s world.

Come & Take It will be hosting the 2009 TASM Convention in Austin, Texas which runs from January 29 through February 1, 2009. To learn more about the 2009 Texas convention, visit the TASM website at www.texashousemovers.com.

If you would like to learn more about Come & Take It Structural Movers, LLC., visit their website at www.328move.com.

submitted by

Rhett Hoestenbach and Chris Kappmeyer

