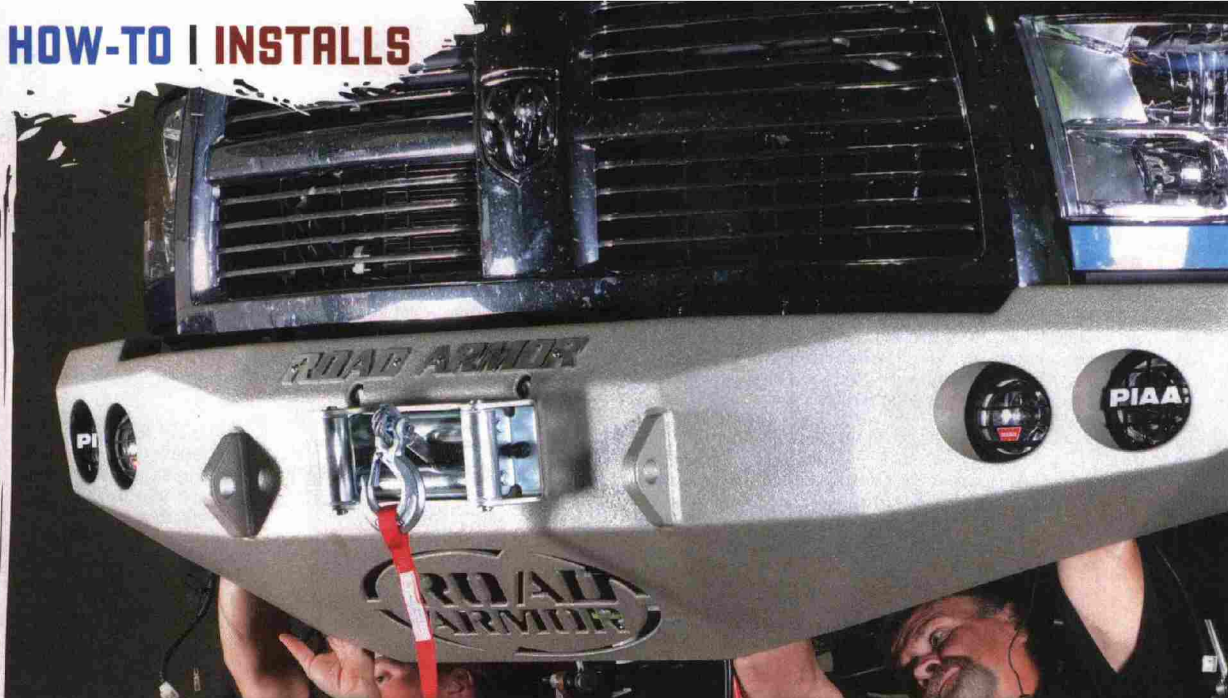


HOW-TO | INSTALLS



MUSCLING UP

INSTALLING A WARN 12,000-POUND-CAPACITY WINCH AND ROAD ARMOR STEALTH BUMPER ENSURES MAXIMUM PULLING POWER AND FRONT-END PROTECTION FOR ANY HEAVY-DUTY PICKUP

by Bruce W. Smith

The diesel fuel had barely started filling our 2010 Ram 2500 4x4's tank when a landscaping contractor, equipment trailer in-tow, pulled up to fuel his 2010 F-250 Super Duty. He strolled around the pump island to take a gander at the winch-laden bumper on our Project "Big Boss." "Nice looking winch bumper," he said. "Mind if I ask where you got it? I've been looking for something along that line to put on my truck."

Nothing improves the personality – and functionality – of a professional's pickup more than swapping out the factory chrome bumper for a well-designed, heavy-duty aftermarket winch/bumper combo.

And the cost of such an upgrade will pay for itself the first time they're called into play.

MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

Choosing the proper winch was detailed in our Spring 2010 issue, while selecting heavy-duty bumpers was covered on

our web site (www.propickupmag.com/2010/04/10/body-protection-buyers-guide.)

When it came time to outfit our Big Boss, we followed our own advice: We selected the Warn Heavy Weight Series M12000 because it has the muscle to move our big Ram and stand up to the rigors of job site use/abuse.

The guts of the 136-pound M12000 center around a powerful 4.6hp, series-wound motor driving a three-stage planetary geartrain connected to a drum with 125 feet of 3/8-inch wire rope. Pulling power at the innermost wrap is 6-tons, while the outer layer can pull 2,000 pounds. It'll get the job done.

But a strong, stout, reliable winch is only as good the bumper it's mounted in.

A front bumper needs to provide as much impact protection as possible while serving other purposes, such as providing attaching points for tow straps and mounting locations for auxiliary lights. It also needs to look like it fits the truck.

We found all those attributes in the Stealth winch bumper from Road Armor, a premier winch-bumper fabricator known for their rugged, yet stylish designs.

The Stealth Base model is constructed like one a contractor





would build: a 3/16-inch outer steel shell with 1/4-inch-thick internal mounting brackets and gussets, seamless welded with a lifetime guarantee against breakage.

Road Armor's bumper also comes with built-in auxiliary light buckets designed to accept either Warn or PIAA 4-inch driving/fog lights, two to a side, and welded shackle mounts. The overall fit and finish of the bumper are flawless.

To make the winch/bumper combo even nicer for our work-pickup application we went to Line-X's headquarters in Huntsville, Ala., where they applied color-matched Line-X Extra on the bumper to blend in with our Project Big Boss' two-tone factory paint scheme. (Go to propickupmag.com to see the full details.)

QUALITY INSTALLERS

Installing a winch and bumper is straightforward for the typical ProPickup reader. Most of you have both the tools and mechanical know-how to do the job. That said, the work can easily take a half-day of labor.

If time is money and labor is better served on the jobsite, do as we did – take it to a pro installation center.

All of our project truck installations are handled by the professional installers at Truck Supply & Outfitters (www.trucksupplyandoutfitters.com) near our offices here in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Alvin Bordelon, a Warn master winch technician, along with long-time pickup upfitter, Ben Evans, made short work of the installation of the winch, bumper, lights and associated wiring. These guys install truck accessories and winches every day. The installation took the duo about six hours.

(TSO is also a top-level Warn Red Letter dealer authorized to handle sales/installation/service/repair for all Warn products.)

The results of the upgrade are quite apparent: The Big Boss now has massive self-recovery power and a rugged personality distinguishing our company pickup from the majority of other heavy-duty pickups on the road and around jobsites. (Isn't that what any big boss' pickup is all about?)

Function with form, that's the goal of every change we make on Project Big Boss.

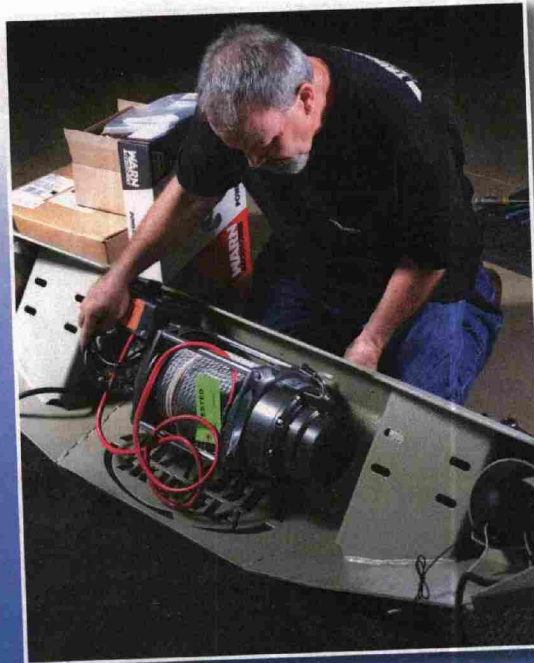
THE LIGHT SIDE

Here at ProPickup we're big believers in plenty of auxiliary light options around a job site. So when it came time to fill our winch bumper's light buckets we turned to two well-known brands: Warn and PIAA.

We choose a set of Warn W350F wireless-remote fog lights to grace the inner buckets and a set of PIAA 510-Series Super White driving lights, wired into the Ram's high-beam circuit, for the outer buckets. Both lights are 55-watt systems and come in kits supplying all mounting hardware, instructions and wiring harnesses.

The only deviation from the instructions we took in our installation was simplifying the wiring by connecting the W350Fs directly to the factory Ram fog light plug and using the Warn wireless-remote system to power the PIAAs.

Now the Big Boss is light-ready, fair weather or foul.



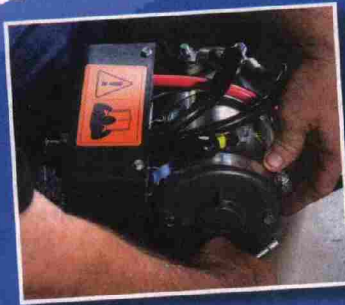
1 The Warn M12000 requires the solenoid control box be connected to the winch motor. The power cables from the box are color-coded to match the posts on the motor.



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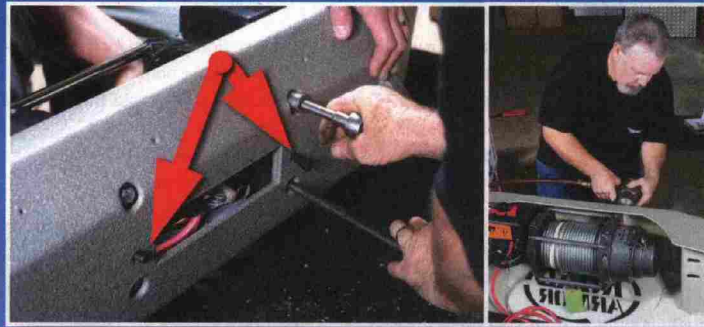
2 Rotate the control box face up with the winches mounting feet face forward. Tighten the two hose clamps to secure the control box to the motor housing.



3 If the bumper is coated with Line-X like ours, use a reamer to open up all the mounting holes prior to starting the winch/light installation.



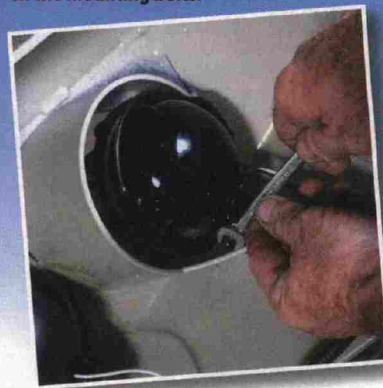
4 Bolt the winch to the face of the bumper. This requires a helper to position the winch from the rear while the other person installs the mounting bolts from the front. (A small pry bar may be needed to help align the bolt holes to the bumper face.) Make sure the fairlead mounting bolts (red arrows) are put in before the winch is mounted.



5 Quick tip: Remove the vertical rollers to get an impact wrench on the fairlead mounting bolts.



6 Install the lights in the light buckets. They will need to be adjusted after the bumper is in place and the truck sitting on the ground. So don't over-tighten the mounting bolts.



7 Remove the factory bumper and grille. Remove the OEM bumper mounts/tow hook brackets. This requires using a reciprocating saw to cut the special mounting bolts in half that secure each bracket to the frame-horn ends.



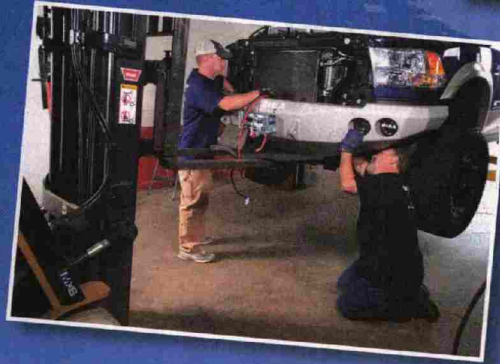
8 Attach the Road Armor mounting brackets using the supplied cadmium-plated fasteners and the OEM bottom frame horn bolts.



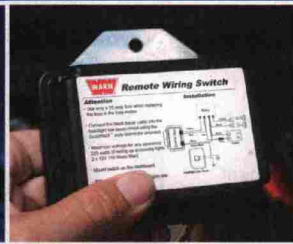
MUSCLING UP



9 Install the four blind-side mounting bolts/keepers in each of the Road Armor bumper's mounting plates.



10 A forklift works great to hoist the 300-pound-plus winch/bumper assembly into position. This part of the job is best done with a helper – or two. Position the bumper so it sits both tight and level to the body lines and tighten the mounting bolts. Connect the lights and run the winch power and ground leads to the batteries. (Do not ground the winch motor to the frame!)



11 Connect the trigger wire for the Warn wireless-remote to the high-beam headlight power lead. Follow the wiring instructions and diagram on the control box to hook-up the pre-assembled wiring harness to complete the wireless light installation.



12 The Ram has dual batteries, so either can be used for the lights and winch connections. Make sure all grounds are direct to the battery – not the frame – to ensure optimum performance. The Warn wireless-remote system negates any wiring into the cab, speeding up the installation. This key fob switch, which attaches to the console with double-sided tape, controls the driving lights. **P**



BIG BOSS UPGRADES

Warn M12000 HD winch	\$1,780
Road Armor Stealth bumper	\$1,825
Line-X Xtra coating	\$ 250
Warn W350F Fog (pr)	\$ 150
PIAA 5190 Driving (pr)	\$ 225
Installation Labor	\$ 450
Retail	\$4,680

WEB EXTRAS
 See more at
propickupmag.com