From: gmclist-bounces@temp.gmcnet.org on behalf of rick flanagan
To: gmclist@temp.gmcnet.org
Subject: Re: [GMCnet] AUBURN RALLY ATTENDIES
Date: Friday, June 04, 2010 8:12:38 AM

Fellow GMCers,
This is what we found through lots of testing.
People don’t realize just how inadequate their properly adjusted OEM brakes are. Just because you can get scratch on all 6 tires doesn’t mean you stop better. I have experienced this first hand, when I screeched all 6 right on through a major intersection in Bozeman Montana at 50 mph. Brand new, properly adjusted OEM brakes feel pretty good especially compared to the worn out brakes you had. They feel GREAT around town & under relaxed slowing at freeway speeds. Where they fall short is in a panic stop, when the brake lights come on unexpectedly right in front of you. That’s when you wish you had that extra 50% of stopping we loose because of the GMC’s swing arms. You see, under a hard stop, the swing arms cause the rear bogie tire to lift & unload rendering it ineffective. When that happens, it puts more load on the forward bogie tires & they unload. This then puts more load on the front tires &, well you get the idea.
Disk brakes feel even better around town & slowing under highway speeds, but from testing we found that they make the brakes lock up even quicker under panic stops. Too much braking can be dangerous, that‘s why anti-lock brakes were developed. (That’s a topic for later.)
Early on, the first guy I had drive my coach with the reaction arm said that he couldn’t feel any difference between his drum brakes & mine. I was shocked. Later I realized he just drove it around & sometimes applied the brakes a little harder then normal. NOT ENOUGH! Standard brakes feel fine until you hit them HARD. That’s why at Auburn I had to twist arms first to get anyone to drive my coach, then to NAIL THOSE BRAKES. It wasn’t until they did that that they under stood what we have all been missing.

You mentioned that, “If there was a system that used OEM drums we would have a lot more customers considering installation,” I feel that would be a BIG mistake because, (A) The cost to make a replacement adapter mounting plate with bearing & reattaching all that stuff would be prohibitive, even more expensive then disks. (B) Drum brakes are more complicated, need periodic adjustments, easily overheat & don’t like getting wet. Do I need to list the virtues of modern disk brakes? During testing we found that having brakes that are TOO good will cause skidding even with the reaction arm. The key is to get the right of friction that will safely stop the coach without causing it to skid. The combination we settled on for my 26’ 12,000 pound coach was 80mm brakes on front & forward bogies & 70mm brakes on rear bogies. Pad types made some difference, but not appreciable.
Look folks this is fundamental, nothing we do, wider brake shoes, disk brakes, sticky pads, even adding the Quadra-Bag will eliminate the dangerous of panic stopping caused by the swing arms. I thought that screeching the tires & praying to stop was a natural part of driving an RV. I was wrong. Thank you Chuck.

Sincerely,
Rick Flanagan

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