

Spring Hanger Upgrade

My son recently had to get an emergency road repair on his 1997 Wilderness 5th wheel. Fortunately he was at Port Viento but still had to have a welder effect a repair as his rig was unable to be towed. For the second time, he had a hanger bracket that holds one of the rear axle springs break thus no longer providing support for the axle.

After checking the internet it appears that this is a common failure on rigs. It is the result of side loads fatiguing the hanger. Not to get too technical, side loads cause a bending moment on the hanger which causes the greatest amount of stress at the point where it is bent and attached to the trailer frame. The hangers are usually made from a flat piece of steel and come in various thicknesses. They are bent into a U shape, a process that creates maximum weakness at the point of highest stress. Failure may not happen right away but will eventually over time. The newer Sunnybrooks have a fairly beefy hanger design. Instead of being only a few inches long, they use one piece that runs from the rearmost spring attachment to the foremost spring attachment. *BUT THE MOST CRITICAL THING* is that the hangers need to have a cross brace welded in between the spring attachment point and the upper part of the bracket. This eliminates much of the bending strain on the weakest point of the hangar. In the case of my son, he replaced all of the hangars with beefier ones having 5/16" thickness versus the original 3/16" thickness. Additionally he had the cross braces added. The whole job to replace 6 hangers cost him about \$300. To just have cross braces welded should cost less than \$100.

I am not sure which models or what year Sunnybrook have an adequate design (mine has the long design with cross braces). I have also seen new rigs that have inadequate design (that can be easily corrected).

