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61/429,046	12/31/2010		110	2010-02127		

CONFIRMATION NO. 9785

30140  
AL HARRISON  
HARRISON LAW OFFICE, P.C.  
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HOUSTON, TX 77002

## FILING RECEIPT



OC000000045355981

Date Mailed: 01/11/2011

Receipt is acknowledged of this provisional patent application. It will not be examined for patentability and will become abandoned not later than twelve months after its filing date. Any correspondence concerning the application must include the following identification information: the U.S. APPLICATION NUMBER, FILING DATE, NAME OF APPLICANT, and TITLE OF INVENTION. Fees transmitted by check or draft are subject to collection. Please verify the accuracy of the data presented on this receipt. **If an error is noted on this Filing Receipt, please submit a written request for a Filing Receipt Correction. Please provide a copy of this Filing Receipt with the changes noted thereon. If you received a "Notice to File Missing Parts" for this application, please submit any corrections to this Filing Receipt with your reply to the Notice. When the USPTO processes the reply to the Notice, the USPTO will generate another Filing Receipt incorporating the requested corrections**

### Applicant(s)

Michael Mintz, Corpus Christi, TX;

### Power of Attorney:

AL Harrison--31708

### If Required, Foreign Filing License Granted: 01/07/2011

The country code and number of your priority application, to be used for filing abroad under the Paris Convention, is **US 61/429,046**

**Projected Publication Date:** None, application is not eligible for pre-grant publication

**Non-Publication Request:** No

**Early Publication Request:** No

**\*\* SMALL ENTITY \*\***

### Title

Apparatus For Transporting Frac Sand in Intermodal Container

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page 1 of 3

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PROVISIONAL PATENT APPLICATION

**APPARATUS FOR TRANSPORTING FRAC SAND IN INTERMODAL CONTAINER**

Field of the Invention

The present invention pertains to an apparatus for transporting frac sand, and more particularly pertains to apparatus adapted for being inserted into an ISO intermodal container for transporting frac sand from its supplier to a well site where in situ formation fracturing operations will be effectuated.

### Background of the Invention

In oilfield applications, pump assemblies are used to pump fluid from the surface of the well to a wellbore at high pressures. Such oilfield applications frequently include hydraulic fracturing operations. For hydraulic fracturing operation ("Fracing"), an abrasive-containing fluid such as sand and other frac fluid ("proppant") are pumped through a wellbore and into targeted regions of the wellbore to create side "fractures" therein. To create such fractures, the frac fluid containing an abrasive proppant is pumped at extremely high pressures to facilitate fracture-creation and to sustain the propped-open fractures. These fractures provide additional pathways for underground oil and gas deposits to flow from underground formations to the surface of the well, thereby enhancing well production.

Prior art apparatus and methodology for transporting frac fluid containing sand and proppant suffer from several long-standing disadvantages. After being loaded onto special-purpose pneumatic trucks or railcars, the frac sand and proppant has typically not been well sealed from environmental incursions and moisture, whereupon the integrity of this material is seriously undermined and characterized by significant degradation from abrasion and friction during transfers, and moisture and rain exposure. Since it has been difficult if not virtually impossible for such special-purpose railcars and pneumatic trucks to be brought sufficiently close to well sites, several material transfers have been necessary before the frac fluid and proppant can actually be delivered to the well site to trigger fracing operations. Moreover, pneumatic trucks are frequently unavailable and unloading of frac fluid from trucks or railcars is frequently delayed, so that railcars remain idle, and the railroads charge demurrage fees.

Accordingly, what is needed in the art are apparatus and concomitant methodology for improving the logistics for transporting frac fluids proximal to well sites to avoid these several limitations and disadvantages in the prior art.

### Brief Description Of The Drawings

FIG. 1 depicts a perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 2 depicts an isometric view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 depicts a frontal view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 4 depicts a top planar view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 5 depicts a bottom view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 6 depicts a right side or end view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIGS. 1 and 2.

FIG. 7 depicts an isolated frontal view of the embodiment of the present invention depicted in FIGS. 1-6, disposed upon a truck trailer.

FIG. 8 depicts a right side or end view of the isolated embodiment depicted in FIG. 7, disposed upon a truck trailer.

FIG. 9 depicts a system flow chart describing the stepwise logistics of effectuating frac sand delivery according to embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. 10 depicts a spreadsheet tabulating a comparative analysis of frac sand delivery according to prior art hopper apparatus and concomitant methodology vis a vis apparatus and concomitant methodology according to embodiments of the present invention.

### Disclosure of the Invention

The preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises a specially configured apparatus adapted for preferably being slidably inserted into and removed from an ISO intermodal container and the like. As will become evident to those skilled in the art, embodiments of this frac sand transport apparatus are configured to enable its plurality of intake and discharge ports to be routinely coupled with a preexisting conventional hopper assembly located in situ at the well site at which fracturing operations will be conducted.

Referring collectively to FIGS. 1-8, there is depicted a preferred embodiment 1 of an apparatus for transporting frac sand in an intermodal container 2 (only partially shown). More particularly, FIG. 1 depicts a perspective view and FIG. 2 depicts an isometric view, respectively, of frac sand transport apparatus 1, comprising plurality of inlet ports 3, plurality of outlet ports 4, plurality of saddle supports 5, pair of end supports 6, pair of cross-braces 7, and roof 8.

As can be readily seen specifically from FIGS. 1-3, the external framework of frac sand transport apparatus 1 comprises each of pair of longitudinal basal cross-braces 7 fixedly interconnected at each end thereof with one of pair of end supports 6 and intermediately thereof with plurality of saddle supports 5. While the base of apparatus 1 structurally devolves to a framework anchored by the fixed interconnection of pair of basal cross-braces 7 and pair of end supports 6 reinforced medially by plurality of saddle supports 5, the upper portion thereof is secured by roof 8. It will also be seen that the structure of frac sand transport apparatus 1 is further secured by medial cross-brace 17 which is affixed to the plurality of saddle supports 5.



Referring again to FIGS. 1-8, there is seen a pair of tubular input ports 3 disposed atop roof 8, with each input port being secured and sealed with a cap or lid as shown. It will be understood that these input ports are typically 20" manways having water-tight hinged lids that are conveniently removed by hand using integrated wing-nuts. Also seen is discharge port 4 with a mechanical valve or the like typically having a 4" outlet and a 24" x 24" sliding grate valve.

It will be appreciated by practitioners conversant with handling ISO containers and the like that the caps situated atop the 20" manways should preferably be situated flush atop such intermodal containers. Accordingly, the lids would preferably be situated just beneath the container roof and, once opened by hand, frac sand would be delivered into the hopper portion of apparatus 1. To assure that contained frac sand remains devoid of water incursion, it is contemplated that the apparatus lid could be enclosed within a hingedly-opened cut-out.

It will also be appreciated that a 24" x 24" gate valve or the like is particularly advantageous under circumstances in which frac sand is being unloaded into a mobile hopper unit or the like. But, it should be understood that, if such mobile hopper units are apt to be unloaded under the influence of a blower or the like through 4" piping, then use of such a gate valve would probably be unnecessary. Of course, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that if and when a gate valve were used in conjunction with an embodiment of the present invention, then frac sand would be unloaded or dumped into a dolly hopper. The top of the dolly hopper should preferably be constructed from two thin-gauge sheet metal telescoping tubes in order to facilitate sliding thereunder and then

being raised to meet the flange disposed on the bottom of the large hopper unit.

Now referring to FIG. 9, there is depicted a system flow chart of the preferred embodiment of the present invention as applied to a particular frac sand delivery scenario. In step 100, frac sand and proppant are received at a quarry or a supplier thereof — for example in a 50,000 pound container. In step 110, four containers corresponding to 200,000 pounds are emplaced upon a (85') flat-bed or spine railcar. Then, in step 120, these frac sand containers are transported proximal to well site, thereby necessitating, in step 130, merely a relatively short haul of the frac sand and proppant to the rig. As appropriate, in step 140, frac sand and proppant can be stored — environmentally safe and waterproof — in a manner heretofore unknown in the art.

Besides the hereinbefore described steel frac sand transport and delivery module, another embodiment of the modular apparatus contemplated by the present invention corresponds to a bladder apparatus using high-density elastomeric and like material similar to that used in military fuel storage applications. For such an embodiment, the central bladder would hold the frac sand material and a plurality of side-bladders would inflate to control the rate and extent of frac sand and proppant discharge. It should be understood that, regardless of which embodiment of frac sand apparatus is invoked in a particular well site fracturing scenario, the present invention teaches converting a suitably modified ISO intermodal container or like container for frac sand transportation.

It should be evident to those skilled in the frac art that embodiments of the present invention are

– The following is a tabulation of the components depicted in the drawings:

Numeral	Component	Comment
1	hopper apparatus	
2	ISO container	only partially shown
3	inlet port(s)	
4	outlet port(s)	
5	saddle support	
6	end supports	
7	Cross-braces, basal	
8	roof	
17	Cross-braces, medial	

Thus, embodiments of the present invention enable frac sand and associated abrasive materials to be loaded at the processor even when there is no hopper car or pneumatic truck available. Once sealed in apparatus taught by the present invention, the materials maintain integrity. Degradation from abrasion and friction during transfers thereof are virtually eliminated. Likewise, the possibility of moisture and rain exposure during transfer have been substantially eliminated.

Furthermore, there is no need for expensive bulk carrying rail hopper cars to transport the material. A more efficient, reliable and inexpensive methodology now exists for maintaining frac fluid inventory – with virtually unlimited storage.

Embodiments also eliminate the need for expensive pneumatic trucks that are in short supply. Containers including the frac sand transport apparatus contemplated

hereunder are loaded on trailers for delivery proximal to the well site. As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, the trailer-and-container assemblies contemplated hereunder are inherently more mobile and consume considerably less space than more cumbersome pneumatic trucks. Indeed, flat bed trailer trucks are more easily aligned and positioned for faster material transfer at the well site. FIG. 10 depicts a spreadsheet that tabulates a plethora of advantages of the embodiments of the present invention over the prior art.

Other frac sand transport apparatus variations and modifications will, of course, become apparent from a consideration of the structures and techniques hereinbefore described and depicted. Nevertheless, it should be clearly understood that the present invention is not intended to be limited by the particular features and structures hereinbefore described and depicted in the accompanying drawings, but that the present invention is to be measured by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A frac sand transporting apparatus configured for being inserted into a container and adapted for transporting frac sand and proppant from a quarry or other frac sand supply source to a well site, said frac sand transporting apparatus comprising:

an external framework comprising each of pair of longitudinal basal cross-braces fixedly interconnected at each end thereof with one of pair of end supports and intermediately thereof with plurality of saddle supports;

said external framework anchored by the fixed interconnection of pair of basal cross-braces and pair of end supports that are reinforced medially by a plurality of saddle supports, the upper portion thereof being secured by a roof;

a plurality of inlet ports disposed atop said roof, said inlet ports receiving said frac sand and said proppant from said quarry or other frac sand supply source into a hopper; and

a plurality of outlet ports for receiving said frac sand and proppant within said hopper and delivering said frac sand and proppant proximal to said well site.

## **APPARATUS FOR TRANSPORTING FRAC SAND IN INTERMODAL CONTAINER**

### **Abstract of the Invention**

An apparatus for transporting frac sand and proppant for use in intermodal containers and for delivering the frac sand and proppant proximal to well sites for fracturing operations. The frac sand transporting apparatus configured for being inserted into a container and adapted for transporting frac sand and proppant from a quarry or other frac sand supply source to a well site. The frac sand transporting apparatus comprising an external framework comprising each of pair of longitudinal basal cross-braces fixedly interconnected at each end thereof with one of pair of end supports and intermediately thereof with plurality of saddle supports, with this external framework anchored by the fixed interconnection of pair of basal cross-braces and pair of end supports that are reinforced medially by a plurality of saddle supports, the upper portion thereof being secured by a roof. A plurality of inlet ports disposed atop the roof, with the inlet ports receiving the frac sand and proppant from a quarry or other frac sand supply source into a hopper, and a plurality of outlet ports for receiving the frac sand and proppant within the hopper and delivering the frac sand and proppant proximal to the well site.

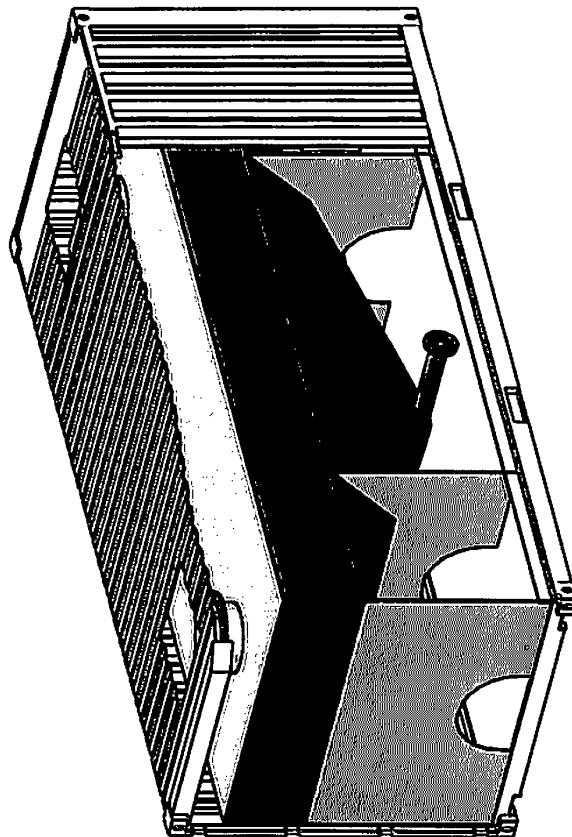


FIG. 1

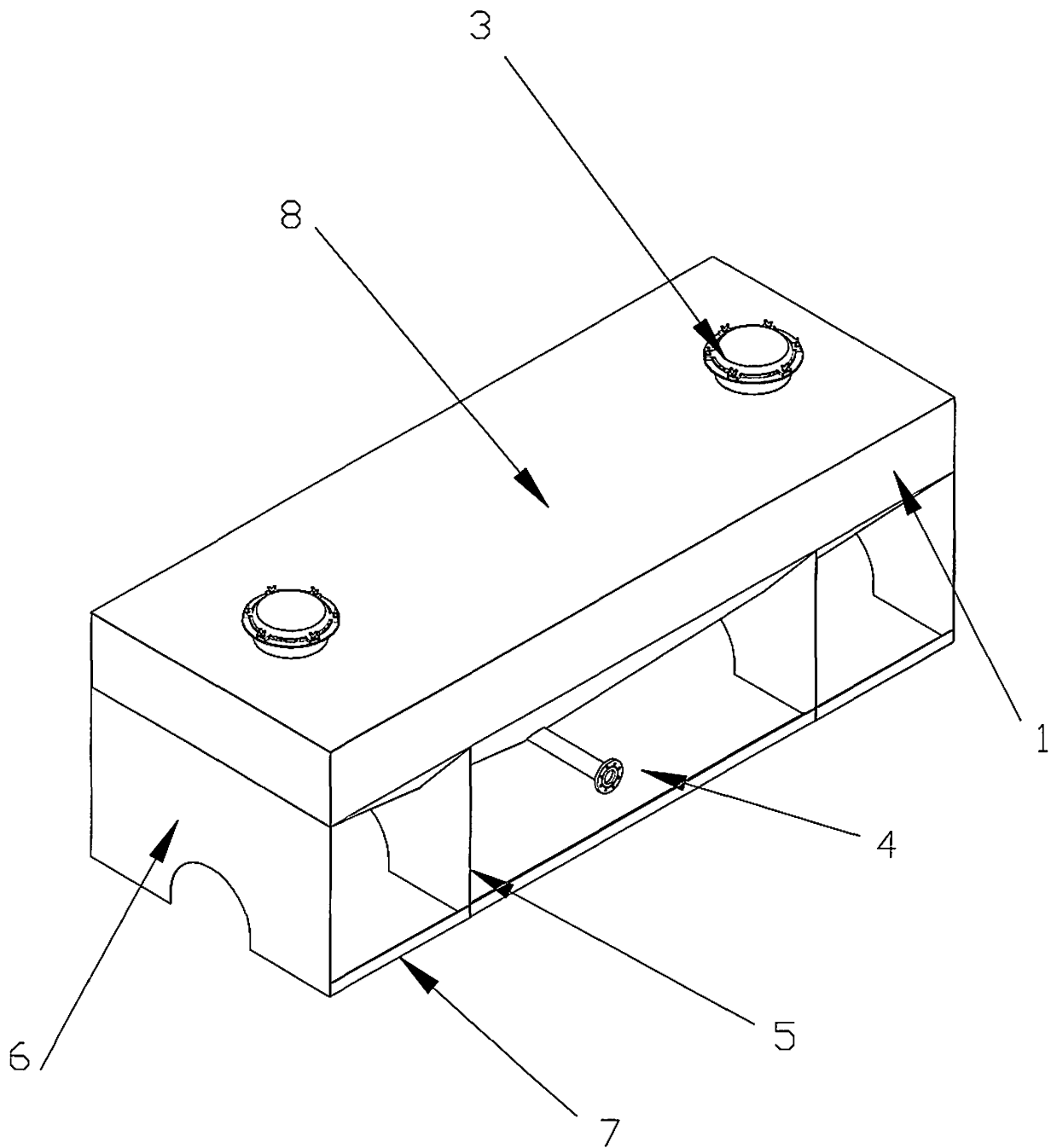
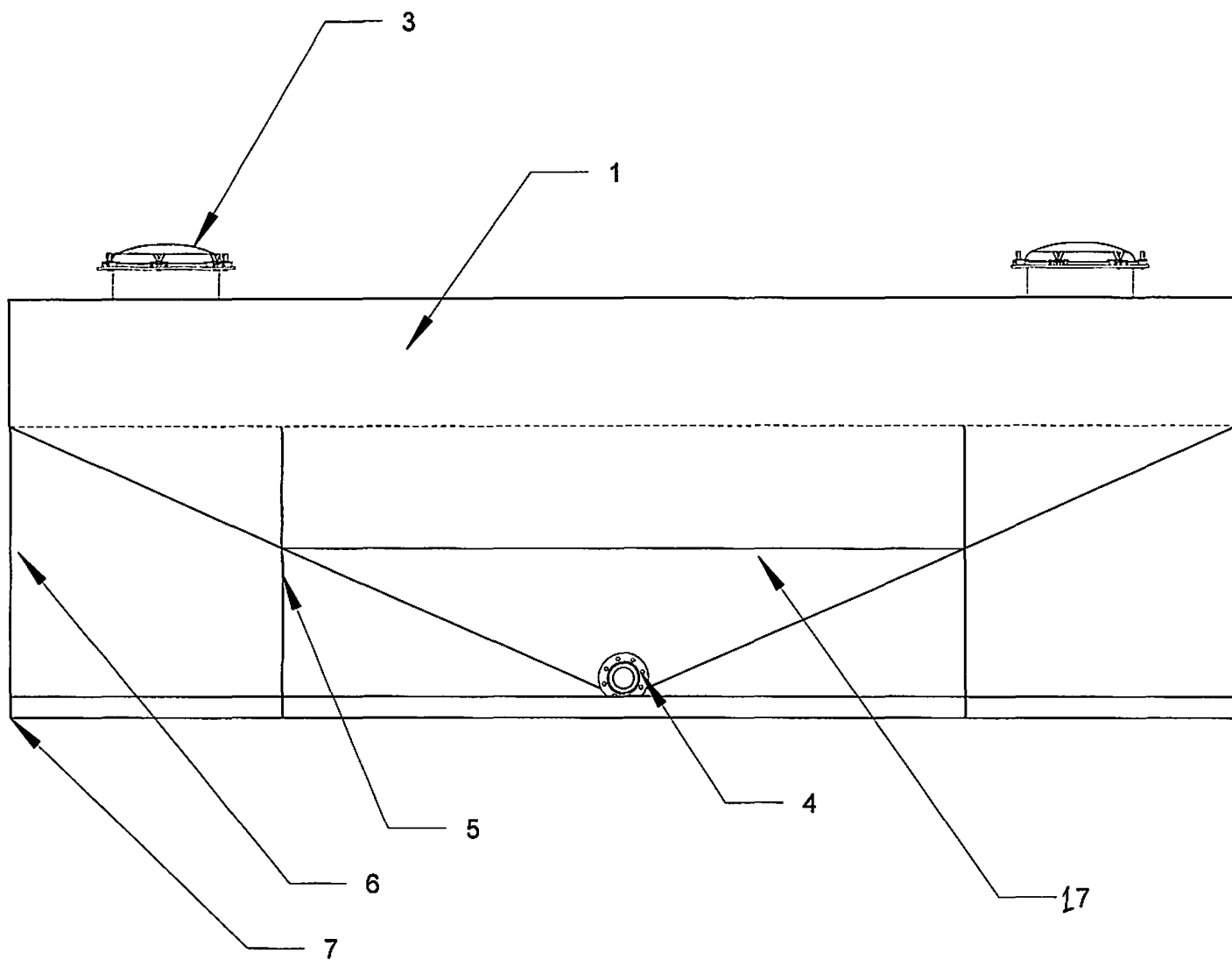


FIG. 2

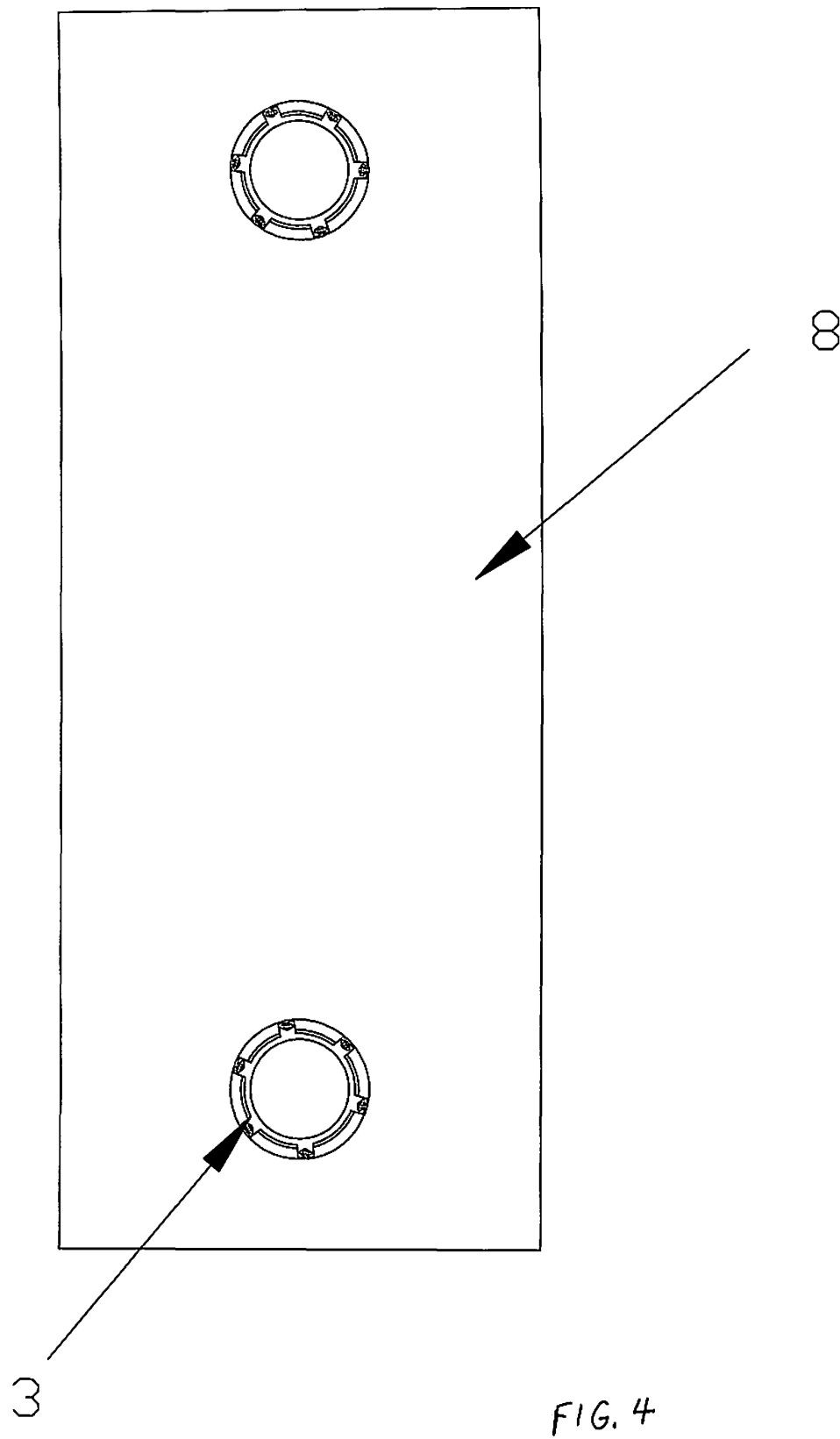
ISOMETRIC VIEW





FRONT VIEW

FIG. 3



TOP VIEW

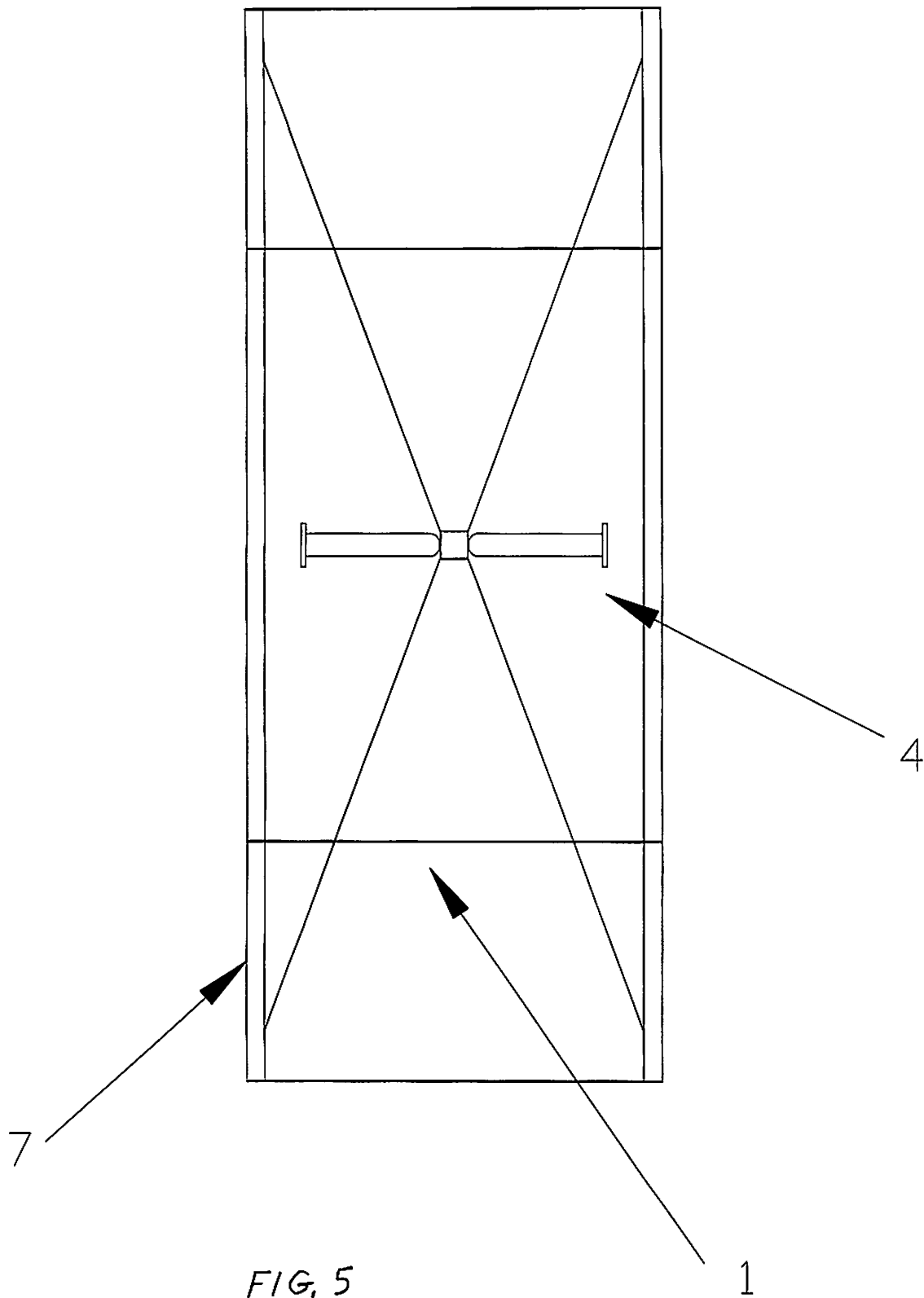


FIG. 5

BOTTOM VIEW

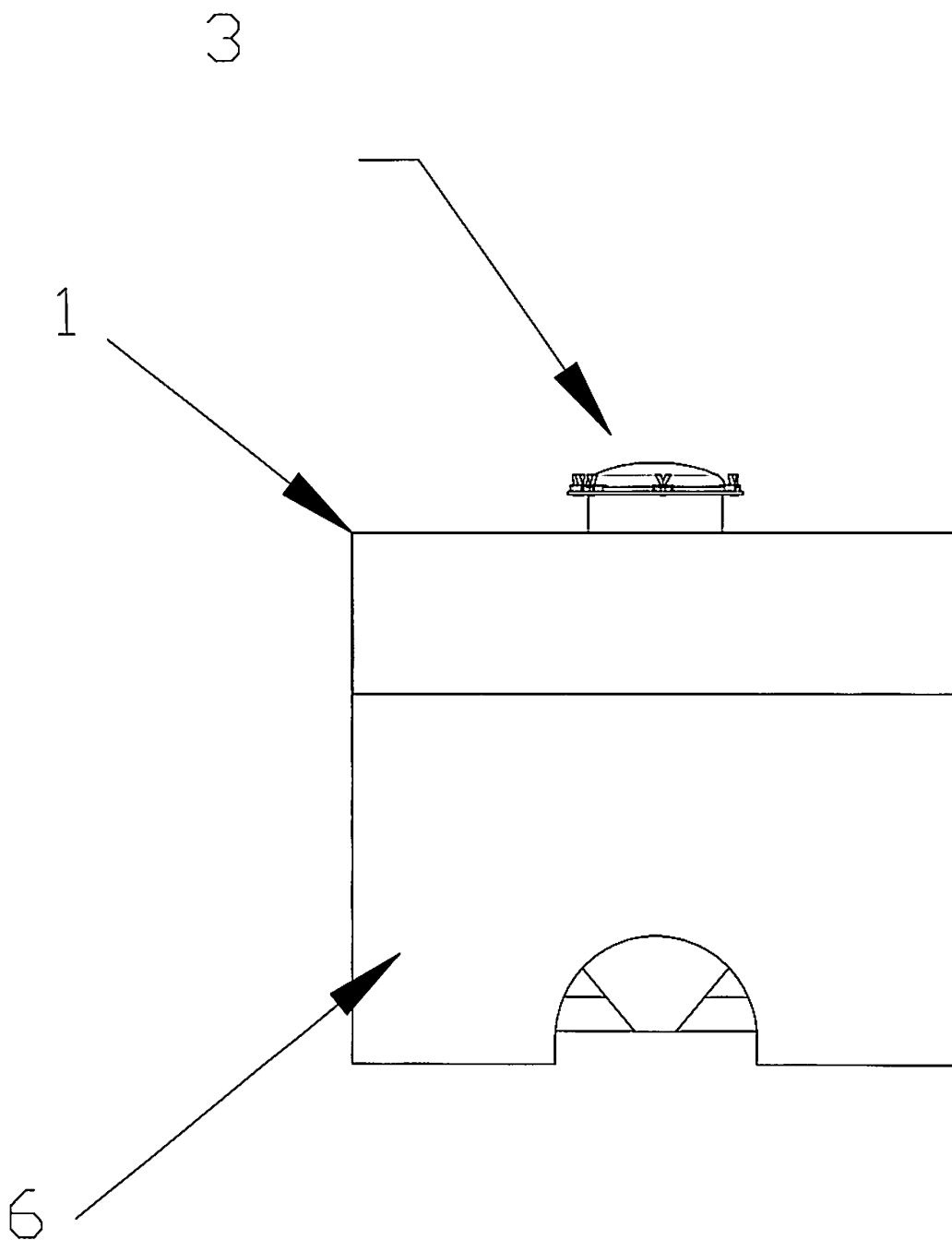
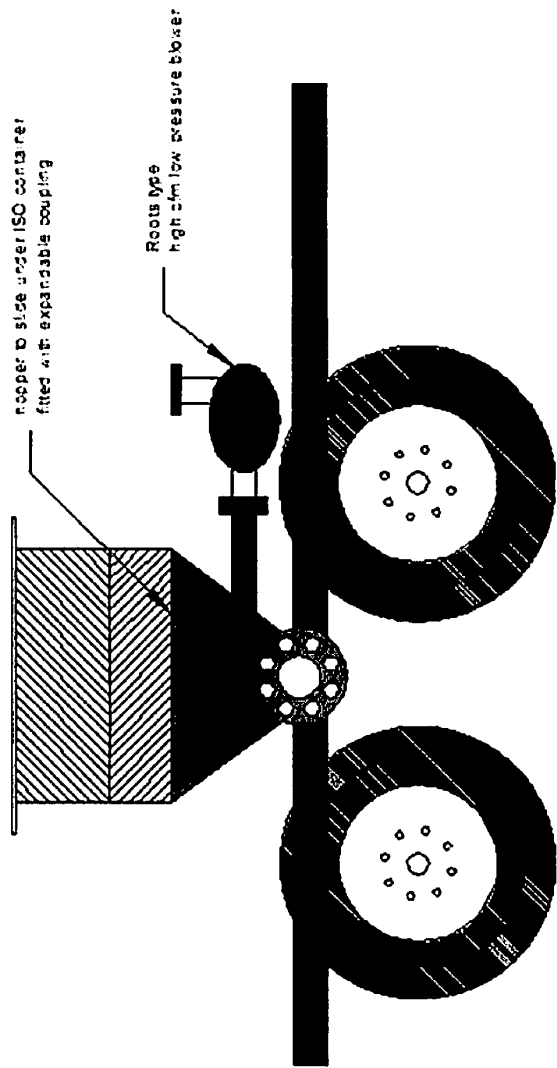


FIG. 6

END VIEW

FIG. 7

Trailer Side View



DCX

FIG. 8  
Trailer End View

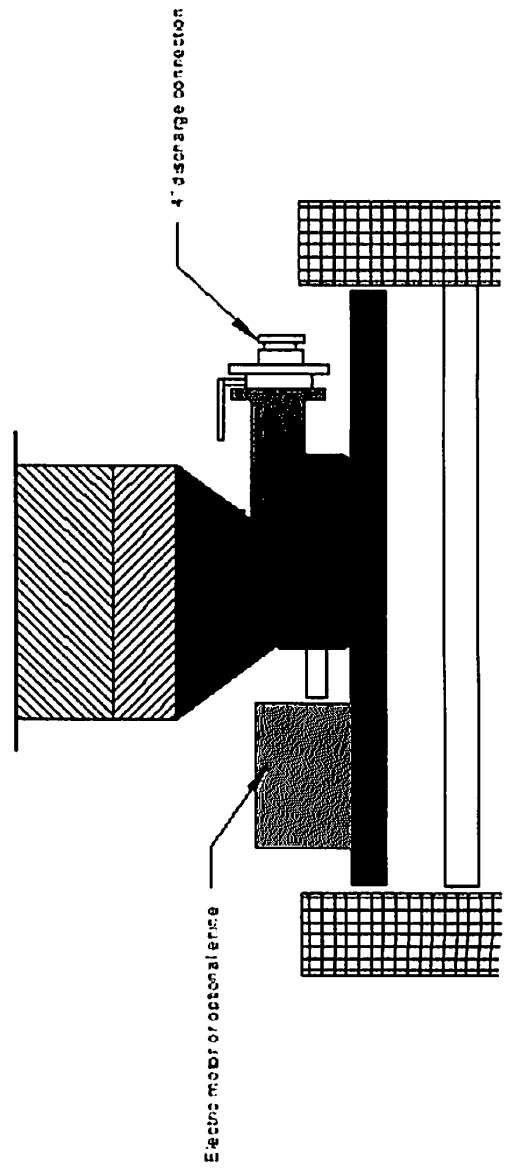
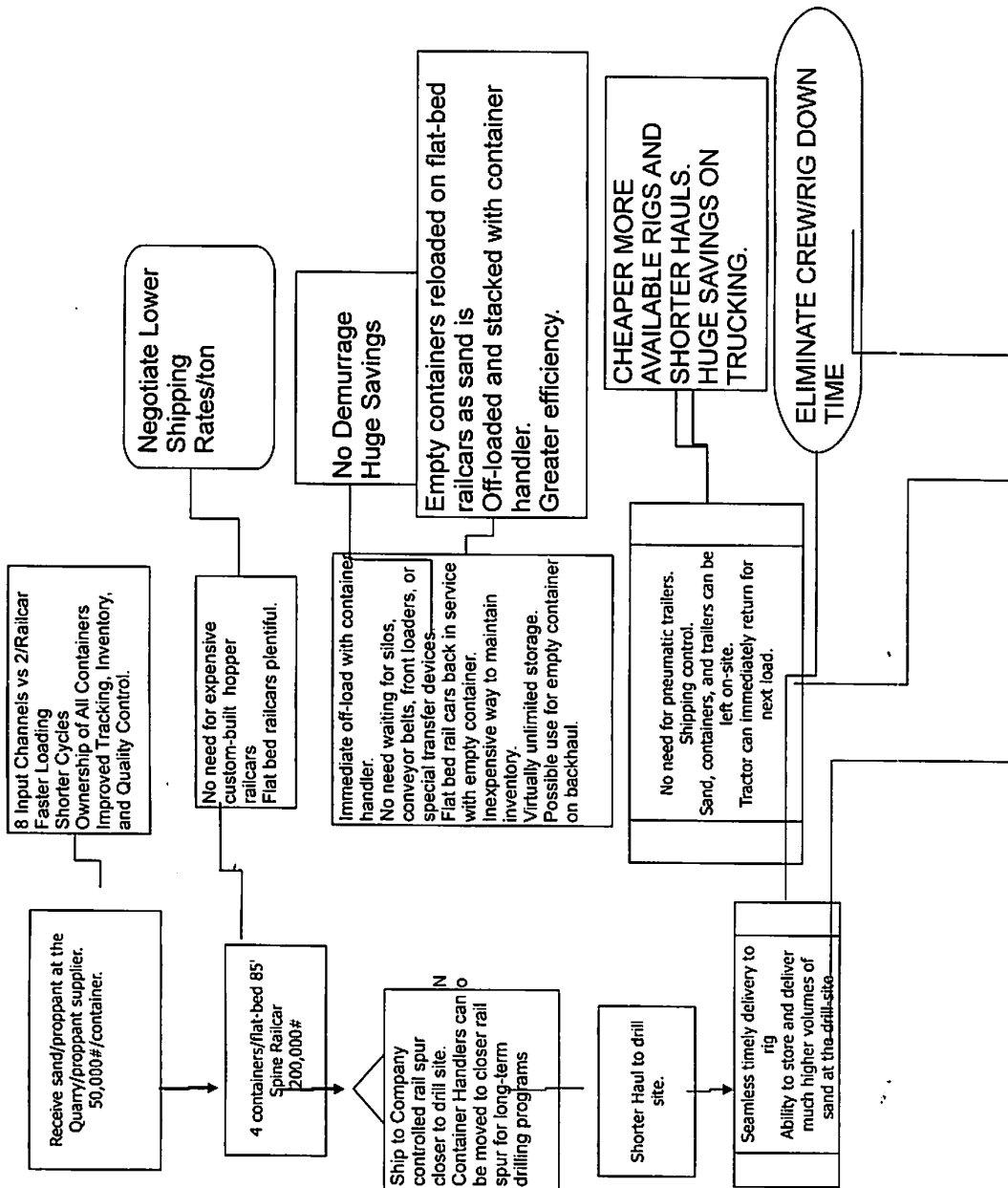


FIG. 9

# Frac Sand Delivery



Transportation Cost or 1 Frac Crew per Month	Conventional System	Barge/Container System
Number of Jobs 1 Frac Crew Can Do in 1 Month	4	4
Average Weight of Sand per Job (lb)	3,750,000	3,750,000
Required Sand (lb/Month)	15,000,000	15,000,000
Required Sand (Tons/Month)	7,500	7,500
Freight Cost (\$/Ton)	50	40
Railroad Freight Cost (\$/Month)	375,000	
Barge Freight Cost (\$/Month)		300,000
Railcar Capacity (lb/Car)	200,000	
Barge Capacity (lb/Barge)		3,000,000
Number of Required Hopper Cars per Month	75	
Number of Required Barges per Month		5
Container Capacity (lb/Container)		50,000
Number of Required Containers per Month		60
Effective number of Leased Containers per Month		80
Transportation Time (Days/Cycle)	21	
Demurrage Time (Days/Cycle)	14	
Effective Number Hopper Cars Required per Month	47	
Demurrage Fee (\$/Car/Day)	50	
Demurrage Fee (\$/Month)	32,900	
Hopper Car Offloading Cost (\$/Car)	500	
Hopper Car Offloading Cost (\$/Month)	37,500	
Barge Offloading Stevedore Services		4
Barge Offloading Cost/Month		30,900
Barge Dock Lease (\$/Month)		4,000
Port Fees (\$/Ton)		0.50
Port Fees (\$/Month)		3,750
Number of Loaded Container Handlers Required		2
Loaded Container Handler Lease Cost (\$/Month/Handler)		0
Loaded Container Handler Lease Cost (\$/Month)		0
Number of Employees to Load/Offload Containers		2
Monthly Wage (\$/Employee)		3,000
Container Loading/Offloading Labor Expenses (\$/Month)		6,000
75 Ton Crane Rental		0
Yard Spotter Rental		1,500
Hopper Car Lease Cost (\$/Car/Month)	500	
Container Lease Cost (\$/Container/Month)		
Container Lease Cost (\$/Month)		0
Hopper Car Lease Cost (\$/Month)	23,500	
Capacity of Truck (lb)	50,000	50,000
Number of Truckloads Needed to Deliver Sand	300	300
Roundtrip Flat Rate Delivery Cost (\$/Truckload)	1,000	700
Distance Differential Cost (\$/hr)		0
Distance Differential (hr/Month)		0
Distance Differential (\$/Month)		0
Trucking Cost (\$/Month)	300,000	210,000
Trucking Wait Time at Rig (hr)	2	0
Hourly Cost of Wait Time (\$/hr)	70	50
Truck Wait Time Cost (\$/Month)	42,000	0
Trucking Cost for Material Handling Equipment (\$/Month)		8,000
Overweight Permit (\$/Month/Truck)		400
Number of Trucks Requiring Permits		6
Permit Cost (\$/Month)		2,400
Number of Trailers Required		
Trailer Lease Cost (\$/Trailer/Month)		0
Trailer Lease Cost (\$/Month)		0
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>810,900</b>	<b>566,550</b>

FIG. 10

**Provisional Application for Patent Cover Sheet**

This is a request for filing a PROVISIONAL APPLICATION FOR PATENT under 37 CFR 1.53(c)

**Inventor(s)**

Inventor 1

**Remove**

Given Name	Middle Name	Family Name	City	State	Country j
Michael		Mintz	Corpus Christi	TX	

All Inventors Must Be Listed – Additional Inventor Information blocks may be generated within this form by selecting the **Add** button.**Add****Title of Invention**

Apparatus For Transporting Frac Sand in Intermodal Container

Attorney Docket Number (if applicable)

2010-02127

**Correspondence Address**

Direct all correspondence to (select one):

☒ The address corresponding to Customer Number☐ Firm or Individual Name

Customer Number

30140

The invention was made by an agency of the United States Government or under a contract with an agency of the United States Government.

☒ No.☐ Yes, the name of the U.S. Government agency and the Government contract number are:



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Applicant claims small entity status under 37 CFR 1.27

☒ Yes, applicant qualifies for small entity status under 37 CFR 1.27☐ No**Warning**

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**Signature**

Please see 37 CFR 1.4(d) for the form of the signature.

Signature	/virtual/			Date (YYYY-MM-DD)	2010-12-31
First Name	Al	Last Name	Harrison	Registration Number (If appropriate)	31708

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6. A record in this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to another federal agency for purposes of National Security review (35 U.S.C. 181) and for review pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act (42 U.S.C. 218(c)).
7. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the Administrator, General Services, or his/her designee, during an inspection of records conducted by GSA as part of that agency's responsibility to recommend improvements in records management practices and programs, under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2904 and 2906. Such disclosure shall be made in accordance with the GSA regulations governing inspection of records for this purpose, and any other relevant (i.e., GSA or Commerce) directive. Such disclosure shall not be used to make determinations about individuals.
8. A record from this system of records may be disclosed, as a routine use, to the public after either publication of the application pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 122(b) or issuance of a patent pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 151. Further, a record may be disclosed, subject to the limitations of 37 CFR 1.14, as a routine use, to the public if the record was filed in an application which became abandoned or in which the proceedings were terminated and which application is referenced by either a published application, an application open to public inspection or an issued patent.
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Electronic Patent Application Fee Transmittal				
Application Number:				
Filing Date:				
Title of Invention:		Apparatus For Transporting Frac Sand in Intermodal Container		
First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:		Michael Mintz		
Filer:		Al Harrison		
Attorney Docket Number:		2010-02127		
Filed as Small Entity				
Provisional Filing Fees				
Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD(\$)
Basic Filing:				
Provisional Application filing fee	2005	1	110	110
Pages:				
Claims:				
Miscellaneous-Filing:				
Petition:				
Patent-Appeals-and-Interference:				
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Description	Fee Code	Quantity	Amount	Sub-Total in USD(\$)
Miscellaneous:				
Total in USD (\$)				110

Electronic Acknowledgement Receipt	
<b>EFS ID:</b>	9147021
<b>Application Number:</b>	61429046
<b>International Application Number:</b>	
<b>Confirmation Number:</b>	9785
<b>Title of Invention:</b>	Apparatus For Transporting Frac Sand in Intermodal Container
<b>First Named Inventor/Applicant Name:</b>	Michael Mintz
<b>Customer Number:</b>	30140
<b>Filer:</b>	Al Harrison
<b>Filer Authorized By:</b>	
<b>Attorney Docket Number:</b>	2010-02127
<b>Receipt Date:</b>	31-DEC-2010
<b>Filing Date:</b>	
<b>Time Stamp:</b>	18:37:05
<b>Application Type:</b>	Provisional

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### File Listing:

Document Number	Document Description	File Name	File Size(Bytes)/ Message Digest	Multi Part /.zip	Pages (if appl.)
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1		prov-frac-sand-apparatus.pdf	59876 d7e6438a0750874d2fccc412b2b110342761094d	yes	11
	Multipart Description/PDF files in .zip description				
	Document Description		Start	End	
	Specification		1	9	
	Claims		10	10	
	Abstract		11	11	
Warnings:					
Information:					
2	Drawings-only black and white line drawings	drawing-figures-rev3.pdf	641125 968b748a301cbab7aca159c1e9daa80cb736d8d5	no	9
Warnings:					
Information:					
3	Provisional Cover Sheet (SB16)	Prov-Cove-rSheet-SB.pdf	89452 db9354a4df84ac3d6f56a036c735205c4cd60c2	no	3
Warnings:					
This is not a USPTO supplied Provisional Cover Sheet SB16 form.					
Information:					
4	Fee Worksheet (PTO-875)	fee-info.pdf	28681 8b8f8e8f4602b61b278ff9b2a531e1c898721336	no	2
Warnings:					
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If a new application is being filed and the application includes the necessary components for a filing date (see 37 CFR 1.53(b)-(d) and MPEP 506), a Filing Receipt (37 CFR 1.54) will be issued in due course and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the filing date of the application.

**National Stage of an International Application under 35 U.S.C. 371**

If a timely submission to enter the national stage of an international application is compliant with the conditions of 35 U.S.C. 371 and other applicable requirements a Form PCT/DO/EO/903 indicating acceptance of the application as a national stage submission under 35 U.S.C. 371 will be issued in addition to the Filing Receipt, in due course.

**New International Application Filed with the USPTO as a Receiving Office**

If a new international application is being filed and the international application includes the necessary components for an international filing date (see PCT Article 11 and MPEP 1810), a Notification of the International Application Number and of the International Filing Date (Form PCT/RO/105) will be issued in due course, subject to prescriptions concerning national security, and the date shown on this Acknowledgement Receipt will establish the international filing date of the application.