

## Spring is in the Air

What a great time of year! Finally the doldrums of a long winter are passing away and new life is all around. Maybe your house is like ours. The bikes and roller blades all come out along with the bats and ball gloves. My two girls are playing softball. Different teams, different schedules, different practices... Whoa! That's a lot of running around.

Spring is also a time (especially in the north) to run some specials or promote alignments. The pothole season has taken its toll and it's time to take advantage of the opportunity. I recently ran across some procedures for checking draglink ends.

Both greaseable and non greaseable ball sockets experience wear. Both require preventative maintenance and periodic inspection. Non greaseable ball sockets depend on the rubber sealing boot to keep contaminants out of the lubricating grease. Should a boot become torn the ball socket should be replaced.

Draglinks and the surrounding critical components should be inspected daily during the pre and or post trip DOT inspections although a thorough inspection for wear should take place every 25,000 miles or three months.

Daily inspection should include checking the boots for tears, missing cotter pins and or missing castellated nuts. Any movement along the axis requires placing the vehicle out of service for ball socket replacement. This inspection is done by pushing and pulling on the drag link to see if there is any movement in the axial direction. Any movement other than rotational measured with 50Lbs, requires replacement.

At the adjustable end, push down and pull up on the drag link in a direction toward the ground. Any movement requires replacement. At the steering gear end- the fixed end push in and pull out on the drag link in a direction toward the engine. Any movement other than rotational requires replacement.

Important note: Do not use a wrench or other objects to apply leverage when inspecting ball sockets. Applying leverage can damage components.

## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."*

# **Upcoming TARA Events**

**October, 2010  
Fall Meeting in Burlington, Vermont  
Hosted by P.G. Adams**

## Where Do You Stack Up In Benchmarking?

The term benchmarking is similar to the word yardstick or target. It is a way to measure something. Are your employees or shops living up to their potential? Benchmarking allows you to compare your business' performance to other businesses so you can see where opportunities exist. Here are a few areas that could be measured.

- Labor sales should make up 40% of total shop sales.
- Direct labor cost is the hourly amount you pay your technicians to produce labor plus any bonuses less fringe benefits. The benchmark is for direct labor cost not to exceed 35% of labor sales.
- Parts sales should make up 47% of total shop sales.
- Parts cost of sales shouldn't exceed 62% of parts sales.
- Material sales should be approx. 8% of total shop sales.
- Material cost shouldn't exceed 65% of material sales, producing 35% gross profit on material sales.
- Sublet costs shouldn't exceed 5% of total sales.



**Truck-frame & Axle Repair Association**

3741 Enterprise Dr. S.W.  
Rochester, MN 55902