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(54) **SYSTEM FOR CLEARING A SURFACE**

SYSTEM ZUR RÄUMUNG EINER OBERFLÄCHE

SYSTÈME POUR DÉBLAYER UNE SURFACE

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(73) Proprietor: **National Association**

**For Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc.
Daytona Beach, Florida 32114 (US)**

(72) Inventors:

- **KRUEGER, Donald E.
Stony Point, NC 28678 (US)**
- **SUTTON, John K.
Concord, North Carolina 28025 (US)**

• **HORTON, Michael D.**

Concord, North Carolina 28027 (US)

• **ROGERS, Shawn**

Huntersville, North Carolina 28078 (US)

• **TATE, IV, John Austin**

Charlotte, North Carolina 28203 (US)

• **KAPROTH, Jerome**

Mooresville, NC 28127 (US)

• **POPIELA, Christopher Allen**

Charlotte, North Carolina 28203 (US)

(74) Representative: **Papula Oy**

P.O. Box 981

00101 Helsinki (FI)

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Description

TECHNOLOGICAL FIELD

[0001] Embodiments of the present invention relate to a system for clearing a surface. In particular, embodiments may include a system which is configured to clear water, oil, debris, or other objects from a surface such as a road surface as the system advances over the road surface.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Racetracks, highways, runways, roads, parking lots, and other like surfaces, generally referred to herein collectively and individually as road surfaces, are generally engaged by tires of vehicles which may be made of rubber, synthetic rubber, or similar compounds. Tires generally grip a road surface better when the road surface and tire are dry and the road surface is free of debris. The introduction of contaminants to a road surface, such as water, oil, gravel, tire particles, etc. may reduce the grip between a tire and the road surface. As such, clearing the road surface of debris and drying the road surface may improve the grip of a tire on the road surface.

[0003] While cars and aircraft may traverse wet road surfaces, stopping distances and handling may be reduced. In some applications, such as some forms of automobile racing where speeds and turning forces may be significantly higher than standard driving traffic, racing on a wet track may be hazardous enough that races may be suspended until the track is dry or clear of other debris. In such applications, actively drying the track may allow automobile racing, time trials, practices, qualifying, and the like to start or resume faster than allowing the track to passively dry naturally. Actively drying the racetrack quickly may also reduce fan disappointment and operating expenses resulting from a race that is prolonged or canceled due to track conditions, such as a wet track. Wet road surfaces can also cause issues when temperatures drop below freezing and the wet road surfaces become icy.

[0004] A previously known system for clearing a surface is disclosed for example in document US 2012/0255585 A1. The system of this reference includes a vehicle-attached air knife assembly which may be rotated about an axis substantially orthogonal to the surface along which the vehicle travels. The air knife assembly is supported at opposite ends by a castor wheel, and the air is supplied to the air knife by a blower, fan or turbine. The air knife assembly of the '585 publication is also disclosed as being potentially as wide as a single lane of a roadway, but can be shortened to allow treatment of narrower paths, as described in the abstract.

[0005] DE 3914348 A1 discloses a method of drying, heating, thawing, or cleaning open air surfaces by warm air of plurality of hot air units.

SUMMARY

[0006] Embodiments of the present invention may provide for a system for clearing a road surface of contaminants, such as water, debris, or other contaminants. In one embodiment, a system for clearing a road surface is provided including an first air knife with an elongate orifice extending along a line, a first frame configured to support the air knife in a position substantially parallel to a plane defined by the road surface, and a tow bar coupled to the frame, where the tow bar is pivotable relative to the frame along an axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the road surface. Further the system includes a second air knife including an elongate orifice extending along a line, and a second frame configured to support the air knife in a position substantially parallel to the plane defined by the road surface, where the second frame is attached to the first frame. A direction of travel of the first frame and a direction of travel of the second frame may be held fixed parallel to one another. The tow bar may include a mounting plate, where the mounting plate is pivotably mounted to the frame. The mounting plate may be pivotable in a first pivot direction about the axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the road surface and pivotable in a second pivot direction, opposite the first pivot direction, about the axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the road surface.

[0007] A road surface clearing system according to some example embodiments may include a biasing member configured to bias the mounting plate in at least the first pivot direction. The degree of pivot between the mounting plate and the frame may be limited by a pivot stop. The degree of pivot may be between about zero degrees relative to a direction of travel of the system and forty-five degrees relative to the direction of travel of the system. The elongate orifice may be disposed at an angle relative to the direction of travel of the system, such as between zero and ninety degrees, between about forty and seventy degrees, or about sixty degrees. The angle of incidence of air exiting the elongate orifice relative to the plane defined by the road surface may be between about thirty and sixty degrees. The angle of incidence of the air exiting the elongate orifice relative to the plane defined by the surface may be about forty-five degrees.

[0008] A road surface clearing system according to some example embodiments may include a guide wheel attached to the frame with an axis of rotation orthogonal to the plane defined by the road surface. The system may define a direction of travel in which the system is advanced by a tow vehicle, and the guide wheel may be adapted to engage a wall extending parallel to the direction of travel. The biasing member may be configured to bias the guide wheel into engagement with the wall.

[0009] Some embodiments may further include a manifold attached to the frame, a first hose extending from the manifold to a first end of the air knife, and a second hose extending from the manifold to a second end of the air knife.

[0010] In some embodiments of the road surface clearing system the second frame may be pivotable relative to the first frame about a first axis and about a second axis, where the first axis and the second axis are perpendicular to one another, and the first axis and the second axis are each parallel to the plane defined by the road surface. According to the invention a direction of travel of the first frame and a direction of travel of the second frame is held fixed parallel to one another, and is parallel to a direction of travel in which the system is configured to be advanced by a tow vehicle.

[0011] Some embodiments may further include a manifold attached to one of the first frame or the second frame, a first hose extending from the manifold to a first end of the first air knife, a second hose extending from the manifold to a second end of the first air knife, a third hose extending from the manifold to a first end of the second air knife, and a fourth hose extending from the manifold to a second end of the second air knife.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Having thus described the invention in general terms, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawings, which are not necessarily drawn to scale, and wherein:

FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of a road surface clearing system according to an example embodiment;

FIG. 2 illustrates a perspective view of an air knife that may be used in a road surface clearing system according to example embodiments;

FIG. 3 illustrates the road surface clearing system of FIG. 1 as viewed from above;

FIG. 4 illustrates the air knife of the road surface clearing system of FIG. 3 shown exclusive of surrounding components;

FIG. 5 illustrates a perspective view of a road surface clearing system according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 6 illustrates the example embodiment of FIG. 5 as viewed from above;

FIG. 7 illustrates a ball joint rod end as used in example embodiments of the present invention;

FIG. 8 illustrates a detail view a system of fastening together adjacent frames of a surface clearing system according to example embodiments of the present invention;

FIG. 9 illustrates a perspective detail view of the fastening system of FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 illustrates an example embodiment of a mechanism for allowing a tow bar to pivot relative to the frame of road surface clearing system according to example embodiments of the present invention;

FIG. 11 depicts an example embodiment of a road surface clearing system with the tow bar pivoted relative to the frame according to the present invention;

FIG. 12 illustrates a surface clearing system as towed behind a tow vehicle according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 13 illustrates an air supply module of a modular road surface clearing system according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 14 illustrates another view of the air supply module of FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 illustrates a modular road surface clearing system with the air knife assembly connected to the air supply module according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 16 illustrates a modular road surface clearing system with the air nozzle assembly connected to the air supply module according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 17 illustrates another view of a modular road surface clearing system according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 18 illustrates the modular road surface clearing system of FIG. 17 with the air nozzle assembly turned relative to the vehicle according to an example embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 19 illustrates a modular road surface clearing system including a biasing mechanism according to an example embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 20 illustrates an air knife assembly according to an example embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0013] The present invention will now be described more fully hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, this invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0014] Embodiments of the present invention may provide for a system to clear material, herein generally also referred to as contaminants, from a road surface. In some embodiments, the material to be cleared may be debris, such as gravel, rubber, trash, etc. from a racetrack surface or an airport runway. In other embodiments, the material to be cleared may be water for purposes of drying a road surface. As will be appreciated, embodiments of the present invention may be implemented for clearing a wide variety of materials from a road surface such that embodiments described herein are not intended to be limiting, but merely provide example embodiments of applications of the invention. As such, embodiments described herein are primarily described in the context of clearing water from a road surface such as a racetrack or runway to dry the surface.

[0015] As outlined above, road surfaces with contam-

inants such as debris or water may reduce the grip available to vehicles traversing the road surfaces and clearing the road surface of debris and drying the road surface may dramatically improve the grip of a tire on the road surface. Example embodiments of the present invention may enable a user to clear debris from a road surface and/or to dry a surface quickly. Further, as wet road surfaces can also cause issues when temperatures drop below freezing and the wet road surfaces become icy road surfaces, embodiments may also be useful to dry the road surfaces before the water freezes to ice. In some embodiments, heat may also be used to assist in drying the road surface and/or even helping to melt and remove snow and ice from road surfaces.

[0016] FIG. 1 illustrates an example embodiment of a road surface clearing system 100 of the present invention including a frame 110 with wheels 120 and an air knife 130 suspended from the frame 110. The air knife may be suspended from the frame by a mechanism, such as a series of bolts, which can raise and lower the air knife relative to a road surface over which the frame rides, being carried by the wheels 120. The frame may include a tow bar 140 which may be used to pull, or in some embodiments push, in a direction of travel along the road surface.

[0017] The road surface along which the road surface clearing system 100 may be pulled may include contours and undulations to some extent; however, for purposes of the disclosure, the road surface, and in particular, the portion of the road surface over which the frame 110 rides, will be described as substantially planar or defining a plane of the road surface.

[0018] The tow bar 140 of the road surface clearing system 100 may be hingedly attached to the frame 110 at hinge points 145. The pivot points may allow the towed end 147 of the tow bar 140 to move vertically up and down relative to the road surface being cleared. The hinge between the tow bar 140 and the frame 110 may allow for tow vehicles with different height tow hitches or receivers, onto or into which the towed end 147 of the tow bar 140 may be mounted. Further, the hinge may accommodate undulations in the road surface between the tow vehicle and the road surface clearing system 100.

[0019] The tow vehicle used to pull (or push) a road surface clearing system 100 of example embodiments may be any suitable vehicle capable of moving the system. In some embodiments, the towed end 147 of the tow bar 140 may be indirectly coupled to a tow vehicle, such as by a boom or telescoping arm such that the surface clearing system 100 may not be located directly behind the tow vehicle as will be described further below.

[0020] Road surface clearing systems of example embodiments may function, as detailed further below, by directing pressurized air through the air knife 130 toward the surface to be cleared. The air knife may be fed pressurized air through at least one inlet, such as inlets on a first end of the air knife 132 and a second end of the air knife 134. A first hose 165 may supply the compressed

air to the first end 132, and a second hose 170 may supply the compressed air to the second end 134. Each of the first hose 165 and the second hose 170 may be connected to a manifold 150 which distributes pressurized air to the hoses. The manifold may be fed by one or more compressors, through one or more hoses connected to inlet 155.

[0021] Pressurized air supplied by a compressor may include oil or oil vapor that is residue from the compressing process. As such, to prevent the road surfaces that are to be cleared from having oil deposited thereon, one or more filters may be implemented between the pressurized air source and the air knives to remove the oil from the pressurized air before being used to clear the road surface.

[0022] FIG. 2 illustrates the air knife 130 as viewed from the side of the road surface clearing system without the components of the remainder of the system for ease of illustration and understanding. As illustrated, the air knife 130 includes mounting brackets 210 configured to mount the air knife 130 to the frame (such as frame 110 of FIG. 1). The mounting brackets 210 may be attached to the frame by adjustable fasteners such that the position of the air knife 130 relative to the frame is adjustable. The adjustability of the position of the air knife 130 relative to the frame allows for more precise positioning of the air knife 130 relative to the road surface that is to be cleared while maintaining sufficient distance from the surface to avoid obstacles and to avoid scraping the surface when the frame moves over undulations or apexes in the surface. An example working height for the air knife 130 above the surface may be between about one-half inch and two inches, or preferably in some uses about one inch. However, as embodiments may be used for clearing larger debris or for providing an air flow of a higher temperature, the height of the air knife 130 above the surface may be increased significantly to about 12 inches, in dependence upon the type of debris to be cleared, the temperature of the pressurized air, and the type of surface that is being cleared.

[0023] The air knife 130 may define an elongate orifice 220 through which the pressurized air is expelled from the air knife 130. The pressurized air is received at the air knife at both ends 132 and 134. While the illustrated example of an air knife is configured to receive pressurized air from both ends of the air knife, alternative embodiments may receive pressurized air from only one end, or from one or more orifices disposed along the length of the air knife. An advantage to receiving the pressurized air at both ends 132, 134 of the air knife is that a more consistent pressure of air exiting the elongate orifice 220 may be achieved. The elongate orifice 220 of the illustrated example is defined by a top plate 230 and a bottom plate 235 which are attached to a body 136 of the air knife 130. While the elongate orifice 220 of some embodiments may be defined by integrally formed portions of the air knife, such as in an extruded channel, the illustrated embodiment includes an adjustable width or-

ifice 220. Fasteners 240 are disposed along the length of the top plate and may be configured to allow adjustability of the width of the elongate orifice 220. An example elongate orifice width may be about 0.005 to about 0.050 inches, or about 0.010 inches.

[0024] An adjustable width elongate orifice may be advantageous to allow more consistent flow to be achieved across the length of the orifice 220. For example, the flow rate of pressurized air may tend to be higher closer to the pressurized air entrance to the air knife body 136 (e.g., proximate the air knife ends 132, 134) such that adjusting the orifice 220 width proximate the air knife ends to be narrower, while the orifice width proximate the middle of the air knife is wider, may achieve more consistent flow across the length of the elongate orifice. Further, the adjustable width of the elongate orifice may assist in compensating for material and manufacturing variances, air knife deflection, and warping of the air knife.

[0025] As illustrated in FIG 2, the elongate orifice is directed downward, toward a road surface, and in the direction of movement of a frame illustrated by arrow 200. The elongate orifice may be directed downward, toward the road surface to be cleared such that a planar, blade-like stream (i.e., knife) of pressurized air exiting the elongate orifice impinges the road surface to be cleared at an angle between thirty degrees and sixty degrees, or preferably in some uses, around forty-five degrees.

[0026] During operation, the road surface clearing system 100 of FIG. 1 may be towed behind a tow vehicle (or a boom as noted above). The manifold 150 may be supplied with pressurized air, which is distributed through the manifold 150 to both the first hose 165 and the second hose 170. The pressurized air is received at the first end 132 and the second end 134 of the air knife and directed through the body 136 of the air knife to exit through the elongate orifice 220.

[0027] FIG. 3 illustrates the road surface clearing system of FIG. 1 as viewed from above. As shown, the air knife 130 is disposed at an angle θ relative to the direction of travel 200. The angle θ may be between zero and ninety degrees, with zero being parallel to the direction of travel 200 and ninety degrees being perpendicular to the direction of travel. The angle θ may be aligned to the left, as illustrated, or to the right in relation to the direction of travel. The angle θ may be adjustable and may be chosen based upon the application, such as the type of material being cleared from a surface. In an example embodiment in which water is being removed from an asphalt or concrete road surface, an angle θ may preferably be between about forty degrees and seventy degrees, and more preferably, about sixty degrees as illustrated.

[0028] Further, as pressurized air may be heated above ambient air temperature as a result of the compression, the pressurized air entering the air knife and exiting to the surface to be cleared may have an elevated temperature. This may be beneficial for drying road sur-

faces as the heat will encourage water vaporization. In some embodiments, heat may be introduced to the pressurized air or indirectly upon the road surface by a heater to speed the drying process when the road surface clearing system is used for drying a road surface.

[0029] FIG. 4 illustrates the air knife 130 of the view of FIG. 3 without the frame 110 or ancillary components for ease of illustration and understanding. As shown, the air knife 130 is arranged at an angle θ of about sixty degrees relative to the direction of travel 200. The airflow exiting the elongate orifice of the air knife 130 is represented by arrows A through F. As the road surface clearing system advances along in the direction of arrow 200, and as water or debris is blown forward and partially laterally relative to the direction of travel by the air following the path of arrow A, the water or debris will be blown into the path of arrow B. As the air knife advances along the direction of travel 200, the air following the path of arrow B will approach the water or debris and it will be blown forward and laterally into the path of arrow C. This cascade continues until the debris or water is blown laterally out of the path of the air knife 130 as it advances along the direction of travel 200. This results in a "squeegee" effect of scraping or sweeping the water and/or debris out of the path of the air knife 130 in the direction of arrow 250.

[0030] As apparent to one of skill in the art, directing the water and/or debris to one side of the air knife 130 may allow, as necessary, a second or additional successive passes of the road surface clearing system to move the water or debris further in the direction of arrow 250. Optionally, a series of road surface clearing systems may be used to clear a swath wider than a single system illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 3.

[0031] While embodiments of the present invention may be scaled according to their intended use, limits may exist on the scalability with regard to how long an air knife can be to adequately deliver consistent air flow along the length of the elongate orifice. Further, limitations on the volume and pressure of the air fed into the manifold may limit the length of an air knife that can be effectively used. In an example embodiment, pressurized air may be supplied to the air knife of FIG. 1 at about one hundred pounds per square inch (psi).

[0032] Applicant has found a method and system according to embodiments of the present invention to create a road surface clearing method and system that are capable of clearing a wider swath than the single system illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 3. FIG. 5 illustrates such an example embodiment that includes three frames 310 connected together. The mechanism with which the frames are connected allows for articulation and rotation along at least two axes as will be described further below. FIG. 5 depicts strut rods 360 connecting together the front of the frames 310 and strut rods 365 connecting together the rear of the frames 310.

[0033] The illustrated embodiment depicts a manifold 350 arranged to distribute pressurized air received at the manifold 350 to each of three air knives 330. While the

embodiment of FIG. 5 shows three frames 310 with three air knives 330 coupled together, the system described herein is modular such that any number of frames 310 and air knives 330 may be joined together in a similar fashion as that illustrated. The number of surface clearing systems coupled together may be determined, for example, based on a width of road surface that requires clearing, the width of access points to the road surface (e.g., access roads, gates, etc.), or the capacity of compressors used to feed pressurized air to a manifold. The air knives 330 may have a minimum pressure and minimum volume of air to adequately clear and/or dry a surface such that the capacity of the compressor(s) used may dictate the maximum number of air knives 330 that may be coupled together while remaining effective for clearing and/or drying a road surface. For example, the example embodiment of FIG. 5 may require compressed air at 100psi and may require about 1500 to about 4500 cubic feet per minute (cfm) of air to adequately dry a surface about 18 feet in width.

[0034] According to the embodiment of FIG. 5, the compressor(s) coupled to the manifold 350 provide compressed air that is distributed through hoses 355 to each of the three air knives 330. As described with regard to the embodiment of FIGS. 1-4, each of the air knives 330 may be supplied with pressurized air at both ends of the air knife. Optionally, as noted above, the air knives may include orifices disposed along their length through which the pressurized air may be received.

[0035] FIG. 6 illustrates the example embodiment of FIG. 5 of three road surface clearing systems coupled together. The manifold 350, hoses 355, and related couplers are omitted from the illustration of FIG. 6. As shown, the frames 310 are offset from one another along the direction of travel. The offset allows for substantial alignment of the air knives 330. Alignment of the air knives 330 may improve the surface clearing efficiency of multiple air knives joined together as the effect described with regard to FIG. 4 may continue substantially seamlessly across multiple air knives. The air knives 330 of FIG. 6 are not aligned collinearly since the pressurized air supplied to the air knives 330 is supplied on the ends of the air knives. A minor offset may be used between the adjacent air knives 330. Including a minor offset between the air knives also allows the air knives to be arranged to overlap to a limited extent to ensure there is no un-swept area of the surface to be cleared.

[0036] As shown in FIG. 6, each of the frames 310 are connected together at the front, left corners 362 by strut rods 360, and at the back, right corners 367 by strut rods 365. The fasteners used to secure the strut rods 360, 365 to the frames may provide a fixed point for the end of the strut rods, but allow for pivoting about the fastened point. For example, the strut rods 360, 365, may each be connected at either end to respective corners 362, 367 by ball joint rod end fasteners. FIG 7 illustrates an example embodiment of such a fastener 400 which may include a ball 410 defining a bore 405 configured to receive

a fastener, such as a bolt, there through. The ball 410 is received within an eye 415 which holds the ball 410 securely, but allows rotation of the ball 410 within the eye 415. The fastener 400 may include a threaded end 420 arranged to be received within an end of the strut rod. The threaded end 420 may allow for adjustability of the overall length of the strut rod to accommodate manufacturing tolerances or to appropriately space the adjacent frames from one another. Optionally, a ball joint rod end fastener may include an internally threaded bore to receive a threaded end of a strut rod, or a solid shank configured to be welded to a strut rod.

[0037] Referring back to FIG. 6, the ball joint rod end fasteners, similar to that illustrated in FIG. 7, may be attached at either end of each of the strut rods 360, 365 and secured to the frames 310 with a fastener, such as a bolt, received through the bore 410 of the fastener and secured to the frame 310 at corners 362 and 367. The ball joint rod end fasteners may allow a degree of flexibility between the frames 310 rather than having the frames rigidly attached to one another.

[0038] FIG. 8 illustrates a detail view of two adjacent frames 310 connected together according to the example embodiment of FIGS. 5 and 6. FIG. 8 illustrates the strut rod 360 connecting the front left corner 362 of a first frame 310 to the front left corner 362 of an adjacent frame 310. Also illustrated is a tie rod 430 configured to connect the front of a first frame 310 at 435 to the back of an adjacent frame at 437. The tie rod 430 further includes ball joint rod ends for connection between the tie rod and the frames at 435 and 437. The combination of the tie rod 430 and the strut rods 360, 365 allow some degree of vertical displacement between frames 310 relative to the surface being cleared due to the ball joint rod end fastener connections at 362, 367, 435, and 437. However, the configuration of the tie rods 430 and strut rods 360, 365 also permits the frames 310 to pivot relative to one another. The collinear or substantially collinear arrangement of the fastener connections at 362B, 367, 435, and 437, as illustrated in FIG. 9, allows the frame 310A to pivot relative to frame 310B about the axis 480. Similarly, the collinear or substantially collinear arrangement of the fasteners at 362A and 435 allow the frame 310A to pivot about axis 470 relative to the adjacent frame 310B.

[0039] The ability of adjacent frames 310A, 310B to pivot relative to one another about axes 470 and 480, while retaining relative alignment of the air knives 330 allows the frames to traverse uneven road surfaces while keeping the air knives in close proximity to the surfaces they are to clear. An example embodiment of such a road surface may include a racetrack with banking, such as a racetrack with banked turns in which the banking increases as the distance from the apex of the turn increases, or banking on the ends or along the front or back stretches. In such an embodiment, a first frame (e.g., frame 310B) may be advancing along a banking of about fifteen degrees while the adjacent frame (e.g., frame 310A) may be advancing along a banking of about thirteen degrees.

Absent the articulated connection between the two frames, the sides of the frames proximate to one another (i.e., proximate axis 480) would be suspended from the racetrack in the above described embodiment. The articulation between the frames allows each of the frames to maintain contact at all corners with the road surface and keeps the air knives in close proximity to the road surface to be cleared. This articulation of the frames may also be important for bringing the road surface clearing system onto or off of the racetrack, including crossing over the apron onto the track and from the track to a pit lane.

[0040] The degree to which the frames may pivot relative to one another along axes 480 and 470 may be dictated by the degree of rotation allowed at the ball joint rod end fasteners. In an example embodiment, the degree of pivot between the frames about axis 470 may be between about five and ten degrees, while the degree of pivot between the frames about axis 480 may be between about five and twenty degrees. In some example embodiments, the degree of pivot between the frames about axis 480 may be up to about 110 degrees to allow a road surface clearing system with three frames to fold the outermost frames up, leaving a footprint not substantially greater than a single frame for convenient storage and/or transport. In such an embodiment fasteners in addition to or other than ball joint rod ends may be used.

[0041] Referring back to FIG. 1, the road surface clearing system 100 may also include a guide wheel 180 attached to a side of the frame 110. A guide wheel may allow a road surface clearing system to be advanced along a wall to clear debris or water as close to the wall as possible. Without the guide wheel, contact may be made between the frame 110 or more sensitive components and the wall if the road surface clearing system 100 is moved too close to the wall, resulting in possible damage to the road surface clearing system 100.

[0042] As it may be important to clear debris and/or water from a road surface proximate a wall, such as at a safety retaining wall of a racetrack, it may be desirable for a road surface clearing system 100 to be held close to the wall as the system 100 is advanced. Due to banking, undulations, and driver error, it may be difficult to maintain the road surface clearing system 100 held proximate to the wall, even including a guide wheel 180.

[0043] To assist in maintaining guide wheel 180 of the road surface clearing system 100 in contact with a wall, a biasing force may be introduced to drive the road surface clearing system 100 against the wall. FIG. 10 illustrates a detail view of the system for providing a biasing force to the road surface clearing system 100 as shown in FIG. 3. FIG. 10 depicts the mounting plate 190 to which the tow bar 140 is hingedly connected at hinge points 145. As noted above, the hinge points 145 allow the tow bar to hinge about an axis defined between the two hinge points 145. The mounting plate 190 may be pivotably connected to the frame 110 at pivot point 195. The pivot point 195 allows the mounting plate 190 to pivot relative

to the frame about an axis through pivot point 195, substantially orthogonal to the plane of the surface being cleared. A biasing element, a pneumatic cylinder 500 in the illustrated embodiment, may be coupled to the frame and may include a piston 500 that is coupled to the mounting plate 190 at 520. The pneumatic cylinder may apply a biasing force to the mounting plate along direction arrow 530 by extending piston rod 510. The biasing force, applied at a distance from the pivot point 195, cause the tow bar 140 and mounting plate 190 to be biased in a counter-clockwise direction according to the illustrated embodiment.

[0044] FIG. 11 illustrates the road surface clearing system 100 of FIG. 3 with the piston 510 of the pneumatic cylinder 500 extended, resulting in the tow bar 140 being pivoted about pivot point 195 relative to the frame 110. FIG. 12 illustrates the example embodiment of the surface clearing system 100 of FIGS. 3, 10, and 11 as towed behind a tow vehicle 600. As illustrated, the biasing force exerted by the pneumatic cylinder 500 drives the tow bar 140 counter clockwise, thereby pushing the road surface clearing system 100 to the right side of the tow vehicle 600. The biasing force holds guide wheel 180 of the road surface clearing system 100 in contact with the wall 610. As shown, the tow bar 140 may be pivotable relative to the tow vehicle as would be possible using a conventional ball-and-socket towing hitch. The tow vehicle 600 may be driven closer to the wall, moving the tow bar 140 clockwise relative to the frame 110, and the guide wheel 180 of the road surface clearing system 100 will maintain contact with the wall 610. Such a configuration may allow a tow vehicle to be driven close to a wall, but within a margin of error (e.g, up to around at least five feet) while keeping the road surface clearing system 100 in contact with the wall 610, thereby ensuring that debris and/or water is cleared from the surface as close to the wall 610 as possible.

[0045] Referring back to FIG. 10, the mounting plate 190 may include a pin 197 or other pivot stop to limit the degree to which the mounting plate 190 may pivot relative to the frame 110. In the illustrated embodiment, a pin 197 attached to the frame 110 engages a slot 193 of the mounting plate 190. The degree of pivot of the mounting plate 190 is limited by the ends of the slot 193 in which the pin 197 is disposed. Practically, referring back to the example embodiment of FIG. 12, a limit to the degree of pivot of the mounting plate 190 (and hence, the tow bar 140) relative to the frame 110 may limit how far to the right of the tow vehicle 600 the road surface clearing system 100 may drive itself askew of linear alignment with the tow vehicle 600. This may preclude the road surface clearing system 100 tow bar 140 from binding between the tow vehicle 600 and the road surface clearing system 100.

[0046] The mounting plate 190 may further be configured to be locked in place relative to the frame 110, such as to allow the tow bar 140 to be disposed at a fixed angle relative to the frame 110 or in line with the tow vehicle

600. Such a lock may be beneficial for transport of the road surface clearing system, in such case the tow bar would likely be secured to be in a straight line parallel to a direction of travel of the frame 110 as illustrated in FIG. 3. In other embodiments, the tow bar 140 may be locked at an angle to enable a tow vehicle to drive further from an edge of a surface that is to be cleared, while a wall may not be present to contact the guide wheel 180.

[0047] The pneumatic cylinder 500 of FIG. 10 used to bias the mounting plate 190 and tow bar 140 may be supplied with pressurized air from the manifold 150 shown in FIG. 1. The compressed air may be supplied to a regulator such that the pressure of the air at the pneumatic cylinder 500 may be controlled, thereby controlling the biasing force magnitude. While the illustrated embodiments include a pneumatic cylinder 500, many other biasing elements may be used, such as a coil spring, a deformable material (e.g., rubber), a clock-spring about the pivot point 195, etc. As such, the pneumatic cylinder 500 illustrated is not intended to be limiting, but merely to provide an example of a biasing element that may provide the force necessary to achieve the aforementioned results.

[0048] While the illustrated embodiment depicts a biasing element configured to bias a mounting plate (and tow bar) counter-clockwise relative to the frame, embodiments may include biasing elements that permit biasing of the mounting plate and tow bar in the clockwise direction relative to the frame. Optionally, embodiments may be configured to bias the mounting plate and tow bar in both the clockwise and counter-clockwise directions, which may be achieved with multiple, independently controllable biasing elements (e.g., two pneumatic pistons) or a biasing element capable of applying a bias force in two directions. Such an embodiment may be beneficial for urging a road surface clearing system against opposite walls in dependence of the type of surface being cleared, or the direction of travel of the tow vehicle along the surface.

[0049] Further example embodiments may include a positioning element in place of, or in addition to the biasing element. For example, in an embodiment in which it is desirable to have a surface clearing system offset from the tow vehicle, a positioning element, such as an electric actuator or hydraulic cylinder may be configured to pivot a mounting plate about the pivot point to position the mounting plate in a substantially fixed location, thereby canting the road surface clearing system from the tow vehicle. Such an electric actuator or hydraulic cylinder may further be configured to be controlled remotely, such as by an operator of the tow vehicle. In such an embodiment, the alignment of the road surface clearing system behind the tow vehicle may be adjusted while the system is being advanced along a road surface.

[0050] According to another embodiment, a road surface clearing system may include a modular system that provides additional and/or alternate functionality and versatility. FIGS. 13 and 14 illustrate a first component of

such a modular system which is an air supply module 700 including a power source 710 and an air pump 730. The power source may include, for example, an engine, such as a conventional gasoline powered four-stroke engine. While the illustrated embodiment depicts a gasoline engine, other example power sources may include a diesel engine, an electric motor, or the like. The power source 710 may include a fuel supply 720, which in the illustrated embodiment is a gasoline tank; however, in an example embodiment in which the power source is an electric motor, the fuel supply 720 may include a battery pack. The power source 710 is configured to be coupled to an air pump 730 to drive the air pump. The illustrated embodiment includes an air pump that is configured to drive a large volume (e.g., about 3000 cubic feet per minute or 3000 cfm) of air at relatively low pressure (e.g., about 5 pounds per square inch or 5 psi) during steady-state operation of the power source 710. The operating pressure and volume of air may be varied according to the application, and will vary based upon environmental conditions. As such, the volume and pressure

[0051] According to the illustrated embodiment of FIGS. 13 and 14, the power source 710 and the air pump 730 are mounted within a frame 750 configured to support the power source and the air pump. Various components that support the operation of the power source 710, such as the fuel supply 720, the exhaust manifolds and mufflers, the radiator and cooling fan, etc., may also be supported and carried by the frame 750. Similarly, the air pump inlet and filter may be supported by the frame 750, as may be duct work 740 configured to direct the air flow from the air pump, such as toward an end, side, or other location of the frame 750.

[0052] The frame 750 of example embodiments may be sized to accommodate the power source 710, the air pump 730, and their related components. The frame 750 may further be sized to fit within a particular vehicle that is to carry the air supply module 700. For example, the frame 750 may be configured to fit within a conventional pickup truck bed. In this manner, a conventional pickup truck may be converted to a surface clearing machine by receiving the surface clearing modular components including the air supply module 700.

[0053] The air supply module 700 may be controlled by a person remotely located from the air supply module 700, such as in the cab of a pickup truck carrying and/or transporting the air supply module, or by someone in relative proximity to the air supply module. While the air supply module could be controlled according to example embodiments from substantially any location, control will generally be performed by someone who can view the operation of the air supply module and control it accordingly. To change the volume of air produced by the air pump 730, the power source 710 output speed may be varied. For example, the greater the rotational output speed of the power source 710, the greater the volume of air produced by the air pump 730 to flow through the air ducts 740. In the case of a gasoline engine power

supply 710, the engine throttle may be controlled by an electronic means, such as a servo motor, that is in turn controlled by an operator. The electronic means for operating the engine throttle may be controlled via wired or wireless control, such as via Bluetooth™ or other near-field communication protocol. Similarly, starting and stopping of the power source 710 may be controlled either remotely via wireless communication protocol or by an operator manually starting and stopping the power source.

[0054] For improved safety, example embodiments of the air supply module 700 may include a fire suppression system, such as a Halon suppression system which may spray fire suppression chemicals on the air supply module 700, or components thereof, such as in the event of a fire or risk of fire. The fire suppression system may be manually actuated, such as by a button pressed in the event of a fire, or automatically actuated by, for example, a thermostat.

[0055] While the air supply module 700 may provide the air needed for a surface clearing system, the air may be purposefully directed to the surface to clear the surface of water and/or debris. To that end, an air directing module may be coupled to the air supply module 700 to direct the air in a manner that clears surfaces of water and/or debris. FIG. 15 illustrates an example embodiment of an air directing module 800 that includes an air knife assembly 810 and an air nozzle assembly 820. The air directing module 800 may be coupled to a vehicle 760 that carries the air supply module 700. The air directing module 800 may include a tongue 830 configured to be received in a trailer hitch receiver of the vehicle 760. The air supply module may be connected to the air nozzle assembly 820 and/or the air knife assembly 810 by one or more hoses 840. The hoses 840 push the air from the air pump 730 to the air nozzle assembly 820 and/or the air knife assembly 810.

[0056] In the illustrated embodiment of FIG. 15, the hoses 840 are connected to the air knife assembly 810 at a flange 815 of the air knife assembly. The air hoses 840 may be configured with quick-disconnect clamps to enable quick coupling/decoupling of the air hoses from the flange 815 of the air knife assembly and/or the flange 825 of the air nozzle assembly. When the air hoses 840 are connected to the air knife assembly 810, the air from the air pump 730 is pushed to the air knives and directed by the air knife assembly to clear the surface 900 (e.g., a roadway or track surface) of debris and/or water, as described above with respect to the embodiment of FIG. 12. However, according to the embodiment of FIGS. 13-18, rather than using a lower volume of air at a higher pressure, a higher volume of air may be used at a lower pressure. The air knife assembly 810 serves to drive water away from the surface and to effectively dry the surface 900 while also being able to drive debris from the surface.

[0057] In the illustrated embodiment of FIG. 16, the hoses are connected to the air nozzle assembly 820. The

air nozzle assembly 820 includes one or more air nozzles, mounted at a predetermined height relative to the tongue 830. In some embodiments, the air nozzles may be fixed or adjustable relative to the tongue. The air nozzles of the air nozzle assembly 820 are configured to direct the flow of air from the air pump 730 proximate the surface 900 and to create a turbulent flow of air above the surface 900. This turbulent flow, of air together with the high volume of air produced by the air pump 730, moves humid air from near the surface 900 to preclude the humid air and mist generated from the air knives (as described above) from stagnating above the surface 900 which would slow the drying effect. Thus, moving the air proximate the surface 900 using the air nozzles of the air nozzle assembly 830 enhances the drying effect of the air knives. In practice, a first pass, or multiple passes over a surface may first be performed using the air knife assembly 810, and one or more passes subsequent to the passes using the air knife assembly 810 could use the air nozzle assembly 820 to clear the humid air from proximate the surface.

[0058] FIG. 17 illustrates the surface clearing system of FIGS. 13-16 viewed from above while mounted in the bed of a pickup truck 760. As shown, the hoses 840 are connected to the flanges of the air nozzle assembly 820 and the air nozzle assembly 820 is substantially perpendicular to the tongue 830. During drying or surface clearing operations, it may be desirable to rotate the air nozzle assembly 820 and/or the air knife assembly 810 relative to the tongue 830, which is disposed in a position in line with the direction of travel of the vehicle 760. FIG. 18 illustrates the air nozzle assembly 820 and the air knife assembly 810 rotated relative to the tongue 830. The tongue 830 may be pivotable relative to the air nozzle assembly 820 where the tongue 830 mounts to the air nozzle assembly 820. In some embodiments, the pivot point may include a plurality of fixed angle stops between the tongue 830 and the air nozzle assembly 820 where the air nozzle assembly can be set at each one of the angles and secured at said angle. Alternatively, one or more hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders may be attached between the tongue 830 and the air nozzle assembly 820 and may be actuated to effect an angular change between the tongue and the air nozzle assembly. Such articulation may be accomplished either manually by controlling a valve attached to the hydraulic cylinders, or alternatively, the hydraulic cylinder valve(s) may be controlled remotely, such as by a servo-motor that is under remote (e.g., wireless) control.

[0059] Optionally, embodiments may further include a mechanism to bias the air knife assembly 810 along a direction substantially parallel to the axis defined by the air knives. FIG. 19 illustrates an example embodiment of such a biasing mechanism as attached between the air nozzle assembly 820 and the air knife assembly 810. The hoses have been omitted for ease of understanding and simplified illustration. As illustrated, the air knife assembly 810 may be attached to the air nozzle assembly

820 with struts 870. The struts 870 may be pivotable on both ends about an axis that is substantially orthogonal to a surface over which the vehicle and system are traveling. That is to say that the air knife assembly can move in the direction of arrow 920 or opposite that of arrow 920 relative to the air nozzle assembly 820. The ends of the struts 870 may further allow movement of the air knife assembly in a direction that is substantially orthogonal to the surface over which the system is moving, i.e., up and down along undulations of a surface.

[0060] According to some embodiments, hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders 880 and 890 may be attached between the struts 870 and the air nozzle assembly 820. The hydraulic or pneumatic cylinders may bias the air knife assembly 810 in the direction of arrow 920 or opposite the direction of arrow 920, relative to the air nozzle assembly 820. For example, if hydraulic or pneumatic cylinder 880 is retracted and hydraulic or pneumatic cylinder 890 is extended, the air knife assembly 810 is biased in the direction of arrow 920. Such an arrangement may allow the air knife assembly 810 to be biased into contact with a wall, such as a retaining wall of a race track, while the air knife assembly 810 is driven around the track. The air knife assembly 810 may include wheels 910 such that a wheel may contact and ride along the retaining wall of a track, and as long as the vehicle 760 is driven within a predefined range of the retaining wall, the wheel 910 of the air knife assembly 810 may maintain contact with the retaining wall. The "predefined range" within which the vehicle may drive of the wall may be the distance of travel of the air knife assembly 810 along the direction of arrow 920, and may be a factor of the strut length 870 and the stroke length of the cylinders 880, 890. The degree of bias in addition to the direction of bias of the air knife assembly 810 may be controlled by manual or remote control of the cylinders 880, 890. Each of the cylinders may be controlled by a valve which may be controlled remotely, such as by a wireless, near-field communications protocol.

[0061] FIG. 20 illustrates an enlarged view of an air knife assembly 810 depicting the modular nature of the air knife assembly 810 itself. The air knife assembly 810 may include several air knives 930, each with a distinct air chamber that may not be in communication with the adjacent air knives. Each air knife body 930 may include an air inlet 940 into which air may be directed from the air pump 730. The air hoses 840 may include fittings, such as Y-shaped fittings 960 that split the air flow from the air pump 730 as needed to each of the air inlets 940 of each of the air knives. Each of the air knife bodies 930 may be hingedly attached to one another with hinges 950 that connect together the structural end plates of each of the air knives. The structural end plates of each air knife enclose the end of the air knife body creating a cavity therein for air flow while also providing a structural member to which castors or wheels can be attached to allow the air knives to translate and articulate across the surface to be cleared. Further, hinges 950 may be used

to connect together the air knives to create a longer air knife assembly 810 that will clear a broader swath of surface. The hinges may allow movement between air knives typically only in a single direction, pivoting on the hinge about an axis substantially perpendicular to the body 930 of the air knife, allowing the air knife assembly 810 to articulate to accommodate curved surfaces, such as the banking of a race track. Further, these hinges may be lift-off hinges allowing the air knives to be easily separated from one another.

[0062] As noted above, each air knife 930 of the air knife assembly 810 may be easily detached from the air knife assembly 810 such that each air knife 930 may be removed and mounted, for example, to the frame 750 of the air supply module 700. This may allow a vehicle carrying the air supply module 700 to carry the necessary components to expand the air knife to be as long as is desired. Such an embodiment may also enable the system to be carried by a single vehicle that is able to pass through narrow gates and relatively tight spaces.

[0063] While the illustrated embodiments are shown with the frame 750 mounted in the bed of a pickup truck, embodiments of the present invention may also be configured to be mounted to a trailer, such that the air supply module 700 is mounted on the trailer with the air nozzle assembly 820 and air knife assembly 810 extending from the back of the trailer. In this manner, a surface clearing machine may be embodied as a trailer that can be towed behind any vehicle capable of towing the weight of the surface clearing machine. As the surface clearing machine is self-contained (i.e., not requiring external power), a tow vehicle can readily attach to the surface clearing machine and pull the surface clearing machine trailer over the surface to be cleared.

Claims

1. A system for clearing a surface, the system comprising:

an air knife assembly comprising:

a first air knife (330) comprising an elongate orifice extending along a line;
a first frame (310) configured to support the first air knife in a position substantially parallel to a plane defined by the surface, and
a tow bar (140) coupled to the first frame (310), wherein the tow bar is pivotable relative to the first frame along an axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the surface,
characterized in that

the air knife assembly further comprising:

a second air knife (330) comprising an elongate orifice extending along a line;

- a second frame (310) configured to support the air knife in a position substantially parallel to the plane defined by the surface, wherein the second frame is pivotably attached to the first frame and wherein a direction of travel of the first frame and a direction of travel of the second frame is held fixed and parallel to one another.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the tow bar (140) comprises a mounting plate (190), and wherein the mounting plate is pivotably mounted to the frame (310), wherein the mounting plate is pivotable in a first pivot direction about the axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the surface and pivotable in a second pivot direction, opposite the first pivot direction, about the axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the surface.
 3. The system of claims 1 or 2, further comprising a biasing member (500) configured to bias the tow bar (140) in a first pivot direction about the axis orthogonal to the plane defined by the surface.
 4. The system of any of claims 1, 2, or 3, wherein a degree of pivot between the tow bar (140) and the frame (310) is limited by a pivot stop (197).
 5. The system of any of claims 1 through 4, wherein a degree of pivot between the tow bar (140) and the frame (310) is between about zero degrees relative to a direction of travel of the system and forty-five degrees relative to the direction of travel of the system.
 6. The system of any of claims 1 through 5, wherein the angle of incidence of air exiting the elongate orifice (220) relative to the plane defined by the surface is between thirty degrees and sixty (60) degrees.
 7. The system of any of claims 1 through 6, wherein the angle of incidence of air exiting the elongate orifice (220) relative to the plane defined by the surface is about forty-five (45) degrees.
 8. The system of any of claims 1 through 7, further comprising a guide wheel (180) attached to the frame, wherein the guide wheel has an axis of rotation orthogonal to the plane defined by the surface.
 9. The system of any of claims 1 through 8, further comprising:
 - a manifold (350) attached to the frame;
 - a first hose (355) extending from the manifold to a first end of the air knife (330); and
 - a second hose (355) extending from the manifold to a second end of the air knife (330).
 10. The system of claim 1, wherein the second frame (310) is pivotable relative to the first frame about a first axis and about a second axis, wherein the first axis and the second axis are perpendicular, and wherein the first axis and the second axis are each parallel to the plane defined by the surface.
 11. The system of any of claims 1-10, further comprising:
 - a manifold (350) attached to one of the first frame (310) or the second frame;
 - a first hose (355) extending from the manifold to a first end of the first air knife (330);
 - a second hose (355) extending from the manifold to a second end of the first air knife (330);
 - a third hose (355) extending from the manifold to a first end of the second air knife (330); and
 - a fourth hose (355) extending from the manifold to a second end of the second air knife (330).
 12. The system of any of claims 1-11, further comprising an air supply module, wherein the air supply module (700) comprises a power source (710) and an air pump (730), wherein the air supply module is configured to be removably received within the bed of a truck.
 13. The system of any of claims 1-11, further comprising an air supply module (700) and an air nozzle assembly (825), wherein air supplied by the air supply module is configured to be interchangeably directed between the air knife assembly (810) and the air nozzle assembly.

Patentansprüche

1. System zum Reinigen einer Oberfläche, wobei das System umfasst:
 - eine Luftmesseranordnung, umfassend:
 - ein erstes Luftmesser (330), umfassend eine sich entlang einer Linie erstreckende längliche Öffnung;
 - einen ersten Rahmen (310), der eingerichtet ist, das erste Luftmesser in einer Position im Wesentlichen parallel zu einer durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene zu halten, und eine Zugstange (140), die mit dem ersten Rahmen (310) gekoppelt ist, wobei die Zugstange relativ zum ersten Rahmen entlang einer Achse orthogonal zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene drehbar ist,
 - dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass**
 - die Luftmesseranordnung ferner umfasst:
 - ein zweites Luftmesser (330), umfassend eine sich entlang einer Linie erstreckende

- längliche Öffnung;
einen zweiten Rahmen (310), der eingerichtet ist, das Luftmesser in einer Position im Wesentlichen parallel zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene zu halten, wobei der zweite Rahmen drehbar am ersten Rahmen befestigt ist, und wobei eine Bewegungsrichtung des ersten Rahmens und eine Bewegungsrichtung des zweiten Rahmens feststehend und parallel zueinander gehalten werden.
2. System nach Anspruch 1, wobei die Zugstange (140) eine Befestigungsplatte (190) umfasst, und wobei die Befestigungsplatte drehbar am Rahmen (310) befestigt ist, wobei die Befestigungsplatte in einer ersten Drehrichtung um die Achse orthogonal zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene drehbar ist und in einer zweiten Drehrichtung drehbar ist, entgegen der ersten Drehrichtung, um die Achse orthogonal zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene.
 3. System nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, ferner umfassend ein Vorspannelement (500), das eingerichtet ist, die Zugstange (140) in einer ersten Drehrichtung um die Achse orthogonal zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene vorzuspannen.
 4. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1, 2 oder 3, wobei ein Drehgrad zwischen der Zugstange (140) und dem Rahmen (310) durch einen Drehanschlag (197) begrenzt ist.
 5. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, wobei ein Drehausmaß zwischen der Zugstange (140) und dem Rahmen (310) zwischen etwa null Grad relativ zu einer Bewegungsrichtung des Systems und fünf- und vierzig Grad relativ zur Bewegungsrichtung des Systems liegt.
 6. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, wobei der Einfallswinkel von aus der länglichen Öffnung (220) austretender Luft relativ zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene zwischen dreißig Grad und sechzig (60) Grad liegt.
 7. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 6, wobei der Einfallswinkel der aus der länglichen Öffnung (220) austretenden Luft relativ zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene etwa fünf- und vierzig (45) Grad beträgt.
 8. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, ferner umfassend ein am Rahmen befestigtes Führungsrad (180), wobei das Führungsrad eine Drehachse orthogonal zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene aufweist.
 9. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 8, ferner umfassend:
einen am Rahmen befestigten Verteiler (350);
einen ersten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem ersten Ende des Luftmessers (330) erstreckt;
und
einen zweiten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem zweiten Ende des Luftmessers (330) erstreckt.
 10. System nach Anspruch 1, wobei der zweite Rahmen (310) relativ zum ersten Rahmen um eine erste Achse und um eine zweite Achse drehbar ist, wobei die erste Achse und die zweite Achse senkrecht zueinander sind, und wobei die erste Achse und die zweite Achse jeweils parallel zu der durch die Oberfläche definierten Ebene sind;
 11. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 10, ferner umfassend:
einen Verteiler (350), der an einem von dem ersten Rahmen (310) oder dem zweiten Rahmen (310) befestigt ist;
einen ersten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem ersten Ende des ersten Luftmessers (330) erstreckt;
einen zweiten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem zweiten Ende des ersten Luftmessers (330) erstreckt;
einen dritten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem ersten Ende des zweiten Luftmessers (330) erstreckt; und
einen vierten Schlauch (355), der sich vom Verteiler zu einem zweiten Ende des zweiten Luftmessers (330) erstreckt.
 12. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 11, ferner umfassend ein Luftversorgungsmodul, wobei das Luftversorgungsmodul (700) eine Energiequelle (710) und eine Luftpumpe (730) umfasst, wobei das Luftversorgungsmodul eingerichtet ist, innerhalb der Ladefläche eines Lastwagens entfernbar aufgenommen zu werden.
 13. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 11, ferner umfassend ein Luftversorgungsmodul (700) und eine Luftdüsenanordnung (825), wobei durch das Luftversorgungsmodul zugeführte Luft ausgelegt ist, abwechselnd zwischen der Luftmesseranordnung (810) und der Luftdüsenanordnung geleitet zu werden.

Revendications

1. Système pour nettoyer une surface, le système comprenant :
- un ensemble de lames d'air comprenant :

une première lame d'air (330) comprenant un orifice allongé s'étendant le long d'une ligne ;
un premier châssis (310) configuré pour soutenir la première lame d'air dans une position sensiblement parallèle à un plan défini par la surface, et une barre de remorquage (140) couplée au premier châssis (310), dans lequel la barre de remorquage peut pivoter par rapport au premier châssis le long d'un axe orthogonal au plan défini par la surface,

caractérisé en ce que

l'ensemble de lames d'air comprend en outre :

une seconde lame d'air (330) comprenant un orifice allongé s'étendant le long d'une ligne ;

un second châssis (310) configuré pour soutenir la lame d'air dans une position sensiblement parallèle au plan défini par la surface, dans lequel le second châssis est fixé de manière pivotante au premier châssis et dans lequel une direction de déplacement du premier châssis et une direction de déplacement du second châssis sont maintenues fixes et parallèles l'une par rapport à l'autre.

2. Système selon la revendication 1, dans lequel la barre de remorquage (140) comprend une plaque de montage (190), et dans lequel la plaque de montage est montée de manière pivotante par rapport au châssis (310), dans lequel la plaque de montage peut pivoter dans une première direction de pivotement autour de l'axe orthogonal au plan défini par la surface et peut pivoter dans une seconde direction de pivotement, à l'opposé de la première direction de pivotement, autour de l'axe orthogonal au plan défini par la surface.

3. Système selon la revendication 1 ou 2, comprenant en outre un élément de contrainte (500) pour contraindre la barre de remorquage (140) dans une première direction de pivotement autour de l'axe orthogonal au plan défini par la surface.

4. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1, 2 ou 3, dans lequel un degré de pivotement entre la barre de remorquage (140) et le châssis (310) est limité par une butée de pivotement (197).

5. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel un degré de pivotement entre la

barre de remorquage (140) et le châssis (310) est entre environ zéro degré par rapport à une direction de déplacement du système et quarante-cinq degrés par rapport à la direction de déplacement du système.

6. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans lequel l'angle d'incidence de l'air sortant de l'orifice allongé (220) par rapport au plan défini par la surface est entre trente degrés et soixante (60) degrés.

7. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 6, dans lequel l'angle d'incidence de l'air sortant de l'orifice allongé (220) par rapport au plan défini par la surface est d'environ quarante-cinq (45) degrés.

8. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, comprenant en outre une roue de guidage (180) fixée au châssis, dans lequel la roue de guidage a un axe de rotation orthogonal au plan défini par la surface.

9. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 8, comprenant en outre :

un collecteur (350) fixé au châssis ;
un premier tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une première extrémité de la lame d'air (330) ;
et
un second tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une seconde extrémité de la lame d'air (330).

10. Système selon la revendication 1, dans lequel le second châssis (310) peut pivoter par rapport au premier châssis autour d'un premier axe et autour d'un second axe, dans lequel le premier axe et le second axe sont perpendiculaires, et dans lequel le premier axe et le second axe sont chacun parallèles au plan défini par la surface.

11. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 10, comprenant en outre :

un collecteur (350) fixé à un du premier châssis (310) ou du second châssis ;
un premier tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une première extrémité de la première lame d'air (330) ;
un deuxième tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une seconde extrémité de la première lame d'air (330) ;
un troisième tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une première extrémité de la seconde lame d'air (330) ; et
un quatrième tuyau (355) s'étendant du collecteur à une seconde extrémité de la seconde la-

me d'air (330).

12. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1-11, comprenant en outre un module d'alimentation en air, dans lequel le module d'alimentation en air (700) comprend une source d'alimentation (710) et une pompe à air (730), dans lequel le module d'alimentation en air est configuré pour être reçu de manière amovible à l'intérieur d'une plate-forme d'un camion. 5 10

13. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 11, comprenant en outre un module d'alimentation en air (700) et un ensemble de buses d'air (825), dans lequel l'air fourni par le module d'alimentation en air est configuré pour être dirigé de manière interchangeable entre l'ensemble de lames d'air (810) et l'ensemble de buses d'air. 15 20

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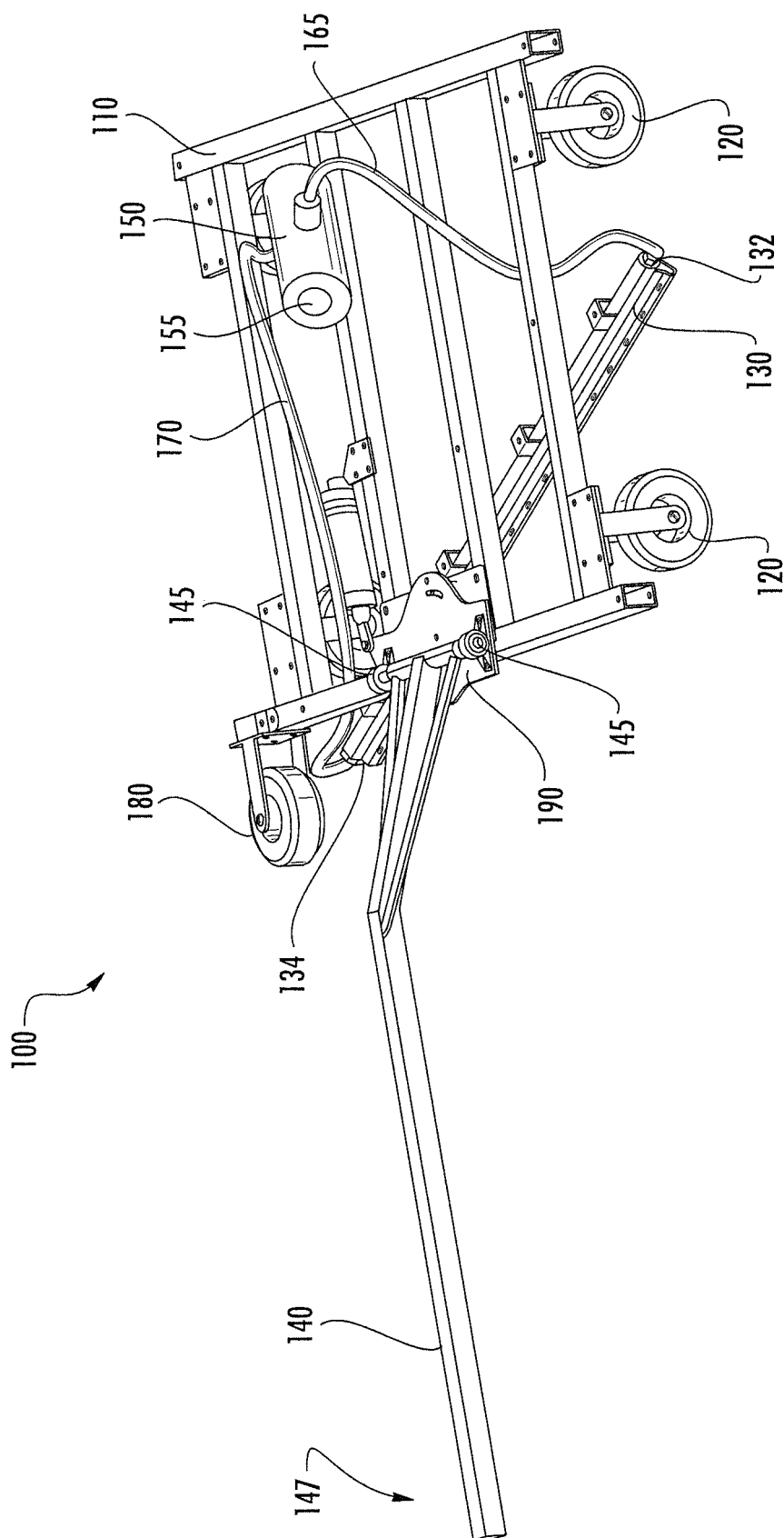


FIG. 1

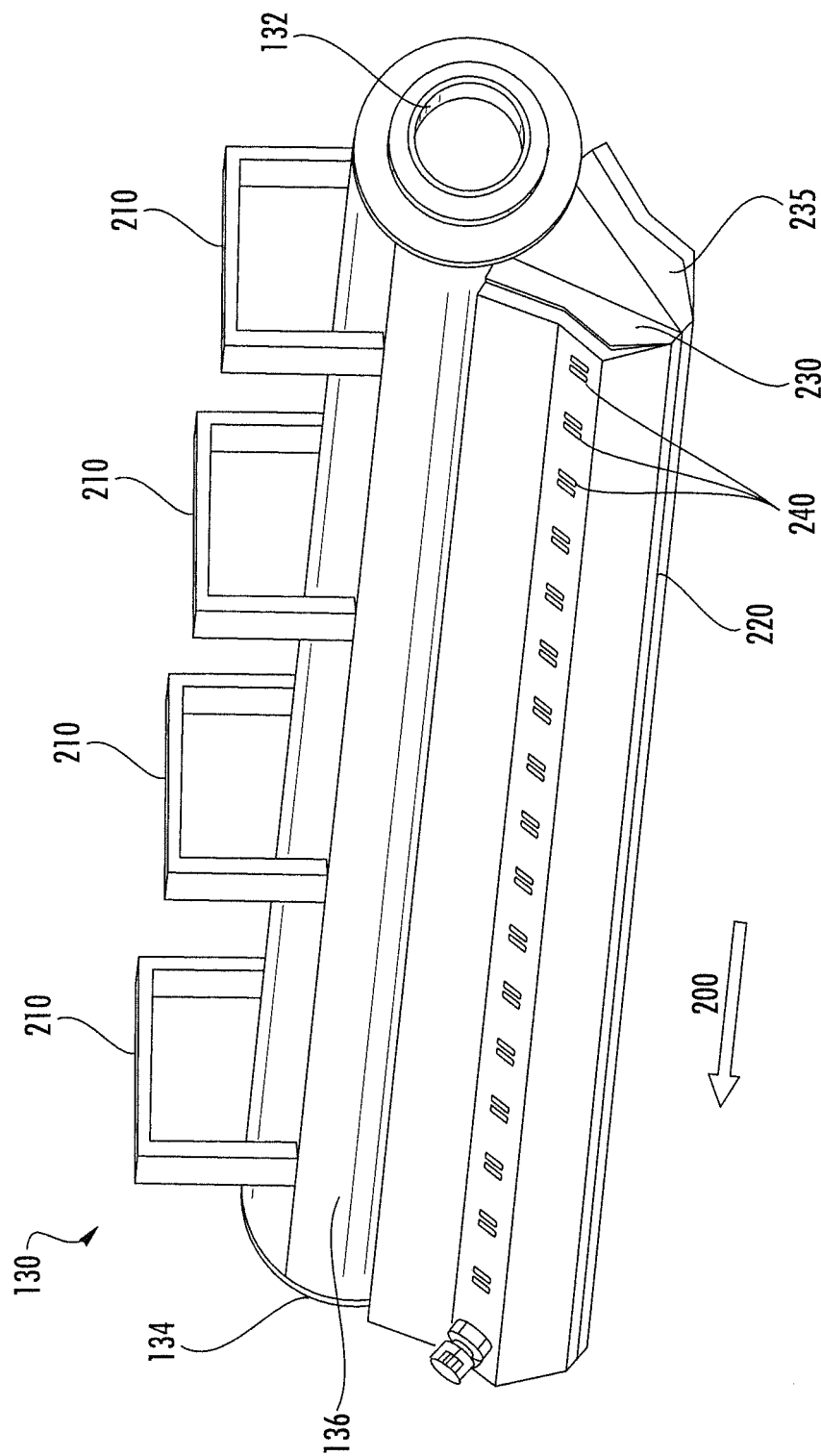


FIG. 2

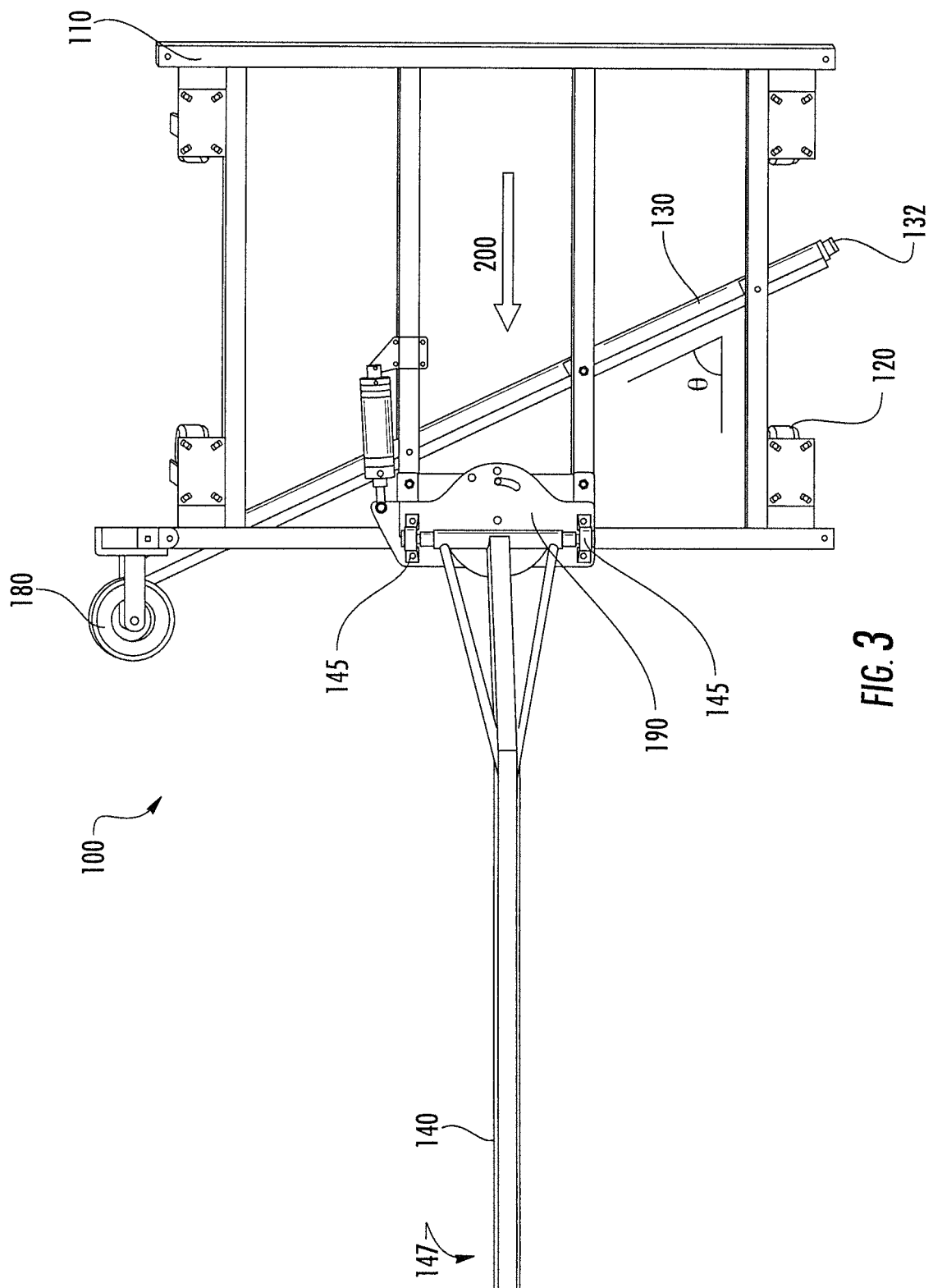


FIG. 3

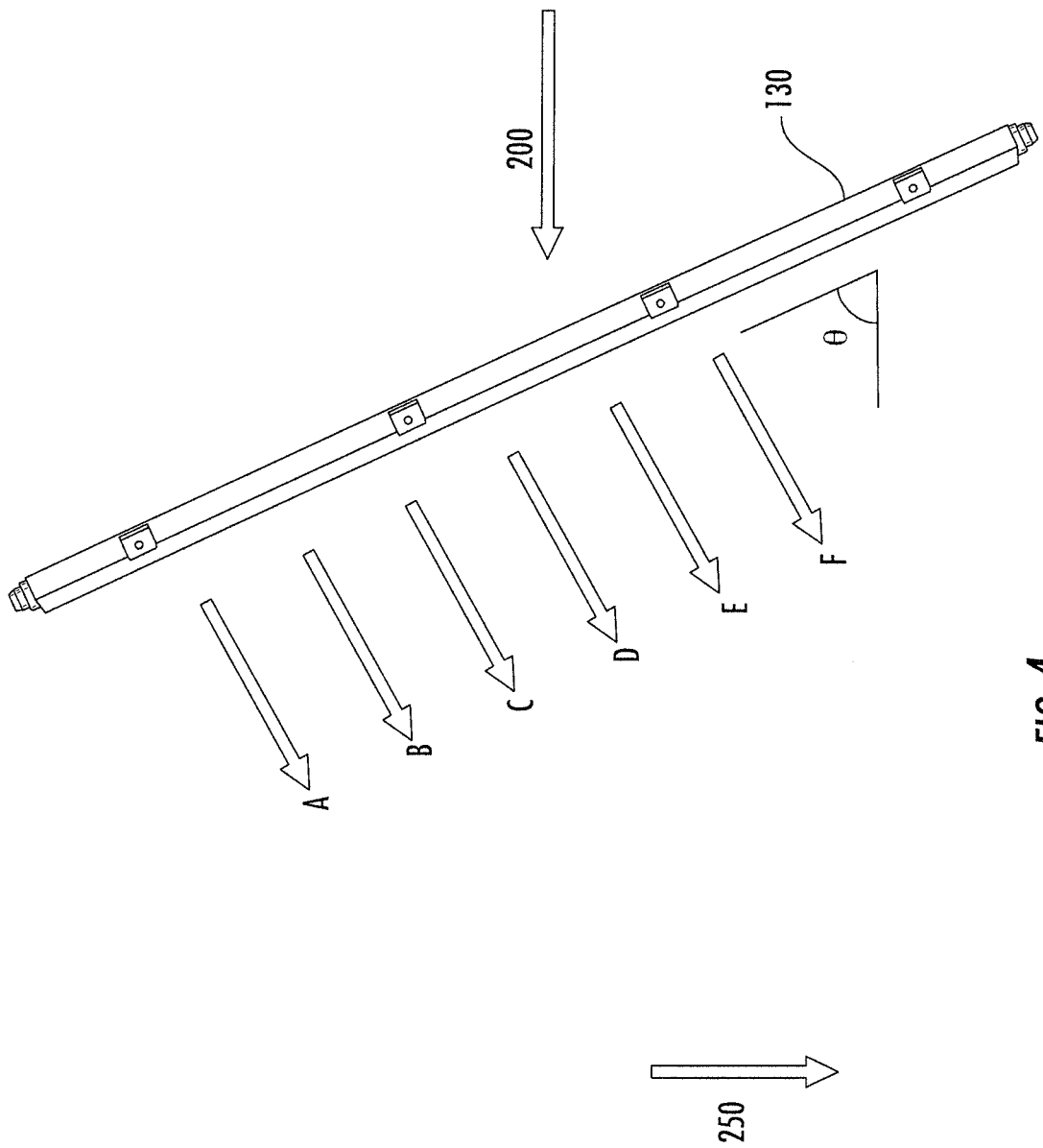
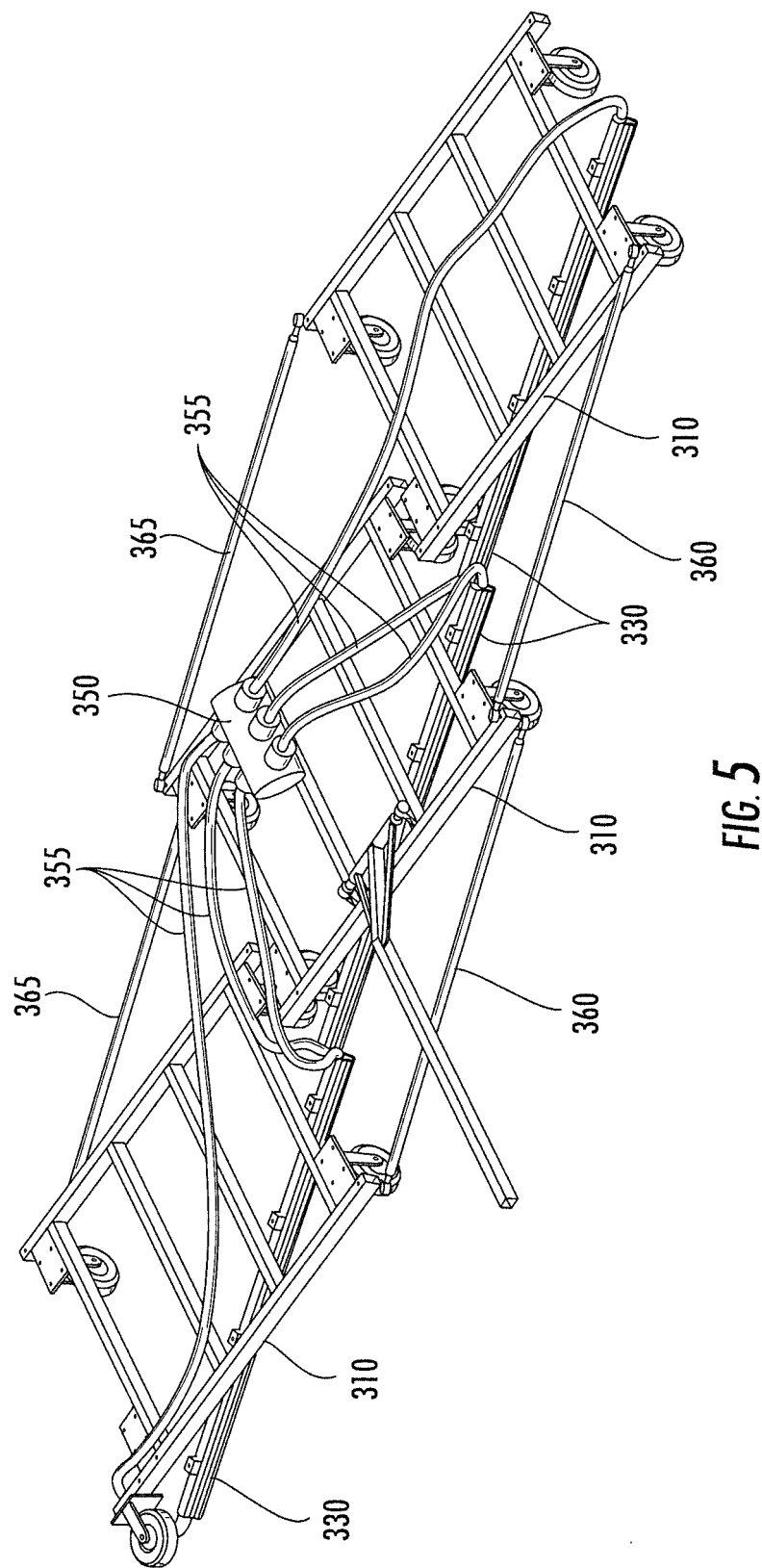


FIG. 4



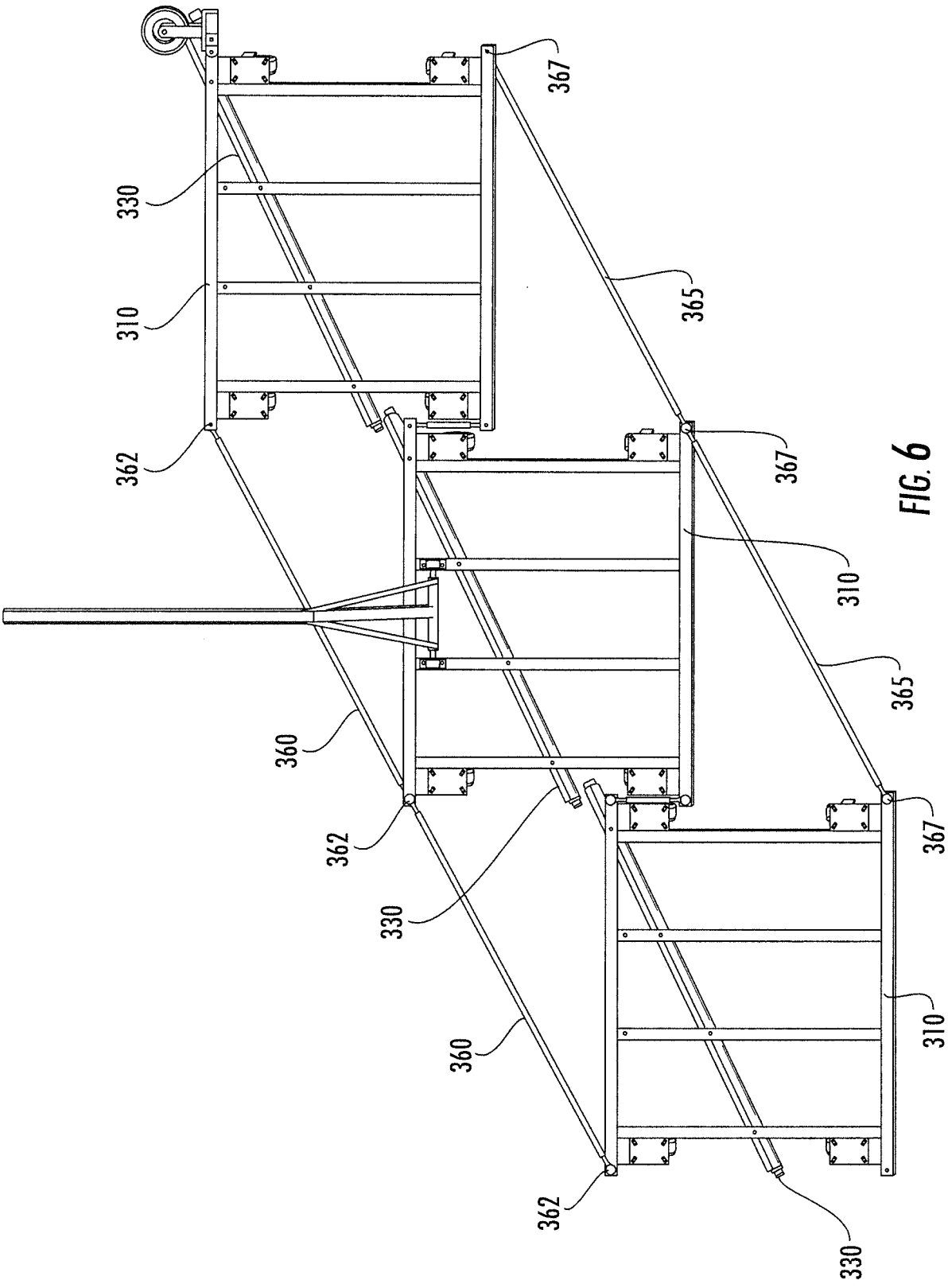


FIG. 6

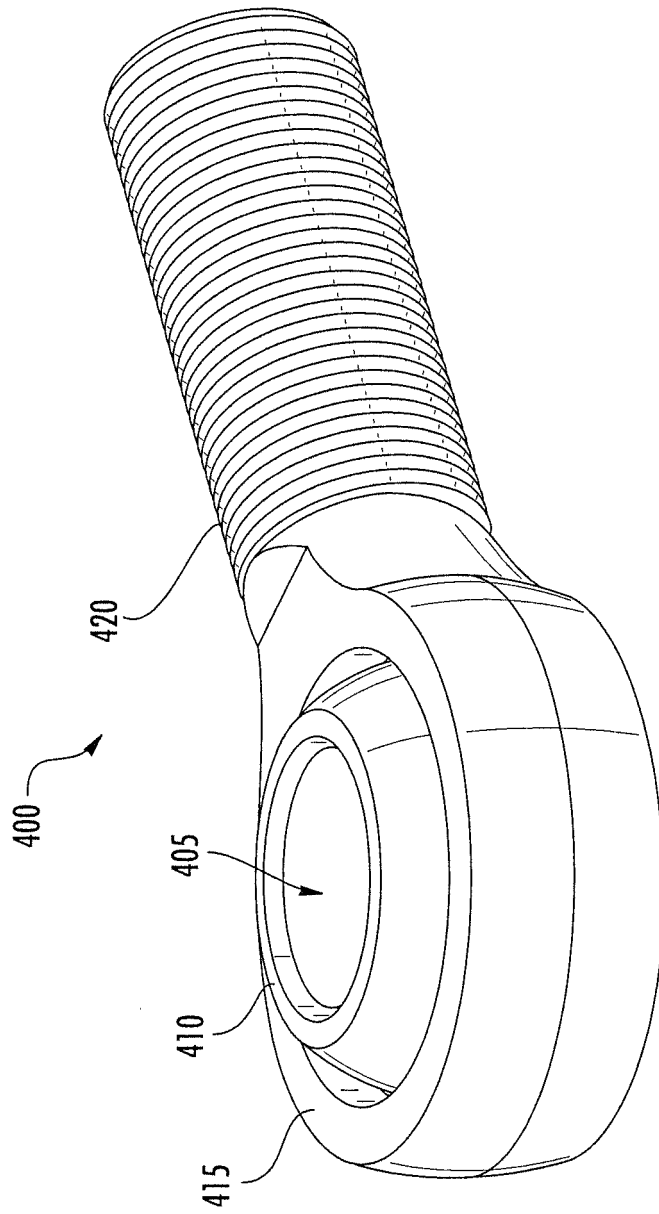


FIG. 7

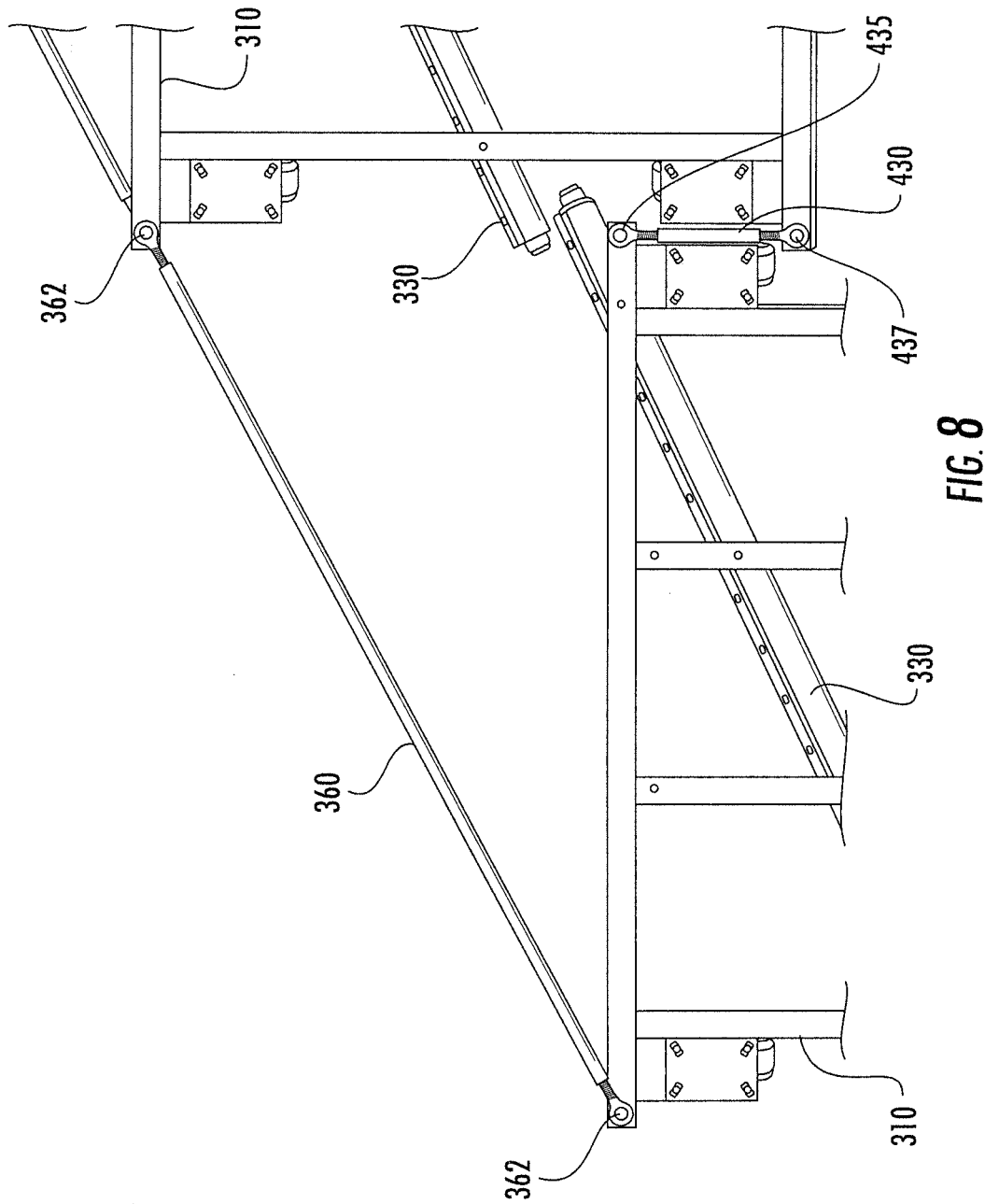


FIG. 8

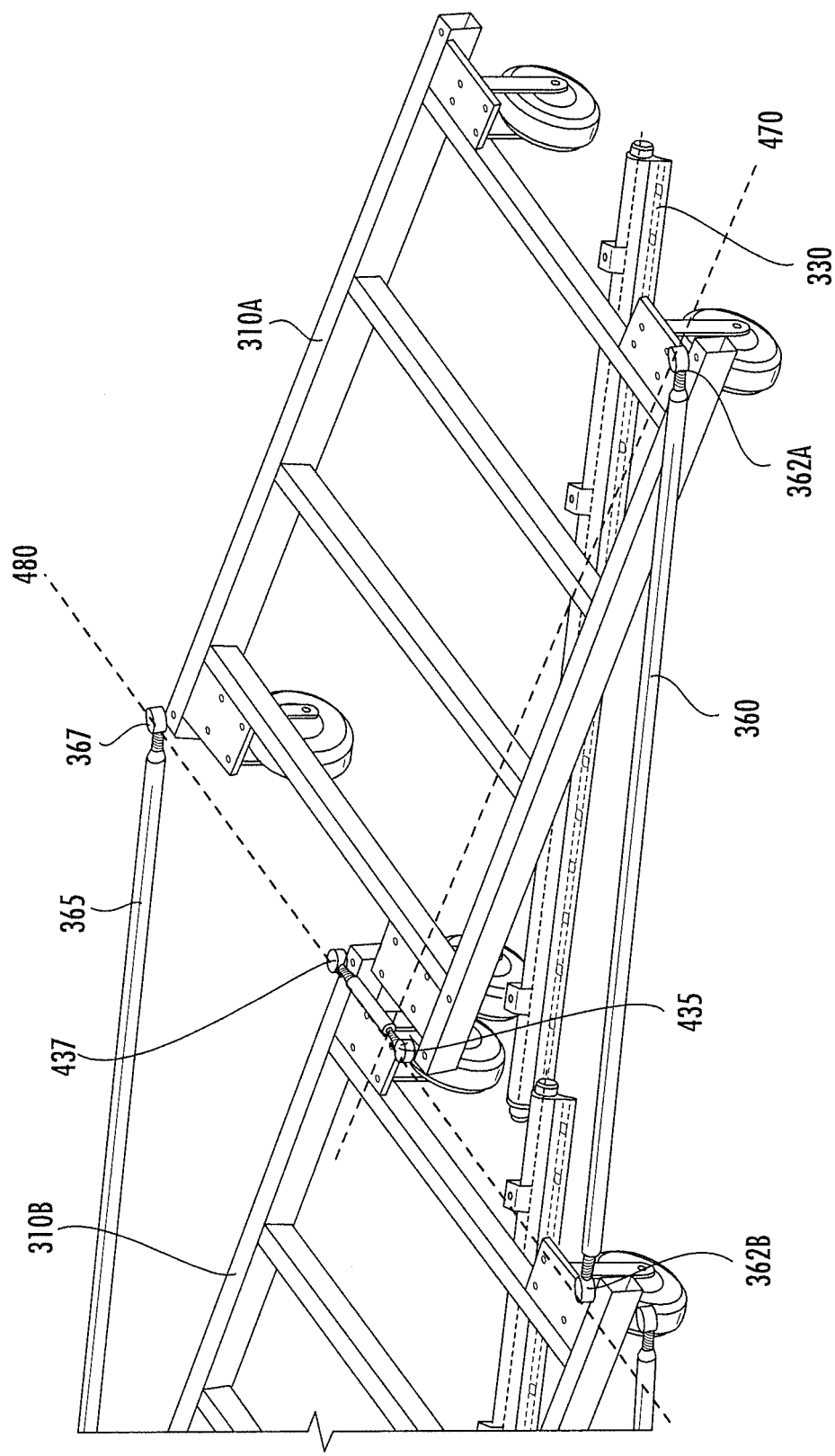


FIG. 9

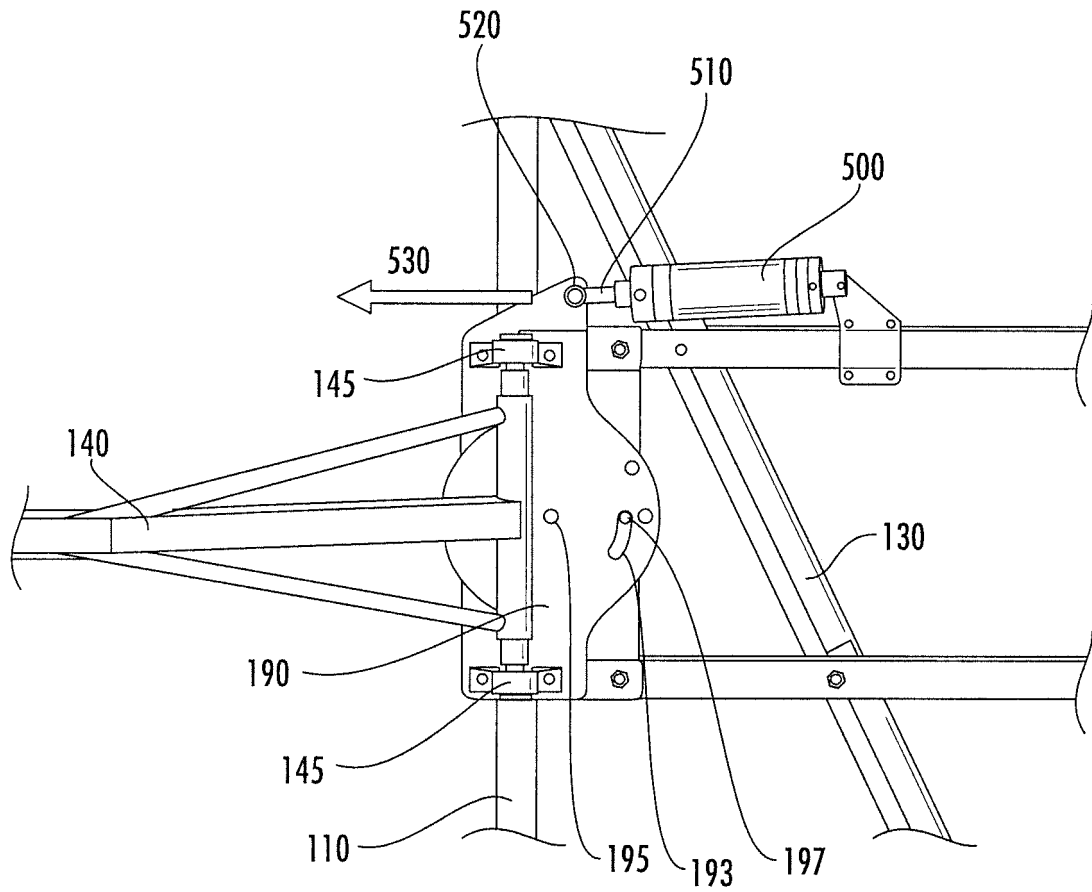


FIG. 10

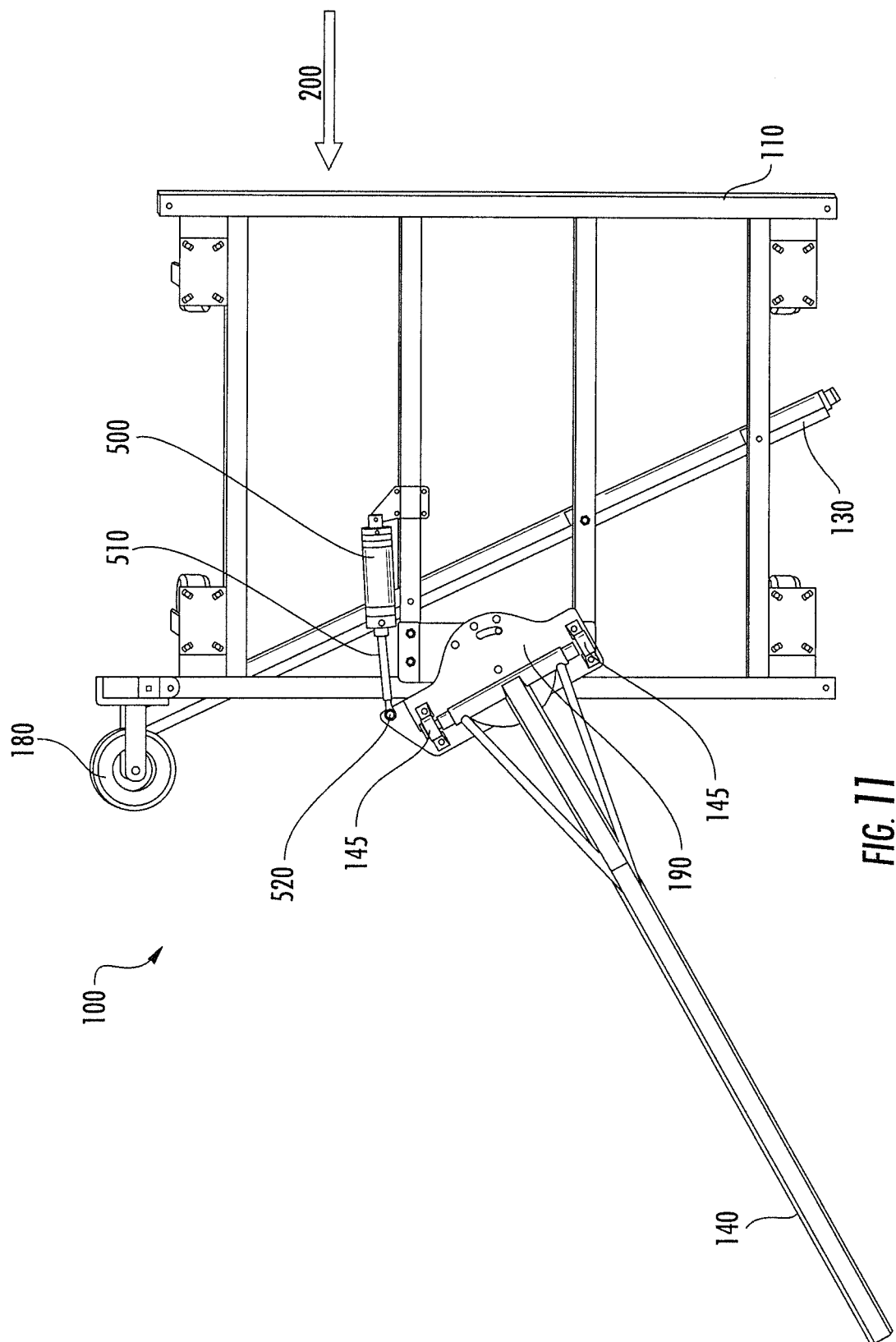


FIG. 11

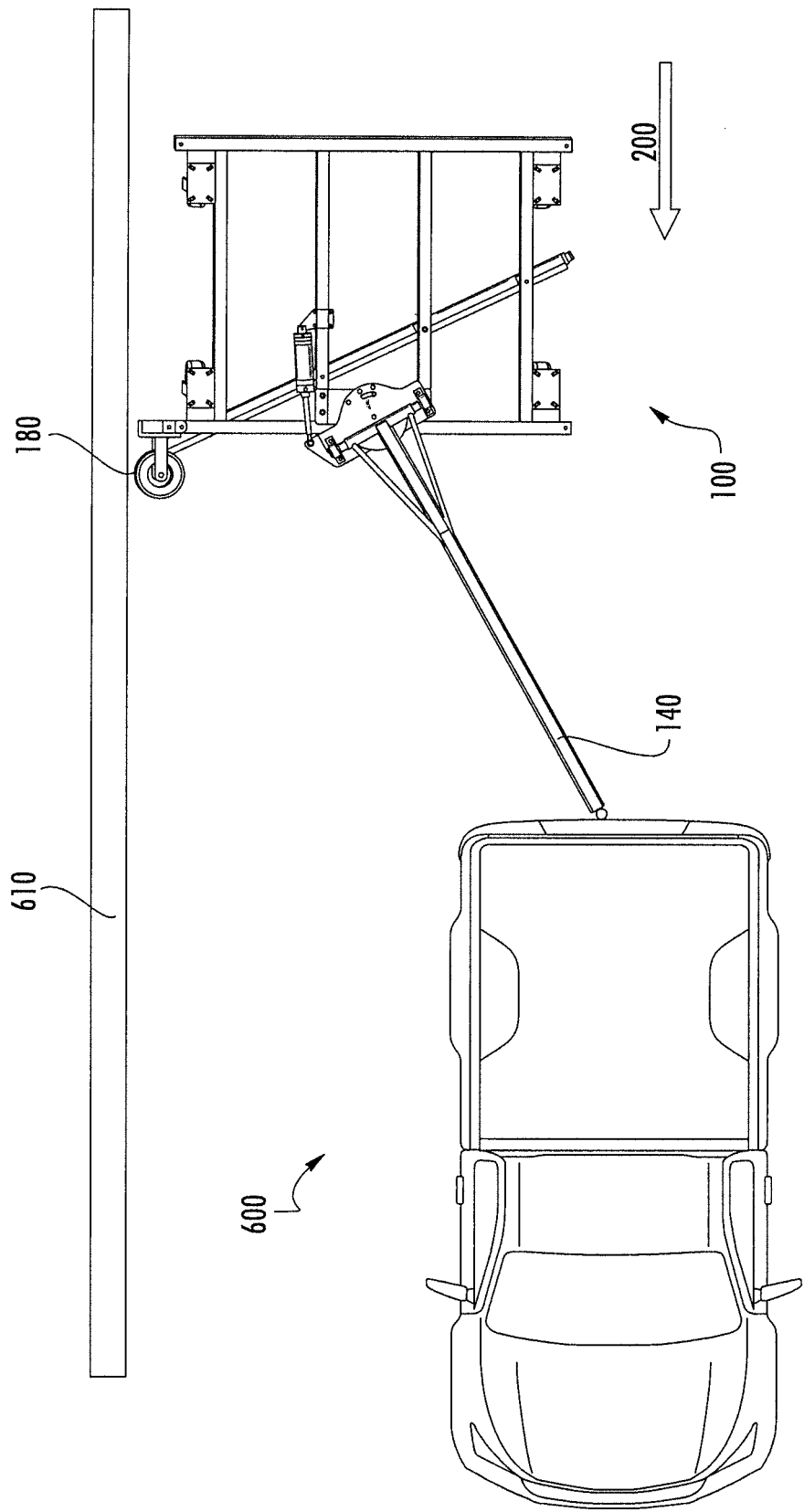


FIG. 12

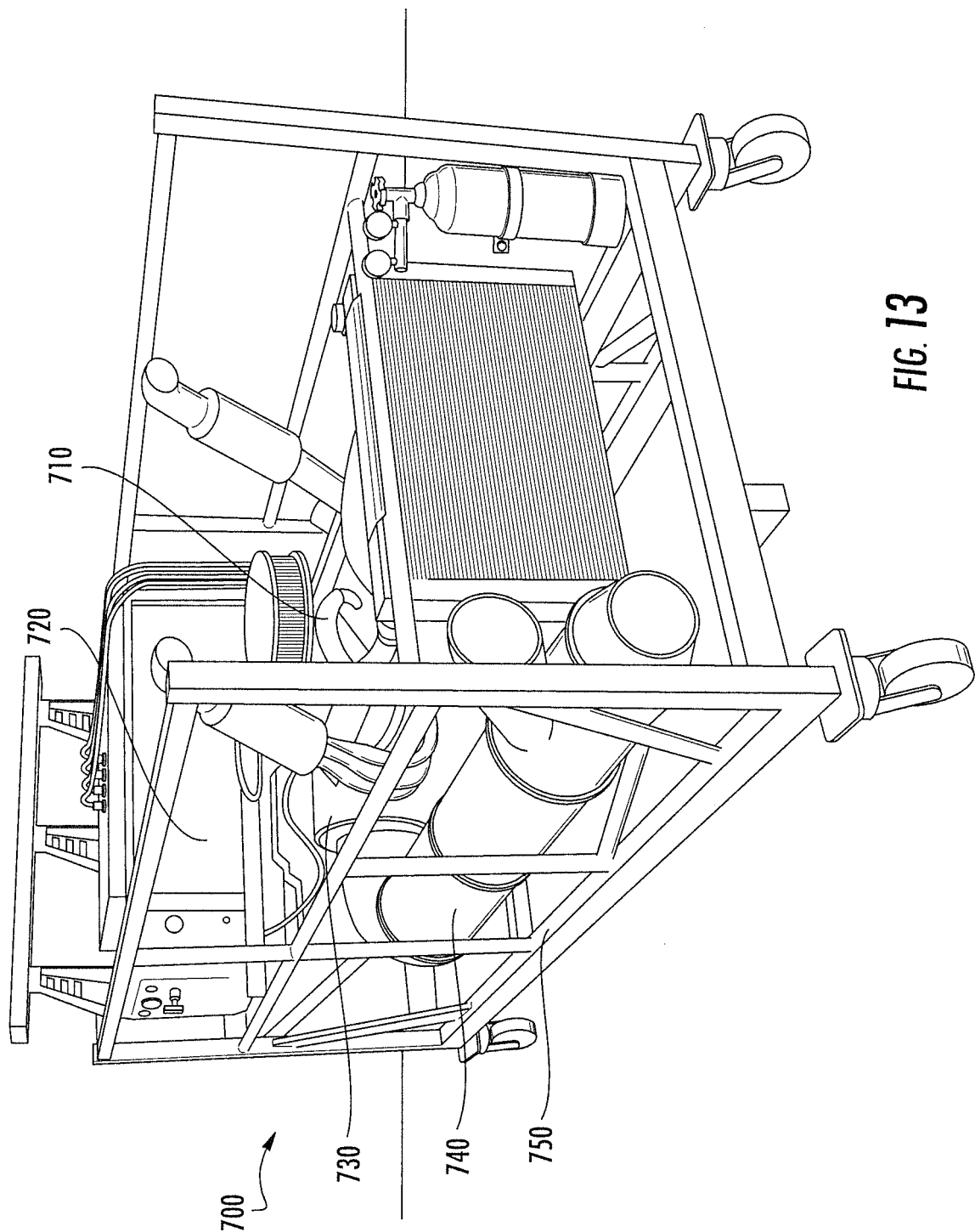


FIG. 13

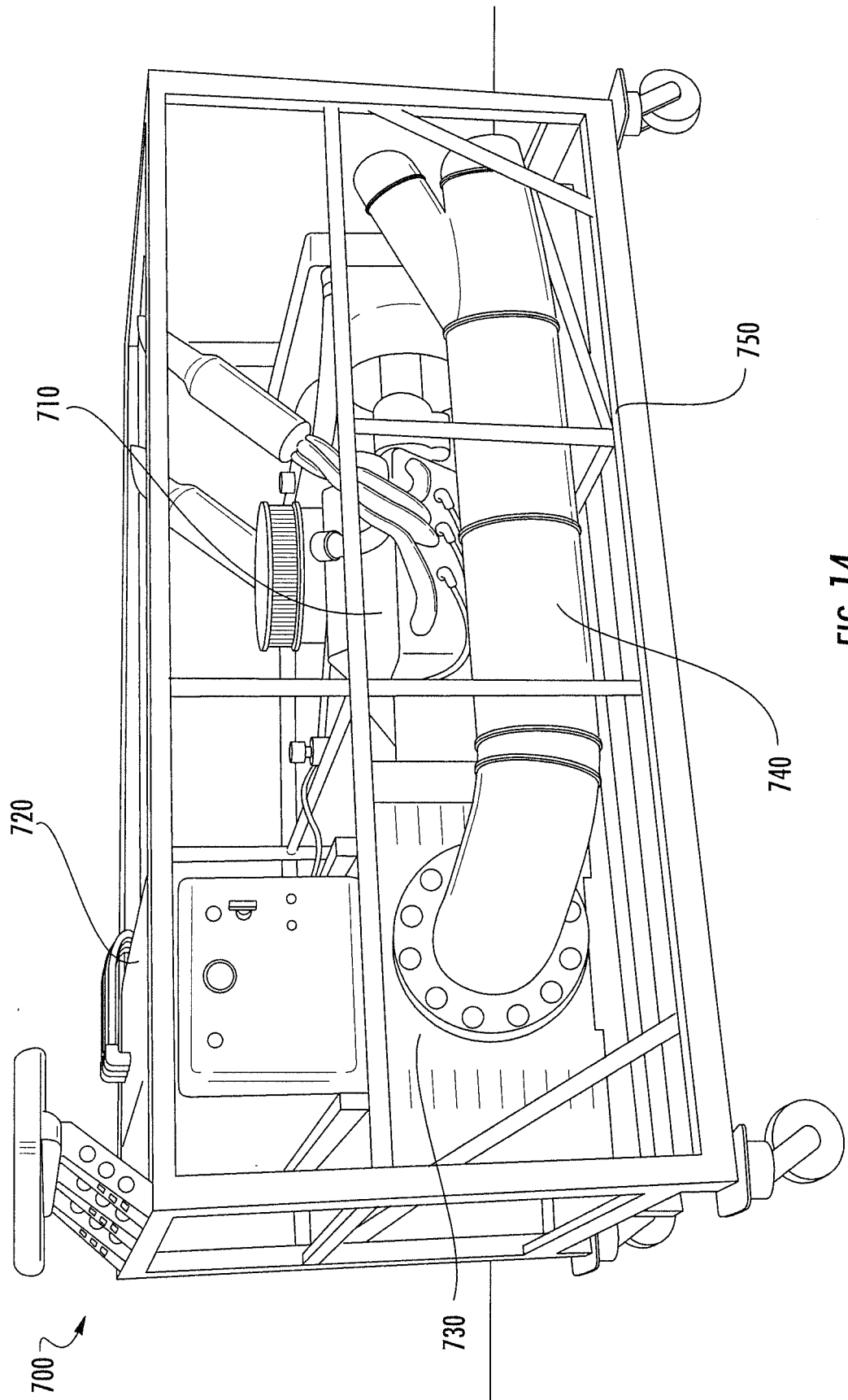


FIG. 14

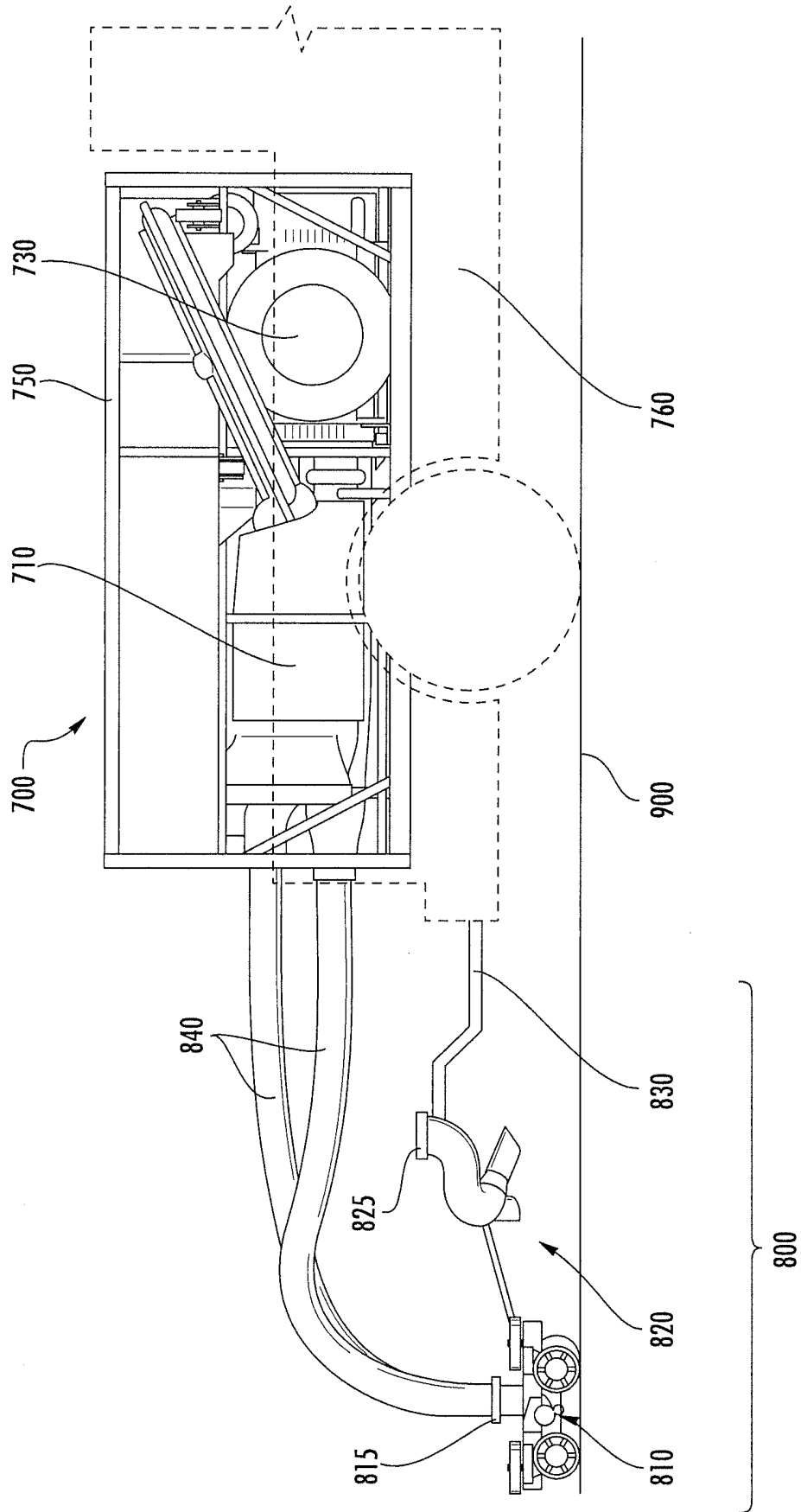


FIG. 15

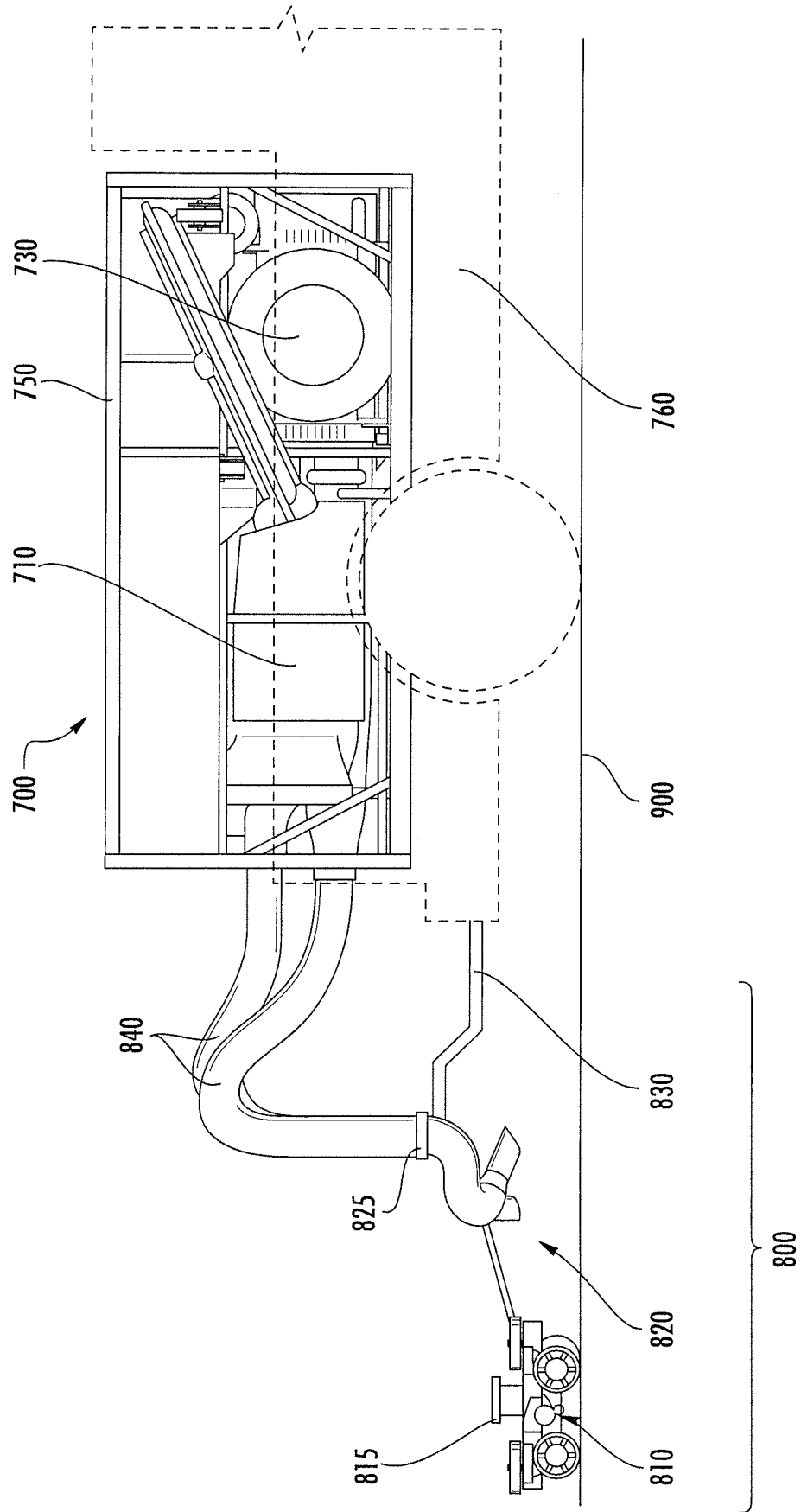
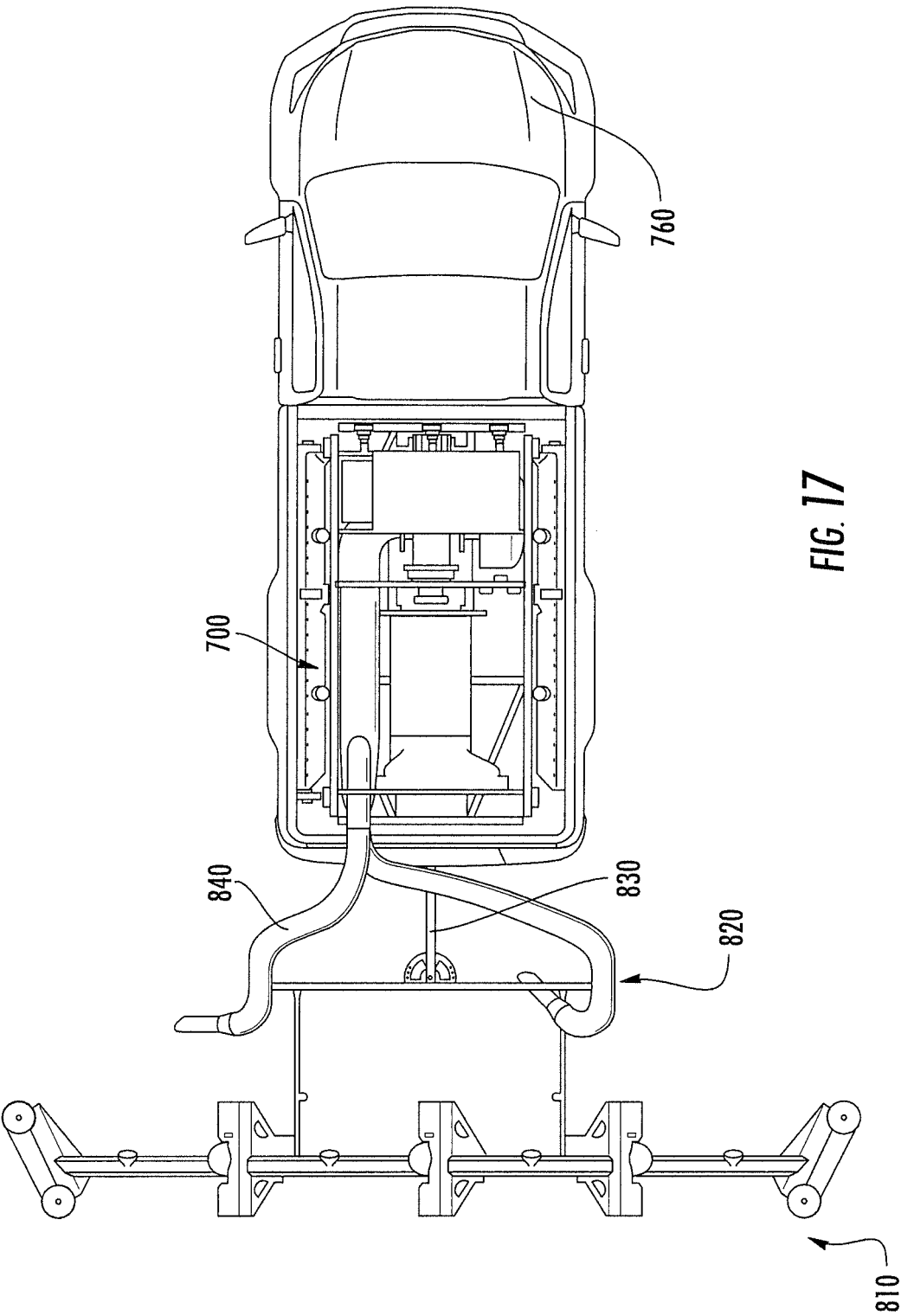
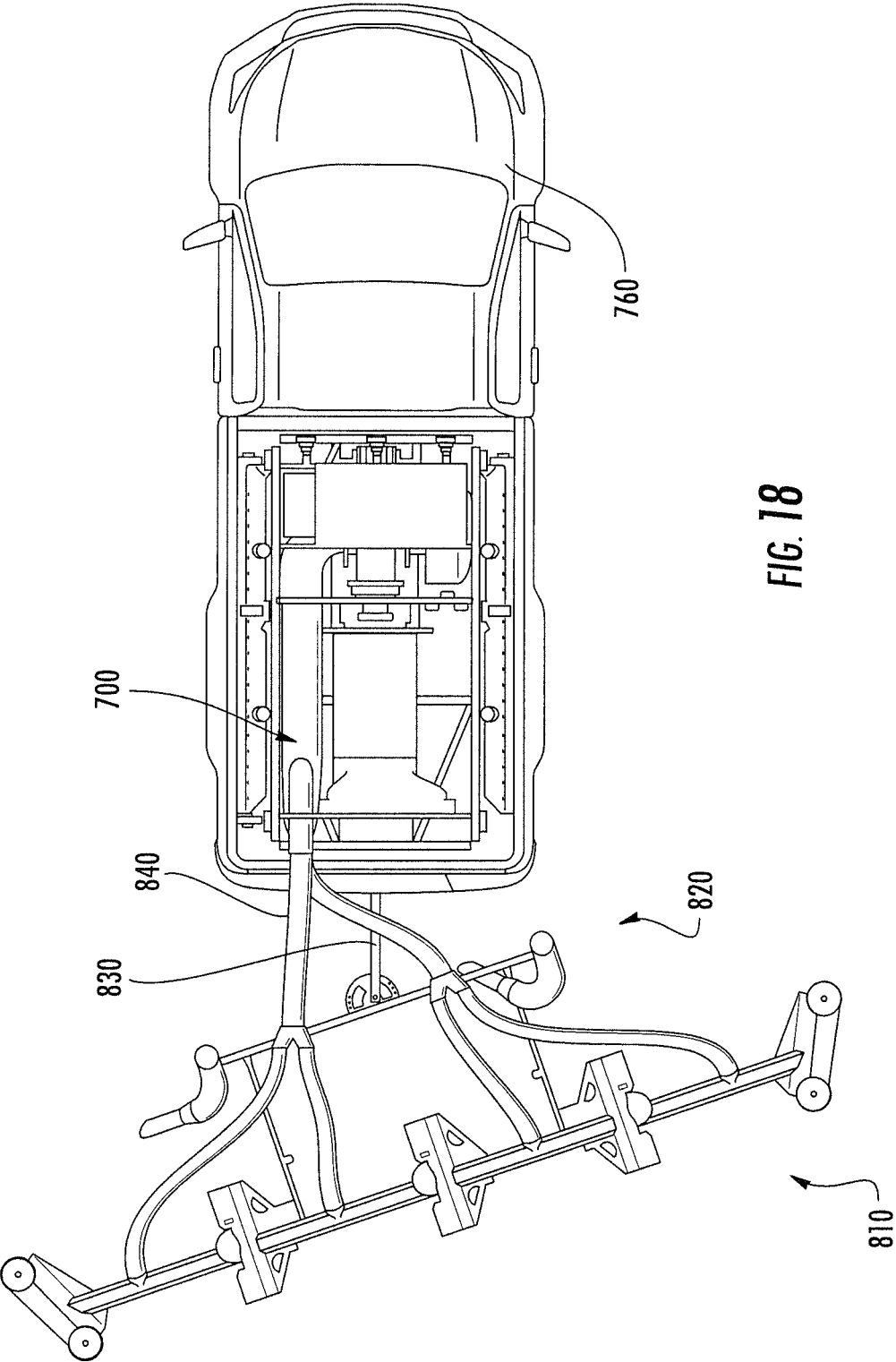
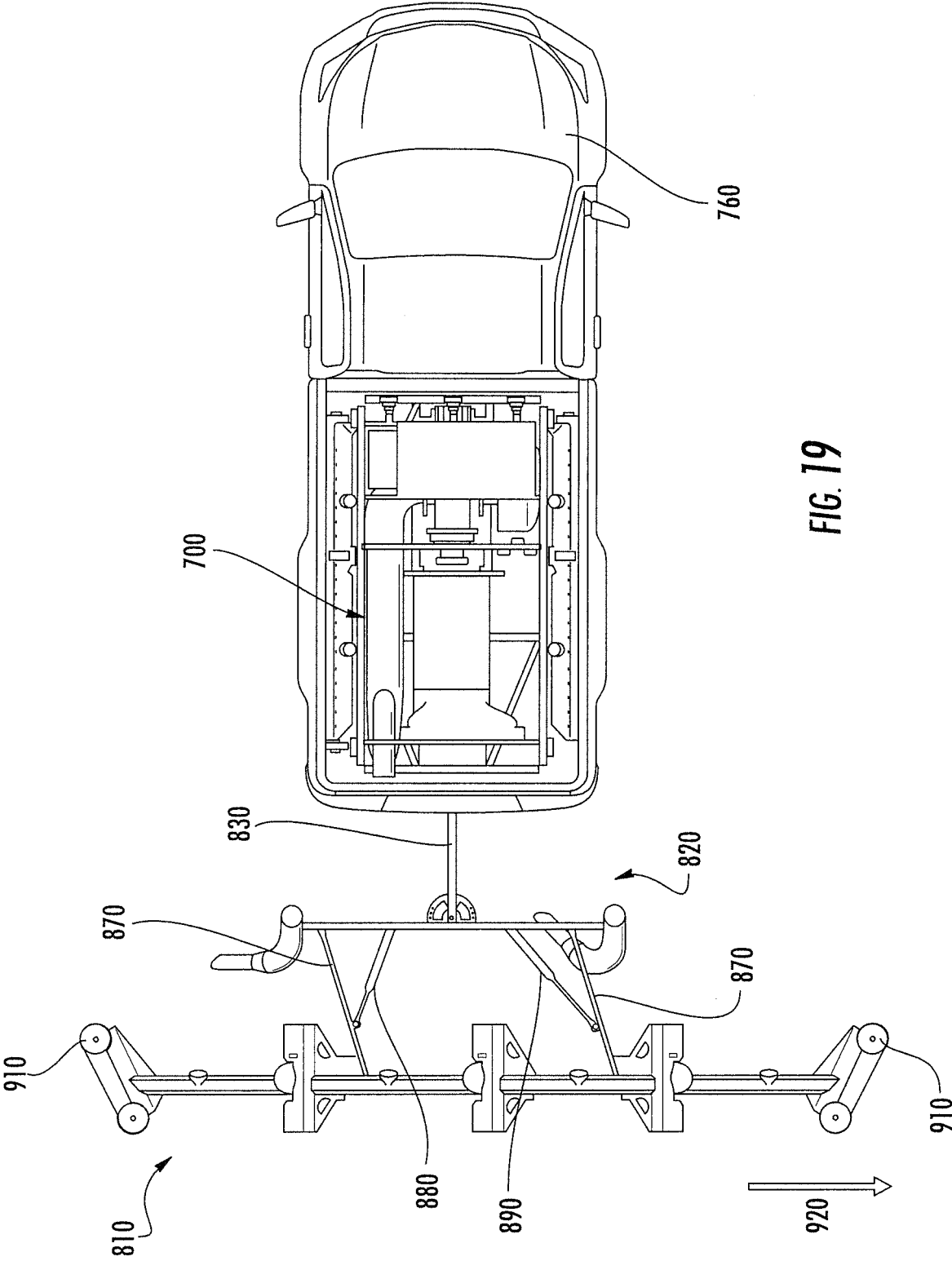


FIG. 16







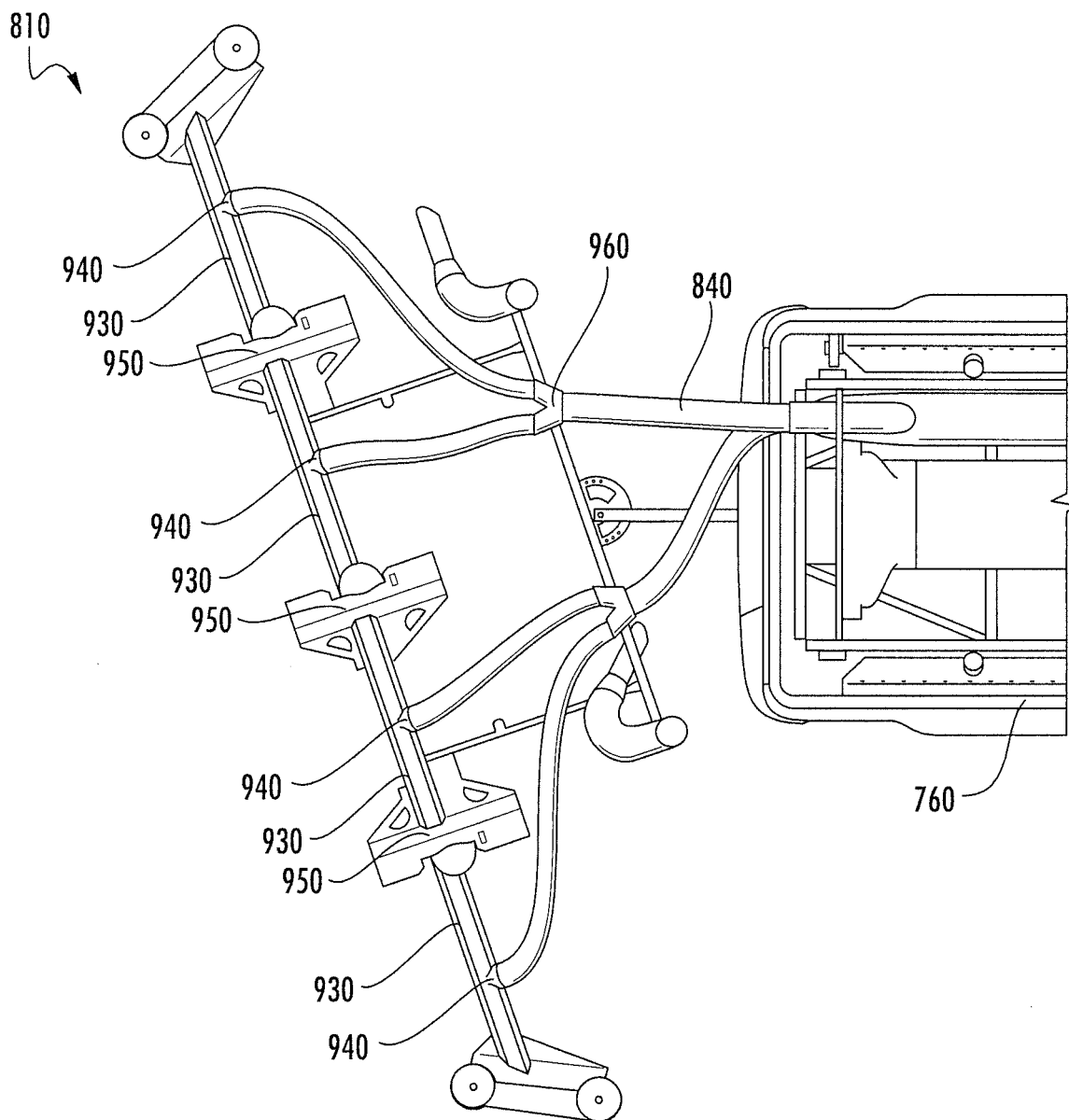


FIG. 20

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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