

(19) World Intellectual Property Organization
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date
16 July 2009 (16.07.2009)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2009/089307 A2

- (51) International Patent Classification: **Not classified**
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/US2009/030369
- (22) International Filing Date: 7 January 2009 (07.01.2009)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data:
61/019,596 7 January 2008 (07.01.2008) US
61/019,592 7 January 2008 (07.01.2008) US
61/020,741 13 January 2008 (13.01.2008) US
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- (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AO, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BH, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DO, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, GT, HN, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KM, KN, KP, KR, KZ, LA, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LY, MA, MD, ME, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MY, MZ, NA, NG, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RS, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SM, ST, SV, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, ZA, ZM, ZW.
- (84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LT, LU, LV, MC, MK, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).
- Published:**
— without international search report and to be republished upon receipt of that report

(54) Title: REPOSITIONABLE SHELF-MOUNTED HANDLE SPOOL ASSEMBLY FOR CABLE ROUTING

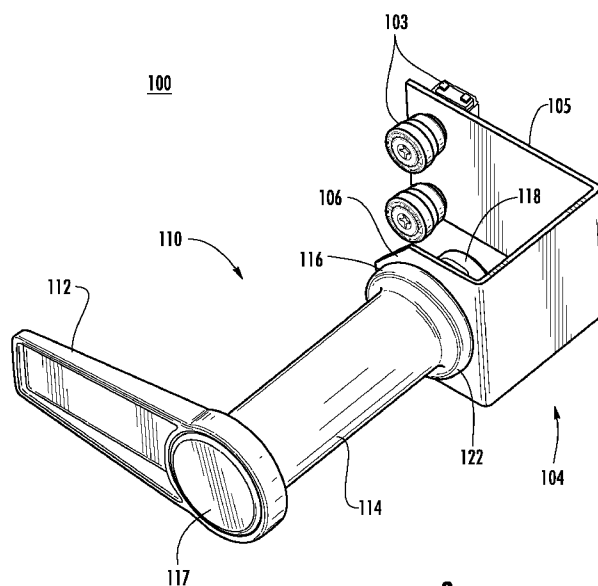


FIG. 3

(57) Abstract: A repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly for cable routing includes a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled thereto. The mounting bracket has a primary mounting plate and a shelf, having an opening, that is parallel to but spaced apart from the primary mounting plate. The repositionable spool includes a base having a stub for repositionably coupling with the opening in the shelf, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a gate arm mounted perpendicularly to the cylindrical shaft. The base may be repositioned relative to the mounting structure via the stub.

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REPOSITIONABLE SHELF-MOUNTED HANDLE SPOOL ASSEMBLY FOR CABLE ROUTING

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application is a U.S. nonprovisional patent application of, and claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) to, U.S. provisional patent application serial number 61/019,592, filed January 7, 2008, U.S. provisional patent application serial number 61/019,596, filed January 7, 2008, and U.S. provisional patent application serial number 61/020,741, filed January 13, 2008, each of which is incorporated by reference herein.

[0002] The entirety of each of the following patent applications are incorporated by reference herein:

U.S. Design Patent Application No. 29/299,950 to Alaniz et al., filed January 7, 2008;

U.S. Design Patent Application No. 29/302,236 to Donowho et al., filed January 14, 2008;

U.S. Design Patent Application No. 29/302,304 to Donowho et al., filed January 14, 2008;

U.S. Design Patent Application No. 29/302,305 to Lawrence et al., filed January 14, 2008;

U.S. Design Patent Application No. 29/302,309 to Lewis II et al., filed January 14, 2008;

U.S. Patent Application No. 61/019,599 to Garza et al., filed January 7, 2008;

U.S. Patent Application No. 61/020,745 to Garza et al., filed January 14, 2008; and

U.S. Patent Application No. 61/095,308 to Donowho, filed September 8, 2008.

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BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

Field of the Present Invention

[0004] The present invention relates generally to supporting and routing cable within an electronic equipment cabinet, and, in particular, to a utilizing a handle spool assembly within an electronic equipment cabinet to support and route cable.

Background

[0005] Frames and cabinets (sometimes collectively referred to hereinafter as “enclosures”) for mounting and storing electronic components have been built in many different sizes and with many different proportions in order to best accommodate the components which they are designed to store. Components stored in these enclosures may include audio and video equipment and the like, but quite frequently include computer equipment and related peripheral devices. Regardless of the component type, each component typically requires an external power supply and a plurality of input and output cables, wires and the like (generally referred to hereinafter as “cables”). Some of these wires and cables are connected to other components in the same enclosure, and some of which extend out of the enclosure to either an adjacent enclosure or to a remote location, typically using either an overhead cabling system or an under-floor cabling system.

[0006] Apparatuses for routing cables and wires to and from the equipment are also well known. Cables are generally routed in the vertical direction to a point adjacent to the desired equipment and then routed in the horizontal direction to the desired equipment. A particular problem inherent in the use of enclosures of all kinds is the issue of how to route and otherwise manage the large quantities of cables that are often necessary for a particular enclosure.

[0007] One device that is used to route cable is a cable management spool. Currently available cable management spools typically require several components to facilitate structurally supporting cables and cable routing maintenance. Typically these systems fell into two categories, ones that use fasteners and require tools to install and adjust, and those that were of a tool-less, snap in design. The designs that required several parts (including mounting hardware) have an inherent cost penalty due to the cost of the parts, assembly, and adjustment labor. Although the minimal part count “snap-in” spool systems have been employed in the past, these systems typically incorporate a fixed finger position or do not incorporate an indexing feature to locate the spool arm in repeatable, known locations.

[0008] Unfortunately, available cable management spools do not afford a minimal part count while providing an indexing arm feature. It would be advantageous to minimize

part count because the assembly of the system is would be greatly simplified and costs would be minimized. Further providing an indexing feature to control the angular position of the spool finger would promote a consistent look for an installation because the arm feature could be positioned consistently and repeatably.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] Broadly defined, the present invention according to one aspect includes a repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly for cable routing having a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled to the mounting bracket. The repositionable spool has a base, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position. The base may be repositioned relative to the mounting bracket.

[0010] In features of this aspect, the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure; the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in a vertical cable manager; the spool head may be a gate arm; the gate arm may be mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft; and the base, the shaft, and the spool head may be integrally formed.

[0011] In other features of this aspect, the mounting bracket may include a spool opening that receives the base; the spool opening may include a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof; the cylindrical shaft may include a cylindrical stud at an end thereof having a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stub for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket; the repositionable spool may be rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool; rotation of the repositionable spool may be indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening; and the repositionable spool may be repositioned to at least four rotational orientations.

[0012] Broadly defined, the invention according to another aspect includes a repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly for cable routing having a mounting bracket and one or more repositionable spools. The mounting bracket has a primary mounting plate and a handle spool shelf, and the repositionable spools are coupled to and repositionable relative to the handle spool shelf. Each repositionable spool includes a base, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.

[0013] In features of this aspect, the spool head of at least one of the one or more repositionable spools may be a gate arm; the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure; the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in a vertical cable manager; and the shelf may be generally parallel to but spaced apart from the primary mounting plate.

[0014] Broadly defined, the present invention according to another aspect includes a repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool for cable routing having a base having a stub for repositionably coupling with an opening in a mounting structure, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted generally perpendicularly to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position. The base may be repositioned relative to the mounting structure via the stub.

[0015] In features of this aspect, the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure; and the handle spool assembly may be configured for use in a vertical cable manager.

[0016] Broadly defined, the present invention according to still another aspect includes a vertical cable manager having a repositionable shelf-mounted assembly. The repositionable shelf-mounted assembly has a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled to the mounting bracket. The repositionable spool includes a base that is repositionable relative to the mounting bracket, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.

[0017] In features of this aspect, the spool head may be a gate arm; the gate arm may be mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft; and the base, the shaft, and the spool head may be integrally formed.

[0018] In other features of this aspect, the mounting bracket may include a spool opening that receives the base; the spool opening may include a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof; the cylindrical shaft may include a cylindrical stud at an end thereof having a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stub for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket; the repositionable spool may be rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool; rotation of the repositionable spool may be indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening; and the repositionable spool may be repositioned to at least four rotational orientations.

[0019] Broadly defined, the present invention according to still yet another aspect includes an electric equipment enclosure having a repositionable shelf-mounted assembly. The repositionable shelf-mounted assembly has a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled to the mounting bracket. The repositionable spool includes a base that is repositionable relative to the mounting bracket, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.

[0020] In features of this aspect, the spool head may be a gate arm; the gate arm may be mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft; and the base, the shaft, and the spool head may be integrally formed.

[0021] In other features of this aspect, the mounting bracket may include a spool opening that receives the base; the spool opening may include a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof; the cylindrical shaft may include a cylindrical stud at an end thereof having a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stub for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket; the repositionable spool may be rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool; rotation of the repositionable spool may be indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening; and the repositionable spool may be repositioned to at least four rotational orientations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] Further features, embodiments, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description with reference to the drawings, which are not necessarily to scale, wherein:

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of an electric equipment enclosure including several repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assemblies, for cable routing, in accordance with a first preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a top cross-sectional view of the electric equipment enclosure of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an isometric view of one of the handle spool assemblies of FIG. 1, shown in isolation;

FIGS. 4A and 4B are exploded orthogonal views of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a top plan view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 3;

FIG. 6 is an exploded top plan view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 3;

FIG. 7 is a left side plan view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 3;

FIG. 8 is a front plan view of the mounting bracket of FIG. 3;

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary isometric view of the mounting bracket of FIG. 3 attached to one of the auxiliary mounting rails of FIG. 1;

FIG. 10A is a rear cross-sectional view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 7, taken along line 10A-10A;

FIG. 10B is a rear cross-sectional view of the handle spool of FIG. 6, taken along line 10B-10B;

FIG. 11 is a top cross-sectional view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 7, illustrating the stub being inserted into the opening of the mounting bracket;

FIG. 12 is an isometric view of a vertical cable manager including several repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assemblies, for cable routing, in accordance with a second preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 13 is a top view of the vertical cable manager of FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a front view of one of the handle spool assemblies and two of the midsection members of FIG. 12;

FIG. 15 is a partially exploded isometric view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 14;

FIG. 16 is a left side view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 14;

FIG. 17 is a right side view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 14;

FIG. 18 is a top view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 14; and

FIG. 19 is a front plan view of the back plate of FIG. 14.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0023] As a preliminary matter, it will readily be understood by one having ordinary skill in the relevant art (“Ordinary Artisan”) that the present invention has broad utility and application. Furthermore, any embodiment discussed and identified as being “preferred” is considered to be part of a best mode contemplated for carrying out the present invention. Other embodiments also may be discussed for additional illustrative purposes in providing a full and enabling disclosure of the present invention. Moreover, many embodiments, such as adaptations, variations, modifications, and equivalent arrangements, will be implicitly disclosed by the embodiments described herein and fall within the scope of the present invention.

[0024] Accordingly, while the present invention is described herein in detail in relation to one or more embodiments, it is to be understood that this disclosure is illustrative and exemplary of the present invention, and is made merely for the purposes of providing a full and enabling disclosure of the present invention. The detailed disclosure herein of one or more embodiments is not intended, nor is to be construed, to limit the scope of patent protection afforded the present invention, which scope is to be defined by the claims and the equivalents thereof. It is not intended that the scope of patent protection afforded the present invention be defined by reading into any claim a limitation found herein that does not explicitly appear in the claim itself.

[0025] Thus, for example, any sequence(s) and/or temporal order of steps of various processes or methods that are described herein are illustrative and not restrictive. Accordingly, it should be understood that, although steps of various processes or methods may be shown and described as being in a sequence or temporal order, the steps of any such processes or methods are not limited to being carried out in any particular sequence or order, absent an indication otherwise. Indeed, the steps in such processes or methods generally may be carried out in various different sequences and orders while still falling within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, it is intended that the scope of patent protection afforded the present invention is to be defined by the appended claims rather than the description set forth herein.

[0026] Additionally, it is important to note that each term used herein refers to that which the Ordinary Artisan would understand such term to mean based on the contextual use of such term herein. To the extent that the meaning of a term used herein—as understood by the Ordinary Artisan based on the contextual use of such term—differs in any way from any particular dictionary definition of such term, it is intended that the meaning of the term as understood by the Ordinary Artisan should prevail.

[0027] Furthermore, it is important to note that, as used herein, “a” and “an” each generally denotes “at least one,” but does not exclude a plurality unless the contextual use dictates otherwise. Thus, reference to “a picnic basket having an apple” describes “a picnic basket having at least one apple” as well as “a picnic basket having apples.” In contrast, reference to “a picnic basket having a single apple” describes “a picnic basket having only one apple.”

[0028] When used herein to join a list of items, “or” denotes “at least one of the items,” but does not exclude a plurality of items of the list. Thus, reference to “a picnic basket having cheese or crackers” describes “a picnic basket having cheese without

crackers”, “a picnic basket having crackers without cheese”, and “a picnic basket having both cheese and crackers.” Finally, when used herein to join a list of items, “and” denotes “all of the items of the list.” Thus, reference to “a picnic basket having cheese and crackers” describes “a picnic basket having cheese, wherein the picnic basket further has crackers,” as well as describes “a picnic basket having crackers, wherein the picnic basket further has cheese.”

[0029] Referring now to the drawings, in which like numerals represent like components throughout the several views, the preferred embodiments of the present invention are next described. The following description of the preferred embodiment(s) is merely exemplary in nature and is in no way intended to limit the invention, its application, or uses.

[0030] FIGS. 1 and 2 are an isometric view and a top cross-sectional view, respectively, of an electric equipment enclosure including several repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assemblies **100**, for cable routing, in accordance with a first preferred embodiment of the present invention. As shown therein, a side panel of the expanded equipment cabinet is removed in order to better show the handle spool assembly **100** of the present invention. The expanded equipment cabinet is fully disclosed and described in commonly-assigned Patent Application Serial No. 11/837,538, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference.

[0031] In brief summary, the expanded cabinet includes an interior four post frame structure and a cabinet expansion kit. The expansion kit creates side panel space in the cabinet wherein the handle spool assembly **100** may be mounted.

[0032] The interior four post frame structure may be of conventional design and construction. As shown and described, the four post frame structure is formed from a plurality of frame members including four vertical members, upper and lower front cross members, upper and lower rear cross members and two pairs of upper and lower side cross members. Each vertical member includes a plurality of cross member attachment apertures at each end. Two of the vertical members are connected together at their upper and lower ends by the upper and lower front cross members, respectively, and the other two vertical members are connected together at their upper and lower ends by the upper and lower rear cross members, respectively. The front cross members and their respective vertical members thus define a front frame, and the rear cross members and their respective vertical members define a rear frame. The front and rear frames may then be connected together at their respective corners by the upper and lower side cross members.

[0033] Any known connection means may be used to join the various members together. Although not illustrated herein, at least one example of conventional connection means is described in commonly-assigned U.S. Patent No. 6,185,098, the entirety of which is incorporated herein by reference. Although likewise not illustrated herein, the precision and the stability of each of the corners of at least some types of four post frame structures may be enhanced by utilizing a self-squaring corner attachment bracket such as that disclosed by the commonly-assigned U.S. Pat. No. 5,997,117 entitled "RACK FRAME CABINET," the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0034] The expanded cabinet includes a fiber management system mounted in side panel space of the cabinet. The fiber management system includes a vertical accessory rail **102** that is connected to and vertically aligned with the left front post of the four post frame. A plurality of handle spool assemblies **100** are mounted to the vertical accessory rail **102**.

[0035] FIGS. 3, 4A and 4B are an isometric view and two exploded orthogonal views, respectively, of one of the handle spool assemblies of FIG. 1, shown in isolation. The handle spool assembly **100** includes a repositionable handle spool **110** coupled to a mounting bracket **104**. The handle spool **110** includes a gate arm **112** mounted perpendicularly to a cylindrical shaft **114** that extends from a repositionable base **116**. The gate arm **112**, shaft **114** and base **116** are preferably integrally formed. Such formation may occur via injection molding or the like. In the illustrated embodiment, at least some portions of the spool **110** are hollow, but alternatively may be semi-hollow or solid, if desired, without departing from the scope of the present invention. A cap **117**, which may also be injection molded, may be used to cover the end of the shaft **114**. It is preferred that the handle spool **110** is constructed of plastic and that the mounting bracket **104** is constructed of sheet metal.

[0036] FIGS. 5-7 are a top plan view, an exploded top plan view and a left side plan view of the handle spool assembly of FIG. 3. As shown therein, the repositionable base **116** includes a generally cylindrical stub **118**, around which are disposed four resilient bosses **120** that may be depressed radially inwardly relative to the stub **118**, bearing surfaces that follow the radius of curvature of the stub **118** and disposed between the bosses **120**, and a coaxial seating flange **122**. The bearing surfaces keep the spool **110** centered in a spool opening **108** of the mounting bracket **104**. In the illustrated embodiment, the bosses **120** are arranged evenly and circumferentially around the cylindrical stub **118** at 90 degree intervals, but it will be appreciated that such spacing need not be even, and that other numbers of bosses **120** may be utilized. As perhaps best seen in FIG. 5, each boss **120** is attached to the

stub **118** near the end of the stub **118** and extends away from the end of the stub **118** in a hollow or opening defined by the side of the stub **118**. Each boss **120** includes a beveled or ramped deflection face **124** and a stepped retention face **126**. The deflection face **124** and retention face **126** flex into the opening to provide locating detents when the spool **110** is rotated. In addition, each boss **120** includes a profile that mates or matches profiles of recesses **109** formed in mounting bracket **104**. The recesses **109** will be described in greater detail below.

[0037] FIG. 8 is a front plan view of the mounting bracket **104** of FIG. 3. The mounting bracket **104** includes a primary mounting plate **105** and a handle spool shelf **106**. The primary mounting plate **105** is penetrated by a plurality of mounting apertures arranged to align with individual apertures on any desired mounting structure, and may be attached to the structure with fasteners **103** inserted therethrough. Any of a wide variety of mounting structures may be suitable for this purpose. For example, FIG. 9 is a fragmentary isometric view of the mounting bracket **104** of FIG. 3 attached to one of the auxiliary mounting rails **102** of FIG. 1. Notably, in at least one embodiment, the primary mounting plate **105** is longer than the handle spool shelf **106** so that the handle spool **110** can be slightly displaced from the structure to which it is mounted.

[0038] FIG. 10A is a rear cross-sectional view of the handle spool assembly **100** of FIG. 7, taken along line 10A-10A, and FIG. 10B is a rear cross-sectional view of the handle spool **110** of FIG. 6, taken along line 10B-10B. Each cross-sectional view is thus taken in the vicinity of the point where the mounting stub **118** intersects the mounting handle spool shelf **106**. The shelf **106** includes the spool opening **108** for receiving the mounting stub **118** of the handle spool **110**. The opening **108** is generally circular but with a plurality of small recesses **109** arranged around the periphery thereof. The recesses **109** include a profile that matches a profile of a portion of the bosses **120**. More specifically, the profile of each recess **109** has three sections, two side sections and a center section. The center section may be generally linear and slightly rounded at the ends, while the side sections are generally linear and gently slope to connect the central section of the recess **109** to the main portion of the opening **108**. The matching profiles of the bosses **120** and the recesses **109** enable the bosses **120** to fit snugly into the recesses **109** when the spool is assembled. The sloping of the recess side sections enables the spool **110** to be turned by pulling the gate arm **112**, i.e., the gently sloping side sections depresses the boss **120** into the stub opening so that the spool **110** can be turned. In the illustrated embodiment, the recesses **109** are arranged evenly around the opening **108** at 90 degree intervals, but it will be appreciated that such spacing

need not be even, and that other numbers of recesses **109** may be utilized, so long as correspondence to the bosses **120** on the handle spool stub **118** is maintained. It will be appreciated, however, that a greater number of recesses **109** than bosses **120** may be provided, so long as there is at least one and preferably a plurality of different dispositions in which the stub **118** may be mounted in the openings **108**.

[0039] FIG. 11 is a top cross-sectional view of the handle spool assembly **100** of FIG. 7, illustrating the stub **118** being inserted into the opening **108** of the mounting bracket **104**. To insert the stub **118** into the opening **108**, the bosses **120** on the stub **118** must be aligned with the recesses **109** around the periphery of the opening **108**. Because the bosses **120** and recesses **109** are each arranged at 90 degree intervals, this may be accomplished with the handle spool **110** in any of four rotational orientations. More particularly, the gate arm **112** may be rotated for disposition at any of four different orientations, with such orientations being at 90 degree intervals relative to each other. Preferably, the four orientations include the gate arm **112** being disposed horizontally to the left (when viewed from the front, as shown in FIG. 1), vertically upward, horizontally to the right, and vertically downward.

[0040] The depth of each recess **109** relative to the edge of the opening **108** corresponds to the extent of the boss **120** from the side of the stub **118** in an undepressed state. More particularly, the depth of the recess **109** is designed such that as the stub **118** is pushed through the opening **108**, the rim of each recess **109** bears against the beveled deflection face **124** on one of the bosses **120**, deflecting it radially inward, until the widest portion is passed and the stepped retention face **126** is reached. Because the stepped retention face **126** is narrower than the widest portion of the bosses **120**, each boss **120** then “snaps” into place and is held in place by an appropriate step or ledge (visible in FIG. 5) on the retention face **126**.

[0041] In use, wires, optical fiber and other cables (not shown) are routed along or around the spool **110**, or if more than one spool **110** is used, as shown in FIG. 1, cables are routed along or around one or more of the spools **110**. Each spool shaft **114** provides a radius of curvature that corresponds to one or more standards, such as for fiber cables. In addition, each gate arm **112** prevents cables from moving forward, a feature perhaps best understood with reference to FIG. 2. As noted previously, the handle spool **110** may be installed in any one of four orientations through selection of which bosses **120** are installed in which recesses **109**. Conveniently, once the handle spool **110** is installed, it may be rotated by simply grasping the gate arm **112** and exerting a relatively minimal pressure in the direction in which it is desired to move the gate arm **112**. The side sections of the recesses **109** gently depress

the bosses **120** of the handle spool **110** into the openings thereof thereby enabling the indexing feature of the handle spool **110**. As the spool rotates, the bosses **120** flex into and out of the recesses **109** to provide a rotational detent feel.

[0042] The handle spool **110** may be removed by reaching between the primary mounting plate **105** and the handle spool shelf **106** and squeezing the bosses **120** inward enough to permit removal of the stub **118** entirely by reversing the insertion process described previously. The bosses **120** may be squeezed by a user's fingers or via a tool. Although the handle spool **110** may be removed according to the method described, a feature of the handle spool is that it is relatively difficult for the handle spool **110** to be inadvertently pulled from the mounting bracket **104** thereof such as by a tangled cable or wire or another snagging feature. In fact, the handle spool **110** has been designed such that the plastic material of which the handle spool **110** is composed will fail before the handle spool **110** is pulled out of the mounting bracket **104**. Such feature ensures that a handle spool **110** is not inadvertently pulled out of a mounting bracket **104** while it is in service.

[0043] Advantageously, the operation of the repositionable handle spools **110** permits cables to be installed along a plurality of handle spool assemblies **100** aligned vertically and held in place by the gate arms **112** of the respective handle spools **110** mounted thereon. In conjunction with the cylindrical shafts **114** of the spools **110**, this provides for retention of such cables along at least three boundaries, defined by the primary mounting plates **105** of the assemblies **100** and any member or members to which they are attached or adjacent, the cylindrical shafts **114**, and the gate arms **112**. Furthermore, if the handle spool assemblies **100** are mounted adjacent a wall of cable guides **144,145**, as may be seen in FIG. 2, then a closed channel may be defined with boundaries on all four sides. Cables may be loaded into a three- or four-sided channel by removal or rotation of the handle spools **110** such that the gate arms **112** do not block the front entrance to the channel and then insertion or rotation of the spools **110** to close that entrance and retain the cables in the channel. Of course, cables may be routed around any of the cylindrical shafts **114**, thereby leaving the channel, if desired, with the radius of curvature of the shafts **114** ensuring that a minimum turn radius is maintained with regard to each such cable.

[0044] FIG. 12 is an exploded isometric view of a vertical cable manager **130** for cable routing, and FIG. 13 is a top view of the vertical cable manager **130** of FIG. 12, shown with two repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assemblies **200** mounted therein, in accordance with a second preferred embodiment of the present invention. The vertical cable manager **130** includes a base **132**, an interconnected double-spine assembly **140** topped by a

top frame **150**, and a pair of doors (not shown). The double-spine assembly **140** is supported by the base **132**, thus avoiding the necessity of supporting the apparatus **130** on an adjoining mounting fixture (not shown). Each door is removably coupled at each lower corner to the base **132** and at each upper corner to the top frame **150**, thus permitting each door to be opened or hinged along either of its lateral sides or removed entirely. The base **132** comprises a frame that includes two side members **134** and two cross members **136**, with the length of the side members **134** and the length of the cross members **136** defining the depth and width, respectively, of the vertical cable manager **130**.

[0045] The interconnected double-spine assembly **140** includes two spine assemblies **142**, each having a plurality of ribbed or fingered cable guides **144,145** extending forwardly and a plurality of ribbed or fingered cable guides **144,145** extending rearwardly from a vertical support column **146**. The spine assemblies **142** are interconnected at their lower ends by the base **132** and at their upper ends by the top frame **150**. Each support column **146** may be formed from a C-shaped section of metal, producing a lateral portion **159**, a front portion **160** and a rear portion **161**. Penetrating each of the front and rear portions **160,161** are a series of preferably evenly-spaced square apertures **148** and a number of small round apertures **149** interspersed therebetween. The fingered cable guides **144,145** are attached to the front and rear portions **160,161** of the support columns **146** via the apertures **148,149** therein.

[0046] The top frame **150** includes two side assemblies **152** and a cross member **154**. Each side assembly **152** includes a portion for mounting to the top of a respective support column **146** and a horizontal rail. A hinge/latch interface **156** is disposed at each of the distal ends of the horizontal rails, thereby providing hinge and latch functions for each lateral side of each door. The cross member **154** stabilizes the upper ends of the spine assemblies **142**, fixing the distance therebetween. Optionally, additional interconnection between the spine assemblies **142** may be provided by midsection members **180**, shown in FIG. 13, attached to the support columns **146** via square apertures **158** therein. A variety of accessories may be mounted to the midsection members **180** to aid in the routing of cables (not shown) therethrough and to better retain the cables therein.

[0047] FIG. 14 is a front view of one of the handle spool assemblies **200** and two of the midsection members **180** of FIG. 13, and FIGS. 15-18 are a partially exploded isometric view, a left side view, a right side view and a top view, respectively, of one of the repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assemblies **200** and two of the midsection members **180** of FIG. 13. The handle spool assembly **200** includes one or more

repositionable handle spools **110**, of the type illustrated in FIGS. 1-7 and described in the accompanying text, mounted on, and aligned along, a back plate **204**. In the embodiment shown, there are four repositionable handle spools **110**, but it will be appreciated that greater or fewer numbers of spools **110** may likewise be used. Further, in at least some embodiments, the spools **110** are arranged horizontally instead of vertically; and in at least some embodiments, the spools **110** are arranged in more than one column or row.

[0048] FIG. 19 is a front plan view of the back plate **204** of FIG. 14. The back plate **204** of the handle spool assembly **200** includes a primary mounting plate **205** and a handle spool shelf **206**. The primary mounting plate **205** is penetrated by a plurality of mounting apertures **207** arranged to align with individual apertures **201** on the midsection members **180**, and may be attached to the midsection members **180** with fasteners (not shown) inserted therethrough. The primary mounting plate **205** is further penetrated by a plurality of access openings and cutaways to provide access to other fasteners and mounting apertures on various midsection members **180** mounted therebehind if necessary.

[0049] The shelf **206** includes a plurality of spool openings **108** for receiving the mounting stubs **118** of the respective handle spools **110**. In the illustrated embodiment, there are four spool openings **108** in each handle spool assembly **200**, corresponding to the four handle spools **110** mounted thereon, but it will be appreciated that greater or fewer numbers of openings **108** may be provided, and that not all of the openings **108** necessarily need to be occupied. Each opening **108** is generally circular but with a plurality of small recesses **109** arranged around the periphery thereof. The recesses **109** include a profile that matches a profile of a portion of the bosses **120**. More specifically, the profile of each recess **109** has three sections, two side sections and a center section. The center section is generally linear and is slightly rounded at its ends, while the side sections are generally linear and gently slope to connect the central section of the recess **109** to the main portion of the opening **108**. The matching profiles of the bosses **120** and the recesses **109** enables the bosses **120** to fit snugly into the recesses **109** when the spool is assembled. The sloping of the recess side sections enables the spool **110** to be turned by pulling the gate arm **112**, i.e., the gently sloping side sections depress the boss **120** into the stub opening **108** so that the spool **110** can be turned. In the illustrated embodiment, the recesses **109** are arranged evenly around each opening **108** at 90 degree intervals, but it will be appreciated that such spacing need not be even, and that other numbers of recesses **109** may be utilized, so long as correspondence to the bosses **120** on the handle spool stubs **118** is maintained. It will be appreciated, however, that a greater number of recesses **109** than bosses **120** may be provided, so long as there is at

least one and preferably a plurality of different dispositions in which the stubs **118** may be mounted in the openings **108**.

[0050] To insert a stub **118** into an opening **108**, the bosses **120** on the stub **118** must be aligned with the recesses **109** around the periphery of the opening **108**. Because the bosses **120** and recesses **109** are each arranged at 90 degree intervals, this may be accomplished with the handle spool **110** in any of four rotational orientations. More particularly, the gate arm **112** may be rotated for disposition at any of four different orientations, with such orientations being at 90 degree intervals relative to each other. Preferably, the four orientations include the gate arm **112** being disposed horizontally to the right (when viewed from the front, as shown in FIG. 14), vertically upward, horizontally to the left, and vertically downward.

[0051] The depth of each recess **109** relative to the edge of its respective opening **108** corresponds to the extent of each boss **120** from the side of its respective stub **118**. More particularly, the depth of the recess **109** is chosen such that as the stub **118** is pushed through the opening **108**, the rim of each recess **109** bears against the beveled deflection face **124** on one of the bosses **120**, deflecting it radially inward, until the widest portion is passed and the stepped retention face **126** is reached. Because the stepped retention face **126** is narrower than the widest portion of the bosses **120**, each boss **120** then “snaps” into place and is held in place by an appropriate step or ledge (visible in FIG. 18) on the retention face **126**.

[0052] In use, wires, optical fiber and other cables (not shown) are routed along or around one or more of the spools **110**. Each spool shaft **114** provides a radius of curvature that corresponds to one or more standards, such as for fiber cables. In addition, each gate arm **112** prevents cables from moving forward, away from the midsection member **180**, a feature perhaps best understood with reference to FIG. 13. As noted previously, each handle spool **110** may be installed in any one of four orientations through selection of which bosses **120** are installed in which recesses **109**. Conveniently, once the handle spool **110** is installed, it may be rotated by simply grasping the gate arm and exerting a relatively minimal pressure in the direction in which it is desired to move the gate arm. The side sections of the recesses **109** gently depress the bosses **120** of the handle spool **110** into the openings thereof thereby enabling the indexing feature of the handle spool **110**. The handle spool may be removed by reaching between the primary mounting plate **105** and the handle spool shelf **106** and squeezing the bosses **120** inward enough to permit removal of the stub **118** entirely by reversing the insertion process described previously. The bosses **120** may be squeezed by a user's fingers or via a tool. Although the handle spool **110** may be removed according to the

method described, a feature of the handle spool is that it is relatively difficult for the handle spool to be inadvertently pulled from the mounting bracket **104** thereof such as by a tangled cable or wire or another snagging feature. In fact, the handle spool **110** has been designed such that the plastic material of which the handle spool **110** is composed will fail before the handle spool **110** is pulled out of the mounting bracket **104**. Such feature ensures that a handle spool **110** is not inadvertently pulled out of a mounting bracket **104** while it is in service.

[0053] Advantageously, the operation of the repositionable handle spools permits cables to be installed along the length of the handle spool assembly **200** and held in place by the gate arms **112** of the respective handle spools **110** mounted thereon. In conjunction with the cylindrical shafts **114** of the spools **110**, this provides for retention of such cables along at least three boundaries, defined by the primary mounting plate **205**, the cylindrical shafts **114**, and the gate arms **112**. Furthermore, if the unit **200** is mounted adjacent a wall of cable guides **144,145**, as may be seen in FIG. 13, then a closed channel is defined with boundaries on all four sides. Cables may be loaded into a three- or four-sided channel by removal or rotation of the handle spools **110** such that the gate arms **112** do not block the front entrance to the channel and then insertion or rotation of the spools **110** to close that entrance and retain the cables in the channel. Of course, cables may be routed around any of the cylindrical shafts **114**, thereby leaving the channel, if desired, with the radius of curvature of the shafts **114** ensuring that a minimum turn radius is maintained with regard to each such cable.

[0054] Notably, the length of each gate arm **112** may be chosen to assist in retaining the cables as described. In at least one embodiment, the length of the gate arms **112** is selected to match the width of the primary mounting plate **205** as illustrated in FIG. 14, thereby permitting the distal ends of the gate arms **112** to be disposed immediately adjacent the cable guides **144,145** or other structure disposed along the lateral edge of the cable manager **130**. In at least one other embodiment, the length of the gate arms **112** is selected to be less than the width of the primary mounting plate **205** so that a gap remains between the distal ends of the gate arms **112** and the adjacent cable guides **144,145** or other structure. In at least some embodiments, the unit **200** is mounted as close to the adjacent cable guides **144,145** or other structure, while in other embodiments the unit **200** is spaced apart from the adjacent cable guides **144,145** or other structure.

[0055] The handle spool assembly supports and controls cables. It allows cables to be supported by a spool which incorporates an arm that may be positioned in discrete, pre-defined locations. The arm may be rotated to allow slack loops to be easily wound or

unwound during maintenance. Rotating the arms in an opposed configuration aids in securing cables with a minimum number of components.

[0056] The handle spool assembly provides a minimum part count solution for a cable spool system. It provides simplified, tool-less push-in installation. The reverse boss design maximizes load capacity of spool. Previously, bosses positioned in the opposite configuration have had a tendency to release as a load is applied. Further, the bosses and mounting opening provide detent to maintain rotational position in predefined orientations.

[0057] Based on the foregoing information, it is readily understood by those persons skilled in the art that the present invention is susceptible of broad utility and application. Many embodiments and adaptations of the present invention other than those specifically described herein, as well as many variations, modifications, and equivalent arrangements, will be apparent from or reasonably suggested by the present invention and the foregoing descriptions thereof, without departing from the substance or scope of the present invention. Accordingly, while the present invention has been described herein in detail in relation to its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that this disclosure is only illustrative and exemplary of the present invention and is made merely for the purpose of providing a full and enabling disclosure of the invention. The foregoing disclosure is not intended to be construed to limit the present invention or otherwise exclude any such other embodiments, adaptations, variations, modifications or equivalent arrangements; the present invention being limited only by the claims appended hereto and the equivalents thereof. Although specific terms are employed herein, they are used in a generic and descriptive sense only and not for the purpose of limitation.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly for cable routing, comprising:
 - a. a mounting bracket; and
 - b. a repositionable spool, coupled to the mounting bracket, including:
 - (i) a base,
 - (ii) a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and
 - (iii) a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position;
 - c. wherein the base may be repositioned relative to the mounting bracket.
2. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure.
3. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 1, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in a vertical cable manager.
4. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 1, wherein the spool head is a gate arm.
5. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 4, wherein the gate arm is mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft.
6. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 1, wherein the base, the shaft, and the spool head are integrally formed.
7. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 1, wherein the mounting bracket includes a spool opening that receives the base.
8. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 7, wherein the spool opening includes a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof.

9. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 8, wherein the cylindrical shaft includes a cylindrical stud at an end thereof, the cylindrical stub including a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stub for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket.
10. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 9, wherein the repositionable spool is rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool.
11. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 10, wherein rotation of the repositionable spool is indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening.
12. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 11, wherein the repositionable spool is repositionable to at least four rotational orientations.
13. A repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly for cable routing, comprising:
 - a. a mounting bracket, comprising:
 - (i) a primary mounting plate, and
 - (ii) a handle spool shelf; and
 - b. one or more repositionable spools, coupled to and repositionable relative to the handle spool shelf, each repositionable spool including:
 - (i) a base,
 - (ii) a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and
 - (iii) a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.
14. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 13, wherein the spool head of at least one of the one or more repositionable spools is a gate arm.
15. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 13, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure.

16. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 13, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in a vertical cable manager.
17. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 13, wherein the shelf is generally parallel to but spaced apart from the primary mounting plate.
18. A repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool for cable routing, comprising:
 - (a) a base having a stub for repositionably coupling with an opening in a mounting structure;
 - (b) a cylindrical shaft extending from the base; and
 - (c) a spool head mounted generally perpendicularly to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position;
 - (d) wherein the base may be repositioned relative to the mounting structure via the stub.
19. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 18, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in an electric equipment enclosure.
20. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 18, wherein the handle spool assembly is configured for use in a vertical cable manager.
21. A vertical cable manager including a repositionable shelf-mounted assembly, the repositionable shelf-mounted assembly having a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled to the mounting bracket, wherein the repositionable spool includes a base that is repositionable relative to the mounting bracket, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.
22. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 21, wherein the spool head is a gate arm.
23. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 22, wherein the gate arm is mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft.

24. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 21, wherein the base, the shaft, and the spool head are integrally formed.
25. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 21, wherein the mounting bracket includes a spool opening that receives the base.
26. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 25, wherein the spool opening includes a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof.
27. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 26, wherein the cylindrical shaft includes a cylindrical stud at an end thereof, the cylindrical stud including a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stud for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket.
28. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 27, wherein the repositionable spool is rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool.
29. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 28, wherein rotation of the repositionable spool is indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening.
30. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 29, wherein the repositionable spool is repositionable to at least four rotational orientations.
31. An electric equipment enclosure including a repositionable shelf-mounted assembly, the repositionable shelf-mounted assembly having a mounting bracket and a repositionable spool coupled to the mounting bracket, wherein the repositionable spool includes a base that is repositionable relative to the mounting bracket, a cylindrical shaft extending from the base, and a spool head mounted to the cylindrical shaft in a fixed position.

32. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 31, wherein the spool head is a gate arm.
33. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 32, wherein the gate arm is mounted perpendicularly relative to the cylindrical shaft.
34. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 31, wherein the base, the shaft, and the spool head are integrally formed.
35. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 31, wherein the mounting bracket includes a spool opening that receives the base.
36. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 35, wherein the spool opening includes a plurality of recesses arranged around the periphery thereof.
37. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 36, wherein the cylindrical shaft includes a cylindrical stud at an end thereof, the cylindrical stub including a plurality of resilient bosses arranged circumferentially to correspond with the recesses of the spool opening, each boss being depressable radially inwardly relative to the cylindrical stub for snap-fitting the repositionable spool to the mounting bracket.
38. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 37, wherein the repositionable spool is rotatable relative to the mounting bracket to reposition the spool.
39. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 38, wherein rotation of the repositionable spool is indexed as the bosses engage recesses of the spool opening.
40. The repositionable shelf-mounted handle spool assembly of claim 39, wherein the repositionable spool is repositionable to at least four rotational orientations.

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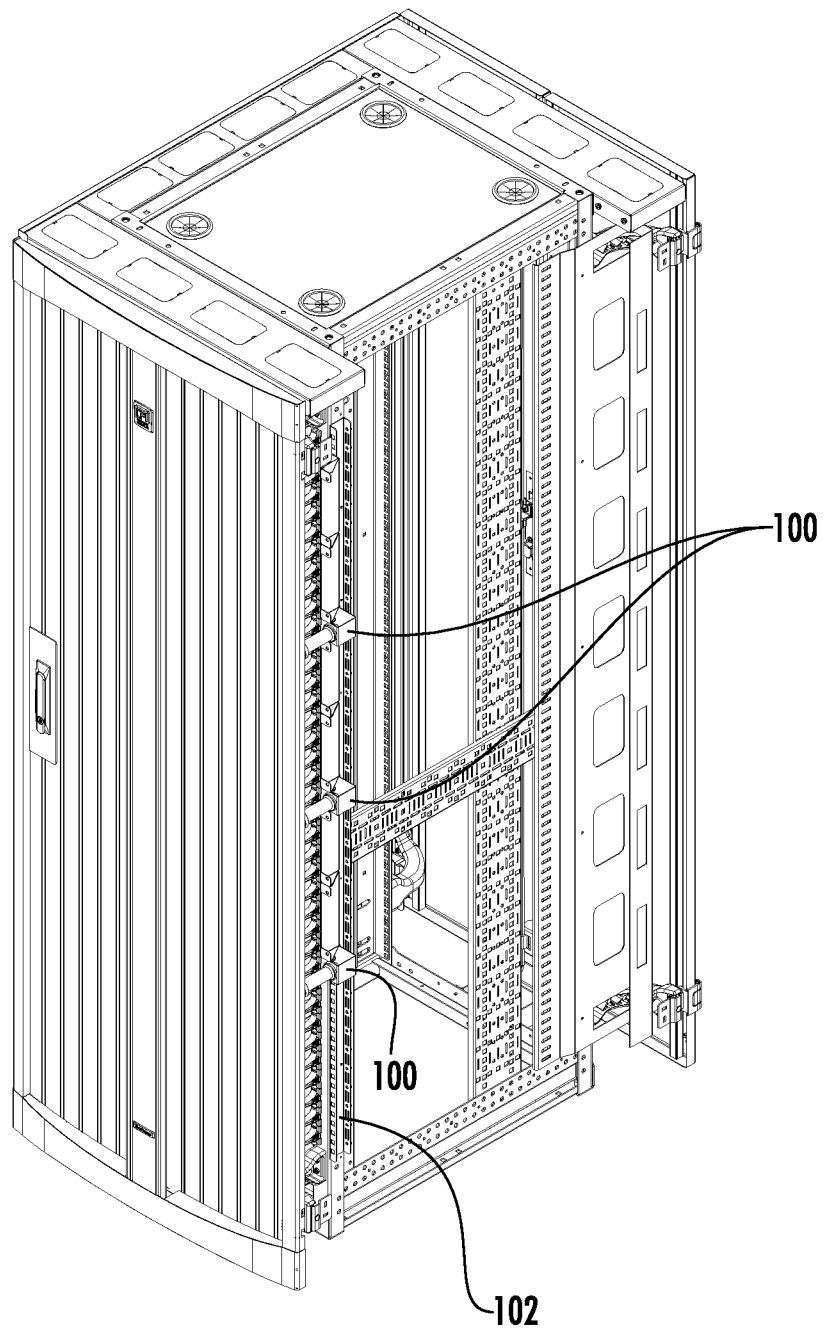


FIG. 1

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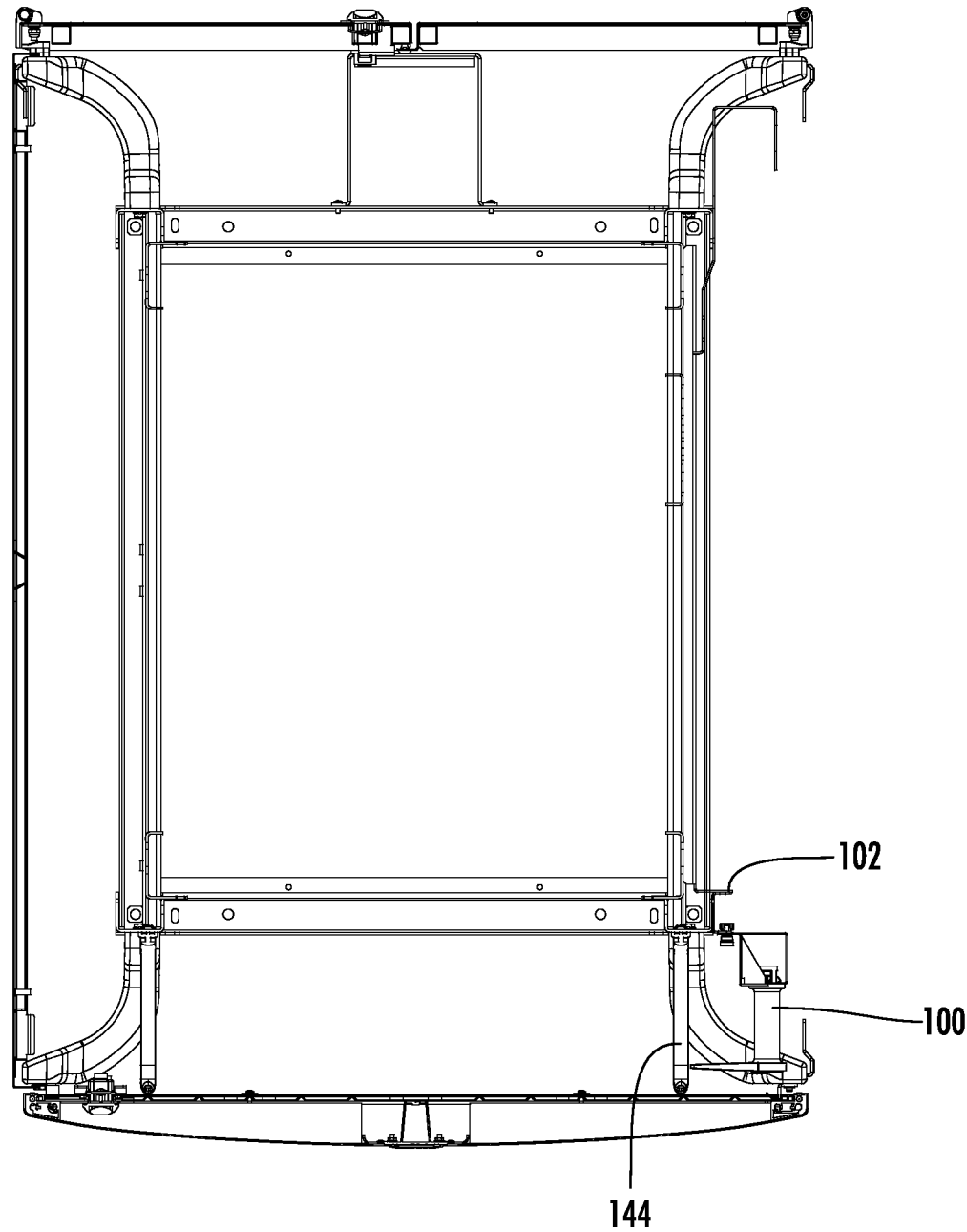
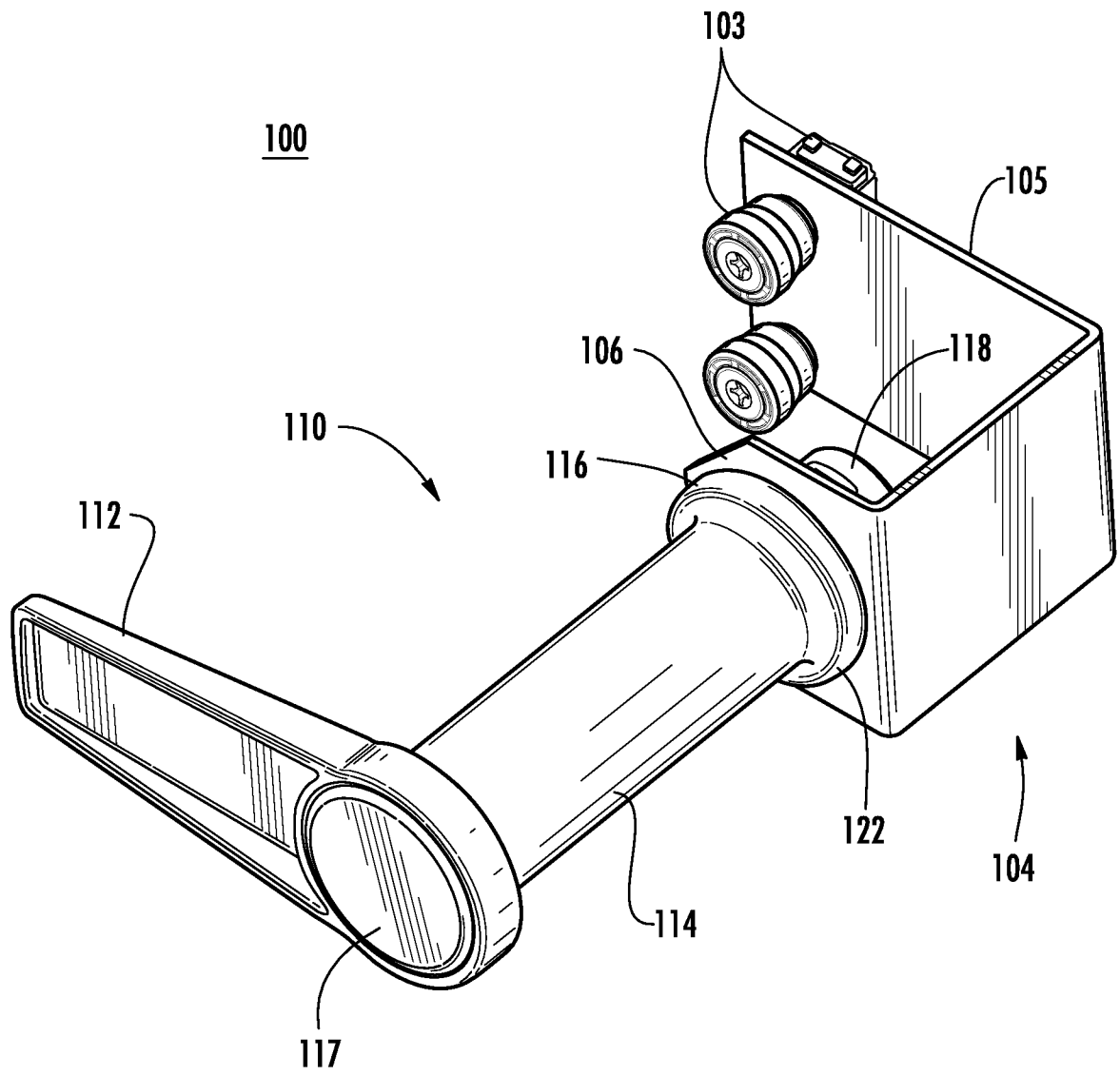


FIG. 2

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**FIG. 3**

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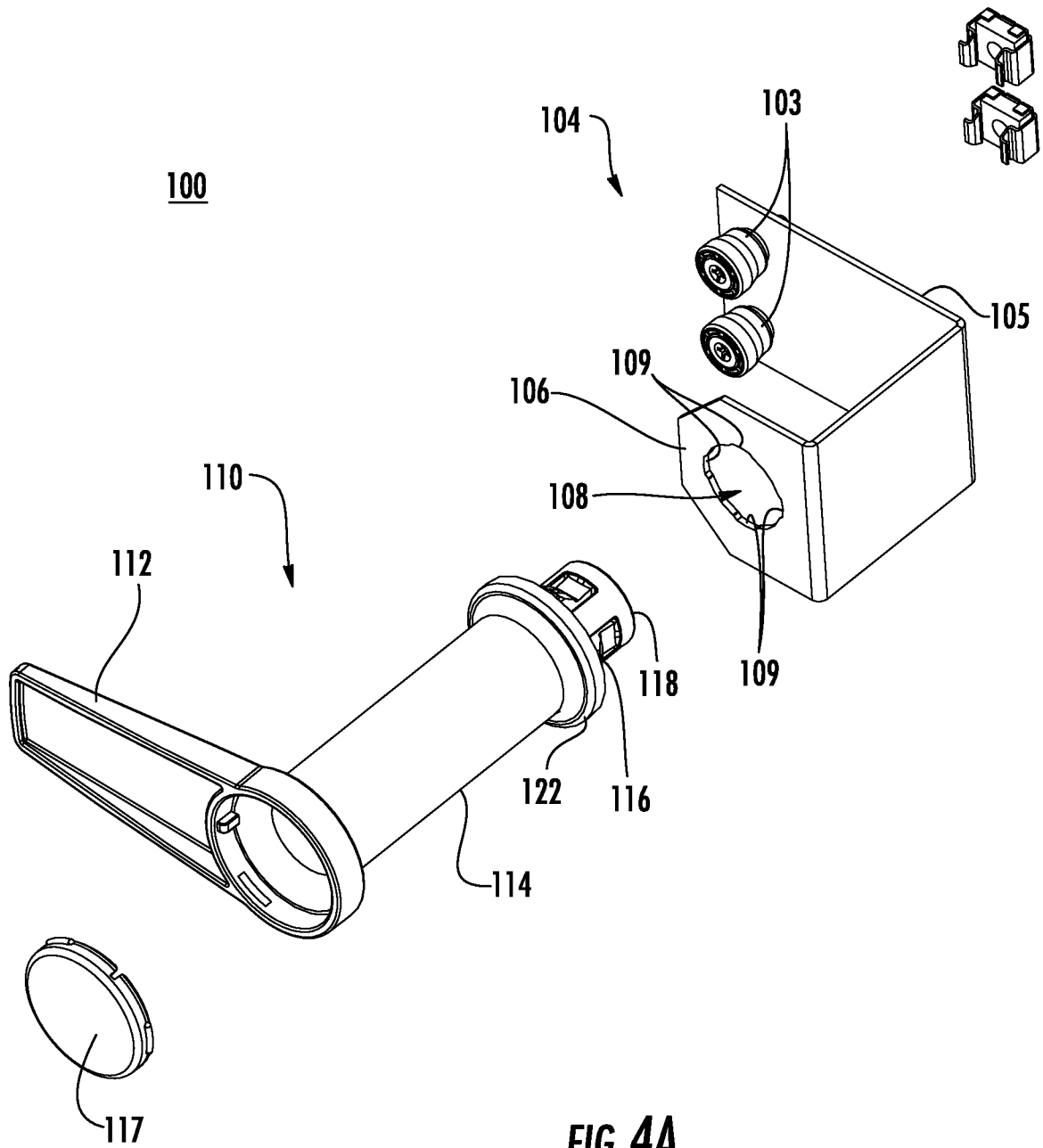


FIG. 4A

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100

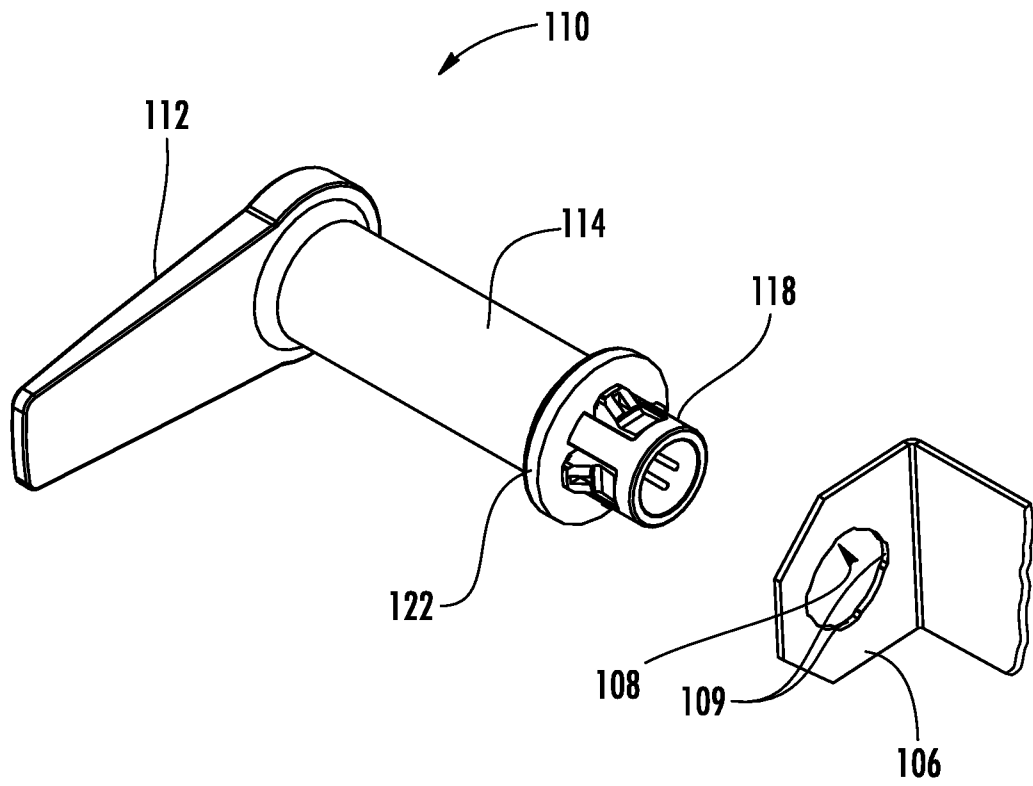


FIG. 4B

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100

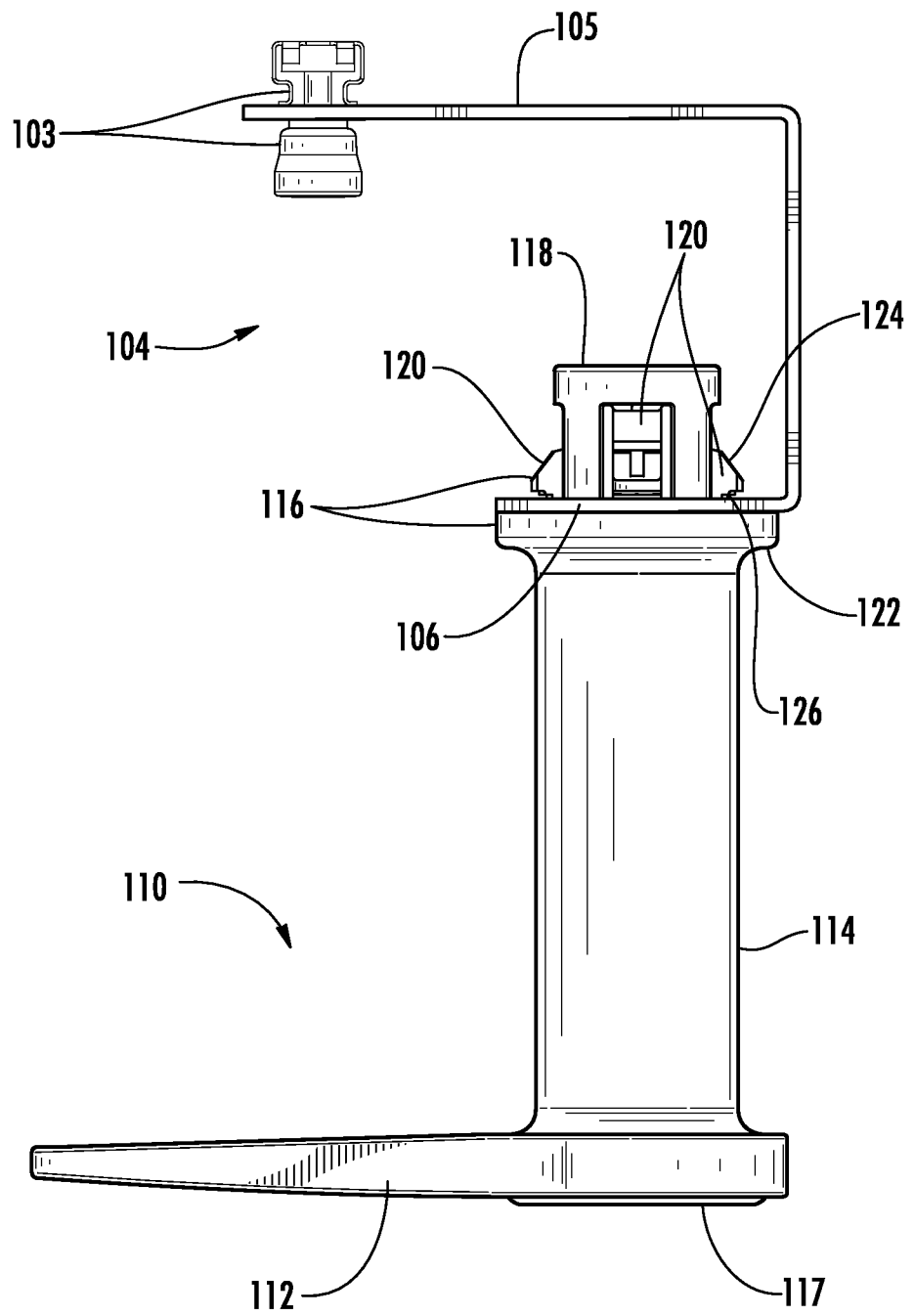


FIG. 5

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100

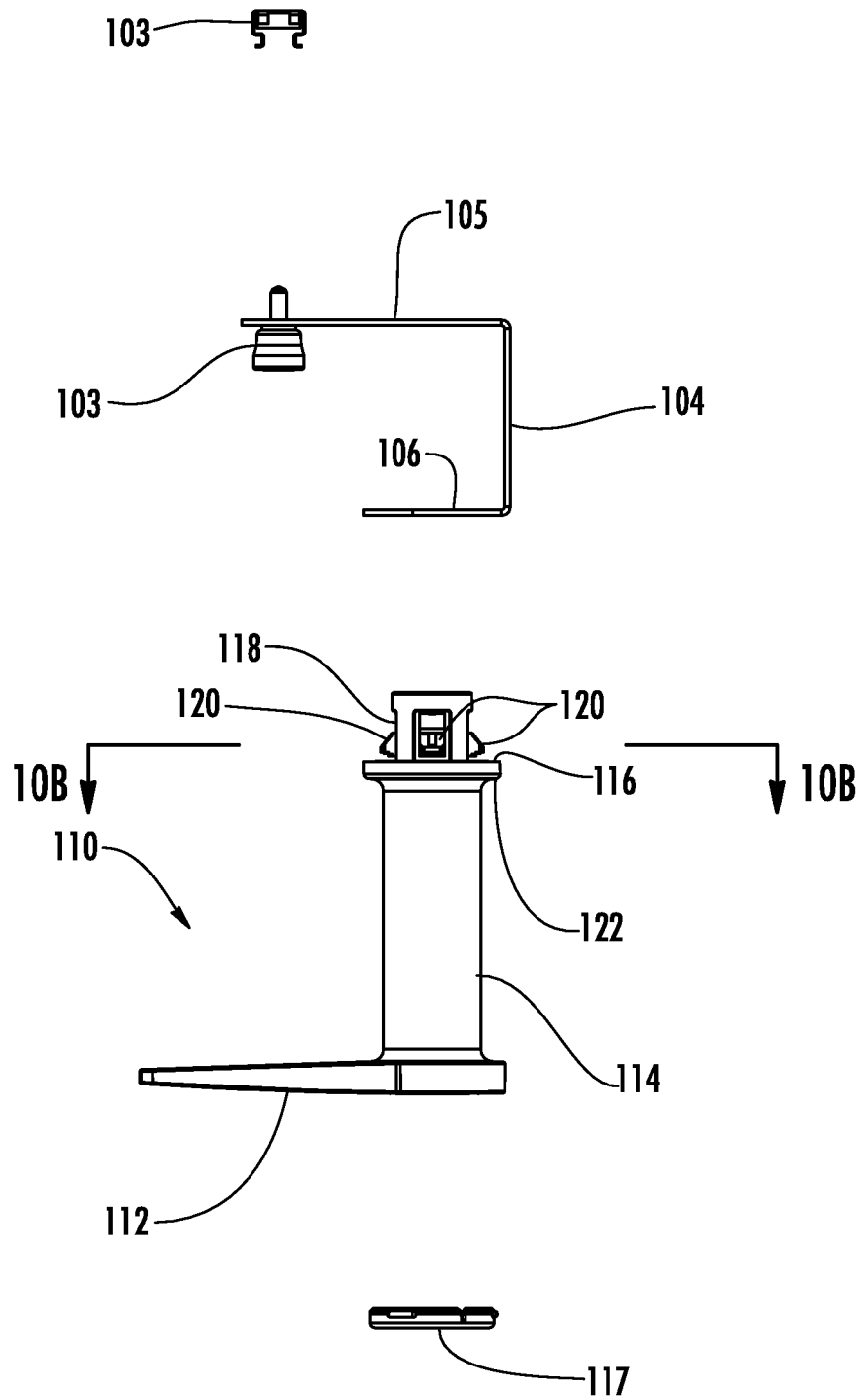


FIG. 6

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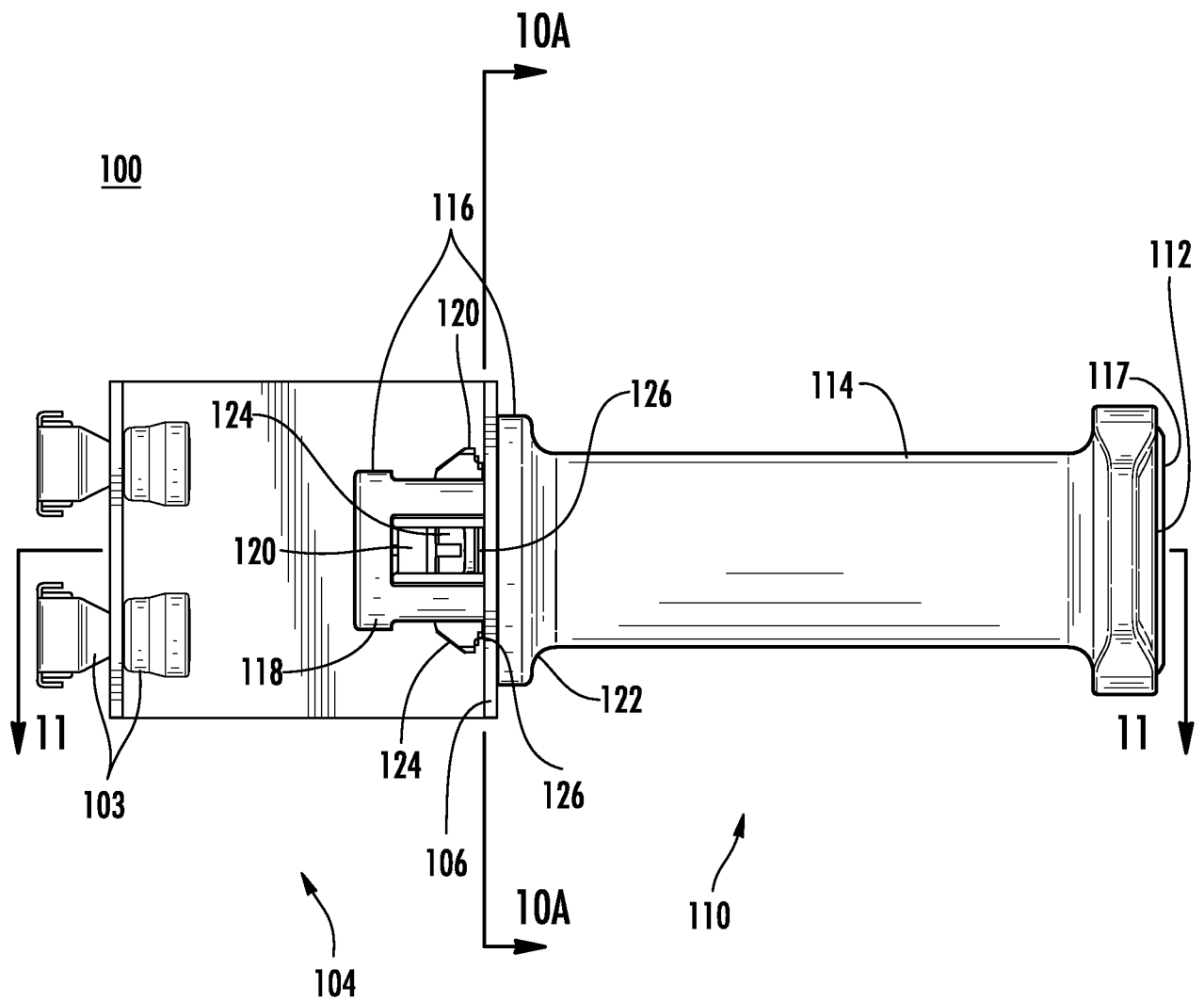


FIG. 7

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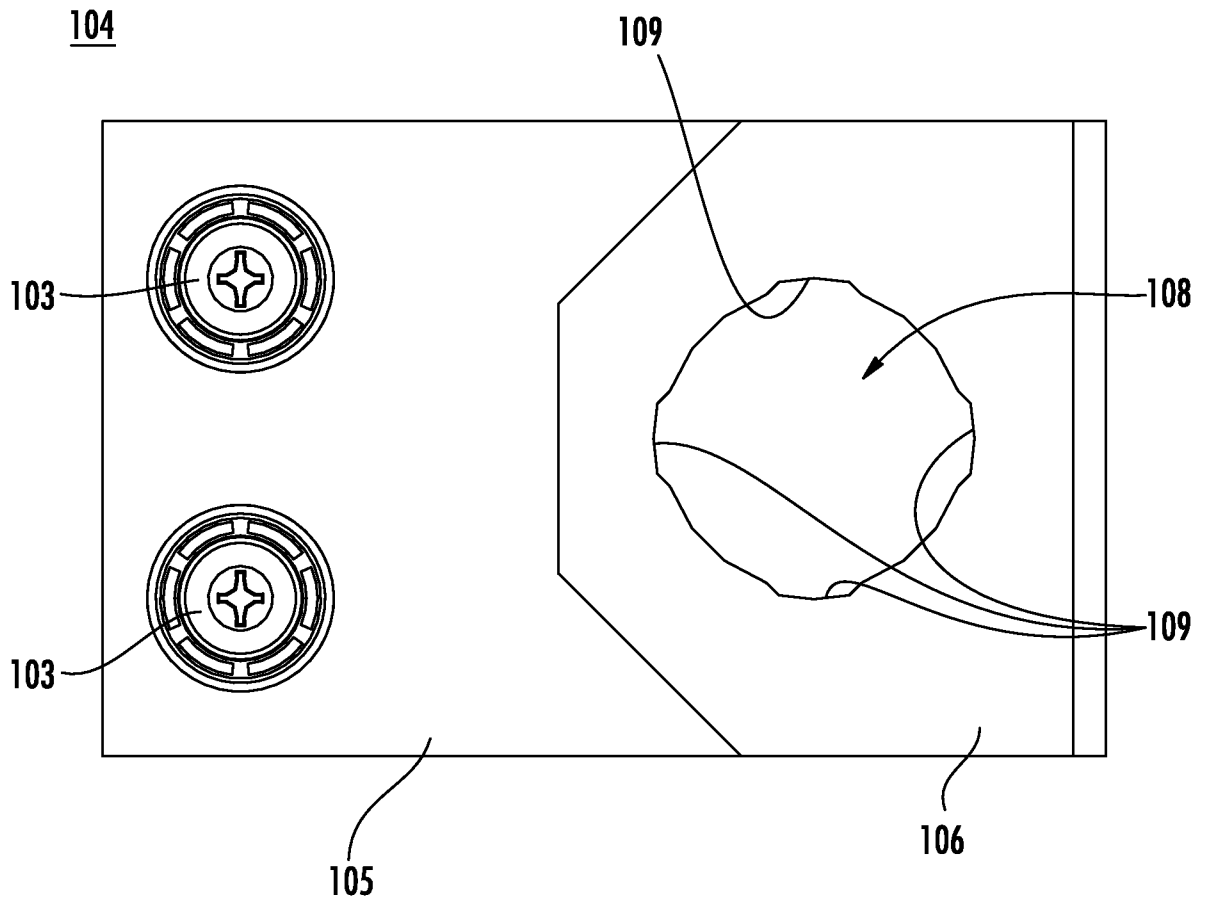


FIG. 8

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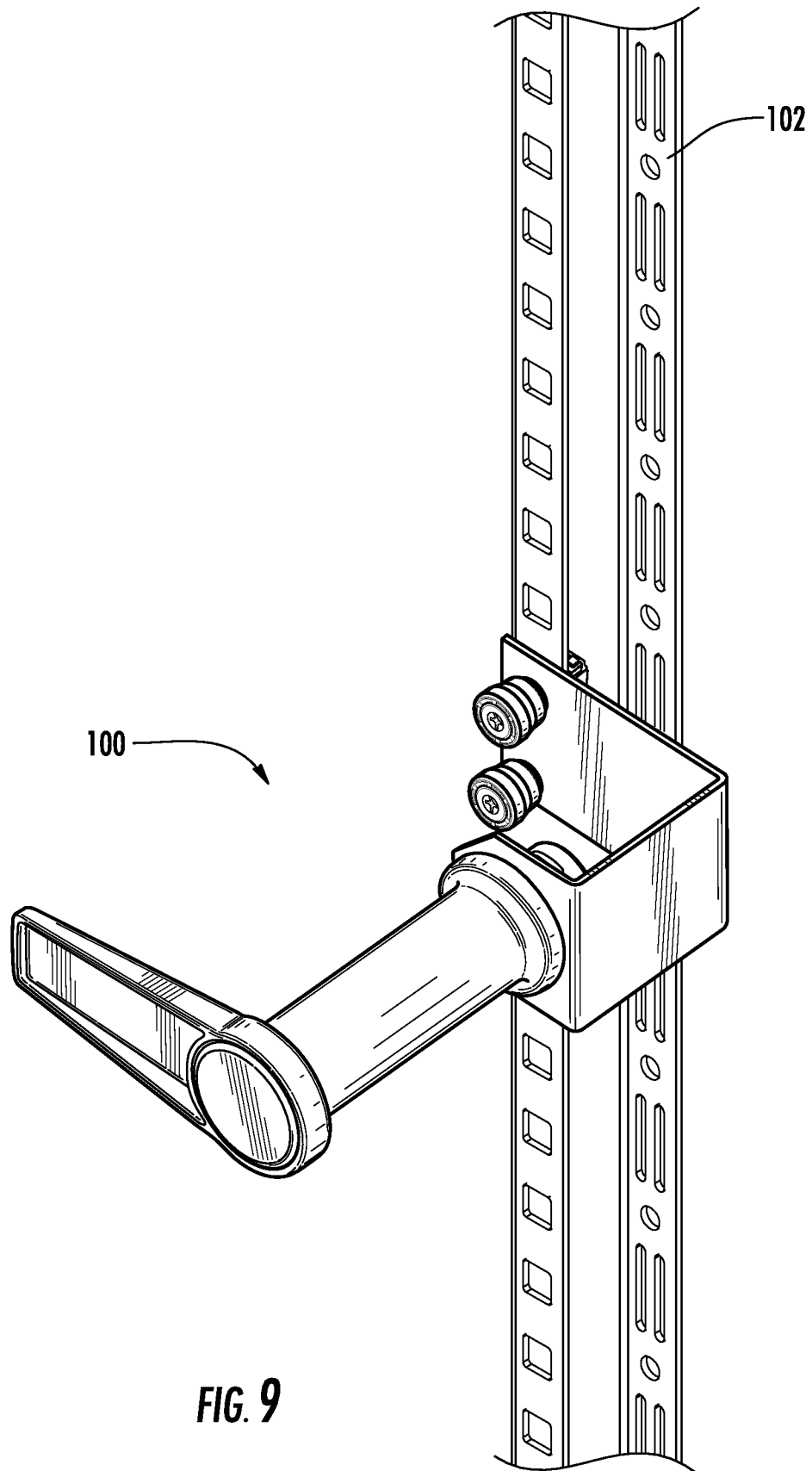


FIG. 9

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100

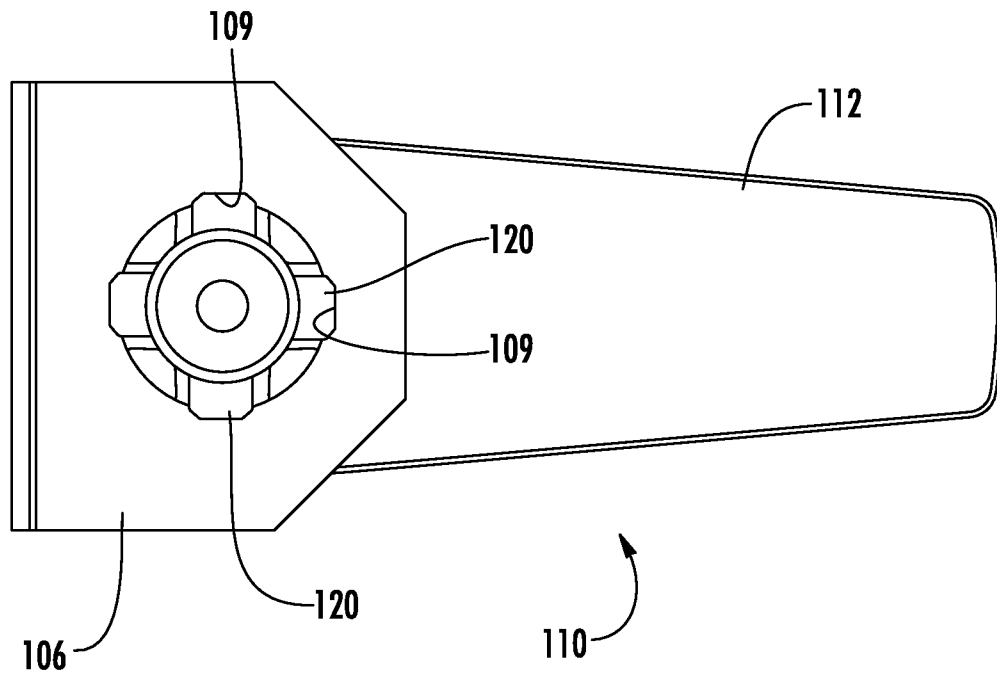


FIG. 10A

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110

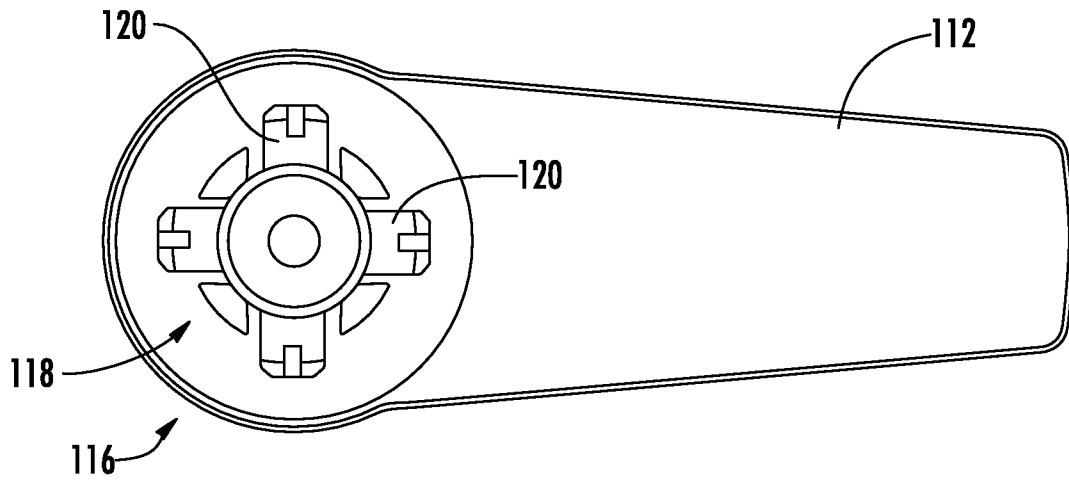


FIG. 10B

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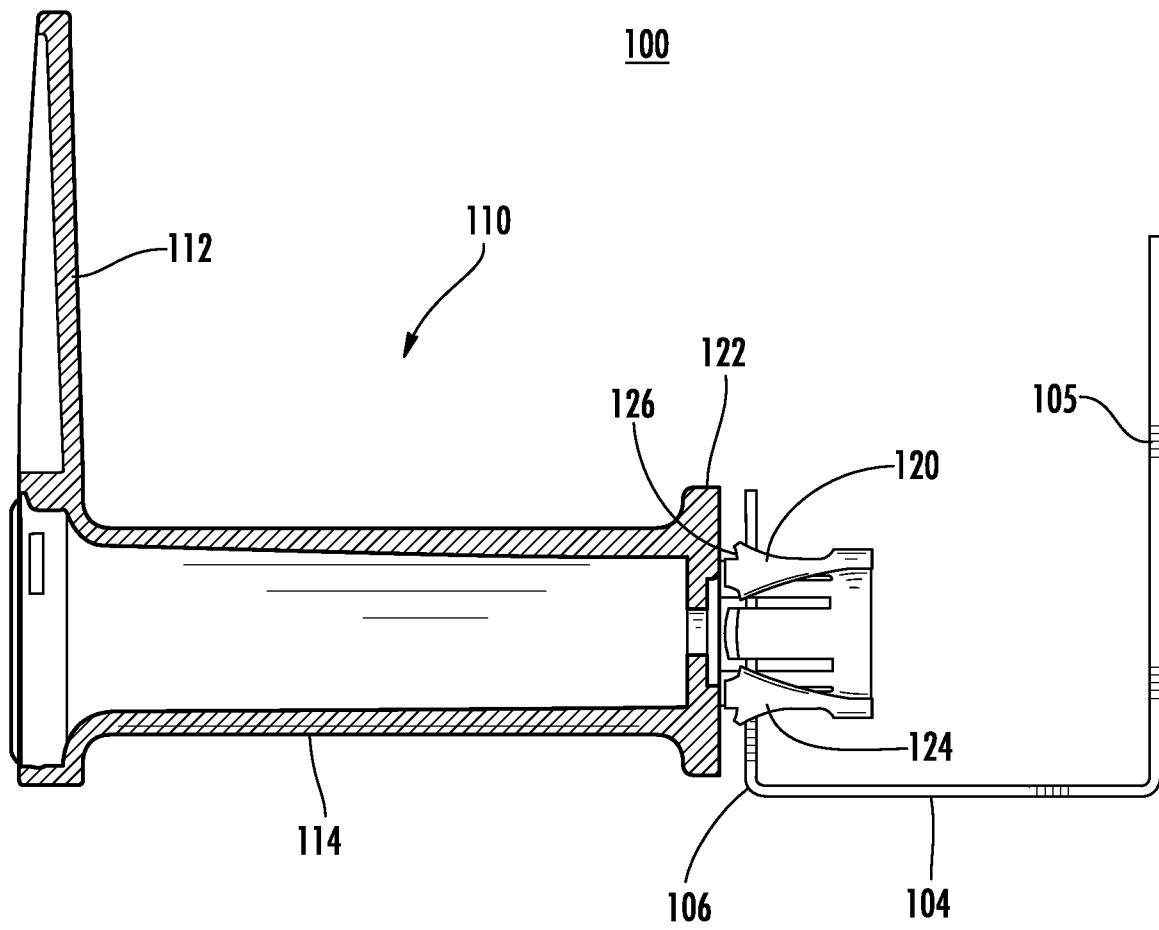
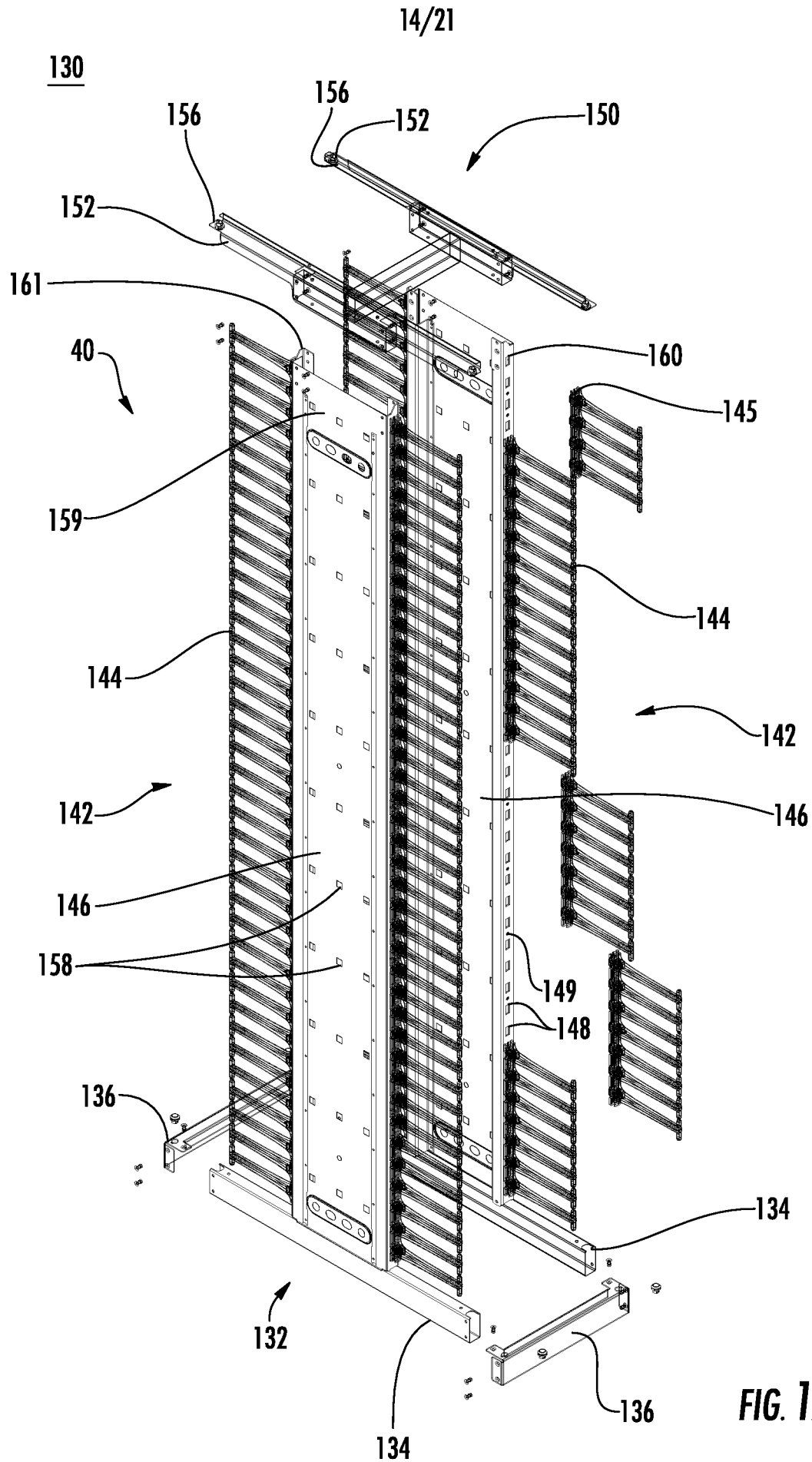


FIG. 11



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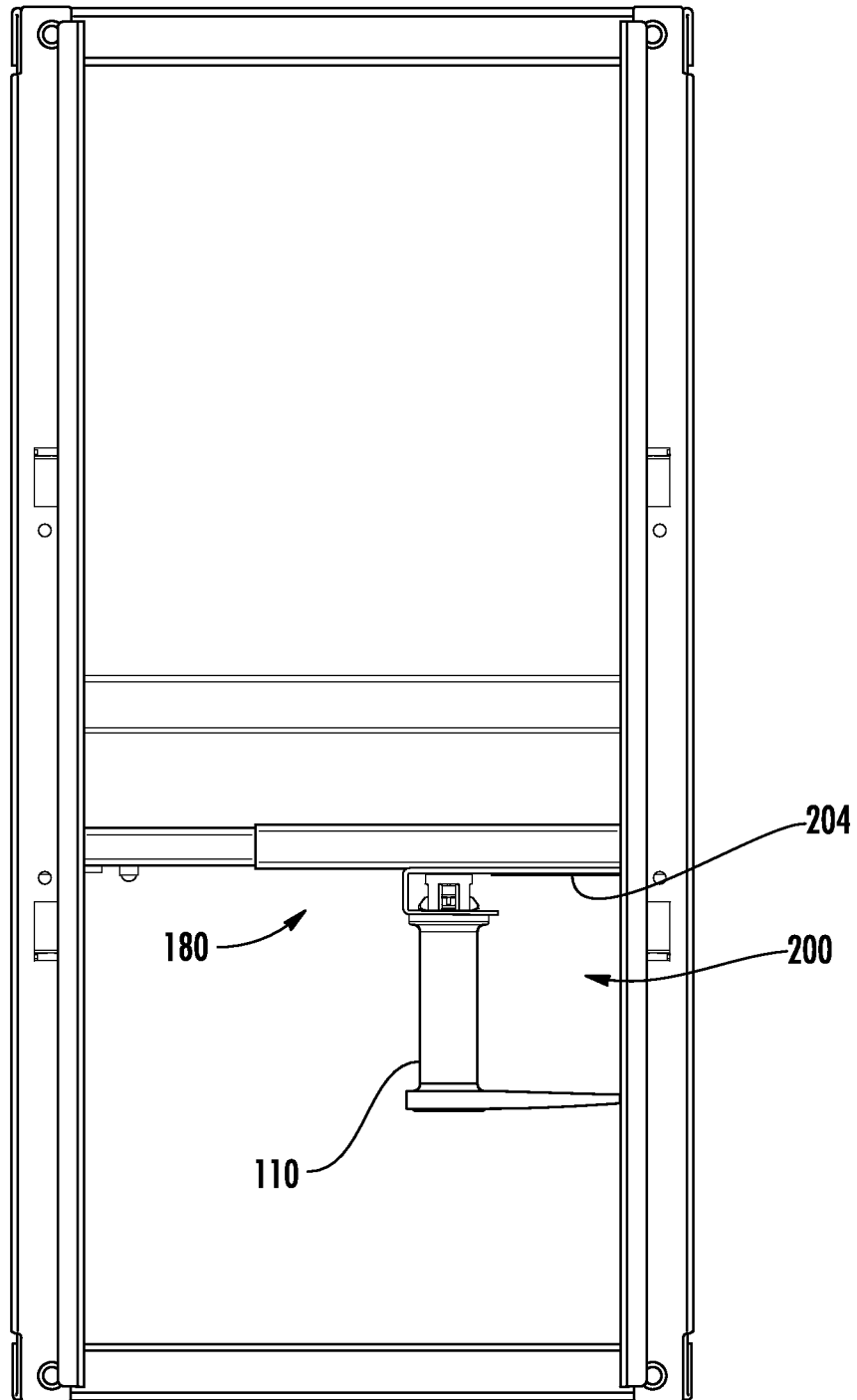


FIG. 13

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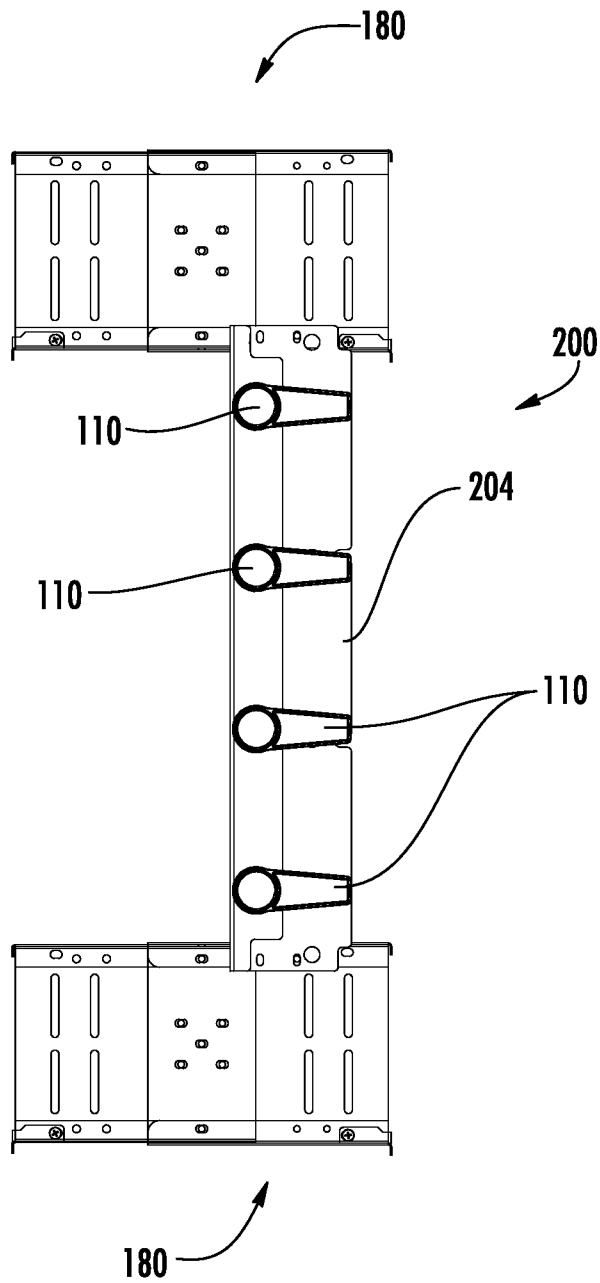


FIG. 14

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200

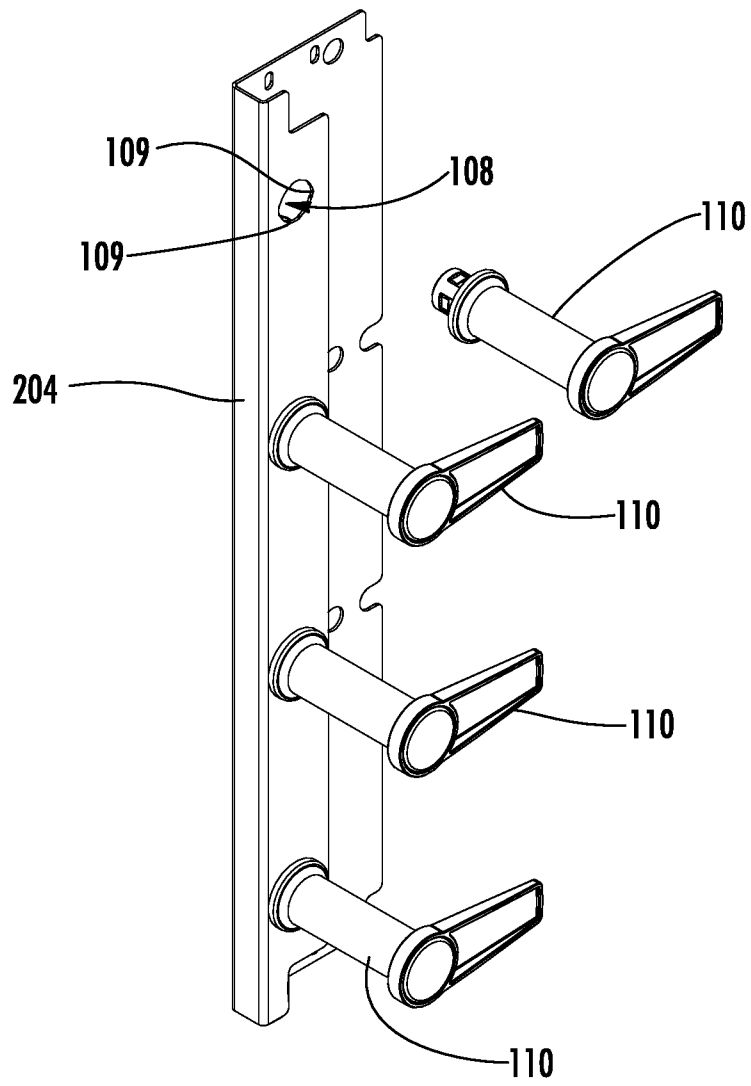


FIG. 15

200

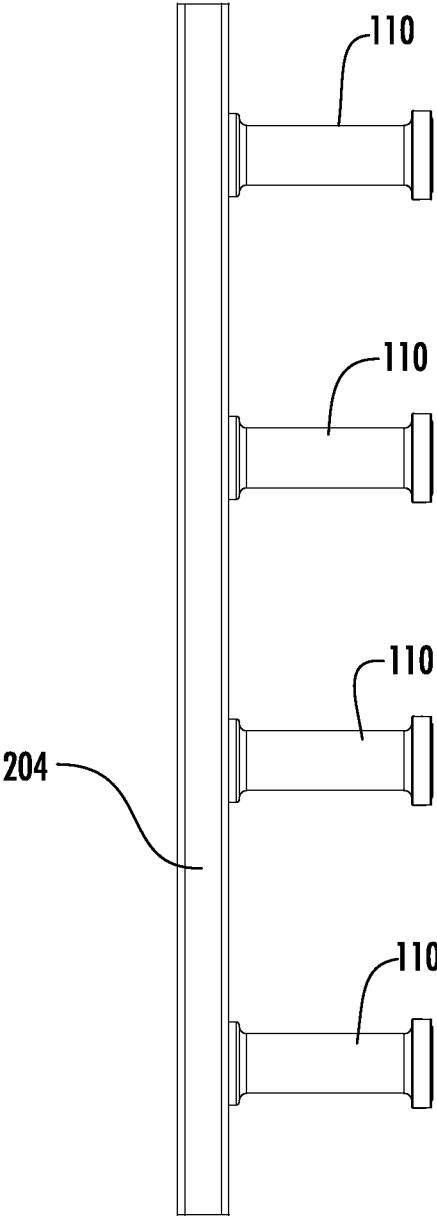


FIG. 16

200

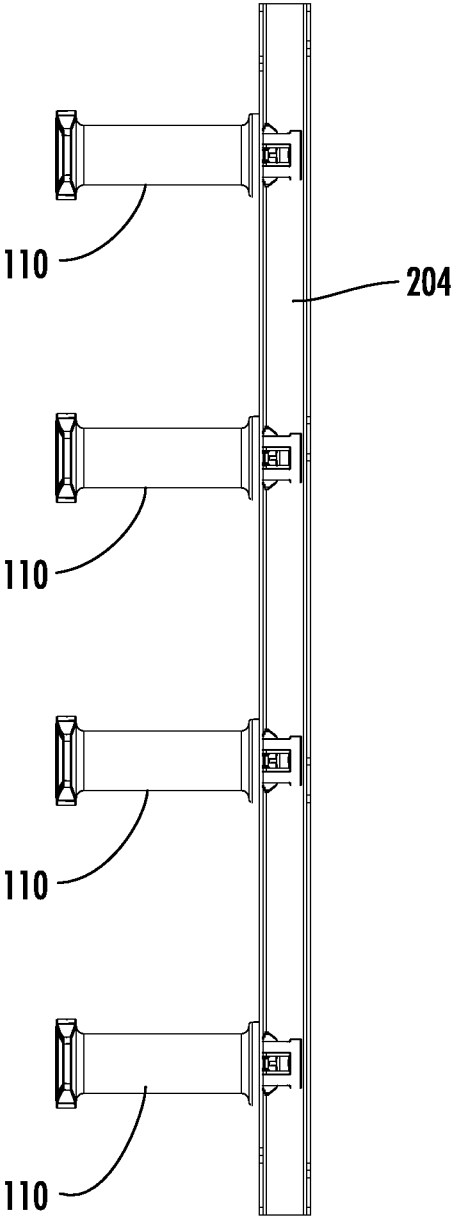


FIG. 17

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200

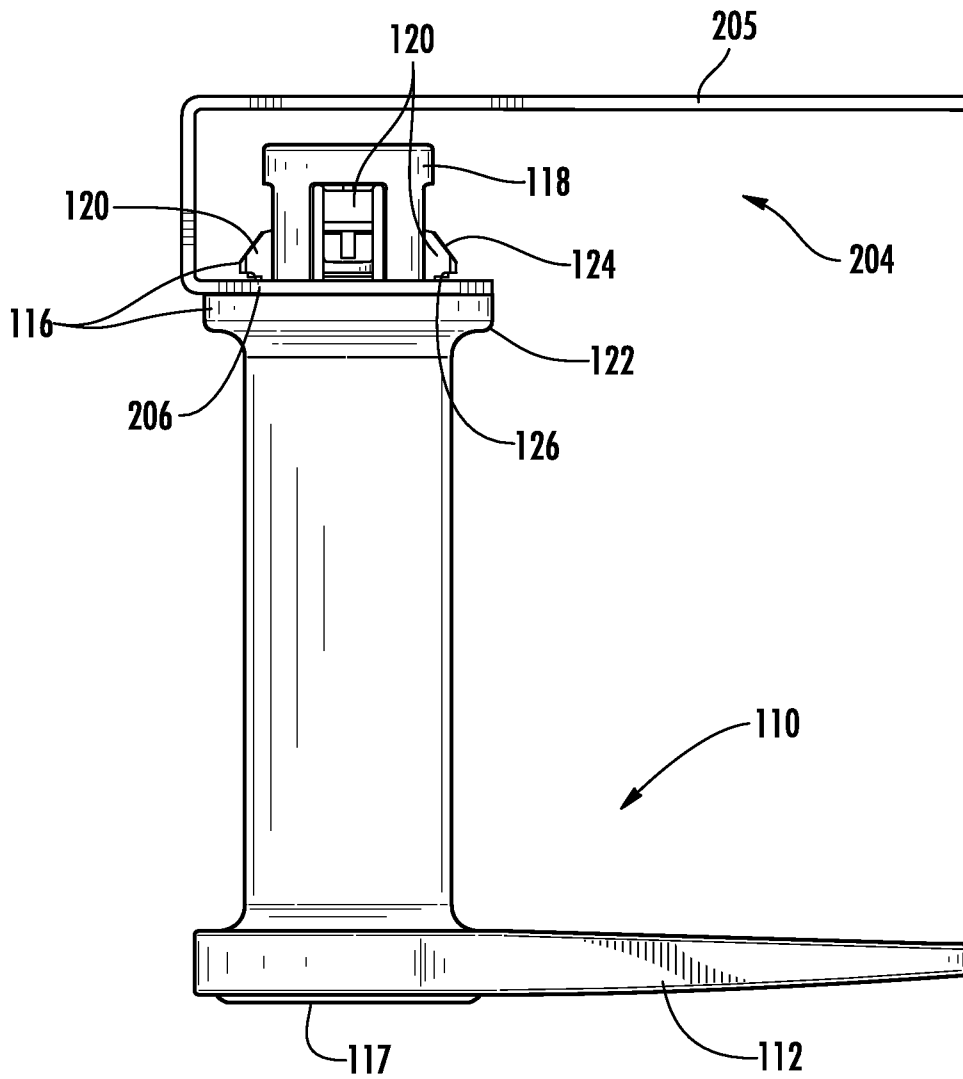


FIG. 18

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204

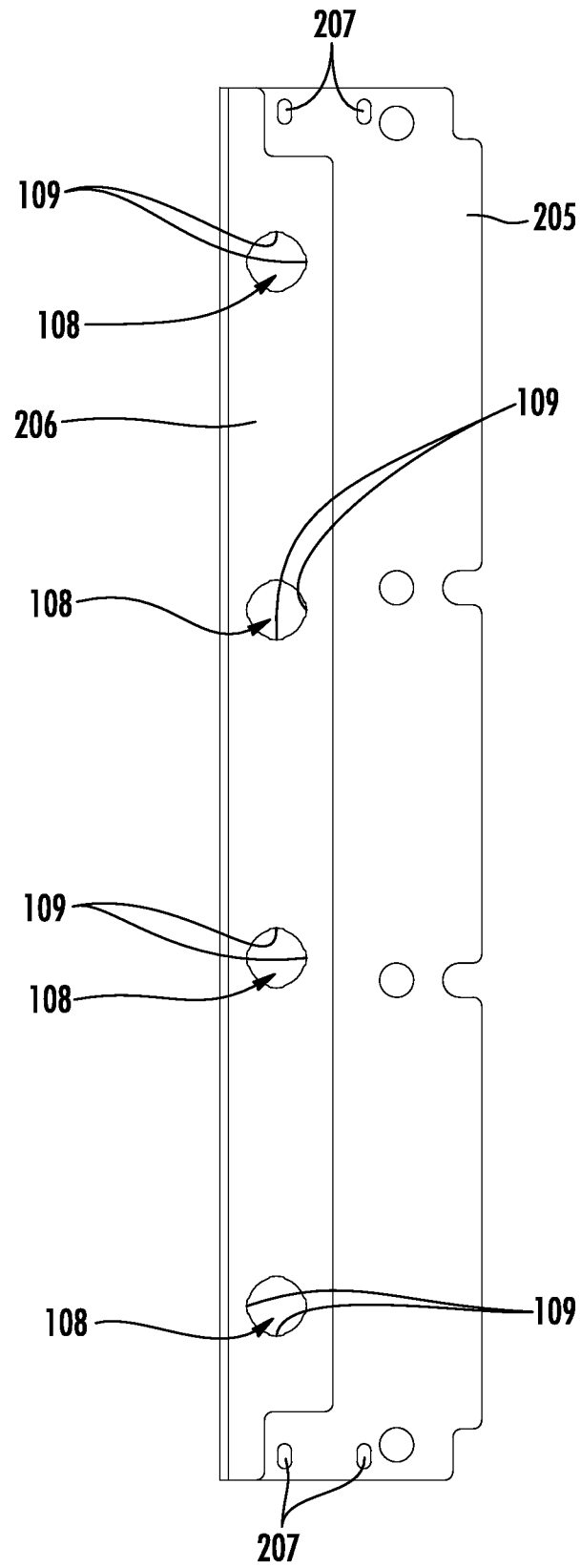


FIG. 19