

Fleet Profile & Specs

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At USA Truck, a range of driver, equipment and maintenance initiatives are streamlining operations, improving retention and lowering costs

Comprehensive

As one of the nation's largest over-the-road truckload carriers, USA Truck is constantly on the lookout for ways to make life on the road less stressful and more productive for the approximately 1,750 drivers it employs. In many cases, that approach pays other dividends for the fleet as well.

For many years, for example, USA Truck provided its drivers with a transponder-based weigh station bypass system. "We understood that weigh station bypass offers drivers valuable time savings," says Martin Tewari, president of USA Truck's trucking operation. "Since our drivers are paid by the mile, anything that can help them stay on the road longer means more money in their pockets."

While the transponder-based system did provide a weigh station bypass capability, USA Truck found that managing transponders in 1,750 trucks presented logistical challenges. For example, dispatchers had to route drivers into service facilities to resolve issues with the transponders, creating unnecessary downtime that negated any benefits. The

understandably frustrated drivers would occasionally put the device away rather than deal with those issues, which also sometimes led to lost transponders.

In November of last year, USA Truck implemented Drivewyze PreClear weigh station bypass service on all of its trucks, which are already equipped with the PeopleNet Fixed Mount Display.4 on-board computer platform.

"The PeopleNet units come loaded with the Drivewyze application, so we no longer need to manage transponders," Tewari explains. "They're also easier for our drivers because all they need to do to activate the service at the start of a shift is to log in using the device's touch screen."

Since activating Drivewyze, Tewari reports, USA Truck has realized substantial savings and improved operational efficiencies. In fact, the company estimates it has received an estimated \$1,360,000 worth of savings in driver productivity and operating costs. Included are about 2,500 hours worth of weigh station delays avoided in just the month of June, and

12,576 hours of productive drive time added to the operation from January to June 2016.

Saving fuel

"By limiting the number of required stops at scales and helping drivers keep trucks operating at our desired road speed, the Drivewyze PreClear weigh station bypass service has also reduced our fuel usage," says Chris Parsons, vice president of maintenance for USA Truck. "That lowers costs and it goes a long way toward helping us fulfill our goal of reducing our carbon footprint."

As a SmartWay partner, Parsons relates, USA Truck takes a proactive approach to fielding equipment that meets the EPA program's fuel efficiency objectives. In the fleet today are approximately 1,800 late model Freightliner Cascadia, International ProStar and Kenworth T680 tractors.

USA Truck also continues to reduce its fleet size to improve utilization. The carrier is in the process of retiring at least 130 tractors, including all

of its 2012 model year trucks. The company also plans to accelerate the retirement of approximately 220 of its 2013 model year tractors.

"The systematic elimination of equipment that is not needed to meet the demand for freight carrying capacity creates a smaller, more efficient fleet," Parson explains. "At the same time, we're also paying close attention to reducing controllable costs, particularly in maintenance."

"While we still operate several strategically located shops that focus on preventive maintenance," Parsons continues, "some of the initiatives we're pursuing as part of our focus on cost control involve transitioning from fixed to variable costs. In particular, we're closing four maintenance facilities and outsourcing approximately 80% of our direct repair and maintenance spend, including our entire mounted tire program."

In addition, Parsons reports, USA Truck has completed a restructuring of its road assistance program to reduce costs and increase reliability,

USA Truck Tractor Specifications

Model: 2017 Kenworth T680
Wheelbase: 224 in.
Engine: Cummins ISX ST2
Transmission: Eaton Smart Advantage
Driveline: Dana
Front Axle: Meritor
Power Steering: TRW THP60
Rear Axle: Meritor
Rear Suspension: Kenworth Airglide
Wheel Seals: Stemco
Brakes: Bendix front disc
ABS: Bendix 6S/6M
Automatic Slack Adjusters: Haldex
Collision Avoidance: Bendix Wingman ACB
Wheels: Alcoa
Tires: Michelin
Fifth Wheel: Holland
Air Dryer: Bendix AD-IS
Fan Clutch: Horton
Mirrors: Heated
Fuel Tanks: Dual, 100 gal.

approach



Martin Tewari
President,
USA Truck



USA Truck Trailer Specifications

Model: Great Dane Composite Plate
Length: 53 ft.
Landing Gear: Great Dane GD60
Suspension: SAF DuraLite
Oil Seals: Stemco
Brakes: Meritor; Haldex
ABS: Meritor WABCO
Tires: Bridgestone
Lighting & Electrical: Grote Long Life System, LED

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eliminating unnecessary call fees, and is making better use of engine diagnostics capabilities.

"We're also continually reviewing measures to leverage key supplier agreements and programs," Parsons adds. "Those programs will provide better service to drivers, further bring down maintenance costs and help us continually provide the best customer service possible."

A publicly traded company established in 1983 and headquar-

Filling Driver Ranks

While actively addressing driver retention needs with new equipment, specifications and other benefits and programs, USA Truck is simultaneously focused on recruiting drivers. One approach it is taking, for example, is to pay for 15 qualified applicants to complete a five-week Commercial Driver's License training program.

Announced earlier this year, the USA Truck Career Launch Program provides scholarships that cover the \$3,700 enrollment fee for the Commercial Driver's License Training Program offered through a partnership with the Universi-



ty of Arkansas Global Campus, Northwest Technical Institute, and Mid-America Truck Driving School. Recipients who complete the training program are given preference for job openings with USA Truck.

"This program provides people with little or no truck driving experience the opportunity to start a new career in an industry that is growing," says Heather Sprandel, a Global Campus affiliate. "The truck driving industry offers various career paths, excellent earning potential and outstanding benefits, so we are very appreciative of USA Truck's commitment to educate the community about careers in trucking and to get new drivers behind the wheel."

The five-week program is offered in day or evening classes, including 200 hours of combined classroom and behind-the-wheel training. The course is designed to provide students with the knowledge, skills and abilities to obtain a CDL.

"We are excited about this partnership and the opportunities it will provide," says Steve Brantley, director of Driver Recruiting for USA Truck. "Our industry is wide-ranging and diverse, and the transportation sector offers limitless possibilities. USA Truck is always looking for talented, hard-working individuals who are passionate about building a rewarding career in a growing industry that is vital to keeping our country moving."

tered in Van Buren, Ark., USA Truck provides a range of capacity solutions to a broad customer base throughout North America, including one-quarter of the Fortune 100 companies in the United States. The company's offerings include customized truckload, dedicated contract carriage, intermodal and third-party logistics freight management services. ▀



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