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Builders Transportation Co. is growing and providing exceptional customer service, cost effectively and efficiently

MEETING OBJECTIVES



Dwight Bassett
Chief Financial Officer

“Our goal,” says Dwight Bassett, CFO at Builders Transportation Co. LLC, “was to spec new trucks that are 2010-compliant, that help meet our CSA needs and have a lower operating cost. In the end, our dealer worked closely with us to specify the equipment we needed to meet those objectives.”

Family owned and operated since Frank Phillips, president, purchased the six-truck operation in 1961, Memphis-based Builders Transportation Co. is run today by Frank and his three sons, Frank Jr., John Paul and Gene, who serve as vice presidents. The 48-state flatbed carrier operates primarily in the eastern two-thirds of the U.S.

The Builders fleet of about 500 company-owned and owner-operator tractors and 48-ft. spread axle and 45- to 65-ft. extendable trailers hauls coil steel, wire products, structural and sheet steel, aluminum products, building materials, cast iron, steel pipe and machinery. Its customers include companies like Alcoa, American Cast Iron Pipe, Thomas and Betts and US Steel, among others.

Builders fields a late model fleet by trading tractors every four years. Recently, the carrier placed an order for 120 Mack Pinnacle model sleepers with EPA 2010-certified Mack MP engines. The new order, along with the purchase last year of 45 Pinnacle models, will shift Builders’ fleet mix to 50% Mack. Recent purchases have been both to replace older tractors and to add 10% to the fleet to accommodate growth.

Hands-on

“We took a hands-on approach in deciding where to turn for our new 2010 model trucks,” Bassett states. “Mack provided us with a demo vehicle so we could learn how its ClearTech SCR technology

operates. We worked closely with the OEM, including Jay Hoffman, Mack southeast region district manager, and our local dealer, Tri-State Truck Center, to spec a vehicle, set parameters and evaluate performance."

After testing Mack's SCR engine, Builders found that fuel mileage, reliability and performance power were all very acceptable. "The higher cost associated with the purchase price of the 2010 models and the need to use Diesel Environmental Fluid (DEF) made lowering operating costs a challenge," Bassett relates. "Tri-State Mack helped us spec a truck for improved fuel mileage. When the pilot truck arrived, we set the parameters in the Mack Vehicle Management and Control System, V-MAC IV, for maximum efficiency, and adjusted them as we pulled data from the ECM.

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"Today," Bassett continues, "we're getting about a half percent improvement in fuel mileage over our pre-2010 engines, which cuts our operating costs significantly. In the end, we configured a truck that would best meet our needs. The Mack SCR engine is delivering for us. We haven't had any issue purchasing DEF at Pilot truck stops and we have not had any problems."

Builders also did two other things to help improve fuel mileage, Bassett notes. First, its trucks are now equipped with Webasto bunk heaters so drivers can reduce idle time. Also, the fleet has installed Alcoa aluminum wheels that weigh 45 lbs., re-

Builders Transportation Tractor Specifications

Model: Mack CXU613
Wheelbase: 244 in.
Engine: Mack MP8, 415 HP
Clutch: Meritor/Sachs Twin Xtend
Transmission: Eaton Fuller, 10-speed
Driveshafts: Meritor 18N
Front Axle: Mack FXL, 12,000-lb.
Power Steering: TRW TAS65
Rear Axle: Meritor RT40145A
Rear Suspension: Maxlite air ride
Wheel Seals: Stemco
Brakes: Meritor
ABS: Bendix, with Road Stability Control
Automatic Slack Adjusters: Meritor
Parking Brakes: Haldex
Wheels: Alcoa aluminum
Tires: Goodyear 295/75R22.5
5th Wheel: Fontaine
Air Compressor: Meritor WABCO
Air Dryer: Meritor WABCO
Air Cleaner: Donaldson
Fan Clutch: Borg Warner Cool Logic
Starter: Delco 39MT-MXT
Alternator: Delco 35SI
Seats: Bostrom

ducing weight and improving fuel economy.

Satisfying drivers

Driver satisfaction was also important to Builders. To address that need, the carrier equipped each of its new Mack Pinnacles with Qualcomm's MCP 200 in-cab computing platform and Pre Pass Plus transponders, enabling drivers to safely bypass hundreds of weigh stations and pay bridge and toll fees electronically.

"We also added some new systems to prepare ourselves for CSA," Bassett says. "The Qualcomm MCP 200 unit, for example, features in-cab video training and has an on-board logging system that provides critical information, such as heavy braking, over speed and roll stability notification. The unit also provides MPG, idle, over rev, time in cruise and top gear data, which we use to coach our drivers on safety and fuel mileage."

The Qualcomm systems on Builders trucks also are integrated with the company's McLeod Loadmaster software. LoadMaster takes automated arrival and departure data or information from driver input to create updates for routes in progress. Hours-of-Service updates for each driver allow dispatchers to choose as-

Builders Transportation Trailer Specifications

Model: Great Dane Combo

Length: 48-ft.

Landing Gear: Jost A-400

Axles: Hendrickson Tapered Spindle

Suspension: Hendrickson AANT 23K

Oil Seals: Stemco

Brakes: Hendrickson Extended Service

ABS: Meritor WABCO Easy Stop Automatic Slack Adjusters

Tires: 295/75R22.5 Bridgestone R196

Lighting & Electrical: Grote Long Life System; LED lamps

signments and manage schedules more efficiently. Dispatchers also have quick access to ETA and out-of-

route data based on the actual positions of tractors.

Maintenance needs

Builders also pays close attention to the maintenance needs of its fleet. Gary Newman, director of maintenance, is responsible for daily activities in the fleet's Memphis shop.

"Our strategy is to perform preventive maintenance in-house and leave more complicated repairs to our Mack dealer," Newman explains.

"We also purchased extended warranties from Mack so most major components are covered for the 48 months we plan to keep our tractors in service."

Newman also notes that Builders' newest tractors are supported by the Mack MVASIST web-based service management platform and Mack OneCall Complete Care round-the-clock roadside assistance program. "We use MVASIST to communicate

our maintenance needs to Mack dealers, regardless of where our trucks are located," he says.

"All communication between Mack shops and our shop occurs through the platform," Newman continues, "which also provides an effective and comprehensive electronic paper trail. MVASIST lets us work together in real time with our service breakdown assistance providers to expedite repairs and maximize uptime."

Impressive growth

That leads to improved customer service, Dwight Basset adds, and has helped Builders Transportation Co. continue to grow at an impressive rate. "Our objective is to provide safe, outstanding service to our customers at the lowest possible cost," he states. "With the vehicle, operations and maintenance technologies we have today, we are more easily able to accomplish that goal." **FE**

J&P TRUCKING

MY MONEY'S ON DOUBLE COIN

J. A. Bates of J&P Trucking located in Iran, AL is proud of his company's performance record. "Our trucks are 98% on time," he says. One reason for that record is the tires he chooses. "Quality makes all the difference in the world," says J. A. After testing out a set of Double Coin tires, he was impressed with how they last even longer than some expensive brands. Now he buys Double Coin tires whenever his trucks need new tires. "It all boils down to cost per mile," says J. A. "Double Coin saves me money... and gets me there on time."

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DOUBLE COIN