

PRIDE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

Henderson Trucking

Henderson Trucking is ensuring efficient customer service and living up to its motto by working with suppliers and by using new service management technology to effectively handle on-road repairs



Mike Shumate
Director of Maintenance

Asked to define the biggest challenges he faces as director of maintenance at Earl L. Henderson Trucking Co., Mike Shumate is quick to provide one example. "With most of our equipment on the road, bringing our trucks back to the company shop for unscheduled repairs is not always an option," he says. "We have to find dealers to make repairs who are fair, have the ability to look at our equipment in a timely manner, and let us know quickly what the problem is and how soon it can be fixed."

Headquartered 70 miles east of St. Louis in Salem, Ill., Henderson Trucking is a 48-state hauler of temperature controlled and time sensitive freight. For the 30-year old company, continual growth has also meant a steady increase in equipment operating in its long haul and regional lanes. Today, the fleet includes 400 tractors and 550 trailers.

"To help ensure we have fewer breakdowns and to make sure we can make on-time deliveries for our customers, we have relatively short trade cycles," Shumate says. "Our current tractor trade cycle is 36 months and trailers are replaced after just 60 months of service. That means our average tractor is just 18 months old and trailers average two-and-a-half years."

Trusted network

For Henderson Trucking it also means that a majority of repairs are covered by warranty. At the company's shop, Shumate reports, the fleet's 25 technicians handle most warranty work under agreements with Freightliner, Detroit Diesel and Carrier Transicold. If a breakdown on the road does occur, though, the fleet turns to a trusted network of dealers.

"We try to do very little outsourcing," Shumate relates, "but as a service oriented carrier, customer satisfaction is our biggest concern. If a repair has to be made on the road, we need access to dealerships that can diagnose a problem within two hours of arriving at their shop. There have been many instances when we were told it will be two or three days before a dealer could look at

our equipment. We also need to work with service locations that can make repairs as quickly as possible, and do so at a consistent cost regardless of their location.

"Our operation often handles time sensitive deliveries," Shumate continues, "so having a centralized source of information about the status of over the road repairs and

Henderson Trucking Tractor Specifications

Model: Freightliner Cascadia

Wheelbase: 228-in.

Engine: Detroit Diesel DD15,
455/475 HP

Clutch: Eaton Solo

Transmission: Eaton FR-15210B

Driveshafts: Meritor RPL25/20

Front Axle: Alliance AF-12.0-3

Rear Axle: Alliance ART-40.0-4

Wheel Seals: Chicago Rawhide
Scotseal Plus XL

Brakes: Meritor LX500

ABS: Meritor WABCO, with
Traction Control/Roll Stability

Slack Adjusters: Meritor
Extended Lube

Parking Brake: Haldex Goldseal

Rear Suspension: Freightliner
Airliner

Wheels: Alcoa aluminum

Tires: Michelin XZA3/X-One

5TH Wheel: Fontaine 6000

Air Compressor: Bendix 360CC,
15.9 CFM

Air Dryer: Bendix AD-9

Air Cleaner: Donaldson

Fan Clutch: Kysor

Batteries: Alliance Group 31

Starter: Delco 39MT

Alternator: Delco Remy; 160
amp, 36 SI

Seats: Sears Atlas 70, Rolltek with
Air Bag

Fuel Tanks: 100-gal. RH,
80-gal. LH



Henderson Trucking spec's Freightliner Cascadia tractors and Utility 3000R refrigerated trailers.

managing repair estimates is crucial. That also lowers costs and ensures that we don't have a dispute over what was agreed upon during start of the repair process. This history of repairs also aids in addressing parts warranty failures."

For Henderson Trucking, a large part of meeting this challenge is a new Decisiv Service Management Platform (DSMP) offering for fleets. The carrier has been one of the first fleets to use a pilot version of Decisiv's newest platform to communicate with Freightliner locations. Henderson is currently using the platform with two Truck Centers Inc. locations, Freightliner sales and service dealers in Troy and Mount Vernon, Ill.

Time saver

"One of the biggest advantages of the Decisiv platform is that it provides better record keeping capabilities on estimates, parts and repairs," Shumate says. "In addition, all communication between us and the dealer is handled via e-mail so there is no question about what we told

the dealer to fix, or the labor and parts cost we are paying. At the same time, if the dealer finds another problem with the truck they can send us an e-mail with an estimate and we can decide if we are going to make that repair. This is a real time saver."

DSMP Fleet Basic is designed to support communications between Henderson and service locations using a transaction portal through which all information and communication flows. The platform is used to create, negotiate and approve service write-ups efficiently and provide a permanent record of the transaction.

Fleet managers that adopt DSMP Fleet Basic receive immediate notification of service transactions as they occur, and are able to view service write-ups, any notes provided by the service location, results of the inspection and any related documents or photos of damaged parts. Participating fleets can also create an electronic profile with contact, operational and vehicle information and provide a unique vehicle

inspection to be performed when a vehicle arrives at a participating service location.

Henderson also has been testing a version of DSMP called Fleet Plus that will provide carriers with a consolidated dashboard to view, negotiate and authorize all work on their vehicles. Decisiv will offer this enhanced service to fleets for a transaction-based usage fee later this year.

Expanding on the transaction portal, the Fleet Plus service provides fleet managers with a consolidated view of all their service transactions in real-time. Other features include the ability to send a service request to a selected location with information from the fleet profile along with comments from the fleet manager or breakdown center. In addition, this

Henderson Trucking Trailer Specifications

Model: Utility 3000R Reefer

Length: 53 ft.

Refrigeration Unit: Carrier
Ultima

Landing Gear: Holland Binkley
Model 51000

Axles: Hendrickson

Suspension: Hendrickson HKANT
40K, wide track

Oil Seals: Stemco Discover

Brakes: Hendrickson; ABEX 931-
162FF linings

ABS: Haldex

Slack Adjusters: Haldex
Automatic Tire Inflation

System: Meritor

Tires: Michelin 445/50R22.5
X-One XTE

Wheels: Motor Wheel, steel

Lighting: Grote LED

version of DSMP will provide historical view and search capabilities of all vehicle service events.

"We are very excited about the Decisiv platform and look forward to using it with additional Freightliner dealer service locations," Shumate says. "It's not only truck dealers that should consider adopting this technology. We'd also

like to see our trailer, refrigeration unit, auxiliary power unit and independent repair shops offer a similar program."

TEAM EFFORT

At Henderson Trucking, maintenance management processes are handled by a dedicated team of professionals. Mike Shumate, director of maintenance, began his career with the company by completing on-the-job training while a technical college student. After graduating in 1990, he was hired by the carrier as a technician. Since then, he has risen through the ranks and was named to his current position three years ago. Today, he oversees all maintenance and repair activities for the fleet along with Phil Mallet, who handles on-road repairs, Bud Mulvany, parts manager, and Andrea Monroe, maintenance assistant.

Meeting needs

Henderson Trucking also works closely with suppliers to meet needs in its own shop. "We have an extensive parts inventory to make sure we cover everything that might be required to perform preventive maintenance and make repairs on our tractors, trailers and refrigeration units," Shumate notes. "We also work with Truck Centers in Troy, Ill., Gateway Industrial Power, a Carrier Transicold refrigeration unit service location in Collinsville, Ill., and all of our parts vendors to provide training for our technicians.

"We believe that our suppliers are essential in helping us meet our customer service obligations," Shumate concludes, "by offering quality products at a fair price, providing warranty coverage, ensuring parts availability, offering training programs, and supporting us as we meet the challenges we face. Without that support we could not live up to our reputation with customers as a first-class operation." **FE**



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