



## Kenworth Bridging the Gap: Heavy Hauler Totes 205-Foot Girders for Seattle Viaduct Replacement Project

### Kenworth T800s Provide the Power To Handle 254,000 Pound Loads

SEATTLE – When Cliff Bates drives across most any new bridge in Washington state, chances are his company had a hand in its construction. And, when he watches news reports on progress of multi-billion dollar bridge and tunnel projects, such as the Washington State Route 520 floating bridge connecting Bellevue and Seattle, and the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement project, which includes an underground tunnel, Bates knows he’s building the future.

“We’re very busy right now,” he said with a smile. As president of V. Van Dyke Inc., a Seattle-based company specializing in oversized loads, the phone is almost always guaranteed to ring whenever larger girders are required to move inside the state. “We have the equipment, 18 Kenworth T800 heavy haulers, and trailers to move the biggest of loads. Contractors know they can count on us to deliver safely and on time. We’ll even go out of state to move steel girders. We were involved in transporting 64, 115-foot long girders for the superstructure in the Mike O’Callaghan – Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge, which opened two years ago and overlooks the Hoover Dam.”



Cliff Bates is president of V. Van Dyke Inc. which is a Seattle-based company specializing in oversized loads. The company’s fleet includes 18 Kenworth T800s.



In business since 1949, V. Van Dyke recently went even bigger and longer – hauling 205-foot concrete girders, weighing in at 254,000 pounds to support the Alaskan Way Viaduct Replacement project. The 18 girders moved span the Atlantic street crossing, directly across from two sports arenas – Safeco Field (Seattle Mariners), and CenturyLink™ Field (Seattle Seahawks). “Geography and where the piers had to be placed drove the size of the girders, which were the largest we’ve ever seen,” said Bates. “But the huge girders represent only part of the project, as we’re working on a half-mile long overpass that takes Highway 99, over railroad tracks, to Atlantic Street and into the tunnel. For the rest of the job, we’re moving 160-foot girders – a bit more pedestrian.”



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But, it's the 205-foot girders that made the project so challenging, said Bates. "We had to develop a new trailer system to handle not so much the length, but the weight," he said. All told a front trailer, with 18 wheels, connected to the fifth-wheel and cradled the front of the girder while a rear, driveable trailer with 32 wheels maneuvered the back of the load. The back was maneuvered by a driver in the cockpit of the trailer, which looked akin to a vehicle out of a Mad Max movie.

To haul the girders, manufactured by Concrete Tech of Tacoma, V. Van Dyke used a pair of identically spec'd Kenworth T800s with 550-hp engines driven through 18-speed transmissions. Heavy duty is the name of the game with two drives and one pusher axle, each rated at 46,000 pounds. The front axles were rated at 20,000 pounds.

"With minimal hills to navigate and basically a straight shot of a drive on Highway 99 from Tacoma to Seattle, the T800 had plenty of power to pull the load," said Bates. "We were fortunate that the only corner we needed to navigate was near the Port of Tacoma where we picked up the girders. The only tricky part was running the 16-foot tall load between traffic signals. There wasn't a lot of room for error and there was a lot of pressure for the rear driver to navigate a straight line."

To mitigate traffic concerns, a police escort tripped stoplights for V. Van Dyke so they could pass through unencumbered. The girders were moved at dusk with loads leaving Tacoma between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. "Still that's pretty early and there was traffic out there, but we needed to get the girders to the job site so they could start putting those in place at night when they didn't tie up much

traffic. All told, we made the 30-mile move between cities in about an hour and a half."

According to Bates, Van Dyke has been a devoted Kenworth customer for decades. The company recently purchased two more Kenworth T800s, through Kenworth Northwest – those feature 600 hp engines, driven through 18-speed transmissions.



"We've been running the T800 for as long as Kenworth has been making them," Bates said. "We don't have a trade cycle – many of our Kenworth heavy haulers have more than a million miles. They just stand the test of time, are durable and comfortable. We're a true believer that if it's not broke, don't fix it. With our T800s, we have no reason to try anything else."

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