



Kenworth Dealer Rod French: Making a Lasting Difference at Iowa State University

OMAHA, Neb. – Say the word “tornado” and people in Omaha, Neb., head for cover. But, when a cluster of Cyclones recently showed up in Omaha, those same people welcomed their arrival. Appearing at Kenworth of Omaha were representatives of the Iowa State University (ISU) Cyclones athletic department, along with Iowa State president, Dr. Steven Leath.

According to Rod French, owner and dealer principal for the Kenworth dealership (which also has locations in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, and Rock Island, Ill.), “it’s always a privilege and honor to host ISU to meet our customers and employees at our dealership,” French said with a smile. “We’re old friends.”



From left, Iowa State University’s Blair Danner, assistant director of development; and Frank Nogel, senior associate athletics director for external relations; present an autographed football, basketball and banner to Rod French.



Iowa State University (ISU) President Steven Leath, along with ISU’s athletic director and key head coaches, recently visited Kenworth of Omaha and Rod French, its owner and dealer principal. From left are Kevin Jackson (men’s wrestling), Fred Hoiberg (men’s basketball), Bill Fennelly (women’s basketball), Rod French, Christy Johnson-Lynch (women’s volleyball), Athletic Director Jamie Pollard, Paul Rhoads (football coach), and ISU President Steven Leath.

Actually, very good and long-time friends, as French and his Kenworth dealerships have been helping support the University for 30-plus years.

Every year, the University sees French in the stands at Iowa State football games, but it also sees him in brick and mortar. Seven years ago, Rod and his wife Connie made a significant gift to Iowa State, creating the Rod and Connie French Athletic Academic Center.



Iowa State University President Steven Leath (seated) and Cy the Cyclone, the university’s mascot, are all smiles while enjoying a new, aerodynamic Kenworth T680 during a special event hosted by Rod French, a major Cyclones sports fan and financial supporter, at his Kenworth of Omaha dealership.

“It’s an incredible academic facility for students (nearly 30,000 attend Iowa State), and it’s the first thing the University shows to prospective students and athletes during their campus visit,” said French, who has been a Kenworth dealer since 1968.

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“I’ve been supporting the University for a long time and when I leave this earth, I want it to be a better place. If the center makes the life and the experience at the University better for the students, then my donation was worth every nickel,” French said.

According to Leath, “it is the continued support from alumni and friends that helps Iowa State University achieve outstanding success on the playing field and in the classroom.

“Our top priority at Iowa State is to educate young people,” Leath said. “The generous support that Rod and Connie French have given to Iowa State University is helping us achieve this goal. Their giving is making a direct impact on the academic success of our student athletes. This past year the Graduation Success Rate of Iowa State University student athletes was the highest in the Big 12 conference. And over half of the Iowa State University student athletes had a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.”



Paul Rhoads, Iowa State University head football coach, likes what he sees of the Kenworth T680.

President Leath has lofty goals for Iowa State University as he begins his tenure as President. According to Leath, “for Iowa State to reach its full potential, it will require a team effort to provide the university with the resources necessary to achieve what I believe our faculty, staff and students can do. The state legislators, individual donors and corporate partners should follow the example provided by Rod and Connie French in their generous support of Iowa State University.”



Cy the Cyclone, Iowa State University mascot, flexes his muscles to indicate an appreciation of the power of the new Kenworth T680.

During the visit to Kenworth of Omaha, Leath was accompanied by Iowa State Athletic Director Jamie Pollard and head coaches Paul Rhoads (football), Fred Hoiberg (men's basketball), Bill Fennelly (women's basketball), Christy Johnson-Lynch (women's volleyball), and Kevin Jackson (men's wrestling). The group had an opportunity to see the new, aerodynamic Kenworth T680.

Kenworth Truck Company is the manufacturer of The World's Best® heavy and medium duty trucks. Kenworth is an industry leader in providing fuel-saving technology solutions that help increase fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. The company's dedication to the green fleet includes aerodynamic trucks, compressed and liquefied natural gas trucks, and medium duty diesel-electric hybrids. Kenworth is the only truck manufacturer to receive the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Air Excellence award in recognition of its environmentally friendly products. In addition, the fuel-efficient Kenworth T700 equipped with the low-emission PACCAR MX engine was named the 2011 Heavy Duty Commercial Truck of the Year by the American Truck Dealers. Kenworth's Internet home page is at www.kenworth.com. Kenworth. A PACCAR Company.