



DLM Trucking Marries Love of Farming with Trucking Operation

Utilizes Fleet of Kenworth T680 76-inch Sleepers Powered by PACCAR MX-13 Engines in Produce Hauls to Southern California

SUNNYSIDE, Wash. – David Messmore has always liked to travel and experience new beginnings. Twenty years ago, four generations of his family decided to move from Oxnard, Calif., to Sunnyside, Wash. This remote spot in south central Washington would be home to a 200-acre farm and the four generations of Messmores would work the land growing grapes, asparagus and apples.

“It was Dad’s dream to move up here and have a farm,” recalled Messmore. “We had a successful trucking company down in Oxnard – DLM Trucking – but he wanted to follow his heart, start a farming operation with our entire family, and see if trucking would also work up here.”



David Messmore is president of DLM Trucking, which operates 27 Kenworth T680 76-inch sleepers.

It has, and then some.

Continuing with a customer base already developed in California, and using its own trucks to move its produce down to southern California, other farmers quickly took notice and began coordinating loads. “It grew from there and today, we have 35 trucks a week, nearly all Kenworth T680s, headed down to California with refrigerated trailers,” said Messmore, who serves as president of the company. His dad, Larry, is semi-retired, but still helps run the company; his brother, Danny, runs the farm. “Those trucks join 35 more we use for in-state heavy haul and flatbed curtain trailer loads to haul agricultural products.”



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At the beginning, Messmore said he and his dad were always traditionalists when it came to the iron they drove. “We had always liked the ‘large cars’ – the big hood with lots of chrome and lights,” said Messmore. “But when the price of fuel began to climb and California started implementing the mandate for fuel-efficient trucks, we had to look at something more fuel-efficient. After doing our homework, we determined the Kenworth T680 was the truck to try.”

The reefer fleet now has 27 T680 76-inch sleepers powered by the PACCAR MX-13 engine rated at 455 hp and driven through automatics. Messmore said the decision has been paying off in spades. “The fuel economy is tremendous. We’re getting 1 to 1-1/2 mpg better with the T680s and that means more than a \$400,000 a year in fuel savings for us,” he said.



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While improving fuel economy was a top criterion in selecting the T680s, which were purchased through Kenworth Northwest – Yakima, Messmore also was candid about the need for a truck that gave drivers excellent comfort. “I grew up around trucks,” he said. “I started sweeping floors at our shop when I was a kid, then when I was 21, I began driving up and down the I-5 corridor. So I knew truck driving wasn’t an easy occupation. It was important for us to have a truck that kept our drivers comfortable.”



According to Messmore, offering a generous pay package and benefits can get the company only so far when it comes to attracting and retaining drivers.

“We have some guys that have been with us for 10 and 15 years, but the average is around 3-1/2 years,” he said. “We always have run PACCAR equipment, but these new T680s are the best trucks we’ve ever seen. There has been a huge boost in driver comfort. The one-piece windshield is just great for visibility and we can stand comfortably in the cab and sleeper. We spec’d the swivel chair and fold down work desk, plus have refrigerators and microwaves on board. Our drivers absolutely love the trucks and how comfortable they are. Other drivers are taking notice and calling to see if we have any openings. We now have a waiting list of drivers – that’s a good problem to have.”

John Clayton, a 20-year veteran behind the wheel, came to work for DLM about a year ago and said “hands down, the T680 is the nicest truck I’ve ever driven...and I’ve driven a lot of brands.

“When I signed on with DLM, I was interested in their runs to California, but I was also interested in driving the equipment they were offering,” Clayton said. “Driving a quality truck is a big deal to me. With the T680, I almost forget I’m driving a

big rig – the T680 is more like a motor coach. It’s so smooth and quiet you have to remember that you have a load behind you.”

Clayton said the sleeper and space between the seats is impressive on the T680. “Before I used to eat all my meals at truck stops – I couldn’t wait to get out of the truck. But with a microwave and the comfortable living arrangement, along with the folding desk on the T680, I load the refrigerator before I head out and eat my meals on board. My monthly food budget is about 1/3 of what it used to be, and I’m eating healthier.”

“I’ve heard that from other drivers as well,” said Messmore, who still gets behind the wheel and makes deliveries from time to time. “It was a great investment to give the creature comforts of home to our drivers – they’re out four to five days at a time and spending more time in the rigs, versus always eating out. They’re saving money and they’ve been very appreciative.”



With a trade cycle of four years, or 500,000 miles, DLM typically utilizes a fair market value lease through PACCAR Financial. “My dad began working with PFC a long time ago and we still work with that same finance person today,” Messmore said. “They’ve always treated us right. They’ve been loyal to us and we’ve repaid that by being loyal to them. From Kenworth to Kenworth Northwest to PACCAR Financial, all three have been phenomenal to work with. They’ve treated us with respect and have helped us grow.”

Kenworth Truck Company is the manufacturer of The World’s Best® heavy and medium duty trucks. Kenworth’s Internet home page is at www.kenworth.com. Kenworth is a PACCAR company.