



New Mexico Department of Transportation Utilizes Kenworth T470s To Keep Costs Down

ROSWELL, N.M. – The town of Roswell, N.M., is famous for the unexplained. For the New Mexico Department of Transportation (DOT), however, everything is crystal clear when it comes to the excellent performance of their Kenworth T470s.



Shown is one of the Kenworth T470s operated by the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

Roswell is known for housing a top-flight transportation department. District 2 of the New Mexico DOT covers the state's southeast corner and some 7,756 miles of road, mostly rural. The district handles 1,200 pieces of equipment – 200 of which are Class 6-8 trucks.

The district's latest trucks are Kenworth T470s purchased from Inland Kenworth – Albuquerque and put into service about a year ago. The eight Kenworth T470s, a mix of single and tandem axle-trucks, run 10-foot blades and feature 5-to 10-yard dump bodies with salt spreaders.

“These T470s were among the first Kenworths in our fleet,” said Tom Melendez, equipment manager for the New Mexico Department of Transportation's District 2. “We had a multi-vendor award from the state, so we had the opportunity to pick the trucks that would work best for our operation. I had my vehicle inspector join me in looking over the trucks and we picked everything apart. After we reviewed everything, and took into consideration the long-life cycle these trucks would encounter – more than 12 years – we decided the Kenworths would do the best job.” The district also purchased six high-hood tandem axle T800s last year outfitted with 12-foot plows and 10- and 12-yard dump bodies with salt spreaders.

“Our budgets aren't increasing, but our responsibilities are – that means we have to hold onto our equipment longer. We felt it was worth paying a little more up front because we're expecting more – more durability and reliability – to give us trucks that will pay us back over the long haul. So far, the trucks are doing just that,” said Melendez.

According to Melendez, the Kenworth T470s are spec'd with PACCAR PX-9 engines, most with 330 horsepower and driven through automatic transmissions. “Some operations call for a smaller truck and that's why we spec'd some of the T470s with single axles and five-yard dump bodies. For bigger jobs, the tandem axle allows us to handle a 10-yard body.”



Bigger than a Class 7 truck and smaller than a Class 8, the T470 is available in GVW ratings from 33,000 to 68,000 pounds. The New Mexico DOT spec'd 14,600-pound front axles (ratings are available from 12,000 to 22,000 pounds), and rear axles at 23,000 pounds (single rear axles are available from 21,000 to 30,000 pounds, and tandem rear axles from 40,000 to 46,000 pounds).



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With full-parent rail extensions providing maximum resistance to bending movement from one end of the rail to the other, the T470 supplies a solid and durable mounting platform for snowplows, hydraulic pumps, winches, and front stabilizers. Like all Kenworth models, the cab of the T470 is constructed of aluminum, which makes it resistant to corrosion and rust.

While most of the country fought bitter cold and feet upon feet of snow, Melendez said District 2 skirted most of the nation's wrath this year. "We were fortunate – we made out okay," he said. "Typically we'll have, on average, 10 to 15 snow days per year where the plows are in action."

In the summer, road repair and patching, plus fire duty come into play. "Our guys flat out love the Kenworths," Melendez said. "Inside, the cab space is so much better than they were used to; the ride as well. They've told me there is no comparison to what they were operating before."

In between road repairs, the Kenworth trucks were used in fire-fighting duties. "Last year was a bad one for fires in our area," Melendez said. "We used the Kenworths to move fire-fighting supplies, plus dirt to build berms."

With spring now replacing winter, Melendez said the trucks are transitioning into road repair. "We're never idle," he said. "Our crews will be out patching roads soon – keeping the pavements smooth for our district citizens."

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.