



Kenworth T680 and 500-hp PACCAR MX-13 Engine Spell Success for Alpha Transport

New Standard Spec Takes Fuel Economy Leap, Saves Weight

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – “I haven’t been this excited about truck specs in a long time.”

Those are the words of Adam Lindsay, vice president of Salt Lake City-based Alpha Transport.

“Our newest spec saves weight, provides nearly a 20 percent boost in fuel economy in our tanker fleet and a 15 percent bump in our freight fleet, and has our drivers raving about the comfort,” Lindsay said. “We drive 4.2 million miles per year, and each 5 percent jump in fuel economy gives us a 1 percent gain to our bottom line, so you can see why I’m so excited.”



The truck earning Alpha Transport such significant benefits is the fuel-efficient Kenworth T680 matched with the PACCAR MX-13 engine and driven through an Eaton UltraShift® PLUS 13-speed transmission.



PACCAR MX-13 Engine



Alpha Transport operates a 52-truck fleet with 40 trucks dedicated to fuel hauling and the remainder in general freight and flatbed operations. Most of its business is in Utah and Idaho, but the company also serves all the western states. The company began operations in 1953 as Johnson Oil Company before becoming Alpha Transport in 1990.

Earlier this year, Alpha Transport took delivery of its initial five Kenworth T680s. Its three T680 day cab fuel haulers are specified with the PACCAR MX-13 engine rated at 500 hp and 1,850 lb-ft of torque, while the two T680 76-inch sleepers use the same engine with 455 hp and 1,650 lb-ft of torque.

The results from those T680s were so impressive that Lindsay said the company decided to standardize on the T680 and 500-hp PACCAR MX-13 engine as trucks come due for replacement on their scheduled trade cycle. “Six more T680s with the 500-hp PACCAR MX-13 will come in soon, and we’re getting quotes for five more,” Lindsay said. “But we might reevaluate that cycle and liquidate our older fleet trucks faster – the fuel economy numbers could be too big to ignore.” The T680s were purchased through Kenworth Sales Company in Salt Lake City.



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Hauling 110,000 pounds GCW (gross combination weight) for a typical fuel delivery, the Alpha Transport's Kenworth T680 day cabs with 249-inch wheelbase support a tanker that typically carries 5,200 gallons, while also pulling a tanker normally filled with 6,800 gallons.

"We needed extra power for these weights, so that's why we chose the PACCAR MX-13 with 500 hp and 1,850 lb-ft of torque," said Lindsay. "That engine is replacing the 475-hp and 485-hp 15-liter engines we were running. The 500-hp PACCAR MX-13 engine has been great in pulling the heavy loads and we've been very happy. The drivers like that the engine is very quiet as well."

According to Lindsay, prior to the T680, the best a truck in his tanker fleet had ever gotten was 4.7 mpg. "With the heavy loads we're pulling and the mountainous terrain, and then in-city driving, we didn't think we could do much better. But the combination of the Kenworth T680 and the PACCAR MX-13 has already raised that to 5.5 mpg, and the trucks aren't even broken in yet. That's why we're so excited," Lindsay said.



"Being also able to lighten up by up to 2,000 pounds, compared to our W900s, is a big benefit as well," he continued. "We can haul more fuel, and then when we do return empty, that weight savings gives us better fuel economy." Among the biggest weight-savings contributors with the T680s are the PACCAR MX-13 (over a 15-liter engine), Kenworth AG400 suspension, and dropping from two fuel tanks to one for tank and fuel weight reductions.

For its general freight and flatbed operation, Lindsay said Alpha Transport is getting up to 8 mpg with its T680 76-inch sleepers "That's an improvement of about 1 mpg over our other tractors," Lindsay said. "The drivers really appreciate the T680's comfort and wide cab. The roomy space between the seats gives them great access to the sleeper. They like to use the swivel passenger seat to face the sleeper and the rotating fold-out table while the truck is parked." Paying attention to driver needs helps Alpha sport an enviable 15 percent driver turnover rate.

Alpha Transport has been on a growth spurt for the past six years. "Utah has been our main area of business but 6 years ago we went outside our comfort zone and opened a location in Idaho hauling jet fuel," said Lindsay. "That was a great decision and opened up new territory and customers for us. We haven't looked back and now plan to move into the Las Vegas market shortly."



Lindsay, whose father-in-law (Jack White) is a co-owner in the business, started with the company as a driver and has worked in dispatch and management. "I got the full scope of every piece of the business," he said. "We've made a progressive shift to be more efficient. And, you have to these days to stay competitive. We were big fans of the long-nose traditional Kenworth W900, but moved to the T660 and now the T680."

A long-time Kenworth customer, Lindsay said while the fuel economy and driver comfort attributes of the Kenworth brand provide savings now, Kenworth resale value also comes into play.

"When we're ready to buy new trucks and we let our dealer (Kenworth Sales Company) know trucks are coming in, 80 percent are normally sold before they hit the dealer yard. People know our trucks; how we maintain them. We always have gotten a premium for our Kenworths."

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.