



Kenworth T680 Produces Mountain of Savings for Mountain River Trucking

MOUNT AIRY, N.C. – Ever since he bought Mountain River Trucking Company and its fleet of four trucks in 2006, Pete Smith has always had a few litmus tests a new truck model had to pass if it were going to be added to his company's fleet.

"Is it a truck I personally would want to drive?" said Smith, owner and president of Mountain River Trucking. "And does it maximize the efficiency and productivity of my team drivers?"



Pete Smith, owner and president of Mountain River Trucking, is shown with one of his company's fuel efficient Kenworth T680s.

More recently with diesel fuel prices pushing \$4 per gallon, Smith said he's had to add one more question to that list: "Does it save money on fuel costs through better fuel economy?"

Mountain River Trucking's latest addition to its fleet – the Kenworth T680 with a 76-inch sleeper has certainly passed those tests and more, Smith said.

"I think the Kenworth T680 equipped with a 76-inch sleeper and Diamond VIT interior provides a driver with a very comfortable working environment," Smith said. "Obviously, Kenworth designed and built this truck with the driver in mind. Personally, it's just the sort of truck I would want to drive."



Mountain River Trucking has grown more than 16-fold as a result of the hard work of company drivers and Smith's careful management which has minimized downtime, reduced fleet expenses and increased driver productivity. The company now runs a fleet of 65 tractors and 98 refrigerated Utility trailers hauling less-than-truckload to full-truckload general freight and high-value loads such as pharmaceuticals coast-to-coast from the Carolinas to California.

Mountain River's trucks also back haul produce from California to the East Coast. Each truck is driven by a driving team that generally spends five days each week traveling from the company's headquarters in Mount Airy to the West Coast and back. Each driving team averages about 250,000 miles per year.



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When it came time earlier this year to replace the majority of his company's trucks with new trucks that provide improved fuel economy and meet his high expectations of driver comfort, Smith said no other truck came close to the performance and style of the Kenworth T680.



That's why Smith purchased and took delivery of 50 T680s in March to replace previous generation aerodynamic trucks. Smith also added side skirts and boat tails to his Utility trailers. Since then, Mountain River Trucking's average fleet fuel economy with the T680s has reached 7.6 mpg. That's up 1 mpg over his previous aerodynamic trucks.

"And that's up 35 percent, or 2 mpg, compared to where the company was two years ago, when we ran long-nose tractors," said Smith. "And, who's to say we couldn't go even more – a couple of our best drivers are getting 8.6 mpg driving with the T680. That's outstanding."

Smith closely monitors his fleet's fuel economy performance using a telematics system. Based on the company's annual mileage of more than 14 million miles and the cost of diesel at \$3.80 per gallon, Smith figures he'll save "big time" in fuel once the fleet is totally converted to T680s. While some of that enhanced fuel economy performance comes from the new trailer aerodynamics, Smith said he attributes a good portion of that anticipated improvement to the Kenworth T680.

Smith figures the savings Mountain River will gain from the T680's excellent fuel economy will more than pay for the additional cost of taking

delivery of 15 more Kenworth T680s with 76-inch sleepers a year early. Support from MHC Kenworth - Greensboro's sales, parts and service teams also played a big role in his decision to buy the T680s this year instead of next, he added.



Mountain River Trucking driver Mitch Dowell (above in the driver seat of a Kenworth T680), and his wife, Sherri (below in the bunk), are a husband-and wife driving team. They appreciate the comfort offered by the T680's premium Kenworth Diamond VIT interior.



Smith's drivers couldn't be happier about his decision to replace all of the company's trucks with Kenworth T680s.

"My drivers love the T680s," he said. "Since they drive in teams, they welcome the extra headroom and additional space between the seats that makes it easy to stand up in the cab and move into the sleeper. They also appreciate the quiet interior and additional storage space.

"I am looking forward to having an all-Kenworth T680 fleet. And so are my drivers," concluded Smith.

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.