

DRIVEN to be different



Energy Transportation Group continues to grow by providing innovative, reliable and efficient service solutions

While there are many examples in the freight transportation industry of trucking companies that found it advantageous to enter the third party logistics market, the history of Energy Transportation Group tells the opposite story. In 2007, Shawn Girard, CEO, and Michael Cinquino, president, launched Energy Logistics, a brokerage focused on offering new and innovative approaches.

“In 2010, after one of our largest clients told us that in order to continue working with them they’d need their own equipment, we bought a fleet of trucks,” Girard relates. “Then we decided to go all in and expand our offerings. Today, we are an asset-based carrier and a third party logistics services provider.”

Today, while the LaSalle, Quebec-based company offers 3PL services across North America through its Energy Logistics brokerage division, it also hauls freight in Canada and the U.S. with three asset-based operations. Included are Energy Express, a dry van truckload carrier; Energy Fresh Express, a refrigerated truckload and less than truckload operation; and Energy Transport USA, which provides U.S. and cross-border transportation services.

“Through our different offerings we are able to offer our clients a range of solutions,” Cinquino says. “It also allows us the opportunity to understand their needs, and to tailor our services to satisfy their supply chain requirements. There is a tremendous amount of upside for both parties when you are able to build successful relationships with your business partners.”

That win-win approach is evident throughout the operation at Energy Transportation Group. For example, according to Fleet Manager Brian Bujarsky, the company uses full-service leasing to help ensure equipment reliability and flexibility for customers. “With full-service leasing we don’t have the expense of service facilities, technicians and supplies, and with the support of a network of service

locations across North America our drivers are never stuck with a down vehicle,” he relates.

“That’s especially important in our Energy Fresh Express division, which hauls general freight or frozen goods to California and the western U.S. and returns with fresh produce to Quebec,” Bujarsky continues. “With produce having such a short shelf life, and the 6,000 mile-plus round trips taking driver teams six days to complete, our top priority is running reliable equipment.”

In 2019, Energy Transportation Group began shifting its full-service leasing business to PacLease Montreal. For its Energy Fresh Express operation it leases Kenworth T680s with 76-in. high roof sleepers and some T680 day cab models for local and regional shuttle operations as well.

While reliable equipment was the top concern for Energy Transportation Group, economics played a part in the decision to use full-service leasing as well. “That’s where lease terms come into play,” Bujarsky says. “PacLease created a contract with mileage requirements that met our business needs. It showed they had confidence in how well their trucks would hold up, and the preventive maintenance programs they had in place in order to keep the trucks running.

“They were also very proactive in

working with us on spec’ing, especially for fuel economy,” Bujarsky adds. “So far, we’ve seen our fuel savings increase by nearly 12%.”

Among the specs that are saving fuel for Energy Transportation Group are the powertrain and aerodynamic devices, including full fairings on both sides of the cab with integral steps on the driver’s side fairing for back of cab access. The T680s are also specified with Kenworth Predictive Cruise Control with Smart Coast, which boosts fuel economy by using topographical GPS to modulate cruising speed and shift points, and to put the truck in neutral after cresting a hill.

“Predictive cruise was totally new to our drivers, so we needed to educate them on the benefit of the system, and how the technology works,” says Melanie Simard, Energy Transportation Group’s safety and compliance manager.

“PacLease helped with that and helped our drivers understand the Kenworth Idle Management System. Even though we run teams, we still have idling a few hours a day when the truck is not moving and when it’s waiting to be loaded.

“The battery-operated HVAC system has helped lower idle time from nearly 25% to around 6%,” Simard continues, “and some of our drivers are down to one or two percent. That is a drop of about

95% in idling time. Now, our drivers are totally on board with saving fuel, and everyone wins because they’re rewarded with fuel bonuses as well. We also offer online and in-person training on safety topics, and we have several incentive programs that enhance safety by encouraging them to adopt safe driving behaviors.”

Investing in drivers pays dividends at Energy Transportation Group, Simard shares. “We spec our trucks to provide drivers with the comfort they require on long hauls, and with new and well-maintained equipment we have a great recruiting and retention tool,” she says. “The Kenworths project an image that helps with recruiting, because they say we’re a high-quality company running high-quality equipment.”

Technology choices are also made at Energy Transportation Group to positively impact operational processes, notes Michael Cinquino. “Once a business case is made for a new solution, we test it by its ability to help us analyze data and make better informed decisions. The data and analytics we have are what justify the investment.

“We also have robust training and development systems that assist in our processes,” Cinquino adds. “For example, our safety and compliance team focuses on working proactively with drivers by using ELDs as a communications tool.”

Energy Transportation Group has been proactive about the U.S. and upcoming Canadian ELD mandates, Cinquino says, and intends to remain fully compliant in both countries. “With the ELD restrictions, though, one major issue for us is parking across the U.S. Our drivers are trying to legally maximize the amount of mileage they run on a daily basis, but the lack of parking is a challenge we face.

“Driven to be different isn’t just a slogan,” says Cinquino. “It’s part of our DNA. We founded and named Energy Transportation Group to use our energy to put in place a business model focused on providing unparalleled service. It’s not enough to just get something from point A to point B. We strive to look for innovative and reliable solutions that can be integrated efficiently for us and all of our business partners.” **FE**

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