

Spreading success



Penske Logistics is one SmartWay Partner that definitely is fulfilling one of its commitments as a program member—"Inform contracted carriers about the partnership and the benefits of participating in the partnership." To that end, Vince Hartnett, president of Penske Logistics, said, "Our preference is to use SmartWay carriers as our first choice when possible and to encourage all the carriers doing business with us to join the program."

As an organization, Penske was dealing responsibly with the environmental issue even before energy sustainability became a prevalent consideration. Joe Gallick, the company's senior vice president of sales, said, "The efficient use of fuel for both us and our customers has always been in the forefront." It was, however, about three years ago when the company noted a heightened in-

doing many of the practices being recommended. For example, it's important that tire pressures be maintained at specified values. Our trucks are all serviced at Penske Truck Leasing facilities and the first thing they do when a truck comes in for fueling, a PMI or a minor repair, is a tire pressure check."

Since the fleet has earned the highest EPA Performance Score of 1.25, which represents outstanding environmental performance, it is certainly doing far more than simply checking tire pressures. Popple, said, "Our day cab engines are set to shut down after just five minutes of idling. Among other things, we make extensive use of route optimization software and require regular training on progressive shifting techniques for our drivers. We also use Espar heaters in road trucks up North.

The company also demonstrates

Although the fleet has not yet gone through a complete annual cycle after reducing road speed and engine RPMs, Popple estimates a fuel economy improvement between 3% and 5%.

He also understands that a big part in the success of the company's efforts is driver acceptance. He said, "It's very important that they buy into the program and understand what we're doing. I estimate that 25% of fuel economy improvement comes directly from drivers. Our guys rose to the occasion and understand the importance of energy sustainability."

The company believes that there is no better way to reduce its carbon footprint than to reduce miles on the road or the number of vehicles required to transport cargo. Popple said, "We look to help our customers with network redesign because the best way to reduce carbon output and NOx emissions is to reduce the amount of miles on the road."

Concern for the environment is a requisite for the selection of third-party carriers by Penske in its transportation management services. Gallick said, "We are asking our carriers to be SmartWay Partners so we can vouch to our shippers that we are using certified carriers as often as we can. We believe that we have to drive it for the program to be successful."

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terest in environmental issues from its customers. Gallick said, "They would ask about our participation in organizations regarding environmental sustainability and what we were doing in relation to the issue."

Getting involved in SmartWay was one of the first things the company did. And participation in the partnership allowed Penske to look at the environmental effects that go hand-in-hand with operating a fleet efficiently. Tony Popple, vice president of fleet operations, said, "When we first got started with the SmartWay Partnership and began to fill out the forms, we realized we were already

that among the more important aspects of participation in the partnership is a heightened awareness of how even small changes in operations or specifications can have large effects on fuel economy. Penske trucks had limits on both road speed and engine RPMs, but Popple asked if the values being used offered the highest efficiency. He said, "We went to Cummins. We went to Detroit Diesel and told them we wanted to improve our overall performance. As a result, we went from 65 to 63 MPH and from 1,800 to 1,650 RPM to take advantage of the 'sweet spot' in the engine."



By Tom Gelin
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