

AT A GLANCE

CUSTOMER

Custom Commodities Transport and Elliott Truck Line

LOCATION

Gilmer, Texas

CHALLENGE

Solving performance issues regarding comfort and longevity of trucks

SOLUTION

Roller bushings aid heavy-duty truck suspension by absorbing the impact of driving on bumpy roads

RESULT

Trucks stay in top shape for longer as roller bushings save wear on the suspension, tires and other chassis components

PRIMARY CHOICE FACTORS

Horton's roller bushings have a superior design in greasing for the longevity of their application along with Horton's reputation for providing timely responses and solutions

Family-Owned Texas Fleet Keeps Trucks Operating Longer and More Comfortable Using Roller Bushings



David L. Stevenson has spent the better part of his life in or around a truck.

Some of his family members hauled pipe out of the Houston area during the 1950s and 60s. Others owned a local Peterbilt dealership. Stevenson grew up working for his immediate family's feed and fertilize business before founding Custom Commodities Transport and later purchasing Elliott Truck Line.

"I grew to love trucks and all types of machinery that makes things happen. It can be a valuable asset to our economy," he said. It's no surprise, then, that Stevenson and his father Bill struck out on their own in 1985. Custom Commodities has grown from David hauling feed in a cab-over Peterbilt truck to a 225-vehicle force in the Texas trucking industry.

Today, Stevenson's team transports dry bulk like plastic pellets, and food-grade commodities including sweetener products that make their way into bakeries, restaurants and canning facilities.

Stevenson purchased Elliott in 2009 and added its liquid chemical and dry bulk capabilities to the portfolio. Like Stevenson, former CEO Vince Elliott started out driving on his own before transforming his one-truck livestock operation into a HAZMAT-approved hauling company.

"We've really enjoyed the opportunities to serve in these industries," Stevenson said. "I am so grateful ... [that] we've been afforded the opportunity to do this."

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Case Study – CCT Roller Bushings

Bill Stevenson, a World War II pilot, and his wife – who managed an engineering company in Houston – moved to Gilmer, Texas after the war. The town of about 5,100 sits 120 miles east of Dallas and 20 miles northwest of Longview, Texas. Gilmer is the birthplace of legendary musicians Don Henley of the Eagles, Johnny Mathis and Freddie King.

It's here that Stevenson developed his vision for a career in trucking. Between observing his neighbors and relatives' reliance on the category and moving feed and fertilizer for his family's operations, he was hooked.

Elliott Truck Line even used to deliver to the Stevensons' farm store. "This has always been my lifelong dream ever since I can remember," he said.

So as Custom Commodities and Elliott seek to sustain their workforce and maximize the life of their vehicles, Stevenson has come to appreciate how even the smallest detail can make a big difference. One example is the roller bushings he's deployed in his fleet.

Challenges

Cross-country trips for truck drivers is long and uncomfortable on the bumpy roads. The last thing they should worry about is how to make the drive more comfortable when the technology already exists. Additionally, long trips can wear and tear on the truck, requiring costly downtime and repair costs.

"Horton roller bushings have a superior design in greasing for the longevity of their application. You don't get all the grinding and hysteresis problems that come from other types of bushings, which bind after time. It actually seems to work better as time goes by. The investment [is] a true no-brainer."

Solution

Roller bushings aid a heavy-duty truck's suspension by absorbing the impact of driving on bumpy roads, gravel or other choppy surfaces. Unlike traditional spring and pin bushings, roller bushings aren't prone to seizing or contamination. They also last longer than newer rubber or polyurethane bushings. When it comes to roller bushings, "it's a true no-brainer," Stevenson said.

Results

Stevenson first tested out roller bushings on 10 trucks. When his drivers reported a more comfortable ride, the CEO wanted to try it out himself.

"I have a CDL and operate trucks from time to time, because I love to do it," Stevenson said. "I noticed how well they felt going down the road on the front ends; whether the trailer was empty or loaded, either way there was this really smooth ride."

Stevenson's family-run operation has its own in-house maintenance team, so he and his drivers are intimately familiar with the inner workings of their trucks. This means he can easily articulate how roller bushings take and hold more grease than other bushings, which can cause all kinds of issues

from binding to alignment issues to wearing out to just plain making the ride less comfortable.

"In my experience [from] working on trucks, Horton roller bushings have a superior design in greasing for the longevity of their application," Stevenson said. "It actually seems to work better as time goes by."

Horton's cooling systems come on heavy-duty International and Peterbilt trucks like the ones Custom Commodities and Elliott deploy, so Stevenson's connection to the manufacturer dates back to his early driving days. Trucks stay in top shape for longer as roller bushings save wear on the suspension, tires and other chassis components.

Most of Custom Commodities and Elliott's Peterbilt, International and Freightliner trucks today feature Horton bushings, with plans to add more in the coming months and years.

"We've always had extremely good response from Horton," Stevenson said. "It's always been very timely. When we reach out, they're very timely in offering us solutions, then providing the knowledge, also why something needs to be done in one form or fashion."



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