

Terpening Trucking commits to quality  
with Kenworth T800s

# Old School, New Fleet

Terpening Trucking, Syracuse, N.Y.

MODEL	T800
ENGINE	Caterpillar C-12
SLEEPER	38-inch AeroCab®
REAR AXLE	Meritor RT46-160P

**S**tep into the lobby at Terpening Trucking in Syracuse, N.Y., and you'll be treated to a pictorial history of the quintessential American trucking company.

There's a vintage, framed photo of the old original milk truck that Charles A. Terpening used when he started the business in 1916. Little did he know that through four generations of Terpenings and nearly a century later, trucks bearing the Terpening name would still be hard at work for a company that turned \$7 million in 2002 revenue.

Also on the wall are some of the locally built but long-since-discontinued Brockways that made up the Terpening fleet from the 1930s through the 1960s. And there's the tankers — milk carriers through the early years, then fuel and heating oil vessels when the firm sold off the dairy end of the operation in 1945 and recognized the potential of gasoline and heating oil transport. Petroleum products remain the company's primary focus today.

And there's one photo proudly labeled "First Kenworth -- 1973," displaying a W900 that ended up

providing 25 years of service for the company.

That truck marked a major milestone for the Terpening fleet, which has been almost exclusively Kenworth ever since. Today, 22 Kenworth T800 tractors pull gleaming Heil aluminum fuel tankers, comprising a high-tech fleet grounded in an old-school commitment to quality and business values that has proven to be a successful combination for Terpening Trucking.

## "A battle"

"That was a battle to get that first Kenworth," recalls Dick Terpening, who with brothers George, Jr. and Chuck head up the organization as it transitions into its fourth generation of leadership, Craig and Rich Terpening. "My father, George Sr.,

The Kenworth T800 is the latest in a long line of Kenworth equipment to serve Terpening Trucking.



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Dick Terpening displays a photo of his grandfather, the founder of Terpening Trucking, in the company's office lobby.

didn't think we could get parts if we needed them like we could from the Brockway plant 30 miles away.

"Well, the truck turned out to be so much better in quality that we barely needed parts. But the few times we needed them, we actually got them quicker."

The first Kenworth was quickly followed by another in the fleet and by the mid-1980s, Kenworth trucks were a mainstay at the company. The trucks' durability has proved to be a key factor in Terpening Trucking's success.

"We're not a high mileage fleet, but we're high wear and tear," says George Terpening, noting that his last group of trade-ins averaged 100,000 miles annually in six to seven years of service. "And these trucks are running day and night."

Twenty years ago, fuel delivery was primarily a 9-to-5, Monday-Friday operation, but the business

of selling gas has become a just-in-time proposition for the convenience stores and retail distributorships that make up Terpening Trucking's customer base. As a result, the firm's T800s work double duty — when one driver calls it a day, another is waiting to take the wheel.

Such duty is tough on trucks, but the Terpenings know they run a truck that can take such a workload.

"The thing we've noticed over the years is the Kenworth cab quality," Dick says. "With other trucks, it's door hinges, window cranks, fuel gauges — silly little things, really, but things that Kenworth has paid attention to."

"George showed me a hood hinge on another make of truck recently and this company used a half-inch pin. Kenworth's was seven-eighths of an inch. And it went all the way across."

"Other trucks we looked at, the mirrors are mounted to the door and they vibrated so badly you could barely see the trailer," adds Mike Chellis, the firm's safety director. "They get knocked loose after a while. But Kenworth mounts their mirrors to the cowl of the truck and they're anchored there."

Adds Terpening, "They're little things, but they make a big difference."

New Terpening T800s are spec'd with a 38-inch Aero-Cab® sleeper that has proved a perfect compartment for the various protective gear and logbooks necessary to haul hazardous materials.

"Even with the additional weight of the sleeper, we still end up with a very weight-efficient tractor," notes Chellis.

### Image conscious

Dick Terpening notes that with T800 tractors and aluminum tankers, he also ends up with a good-looking delivery package.

"Buying Kenworths is consistent with the image we project," he notes. "I think in this business, people form an impression of the product you haul based on their impression of your equipment."

"And our slogan has always been that we provide 'that little better service.' With their durability, reliability and the image they project, Kenworths have helped us do so."

In the lobby, there's a photo of a row of new T800s that help prove his point. 🚛



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