

Evolving Trailer Technology

Volume • 13 / Issue • 2



Reducing Fuel Consumption

Strategies Go Beyond Aerodynamic Features

Manufacturing a Smaller Breed

Pups Built With Sturdy Options of Larger Trailers

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

Technologies Can Help Address CSA Tire Concerns



Great Dane Trailers

CALENDAR

August

August 25 - 27
Great American Trucking Show
Dallas Convention Center
Dallas, TX

September

September 19 - 22
Technology and Maintenance Council
(TMC) 2011 Fall Meeting
Raleigh Convention Center
Raleigh, NC

October

October 15 - 18
American Trucking Associations (ATA)
Management Conference and Exhibition
Gaylord Texan Resort and
Convention Center
Grapevine, TX

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Quality Driven by Commitment

Dear Customer,

Delivering superior quality products that meet our customers' needs today and down the road is our relentless commitment at <location name>. By understanding your operation, we can help you find practical solutions that drive your business forward.

Up-and-down fuel prices make fuel-efficient strategies more important than ever in terms of operational costs. Great Dane's ongoing dedication to research and design has helped develop cost-effective solutions to help improve fuel economy, thermal efficiency and corrosion protection, and help enhance durability, appearance and ease of repair. These features and options can extend a trailer's life, meaning a greater return on the money you spend.

In this issue of Evolving Trailer Technology, you'll learn more about how reducing trailer weight can boost fuel economy, how Great Dane excels at pup trailer manufacturing and how tire technologies can help address Compliance Safety Accountability (CSA) standards.

To put some of what we can offer in perspective, one Great Dane customer shares how choosing weight-saving components in the design of their trailers helped boost payload, while another is supported by the company's extensive distribution network.

For quality customer support like this, we hope you will turn to us to help you find the best products for your operation that you can depend on today and for the long haul.

Regards,

Jim Pines
Executive Vice President
Great Dane Trailers

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Growing Again

Recent Gains in Vehicle Orders Point to Industry, Economic Growth

Through May of this year, orders for new Class 8 trucks in North America stood more than 165 percent above the level they attained during the same period in 2010. In April alone, a five-year high was recorded, and while May orders fell from that lofty mark, they still jumped 85 percent compared with the same month one year before.

Needless to say, pointing to healthy order and production levels for Class 8 trucks this year, industry analysts are optimistic. Boosting their outlook even higher are recent announcements by truck makers that they are adding employees and shifts, and expanding production to meet the higher level of demand.

Growth in commercial vehicle sales is not limited to power units. Orders for trailers have also been on an upward swing. This year, March orders across the industry were 21 percent higher than in February and 33 percent above January. Trailer shipments in the first quarter of 2011 were up 109 percent compared to the same quarter in 2010.

Orders for trailers grew for 18 consecutive months through the first quarter of this year, and were almost double the level seen at the same point in 2010. Looking ahead, order backlogs have continued to grow, setting the stage for solid performance in the remainder of 2011 and potentially throughout 2012.

While all trailer segments are on the upswing, dry van orders and sales are leading the charge. This is attributable directly to ongoing growth in demand for freight-carrying capacity in truckload markets. Currently, especially during the traditionally heavy summer shipping season, demand for freight-carrying capacity remains strong, leading many carriers to report being very close to, if not at, capacity.

Demand is also starting to surge for hauls of construction materials, traditionally handled on platform trailers. In the aftermath of the very severe 2011 winter, many long-planned building projects are only now able to proceed. It is a good possibility, therefore, that capacity in those markets will tighten even further this summer.

For tractors especially, some growth in orders is the result of pent up demand for replacement of aging fleets. In many cases, and especially in over-the-road markets, the economic decline caused carriers to keep vehicles in service longer than originally anticipated.

Other challenges to be addressed by fleets include fuel costs, which have soared in the past six months. Additionally, trucking companies are concerned about the costs of complying with recent government regulations related to the Hours of Service regulations and the effect of new safety compliance and reporting requirements. Not to be overlooked is the need to recruit, hire and train a steady supply of quality drivers.

In reality, freight tonnage, truck and trailer sales have all been growing for more than a year, serving as they always have as a leading indicator of economic growth and pointing to a more profitable and successful future. 🚛





Lowering Weight Reduces Fuel Consumption



With fuel prices at record levels, reducing fuel consumption is an ongoing challenge for trailer manufacturers and their customers. Already proving effective on Great Dane trailers are several technologies that can measurably improve fuel economy.

On that list are lightweight design features, including aluminum components such as posts and crossmembers as well as composite materials such as doors, liners and floors. Aluminum wheels and hubs, and lighter weight brake drums and suspensions offered by Great Dane can also cut weight. Wide-base single tires in place of duals can lower a trailer's weight as well, while lower rolling resistance from these tires can also improve fuel economy.

Using lightweight components to reduce empty weight in a trailer is a direct path to improved fuel efficiency. Lighter trailers by design are also capable of carrying heavier payloads, and by boosting a fleet's utilization, are a means of reducing fuel consumption.

At Great Dane, the recently redesigned Classic Truckload refrigerated trailer is a perfect example of how engineering and testing can trim excess weight to help save fuel without compromising strength and durability.

On the redesigned Classic Truckload, a bonded roof construction process is now employed to cut weight while maintaining optimal

thermal efficiency. Also, now lighter as well as stronger is Great Dane's exclusive ThermoGuard thermoplastic liner. The reefer interior liner, while strong, durable and puncture-resistant, can save up to 200 additional lbs per trailer.

While cooling unit technology advancements present additional potential for improvement in reefer fuel efficiency, minimizing cooling losses from refrigeration units is also essential.

ThermoGuard, which employs a revolutionary multi-layer design, saves fuel by assisting in maintaining the thermal efficiency of the Classic Truckload and other refrigerated trailer models.

By helping maintain insulation performance over the life of the trailer, the cooling unit will not have to work as hard to make up for degrading insulation performance. This advantage helps maintain excess cooling capacity, saving fuel by lowering refrigeration unit run-time.

Lightweight components, designs like the Classic Truckload and innovative ideas like ThermoGuard are just some of the many ways that Great Dane continues to help its customers find cost effective ways to cut fuel consumption. 



High Quality, High Value

Great Dane's Pup Trailer Design and Manufacturing Has Loyal Following

Built at three Great Dane plants, 28-ft pup trailers used by customers in single-, double- and triple-trailer configurations can represent as much as one fourth of the company's dry van production. Unlike its competitors, Great Dane does not build pup trailers as a means of filling production slots.

Designed and built specifically for the markets they serve, Great Dane pups are produced on dedicated assembly lines in the Brazil, Ind., Kewanee, Ill., and Danville, Pa. plants. The Brazil plant also produces 28-ft Classic and food service reefers, which can be fitted with a range of options including side doors and liftgates. Great Dane also builds pups with rail packages, including top and bottom lift pads and certified couplers, for intermodal carriers.

The majority of Great Dane dry freight pups are SSL models that share all of the attributes and quality inherent in their 48- and 53-ft counterparts. SSL 28-ft pups feature the same distinct interior lining consisting of a layer of 0.019-inch, 80,000-PSI galvalume steel over a rigid core.

The lining is four times more corrosion resistant than galvanized steel and will not wrinkle or easily crumple from repeated forklift impact. The puncture strength of the SSL lining is nearly six times greater than ¼-inch plywood and over four times greater than MDPE plastic.

Great Dane is also unique in its approach to pup trailer manufacturing by offering a complete line of dry freight 28-ft trailers, including composite plate, plastic-lined and plywood-lined versions. Also available on the pup trailers is Great Dane's unique PunctureGuard scuffbands and wall liners, the incredibly thin, extremely puncture-resistant material.

Options on the trailers include a variety of doors and rear frames, the same range of floors offered in other dry freight trailer models, and Double Dex, the innovative technology that uses captive beams within a recessed track to create a second deck without intruding into the cargo area.

Great Dane supports pup trailer customers with a line of converter dollies built in the Kewanee plant, a highly successful product that can account for 45 percent of the market.

Loyal customers of Great Dane dry freight pups include some of the best known and most successful less-than-truckload carriers operating in North America. Those companies typically purchase these highly versatile units by the hundreds and in some cases thousands. Interested in a long-lasting product, they continue to choose Great Dane pups. ➔



Tire Technologies Improve Safety and Lower Costs

One of the many regulatory challenges facing Great Dane customers is to meet the new rules included in the new safety scoring system from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) known as CSA (Comprehensive Safety Analysis). The CSA methodology covers seven BASICs (Behavior Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories), including one for vehicle maintenance. In that area, tires are a main focus, including those on trailers.

FMCSA has attached a violation severity number to be used in calculating a carrier's safety score. Depending on the specific tire issue, violations that carry a severity rating include a flat tire or fabric exposed; ply or belt material exposed; tread and/or sidewall separation, flat tire and/or audible air leak, cut exposing ply and/or belt material, and trailer or dolly tire tread depth less than 2/32-in.

An effective pre-trip vehicle inspection that includes tires should identify these high severity violations. At the same time, a leading violation that carries a severity rating is for a tire that is underinflated based on load. Tire technologies offered by Great Dane can help address and prevent this common problem.

Leading that list are tire pressure monitoring and automatic inflation systems, which can be added to new Great Dane trailer

specifications. These systems continuously monitor and adjust tire pressure by inflating or deflating tires based on changing environmental conditions, as well as balancing tire pressures at every wheel position.

Tire pressure monitoring and inflation systems draw from the trailer air supply to keep tires properly inflated by directing air to tires that fall below a preset pressure level. If ambient temperature increases, the systems will relieve air to prevent over inflation. Pressure protection valves in the systems ensure air is available for braking systems, and check valves in tire hoses prevent loss of air pressure from other tires. The systems also alert drivers with signal lights when a tire requires attention.

Commercial trailer tires are designed for long tread life and good fuel economy. Whether specified on new Great Dane trailers or retrofitted on existing equipment, automatic tire inflation and tire pressure monitoring systems have measurable benefits for fleets. Included is improved fuel economy from maintaining proper inflation pressures and enhanced safety by eliminating potential problems. Lower costs from these systems are derived from a reduction in labor associated with checking tires, avoiding costly breakdowns, lower fuel expenses and improved tread life. 

Bear Trucking, Inc.

Lightweight Dry Freight Vans

Carry the Load for Beverage Hauler



"Great Dane's knowledge of our industry was unequalled, they used that knowledge to design a trailer for our operation and to steer us away from specs that might have limited the trailer's durability."

Chris Moore
VP of Operations, Bear Trucking Inc.

To grow steadily, we need to field equipment that would make us more valuable to our customers," says Chris Moore, VP of Operations at Bear Trucking, Inc. "Choosing Great Dane to fill our trailer needs was not a mistake. It was a very positive decision on our part."

About half of the 5,000-lb increase in carrying capacity at Bear Trucking comes from lightweight trailer specs, Moore explains. The balance comes from lightweight specification for the fleet's tractors.

The aluminum sheet and post trailers added to the Bear Trucking fleet feature weight saving components in many areas. Included are aluminum for sidewall posts, spaced on 24-inch centers from the landing gear to the rear, roofs and roof bows, and a smooth finish dry cargo floor with a 12-inch wide threshold plate. There are also 4-inch aluminum I-Beam crossmembers on 8-inch centers in the bay area. The carrier also specs lightweight composite swing doors.

Bear Trucking is also specifying 445/50R22.5 Michelin XOne wide base single tires on Alcoa aluminum wheels on its new Great Dane dry vans, along with Webb aluminum hubs and Vortex drums. Hendrickson sliding tandem axles and air ride suspensions, and Stemco aluminum hubcaps are standard as well.

Another reason that Bear Trucking started converting its trailer fleet to Great Danes in 2010 was what Moore calls "the manufacturer's attention to meeting our needs and its ability to deliver what we needed at a competitive price. Great Dane's knowledge of our industry was unequalled," he adds. "They used that knowledge to design a trailer for our operation and to steer us away from specs that might have limited the trailer's durability. In this business trailers have to stand up for the long haul. Great Dane understood that our needs included a consideration of long-term value."

Based in San Bernardino, Calif., Bear Trucking has grown considerably. Founded in 1988 with one truck and one trailer, today the company operates 65 tractors and 225 trailers from two southern California locations. The common carrier services clients throughout 11 western states with regular hauls to the San Joaquin Valley, the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento areas, the Central Coast, Las Vegas, Phoenix and the entire Southern California market.

An exclusive beverage carrier for an Irwindale, Calif., brewery, Bear Trucking has focused on specifying lightweight dry vans that allow it to carry heavier loads than its competitors. Meeting those needs are 96 Great Dane 48-ft by 96-inch dry vans, including 80 new trailers added to the fleet in the past 14 months.

"A standard day cab tractor and 48-ft trailer for over-the-road use in the beverage market can haul about 48,000 lbs of freight," Moore says. "Our goal was to spec equipment that can handle loads up to 53,000 lbs and with Great Dane's help we have achieved that objective. Before we began buying Great Danes we would reach our maximum carrying capacity in weight before the trailer was full. Now we can put 5,000 more lbs of product on each load."

Rapid growth has also been a driving force at Bear Trucking. Of the 80 new Great Danes to join the fleet in the past two years, only 15 were replacements. The company also requires a high trailer-to-tractor ratio to have the ability to easily handle peak demand during the summer with drop trailer programs. Their drivers can then deliver multiple shipments per day in the southern California market.

"The lightweight Great Dane dry vans enable us to meet that level of demand by carrying more freight per load," Moore states. "During slower periods we can use the trailers to reduce the number of hauls, which means running fewer miles and realizing the cost and environmental benefits of burning less fuel."

"Over the next two or three years, as we continue to grow," Moore concludes, "we'll add to our ultra lightweight trailer fleet. Based on our current success with Great Dane, it is highly likely we will standardize on this trailer. With the support of our customers, we could replace the rest of our fleet and add 50-100 Great Dane trailers in this time frame."

EPA SmartWay Certification

Great Dane customers are boosting profits by using environmentally friendly technologies certified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay Transport partnership. The collaboration between the freight industry and government designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve fuel efficiency provides a list of technologies that can meet these requirements.



On that list are several items for trailers. Included are aerodynamic devices that help save fuel by reducing the tractor-trailer gap and streamline air flow, such as side skirts and belly fairings. Automatic tire inflation systems, which maintain proper tire pressure even when the trailer is moving, extend tire life, lowering replacement costs and reducing fuel consumption. Lower rolling resistance, which leads to improved fuel economy, can result from the use of wide-base single tires. Using components made of aluminum or other lightweight materials can reduce empty weight, improving fuel efficiency. On trailers, weight can be cut by specifying aluminum posts and crossmembers, and with components such as aluminum wheels and hubs.



Grote's Roadside Lighting Repair Kit

Emergency Kit Helps Drivers Make Roadside Repairs That Could Impact CSA Scores

Grote

The first name in vehicle safety systems®



Developed as a cost-effective solution to the problem of unpredictable lighting and wiring failures that occur on the road, the new portable Roadside Lighting Repair Kit from Grote Industries contains everything a driver needs to make a field repair and return to a service facility without needing costly roadside assistance or risking an inspection violation.

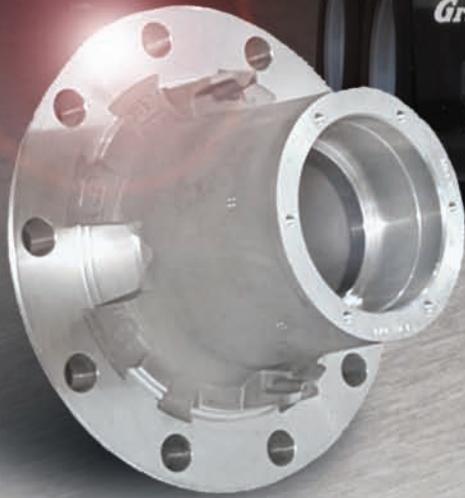
Lighting and lamp failures identified during a pre-trip inspection can be costly, Grote notes. Inspection violations can impact CSA scores, for example, with failed lamps generating four to six points for both driver and fleet records. In addition, the kit can help minimize expensive road calls for lamp repairs, which can cost a fleet hundreds of dollars in service fees, plus hours of lost vehicle and driver productivity that might potentially result in delayed deliveries and customer service failures.

Packed in a small nylon duffel bag, the Grote Roadside Lighting Repair Kit is flexible and lightweight. Measuring only 11 inches long, eight inches wide and seven inches deep, the kit can be easily stowed behind a seat, under a console or in other small spaces.

The Grote Roadside Lighting Repair Kit contains 23 of the most commonly used lighting-related parts, including 12 lamps, four styles of pigtails, three unique grommets, two unique brackets, conspicuity tape and a selection of 14-gauge butt connectors. It also has a selection of zip tie fasteners to help stabilize any field repair, and has space to add additional parts and tools. The kit is also provided with an inventory sheet with part numbers and color images to help keep track of contents and replenishment needs.

Lighting failures are taken very seriously, Grote says, making its new Roadside Lighting Repair Kit an essential tool to have onboard any commercial vehicle. 





Webb Wheel Aluminum Hubs

Lightweight Hubs Help Boost Payload, Fuel Efficiency and Reduce Maintenance

Designed to weigh less, providing for added payload capacity and improved fuel efficiency, Webb Wheel Products aluminum trailer disc wheel hubs are available on most popular trailer axles specified on Great Dane trailers.

Rated for 25,000 lbs GVW, according to the company, the aluminum hubs weigh from one to three lbs less than competitive products. Part number 4023 for “TN” axles weighs in at just 31 lbs complete with studs and bearing cups. Webb’s “TP” axle aluminum hub, part number 4343, weighs 33 lbs.

Webb aluminum hubs, the manufacturer points out, are very robust, helping fleets reduce maintenance costs for the wheel end components. Results of both SAE J1095 and Webb performance testing at a 25,000-lb axle rating indicated exceptional durability characteristics for both aluminum hub models.

Webb aluminum hubs are also available in combination with lightweight Webb Vortex Brake drums. Specifying Webb alu-

minum hubs and Vortex gray iron drums, the company notes, can save fleets 28 lbs per axle end, or 112 lbs per trailer compared to standard hub and drum configurations.

Webb offers hub assemblies for use with all common drum brake sizes, with or without ABS. Included are hub piloted 10- and 8-hole products and stud piloted versions for 10- and 6-hole applications.

To support Great Dane fleet customers, Webb Wheel Products provides an online Training Toolbox featuring videos and documents for training technicians and for developing maintenance practices. Covered are proper procedures for maintaining wheel-end components and details on problems that can be caused by improper procedures. 





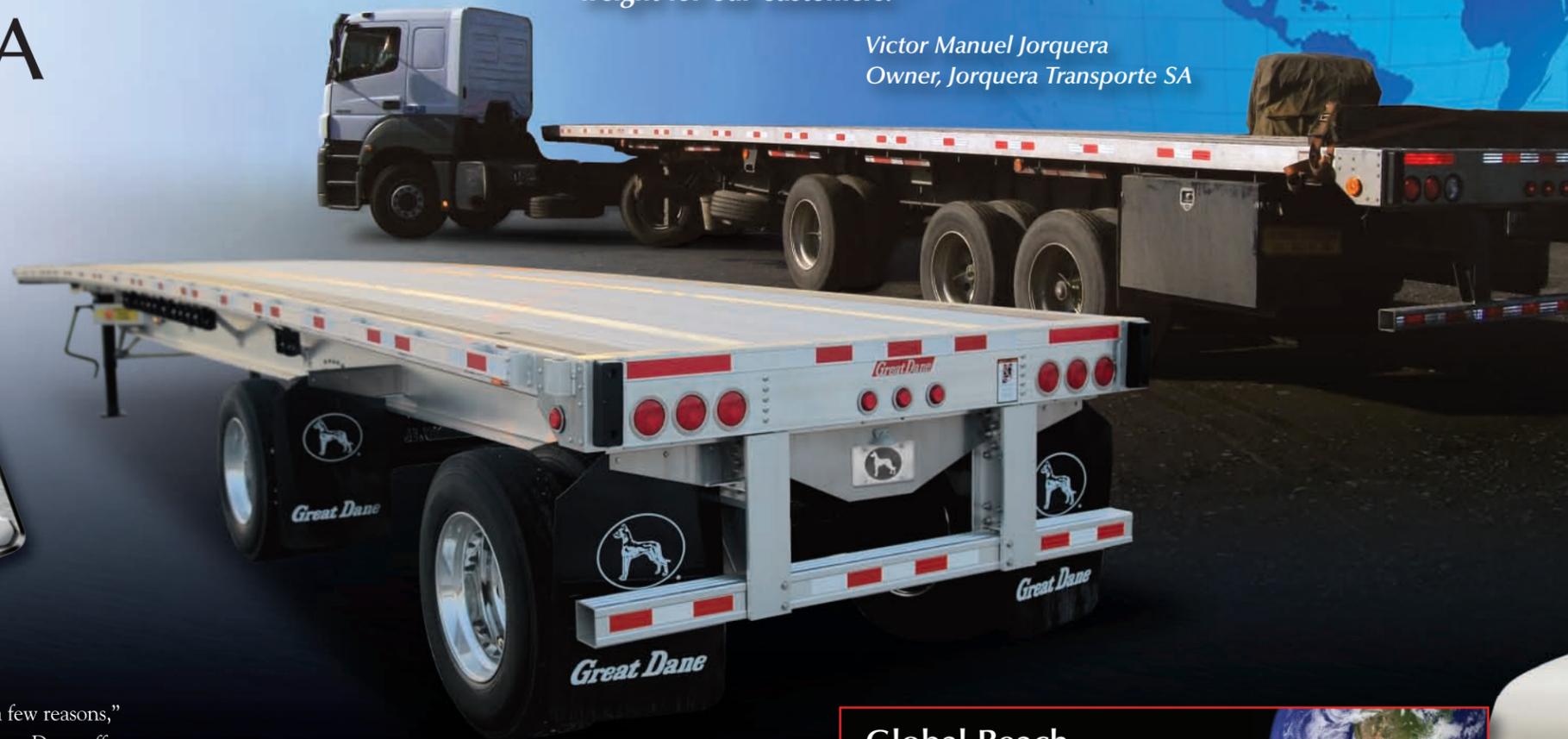
Jorquera Transporte SA

Extensive Great Dane Network
Delivers GPL Combo Platforms to
Chilean Customers



“Great Dane works closely with us to spec the systems and components we need to handle different types of freight for our customers.”

Victor Manuel Jorquera
Owner, Jorquera Transporte SA



“We continually strive to meet the transportation requirements of our clients,” says Victor Manuel Jorquera, owner of Jorquera Transporte SA. “While our team of transportation professionals constantly develops, optimizes and executes effective and efficient transport services, we couldn’t meet our customers’ needs without a reliable fleet. For platform trailers, the only real choice for us is Great Dane.”

“We decided to buy the Great Dane flatbeds for a few reasons,” Jorquera continues. “First and foremost is that Great Dane offers quality and durability in its equipment. In addition, Great Dane works closely with us to spec the systems and components we need to handle different types of freight for our customers. At the same time, Great Dane’s experience in the U.S. and its excellent representation in Chile were part of that decision.”

Founded in 1972 and headquartered in Los Angeles, Chile, Jorquera Transporte SA serves a range of clients throughout the South American country. Based in eight locations, the fleet is engaged in a variety of freight transport, cargo handling and warehousing services. The carrier hauls forest products, steel and building materials on a fleet of Great Dane flatbeds. Other parts of the operation handle dry, refrigerated and liquid freight, including fuel and chemicals, paper and food products.

The Great Dane GPL aluminum/steel combination platform trailers at Jorquera Transporte are 47-ft models fitted with tridem axles especially for the Chilean market. The front axle on the configuration is set 95 inches ahead of the center axle to meet operating requirements for loads handled by the fleet. A mix of air ride and spring suspensions are specified as well so the carrier has alternatives depending on the service a customer requires.

“For platform trailers we have chosen to use Great Dane GPL aluminum/steel combination platform trailers,” Jorquera relates. “Currently we have 21 of those trailers in our operation and we have ordered another 50 for delivery this year.”

“The GPL is the best choice for us because of the strength of its steel frame, front end and bulkhead, and rear impact guard, and the hauling capacity we have with its lighter weight aluminum components, including side and rub rails and flooring,” Jorquera points out. “Additionally, the design of its heavy-duty outriggers means we can transfer weight from the side rails to the lower main beams.”

Over the years, Jorquera Transporte SA has established itself as a leader in the freight transport market in Chile. The family-owned and operated company has grown steadily by establishing and maintaining close relationships with its customers.

“The professionalism throughout our operation comes from our people who believe strongly in providing excellent service to our customers at all times,” Jorquera states. “One of the keys to our success is a foundation of providing quality service focused on customer satisfaction.”

“A solid relationship with equipment suppliers is also essential to our ongoing growth and success,” Jorquera adds. “Great Dane helps separate us from the competition and meet our customers’ needs effectively and efficiently. In the future we plan to continue to expand our fleet with Great Dane trailers.”

Global Reach



Great Dane’s commitment to building superior products and fulfilling customer needs extends beyond North America, bringing the highest quality dry van, refrigerated and platform trailers to customers in Mexico and South America. The company’s extensive dealer, service and parts distribution network includes dealers in Mexico and Colombia, and numerous locations in Chile.

Great Dane utilizes a network of company-owned branches, full-line independent dealers, and parts-only independent dealers as well as distribution points across North and South America to meet customer needs. All of the locations are fully supported by division offices in Savannah, Ga. and Chicago, Ill., as well as the company’s seven manufacturing plants in the U.S. An eighth manufacturing facility is under construction in Statesboro, Ga., and is expected to begin production in April 2012.





Did You Know?

Crash Worthy

Leading Suppliers Already Offering Effective Truck Safety Solutions

Working to make highways safer has always been a key goal of the trucking industry. Recently, two very prominent industry associations took a very public stance, calling for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to consider setting crashworthiness standards for commercial vehicles similar to those in place for cars and light-duty trucks.

Calling it a high priority, the American Trucking Associations (ATA) and the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) told NHTSA they “believe there may be opportunities to enhance the survivability of professional truck drivers if appropriate, research-based, uniform standards are developed.”

ATA and OOIDA highlighted the need to improve cab structure and occupant restraints such as safety belts and airbags, among other safety-related features. They also mentioned the need to strengthen windshields and doors to prevent occupant ejections, and to install more forgiving interior surfaces.

While the federal agency considers this request, a number of safety systems for trucks are already helping fleets and drivers avoid accidents, saving dollars, equipment and lives in the process.

Among them are anti-lock braking, automatic traction control and stability control systems that use electronic control units to transparently assist the driver. The systems continually monitor conditions that can lead to an accident. They reduce the risk of vehicle instability through selective application of tractor and trailer brakes, and the reduction of speed through engine control and application of the engine brake.

The growth in specs for stability solutions shows that fleets are continuing to recognize the benefits of these technologies. A study conducted by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) and released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) uses post-crash data to show how stability controls can provide safety benefits. Among its conclusions are the following:

- If all existing five-axle tractor-trailers operating on U.S. roads were fitted with roll stability control systems, 3,489 crashes, 106 fatalities and 4,384 injuries could potentially be prevented.
- Annual savings from rollovers prevented by roll stability control systems are estimated at \$1.409 billion; savings from loss-of-control crashes prevented are estimated at \$47 million.

Another type of technology that is gaining in acceptance is designed to actively intervene to help maintain safe following distances. Adaptive cruise control and forward-looking radar systems monitor the distance, speed and deceleration of a vehicle ahead. In some cases, when they detect a potential collision developing, the systems send audible and visual warnings to the driver. If the driver does not respond, these systems can automatically decelerate the vehicle by reducing engine torque and applying engine and foundation brakes.

While safety technologies do not replace the need for alert drivers practicing safe driving habits, today’s state-of-the-art safety systems are making highways safer than ever. Proactive efforts to improve the crashworthiness of commercial vehicles can only ultimately help even further. 



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Products: News, specifications, information and announcements about the latest products available to meet the needs of today's trucking operations.

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