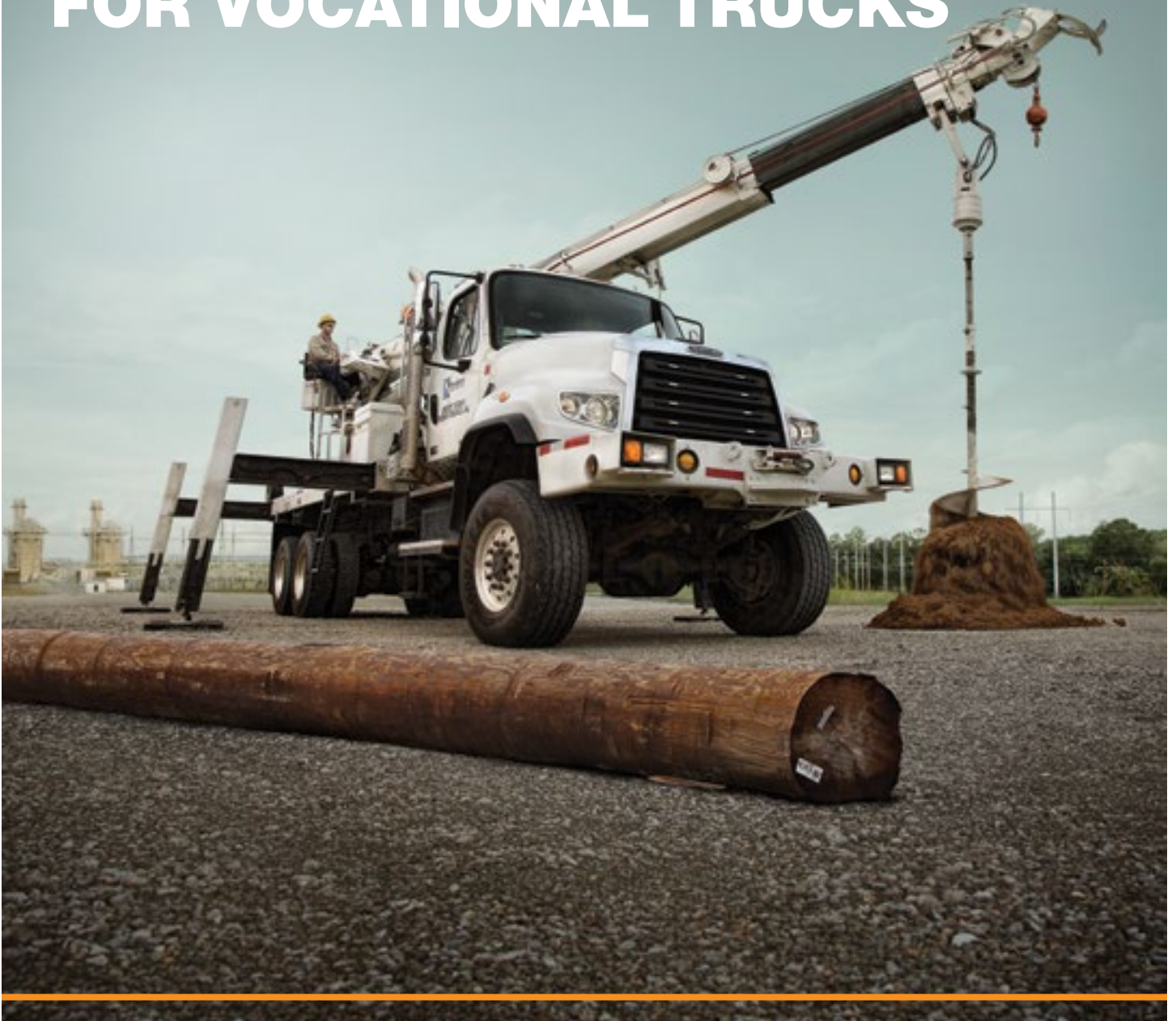




**WORK SMART™**

# **REAL COST OF OWNERSHIP<sup>SM</sup>** **MEASURING WHAT MATTERS** **FOR VOCATIONAL TRUCKS**



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# CONQUERING COSTS

When it comes to measuring TCO — Total Cost of Ownership — with vocational trucks, it is not as simple as calculating fuel costs and adding in scheduled maintenance. You count on your trucks to get the job done on a daily basis so you can turn a profit. And Freightliner Trucks recognizes vocational trucks have to perform, whether you are hauling ready mix concrete to a remote construction site or beer to a local restaurant. Work trucks are an important tool and contributor to bottom-line results.

Many TCO discussions fall short of measuring critical factors when it comes to vocational trucks. That's why Freightliner Trucks talked to our customers and took a fresh approach to calculating what it really costs your

business to have work trucks in the field. In doing this research it was clear that what is expected in each industry and for every customer is different. Freightliner Trucks has set out to broaden the discussion and help vocational truck owners get a clearer picture of their Real Cost of Ownership<sup>SM</sup> (RCO).

RCO is a comprehensive consideration of hard and soft costs over the lifetime of a vehicle. Some of the costs are hard numbers you can get by using a calculator—like monthly diesel expenses—while others, such as ease of upfit, safety and productivity, are a bit more difficult to measure. But these real-life costs are as critical to the RCO for your business as an increase in the price of tires.

## FREIGHTLINER'S DEFINITION OF RCO FOR THE VOCATIONAL SEGMENT RECOGNIZES FIVE MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO MAXIMIZING PERFORMANCE:



### UPFIT:

Vocational trucks are expected to perform a myriad of tasks, from delivering construction materials to plowing snow. That's why there are literally thousands of different configurations for vocational trucks. Having truck configurations for specific applications is a critical element of the upfit process. Freightliner Trucks works closely with truck equipment manufacturers (TEMs) across a variety of segments to create vehicles with numerous segment-specific options and clear back-of-cab packaging that TEMs can efficiently upfit, reducing time and costs.

### UPTIME:

Freightliner's robust support footprint features hundreds of service locations with Detroit™ factory-certified technicians. That includes more than 400 dealership/parts and service locations, and more than 195 of them are Elite Support Certified. Additionally, with almost 200 ServicePoint® facilities and a 24/7 toll-free hotline, no matter where you are in North America, you're covered. Detroit Connect's advanced telematics keep you in touch with your trucks, and the Detroit Connect Virtual Technician™ integrated remote diagnostic system helps you make informed decisions about which issues require immediate attention and which can wait for the next routine maintenance cycle.

### SAFETY:

When it comes to safety, Freightliner Trucks is an industry leader in the development of passive and active safety systems. We recognize that vocational trucks are often used on job sites and in conditions that are congested and difficult. We understand the importance of operator visibility, entry and egress. Comfort in the truck during a long work day can help reduce fatigue and improve safety. Freightliner's vocational trucks offer numerous available safety features and ergonomically designed, well-insulated cabs to help keep drivers safe and productive.

### QUALITY:

Freightliner® trucks are designed to maximize reliability and longevity. We rigorously test our products to ensure each model meets or exceeds customer business needs. And Freightliner's cutting-edge manufacturing technology, including robotics and automated systems, achieves precise, repeatable results. Quality construction and durable materials help Freightliner trucks stay on the job and drive business results.

### PRODUCTIVITY:

Productivity for vocational trucks starts with efficiency and dependability that maximize uptime. A truck has to be in-service and getting the job done. That's why Freightliner is focused on designing and testing medium and severe duty trucks for real-world conditions.



WORK SMART™

# MASTERING UPFIT

The process of building the right work truck starts with specifying the right chassis and powertrain. Because every vocational truck must be upfit by a TEM before it reports for work, we interact with these business partners to assess needs and deliver the best possible solutions. Freightliner has become the number one vocational truck brand by recognizing that upfit is an essential part of producing a great work truck.



“We were looking for a chassis that could fit in a niche market and we went to Freightliner. Their response was, ‘What can we do to make this happen?’ Together we developed an option package for the M2 106 that streamlined our upfit process and met the needs of the end user.”

JEFF IRR, Director of Sales, Jerr-Dan

## Custom-built trucks

Freightliner Trucks designs productivity solutions for vocational customers. “It’s a customer-driven thought process,” says Richard Saward, general manager vocational sales, Freightliner Trucks. “Customers aren’t likely to change their operation to adapt to our truck. They’re not in the truck business; they use trucks to do their business. They’re in the propane delivery or power line maintenance or waste hauling business. The chassis is a major component and a critical element, but it’s not the most important one.”

Freightliner asks our customers how we can build trucks differently to best meet their needs. We listen to their operations and manufacturing people, identify common ground and find efficiencies. The result is a truck that meets the specific needs of specific industries. When a truck goes to the job site, it’s the aerial lift, the digger derrick or the crane mounted on the back of the truck that is the crucial tool. We recognize the truck is part of the solution to get the job done.

Jeff Irr, director of sales with Jerr-Dan, a TEM in Hagerstown, Md., says that Freightliner’s ability to listen and respond to customer needs is the primary reason Jerr-Dan partners with Freightliner vocational trucks.

“Freightliner listens to the customer for the features and benefits they need to deliver,” said Irr. “We were looking for a chassis that could fit in a niche market and we went to Freightliner. Their response was, ‘What can we do to make this happen?’ Together we developed an option package for the M2 106 that streamlined our upfit process and met the needs of the end user.”

Irr also cites the SmartPlex® electrical system and ease of access to cab components for streamlining the upfit process. “When we receive a Freightliner truck, we know we’re going to have little to no extended time to upfit the truck, so we can meet or exceed our customers’ delivery expectations,” said Irr. “That equals more uptime for the customer.”

AmeriGas, the nation’s largest propane company, makes many of its deliveries with Freightliner vocational trucks. Jay Massey, corporate fleet manager at AmeriGas, reports that “Freightliner has been very responsive to our needs and to our requests for engineering changes.” AmeriGas and its

body builders worked closely with Freightliner engineers, changing 30 to 40 specs in as few as 30 days. These changes included several multiplex options that made it easier for AmeriGas builders to attach the propane vessels. Customer-driven optimization is just one of the benefits of Freightliner’s proprietary SmartPlex electrical system.

## Open line of communication

Freightliner has been customizing trucks for over 70 years. “It’s our heritage, our competency. We have always led this industry through innovation. We are customer-centric. In vocational applications, we have the capacity to custom engineer small-business solutions,” Saward says.

An example of this commitment is the Freightliner hotline, a resource for truck equipment manufacturers. This number is toll-free and available six days a week. This service provides TEMs with answers to questions pertaining to the upfit of equipment on Freightliner chassis. This is in addition to the online and face-to-face training Freightliner offers to TEM partners.

## Continuous improvement through feedback

Beck Industrial is a San Antonio, Texas, based rear discharge concrete mixer manufacturer that upfits a remarkable volume of mixers every month. A family-run business with a reputation for building durable and reliable trucks, Beck Industrial got its start as a division of a steel fabrication company that Jim Beck and his brother and father started 30 years ago. In 1999, Beck introduced its first rear-discharge mixers to equipment distributors in the U.S. and Mexico.

Frank Beck, partner at Beck Industrial, says Freightliner Trucks listens to truck equipment manufacturers and uses that input to build a better chassis for each vocational use.

“Connecting to the industry is one area that Freightliner has really made a big push at. It’s been a sincere push, so I really respect it,” Beck says. “They’ve reached out to people like us, body manufacturers, people who work in companies that specialize in their respective vocation.”



## Finding the perfect fit

“Our Severe Duty (SD) product line is the smart business solution for vocational customers who are looking for a combination of toughness and efficiency,” says Mark Howerton, vocational segment manager for Freightliner. “Our Severe Duty trucks feature a wide variety of options that include front frame extensions, front and rear engine power takeoffs, and body-specific chassis layouts that allow vocational customers to ‘Work Smart’ in any application.”

Having the right chassis to upfit for the Bowen Island Fire Department was critical to the selection process. Bowen Island is located off the west coast of British Columbia, and has mountainous terrain with occasional high winds that present a real challenge. To overcome the environment, the Bowen Island Fire Department and HUB Fire Engines and Equipment decided to create the biggest and most powerful fire truck on the island.

Bowen fire trucks transport about 2,800 imperial gallons (3,362 U.S. gallons) of water on their trips, so they needed more power to go uphill and the ability to switch to lower gears to travel down the mountainous terrain. Additionally, many of the department’s drivers operate gravel trucks at work and are accustomed to large-cab trucks. The solution: a Freightliner 122SD.

“The reason that we went for such a large chassis was to be able to accommodate the immense amount of water that we need to carry and because we have very hilly terrain,” explains Brian Biddlecombe, fire chief of the Bowen Island Fire Department.

Bowen Island’s previous trucks were smaller units, which are what HUB Fire typically upfits. “Most of our customers request their trucks be built on Freightliners, more than any other chassis manufacturer. That definitely says something about quality and people’s confidence in the product,” says Trevor Edwards of HUB Fire.

# UPTIME THAT KEEPS YOU WORKING

Tony Bodway, who has been in sales at Truck Country of Wisconsin for 10 years, is bullish on the support and service he can offer his vocational truck customers. “There’s nothing we can’t get done,” he says. “The response time from the Freightliner support network is phenomenal. And it has to be, because our customers demand the least amount of downtime if they do go down.”

## Technicians around the clock

Bodway points to a case when a customer’s vacuum truck had an issue in the southwestern U.S. along the border with Mexico on a Thursday night. Typically these work trucks are busy on weekends and holidays when job sites and plants are less active, so downtime as the weekend approached presented a significant issue.

“We were able to reach out through the Freightliner dealer network and get a technician out to the truck that night. It turned out to be a minor issue, and we were able to fix the problem quickly,” Bodway says. “It really comes down to the attitude of the people. You have to push hard to be there for the customer. These trucks are used in rough applications, and inevitably they require maintenance. Service and support have to be top notch.”

Once a TEM delivers a vocational truck, Freightliner’s strong support network of hundreds of service locations with Detroit™ factory-certified technicians is a resource work truck customers can count on. Freightliner’s 400 dealership/parts and service locations—more than 195 Elite Support Certified—combined with nearly 200 ServicePoint® facilities and a 24/7 toll-free hotline, provide

coverage across North America. The addition of Detroit Connect’s advanced telematics/diagnostic tools can help catch small issues before they become big problems.

## Exceptional dealership service

Bleigh Ready Mix is a family-run business with three locations along the Mississippi River in Missouri and Illinois. Bleigh recently welcomed Freightliner Trucks to the team when it started adding vehicles upfitted by Kimble Mixer of New Philadelphia, Ohio.

“We’ve been doing business with Kimble Mixer for 15 years,” said Bridget Bleigh, general manager of Bleigh Ready Mix. “They came through the area in 2013 with a Freightliner demo truck, and we asked them for a quote. We received the quote in two days, which was pretty

amazing. We were impressed by the service.” The performance of Bleigh’s first Freightliner 114SD in 2013 has led to four additional Kimble Mixers on Freightliner chassis joining the Bleigh Ready Mix fleet in 2014.

“One of the primary factors I consider before buying a truck is whether there is a dealership close to our locations,” Bleigh says. “There are more electronics in today’s trucks, so when a light goes on or you need warranty work done, having a dealer nearby is a must.”

Brandon Smith, vice president of The Wheeler Group in Austin, Texas, also chooses Freightliner for its dealership service. “At the end of the day, a lot of trucks are similar,” said Smith. “It’s the dealerships that stand out and make the difference. Freightliner of Austin has stood out from the rest in terms of taking care of our group and delivering results.”



# SAFETY IS A PRIORITY

When it comes to work trucks, safety is a primary consideration at Freightliner. Not only must the vehicle have advanced safety systems for moving from job to job, it also must be up to the challenge of busy and congested work sites.

## Designed with the driver in mind

Freightliner's SmartPlex® electrical system offers customizable interlocks that help operators perform their jobs safely. SmartPlex links the engine, transmission, axles and body so they communicate through the bulkhead module. This means that equipment cannot engage unless the truck is in neutral, and an audible warning is sounded if a door is opened and the vehicle's parking brake is not engaged. SmartPlex can also reduce maintenance costs. One example is that it will automatically slow windshield wiper speeds on a truck that has its parking brake set.

"Safety is important to us and to our customers. Just think about the utility crews and tree-trimming companies that put people in the air near power lines, and you understand why they are hyper-safety conscious," says Mike Finney, vocational sales segment manager for Freightliner Trucks. "We are always looking for what we can add to make vocational trucks safer, and our customers readily adopt these features."

Jeff Irr of Jerr-Dan says his company's focus is on how to get truck operators home safe at night. "They're working on the side of the highway late at night. It's extremely dangerous," said Irr. To respond to this safety issue, Jerr-Dan became the first to offer dual controls on its tow vehicles so the lift can be safely operated from the non-traffic side. Paired with the fastest pitching speed,



**SmartPlex**  
Electrical System



roll-back speed, and rail lighting system, Jerr-Dan provides towing companies the ability to quickly and safely remove a disabled or crashed vehicle from roadways.

## Safety starts on entry

Mike Finney says an important consideration is not only operator comfort as they are driving the vocational truck, but also safety and ease of exit and entry.

"Crews are in and out of the cabs multiple times a day," Finney says. "That's why we have low cab heights,

non-slip steps and strategically placed grab handles to make getting in and out easier and safer."

Finney also notes Freightliner has industry-leading operator visibility from the cab. With the largest windshield in the category and a dashboard shaped to offer a better field of vision, the design allows drivers a better view of tight work areas.



## Comfort keeps drivers focused

Beyond its importance in contributing to safety by reducing driver fatigue, a comfortable vocational truck offers additional benefits. LaGrange County, Ind., receives approximately 33 inches of snow each winter, so they need strong and reliable snow plow trucks. They currently use three Freightliner 114SD trucks with set-forward axles, but their brawn isn't the only reason they purchased them.

"Not only are the Freightliner 114SD snow plows durable and rugged, they also provide great comfort for their drivers," said Stoops Freightliner

Municipal/Vocational Sales Representative Kevin Woodward. "Many of these drivers are on 12-hour shifts, and it's crucial for them to have comfort. The Freightliner® trucks provide a spacious cab, easy access and a large windshield, which help ensure better visibility."

The 114SD cab's interior design provides drivers with operational efficiencies. Easy-to-reach controls and easy-to-read LED-backlit gauges offer ample customization to your specialized needs and preferences. The automotive-style wing dash and spacious cab interior provide superior ergonomics.

Freightliner snow plows come equipped with a 2,500-square-inch windshield and downward-sloping cab hood, resulting in outstanding visibility. The North Carolina Department of Transportation also chooses the Freightliner 114SD for its snow plows.

"These drivers venture onto the roads when everyone else stays off of them," said Pat Godwin, owner of The Godwin Group in Dunn, N.C. "The Freightliner 114SD provides the best windshield visibility in the game and offers drivers the utmost comfort in the cab. This Freightliner 114SD plow not only powers through snow, but also ice. It powers through it like a battering ram."



"Many of these drivers are on 12-hour shifts, and it's crucial for them to have comfort. The Freightliner® trucks provide a spacious cab, easy access and a large windshield, which help ensure better visibility."

**KEVIN WOODWARD**

Stoops Freightliner Municipal/Vocational Sales Representative

## FOCUSED ON QUALITY

Continuous improvement is part of the culture at each of the Freightliner manufacturing facilities. The Truck Operating System (TOS) serves as a benchmark to ensure high performance in meeting manufacturing's core objectives in the areas of safety, quality, cost, delivery, environment and employee morale. TOS has been introduced in all Daimler Trucks plants worldwide to create an extraordinarily lean plant organization.



### The value of Freightliner

"At one of our dealer meetings we actually took a vote on which truck cab and chassis brand that our dealers wanted to see," says Brian Peretin, vice president of National Crane. "Their overwhelming vote was for a Freightliner chassis, so choosing the Freightliner 114SD was an easy decision for us."

Peretin explains that his customers are selective and are looking for the best total value for the total package. They want the best deal with a crane mounted on a solid chassis — a total value proposition. For them, the best value came with Freightliner.

"Overall value truly sets Freightliner apart," explains Peretin. "You get more for your money. You don't have to buy the most expensive chassis on the market to get what you want. With Freightliner, we get exactly what we want and need. It's just as our customers request."

"The pricing of Freightliners is more attractive than what we can get some other chassis for," explains Mike Beauregard, assistant vice president of Ring Power Utility Equipment and a National Crane customer. "Plus, the weight of the Freightliner is truly ideal for many of our applications, particularly when it comes to federal bridge law compliance."

## Stable in the toughest conditions

A typical day for Mapp Trucking in Hinton, Alberta, Canada, includes snow, ice and mud during 30- to 60-mile runs to make deliveries in the Alberta oil fields. The average January temperature is a bone-chilling 12 degrees Fahrenheit, and the rolling grades of the Rocky Mountain foothills 300 miles northwest of Calgary offer a challenge to any tank truck. Mike Pinet of Mapp Trucking says the worst thing for a driver trying to stay on schedule is that rapidly changing weather and road conditions can often require pulling chains on and off the average truck multiple times during the day.

Mapp Trucking's solution to Mother Nature and the rolling grades? The Freightliner® 122SD. Mapp's powerful Freightliner 122SD successfully withstands the demanding conditions of Canadian winters, provides superior uptime and offers steadfast power and handling.

According to Pinet, the addition of a front drive axle to the 122SD's traction performance in slippery conditions is like switching from a two-wheel-drive pickup to a 4x4. The extreme-climate thermal cab insulation by Freightliner adds to driver comfort and provides a very quiet cab. Not only does the vehicle offer stability in poor weather conditions, the efficient 560-horsepower Detroit™ DD15® engine delivers 1,850 pound-feet of torque that is a game changer in the rugged Alberta backcountry. Based on the performance of the first tank truck, Mapp has ordered a second Freightliner 122SD.

Chuck Dutton, fleet maintenance supervisor of PowerSouth Energy Cooperative in Andalusia, Ala., can also attest to the strength and sturdiness of Freightliner trucks. "Our trucks sometimes operate in very adverse conditions, from highway miles all the way to terrain that's on a right of way that is almost impassable. A lot of times we've had trouble with the cabs on different model trucks—all the jarring and shaking caused them to come apart. We haven't had that with Freightliners."



## Engineered for performance

"A lot is expected of these trucks. They travel down the road at over 60 miles an hour, slinging 40,000 pounds of payload 12 feet in the air in a circle. That payload is heavy. That wear and tear on a vehicle will expose any lack of quality," says Frank Beck of Beck Industrial, a San Antonio, Texas, based rear discharge concrete mixer manufacturer. "That demand on a piece of equipment means that it's not a purchase that concrete producers take lightly. We're sending our product in and out of school zones, down highways, and through neighborhoods. The durability and the engineering behind ensuring the complete package is a responsible piece of equipment for the communities that we live in is important to us."

Beck says that the growth of Freightliner in the construction segment can be attributed to a number of factors, from educating dealers on spec'ing trucks so they can handle the demands of job sites, to listening to customer feedback about making cabs more ergonomic for drivers, to making engines and other parts more accessible for mechanics.

Construction isn't the only segment that relies on Freightliner to carry precious cargo. The Nashville Fire Department recently added seven new Freightliner M2 106 ambulances to its fleet to keep up with medical emergency calls.

"It is crucial for the Freightliner M2 106 ambulances to be efficient and reliable, because they are in use 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Neely Coble, owner of Neely Coble Company. "Paramedics and first responders sacrifice their safety every day on the job, and it's imperative that they have reliable and durable transportation and equipment. These are the first Freightliner M2 106 ambulances the city has purchased, and they are pleased with them."

# RCO MAKES A BOTTOM-LINE DIFFERENCE

Real Cost of Ownership<sup>SM</sup> is a way of looking at your work truck in a new way. It is not just a cost center, but a tool for increasing profits. In the past the focus has been on fuel mileage, scheduled maintenance costs and resale value. These costs are important to your performance, but RCO brings a broader, real-life perspective to the discussion.

“If you save \$10,000 on the front end of a purchase, but it costs you \$50,000 more in maintenance over the first five years of life of the vehicle, then that’s not really what you want,” said Joe Armstrong, transmission operations and maintenance manager, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative. “The goal is your overall cost of ownership to be low, and the reliability to be high.”

Sometimes reducing your bottom line means looking at alternative fuel-efficient options. Excel Truck Group in Charlotte, N.C., sells compressed natural gas (CNG) work trucks that are more expensive at initial purchase, but often make up the difference in lower fuel costs and increased longevity. The Freightliner M2 112 with natural gas not only offers the standard product advantages of superior maneuverability and visibility, it can also handle gross vehicle weight or combination ratings up to 66,000 pounds.

By paying attention to the five RCO pillars for vocational trucks—upfit, uptime, safety, quality and productivity—vocational truck owners get a better picture of how work trucks influence a range of critical factors in their businesses. The steps required for maximizing RCO are as different as the jobs work trucks are expected to handle—from hauling gravel to delivering lumber, maintaining power lines to plowing snow.

RCO takes into account the real-world situations that operators, trucks and their companies face on a daily basis. Having durable, productive trucks on the job with satisfied skilled operators behind the wheel and backed by a broad service and support network goes a long way to maintaining a successful vocational truck operation. Managing the individual Real Cost of Ownership factors for your company is the most efficient path to success.





“The goal is your overall cost of ownership to be low, and the reliability to be high. If you save \$10,000 on the front end of a purchase, but it costs you \$50,000 more in maintenance over the first five years of life of the vehicle, then that’s not really what you want.”

JOE ARMSTRONG  
Transmission Operations and  
Maintenance Manager,  
PowerSouth Energy Cooperative



## **VOCATIONAL TRUCKS: PRODUCTIVITY IS JOB #1**

A work truck is designed to do work. Freightliner never loses sight of this fact. No matter the job, vocational trucks are put under significant pressure to perform. The daily stresses are enough to cause issues for the average truck. That's why Freightliner is constantly testing its trucks and working on the next innovation.

Trucks that can carry heavier loads, work in tougher conditions and have longer maintenance intervals spend more time on the job and generating income for our customers. Freightliner works in the field, observing vocational trucks in action and talking to operators and technicians. We want our trucks to work harder so you can get more done during the average day.



## The strength of two trucks

Kling Towing & Recovery, located in Fruitland Park, Fla., specializes in recovery and towing of disabled vehicles. But what they are really known for is heavy-duty recovery of large vehicles—tractor trailers, fire trucks, ladder trucks and buses. Kling's truck of choice is a Freightliner 122SD chassis built out with a wrecker body by Miller Industries.

"We are now able to tow and recover many vehicles that usually take two or more wreckers to recover," explains Darrin Kling of Kling Towing & Recovery. "We recently recovered a tractor that was stuck in 12 feet of thick mud with just this single wrecker."

"We worked directly with Freightliner to ensure that the body was spec'd and built correctly to fully optimize the chassis and the truck," explains John Hawkins, vice president of heavy-duty sales for Miller Industries.

"These trucks run in a 24/7 business, 365 days a year. We have to make sure that the truck is built just right. Luckily, we have a really great relationship with Freightliner. They have a great reputation for being dependable and providing good value. Plus, their dealers are really great to work with."

## Less maintenance means fewer snow days

Larry Humphries is fleet manager of the village of Downers Grove, Ill., a 50,000-resident community near Chicago. Local crews plow 164 miles of roads across the area. For Humphries, keeping the neighborhoods clear of snow and as clean as possible is his primary goal. And it starts with his trucks.

“We’ve had zero maintenance issues,” explains Humphries. “Since CNG burns so cleanly, the maintenance intervals for changing the oil or air filters of our Freightliner 114SDs are much longer than in our trucks with diesel engines. Instead of servicing our trucks four or five times a year, we service them only once or twice, and that’s mainly to put on or take off the snow plow equipment when the seasons change.”

Humphries has two five-ton dump trucks upfitted with front frame extensions to allow for a plow on the front, a hydraulic system and a dump body. Although the truck is used all year long, it really shines in the winter. The Freightliner 114SD is coupled with an 11-foot polyboard Wausau Homesafe™ plow. At the rear of the truck are a stainless steel dump body and a tank to hold de-icing chemicals or salts.







“Virtual Technician helps me do my job. If I get a truck with a check engine light on, I know right away what that problem is. If it’s a minor issue the driver can keep running. I don’t have to take the truck out of service. If it’s a major issue, like when we had a coolant hose failure, I get the e-mail right away.”

**JAMES LARUE**  
Fleet Maintenance Manager, Tex-Mix

## Virtual Technician reduces downtime

Tex-Mix Concrete is a family-owned and -operated company that opened in 1996. During the last two decades, Tex-Mix has grown by supplying ready-mix concrete for residential, commercial, industrial and government projects in and around Austin, Texas. The company has seven concrete plants, with two new locations under construction to keep up with demand.

According to Tex-Mix Fleet Maintenance Manager James LaRue, his company has 32 Freightliner trucks, with 12 more on order.

“We’ve got 23 of the 114SDs and four of the FLD120 mixers. In addition, two Coronados, a Columbia and two Cascadia tractors,” LaRue says. “We started running the Freightliner trucks for the ease of maintenance, the reliability, the parts availability and the relationship with our dealers.”

The addition of Detroit Connect Virtual Technician<sup>SM</sup> onboard diagnostic

system telematics helps LaRue stay on top of his fleet.

“Virtual Technician helps me do my job. If I get a truck with a check engine light on, I know right away what that problem is,” LaRue says. “If it’s a minor issue the driver can keep running. I don’t have to take the truck out of service. If it’s a major issue, like when we had a coolant hose failure, I get the e-mail right away.”

E-mail alerts that Detroit Connect Virtual Technician provides help to maximize uptime by keeping small issues from turning into bigger ones. In the ready-mix business, if a truck breaks down and you are unable to keep the load active, it will set up. When that happens you not only lose the cost of the concrete, but it can cost \$3,500 to have the drum chipped out and three to seven days of downtime for the mixer truck.

“We had a truck that blew its radiator hose. The truck was loaded on the way to the job,” LaRue says. “I got the e-mail on it. It showed that he’d lost

his coolant. My guys started getting parts ready and loaded up. We were able to get out there, get the truck back up and going, get them to the job and the load was delivered. There are a lot of times when Virtual Technician has helped us save the load. We’re able to respond faster.”

In many cases it is not the cost of maintenance or repairs that has the greatest impact on profitability for vocational trucking companies. It’s the amount of time a truck is out of service.

“If the truck’s not on the road for us, it’s not making money,” says Logan Owens, CEO of Tex-Mix Concrete. “We experience improved uptime with the Freightliner trucks that we’ve got in the fleet. The biggest way that running Freightliner trucks improves our Real Cost of Ownership is in keeping our trucks on the road as much as possible.”



## Trucks you can rely on

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative is a generation and transmission cooperative that supplies bulk power to 20 different distribution members in its service area of Alabama and northwest Florida. It powers 16 electric cooperatives and four municipal electric systems that serve more than one million end-users.

PowerSouth relies on dependable trucks and equipment to maintain thousands of miles of electrical line. Its fleet of 54 vocational trucks includes service trucks, digger derricks, bucket trucks, and heavy-haul vehicles that assist with everyday service calls, outages, emergencies, and restoration.

“When we turn the key on a truck, we need it to run,” said Joe Armstrong, PowerSouth’s transmission operations and maintenance manager. “When it gets to the job site, it needs to be able to handle the harsh conditions. We feel like the new Freightliner trucks we got are helping us maintain the reliable services that our members and our customers demand.”

The majority of the time, PowerSouth’s trucks are not driven on the highway. These trucks encounter all types of harsh environments, from hilly areas and swamps in Talladega, Ala., to flat, sandy land in the Florida Panhandle. The trucks also operate in extreme heat and humidity, especially in the summer months.

“The thing that I’ve really come to like the best about the trucks is their dependability,” said Chuck Dutton, PowerSouth’s fleet maintenance supervisor. “We’ve had very little downtime, and to us, that’s very important. They need to be going when we need them, and we need to be able to put them on the road and not worry about whether they’re going to get there or get back.”





# SUMMING IT UP

## What RCO means to you

Real Cost of Ownership is a way of looking at the truck as a critical part of your business and not just a costly tool. By focusing on the five major factors that go into RCO you can better manage your bottom line and boost profitability.

Whether you haul concrete for road projects or deliver produce to local restaurants, your company can get a more accurate picture of how the trucks you buy influence a range of factors by considering the five RCO pillars—Upfit, Uptime, Safety, Quality and Productivity. The solutions for reducing RCO are different for each company and depend on the type of work you do.

RCO takes into account the real-world situations that operators and their trucks face on a daily basis. Having a reliable, durable truck on the job with a skilled, experienced and satisfied operator at the controls is key to your success. The broad range of upfit options offered by Freightliner Trucks—with technology that boosts uptime and safety, in a proven quality workhorse platform that increases productivity—is key to managing your Real Cost of Ownership.







### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

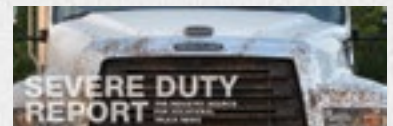
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Competitive financing available through Daimler Truck Financial. For the Freightliner Trucks dealer nearest you, call 1-800-FTL-HELP. FTL/MC-M-1419. Specifications are subject to change without notice.  
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