Mack Anthem®
In it for the long haul

Pandemic pivot
Uptime Center powers through obstacles to help customers

Mack® LR Electric
A look at how Mack is electrifying trucking

100 years strong
Mack Canada celebrates a century on the road

Vol. 1 2021
Your Passion.
Our Gear.
Perfect Combination.

MACK AC/DC BACK IN BLACK
SUPERLINER DIECAST 1:64 SCALE
M1547

MACK TUMBLERS
M7318  BULLDOG STAINLESS STEEL
M1183  PERFORMANCE COUNTS TERVIS
M3689  TRAILER HITCH
M0078  HOOD ORNAMENT
MACK BULLDOG CAMP MUG
M1177  GREY
M1179  WHITE

MACK B61 DAY CAB & VINTAGE TRAILER
1:64 SCALE
M1566

MOOVER MACK RIDE-ON
WOODEN TOY TRUCK
M2909  RED
M2910  GREEN

MACK SUPERLINER BLACK TSHIRT
M4446

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On the cover: Ryan Mabe, general manager for Reliable Carriers
Photos by Kirk Zutell

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Mack donates Mack® Granite® mixer to Concrete Industry Management auction

Mack Trucks announced it will continue its support of the Concrete Industry Management program by donating a Mack Granite® mixer for the annual CIM Auction. The auction, to be held on June 9 during the World of Concrete 2021 convention at the Las Vegas Convention Center, is the primary fundraiser for CIM programs and helps to support educational programs and fund scholarships.

“Mack Trucks is proud to again support this CIM program and the development of future industry professionals,” says Tim Winkle, Mack construction product manager. “As a leader in the construction segment, Mack understands the valuable skills and insights that CIM’s programs offer students, creating well-rounded leaders and workers, ready for the demanding and competitive concrete industry.”

Attendees of World of Concrete 2021 may bid on the Mack Granite during the silent and live auctions. The Mack Granite is backed by a 60-month/200,000-mile Mack Engine Plan 2 extended warranty, and the model will be delivered free to the auction winner anywhere in the contiguous United States.

The vehicle up for auction, a Mack Granite Axle Forward model bridge mixer, is powered by a 375-hp horsepower Mack MP7™/395C engine, with a 14-speed Mack MHDRIVE™ HD automated manual transmission and Mack front and rear axles. Paired with the Mack Granite and Mack Cornerstone™ chassis is a McNeilus FLEX Controls BridgeMaster Mixer, featuring an 11-cubic-yard MB Series drum donated by McNeilus.

Mack Trucks to open electric vehicle training hub in California

Mack announced it will open a training facility for its Mack LR Electric model in Hayward, California, supporting customers in the Western United States and Canada with comprehensive electromobility courses and training to begin on June 1.

The training facility will serve as the flagship location for Mack’s LR Electric training. Says Jonathan Anderson, Mack Trucks senior vice president of North American sales and commercial operations. “The 9,600-square-foot space will eventually offer courses 30 weeks a year and feature the same training tools found at the 425 dealer locations throughout the U.S. and Canada. The first week of training will focus on battery-electric vehicle safety training, and through subsequent weeks’ courses are still being finalized, sessions are expected to include more training on battery-electric vehicle operation and repair, as well as diesel-trained and parts sales and warranty fundamentals.

“We will have the same setup as dealers, so trainees are utilizing the same safety equipment, electrical repair tooling and electric chargers as they would at their dealer location,” says Scott Bahni, senior manager of training support for the Mack Trucks Academy. “Mack works to make the training process as efficient as possible. It helps that we can meet at different times to meet the most demand while also simulating a real-world environment.”

Mack® Command Steer system now available for Granite® axle back models

Mack® Command Steer, Mack’s active steering system that reduces driver fatigue, is now in production in Mack Granite® axle back models.

The Command Steer system combines an electric motor with the Mack Granite model’s hydraulic steering. Sensors outfitted throughout the truck collect data on the terrain, driver inputs and environmental elements. The Command Steer system processes this data more than 2,000 times per second, then provides variables such as turning radius as needed to make it easier for the driver to keep the truck steady on its desired route. Command Steer also suppresses uneven terrain, countering the steer force on pokey pot-holes and dips and reducing the kicks from the truck’s steering wheel.

This significantly reduces the physical demands on drivers, says Tim Winkle, Mack construction product manager. “Jobsites have uneven road conditions, which contribute to wear and tear on the driver,” Winkle says. “Mack Command Steer has been shown to reduce driver effort by 85%, improving jobsite safety and driver productivity.

Mack debuts custom NASCAR Salutes wrap in honor of U.S. military

For the fourth consecutive year, Mack Trucks has unveiled a new custom-designed, military-themed wrap for one of NASCAR’s 10 Mack Anthem™ models as part of 2021’s NASCAR Salutes Together with Coca-Cola campaign. Incorporating all five branches of the United States Armed Forces into its design, the winning wrap was selected by fans online. “It’s an honor for Mack to once again feature their support and recognition of military heroes and their families, says John Walsh, Mack Trucks vice president of marketing.
Ryan Mabe, manager of Reliable Carriers in Manchester, Tennessee, says they took a chance in 2019 when buying five 2020 Mack Anthems to add to their over-the-road fleet. They had not been running any Mack trucks, so this new purchase had a very specific goal. “We wanted to evaluate how well they performed and what the level of driver acceptance was,” Mabe says. The Anthems exceeded their expectations with fuel economy, safety, uptime and enthusiastic driver response to the trucks’ creature comforts. “Based on head-to-head comparisons with other truck manufacturers, we ordered 10 more 2021 Anthems,” he says. These positive reviews line up with customer feedback since the launch three years ago. “When we talk to fleets, the Anthem’s key features they focus on are fuel economy, total cost of ownership, safety and anything revolving around driver acceptance and comfort,” says Stu Russoli, Mack Trucks’ highway product manager.

Fuel economy matters

While prices will always fluctuate, fuel accounts for 24% of a fleet’s average marginal costs, according to the 2020 American Transportation Research Institute. Diesel fuel prices have been low for several years but recently there has been an upward trend. As of early May 2021 the average price of diesel had increased to $3.186 per gallon, according to data from the Energy Information Administration. The good news is that Mack Trucks had a laser focus on fuel economy when designing the Anthem for long-haul operation. Mack optimized the Anthem for aerodynamics, including the hood, roof, chassis fairings, mirror covers, front bumper and air dam. While it can be difficult to provide an average fuel economy number because of the various duty cycles and applications, the aerodynamic improvements made to the Anthem in 2018 resulted in a 3% fuel economy gain, with another 6.5% gain if the Anthem is spec’d with the MP®8HE powertrain package, Russoli says. And the new GHG21 MP8-HE engines in production this year get an additional 3% fuel economy.

Kyle Behnke, CEO and founder of United Federal Logistics Inc., says he saw a .75 mpg improvement in fuel economy when switching to Anthems from another truck brand. United Federal has 23 trucks and 42 drivers pulling doubles, operating primarily with team drivers, with its tractors averaging 4,500 to 5,500 miles a week. Loads run from Atlanta to California and Atlanta to Oregon as well as up and down the East Coast.

Mabe, with Reliable Carriers, tracked the Anthem’s fuel economy against other trucks. “Many of the over-the-road Anthems average in the 7+ mile per gallon range, with the highest at 7.82 mpg in the first quarter of 2021. That’s impressive,” Mabe says. To help customers understand the potential fuel savings, Russoli says Mack offers a Fuel

“Drivers really appreciate the Anthem’s bigger cab and the upgraded amenities.”

Kennan Hill, president and owner of Chief Express
Economy tool allowing fleets to input specs for several variations of a new Mack truck they are considering and then compare the fuel economy of the new asset to that of an existing Mack truck. “We can actually run simulations of where they are going to be running the trucks and tell them what they can expect their fuel economy to be with a new Anthem,” Russoli says. “This is not a general fuel economy number, but rather a number that is specific to the fleet and the conditions in which it operates and specific to the vehicle’s duty cycle.”

Cutting-edge safety technology

Safety was a key concern during the design and manufacturing of the Anthem. Bendix Wingman Fusion 2.0 is standard on the Anthem, a social media influencer in the trucking industry with 12,500 Twitter followers and an active LinkedIn account, uses his platforms to spread the word about all things Anthem, including his quest for extreme fuel efficiency. Hagen employs four drivers whom he trains and rewards for driving efficiently. “When the wind is in the right direction and I’m fully loaded, I can hit 11 mpg and empty, 12-13 mpg. Last summer, my 90-day average was 9.98 mpg. That shows me and my drivers what’s possible.”

Hagen says he loves the Anthem sleeper. “It’s like a little house: quiet, dark, roomy and totally driver friendly with cubbies and a comfortable mattress.” He’s looking forward to his new Anthems with Mack Command Steer. “It’s going to be a gamechanger. You won’t overcorrect because it makes minute changes to your steering.”

Bendix Wingman Fusion 2.0 comes with bump-mounted radar and a road-facing windshield camera to accurately recognize the necessary data. In mid-2021, Fusion 2.0 with an optional driver-facing camera becomes available on Mack vehicles. The camera records when an incident such as hard braking or an alert is detected. “I think drivers are starting to accept cameras on the vehicles,” Russoli says, “because the video from the camera often can exonerate a driver as being at fault for an accident by showing that a vehicle cut too close in front of them, for example.”

Stan Mitchell, director of maintenance for White Oak Transportation, says his trucks are spec’d with Wingman Fusion because of the added safety. “There are some features that allow you to know you have a wingman looking out for you,” he says. White Oak operates 244 power units out of its headquarters in Decatur, Alabama. Mitchell says 90% of the units are Macks, with Anthems being the majority and the ones used in long-haul runs in Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana and Texas.

Additional safety features on the Mack Anthem include a sloped hood for superior visibility, a passenger side peep window, three points of entry and exit, full length grab handles, slip resistant steps, an optional parking brake alarm, door mounted entry (puddle) lights and optional orange seat belts. To make it easier and safer for drivers to complete their pre- and post-trip inspections, ground reachable light controls and a ground reachable pre-trip light check switch are included as well.

Driver comfort and acceptance

While the competition for drivers remains fierce, incentives like the Mack Anthem go a long way toward recruiting and retention. Perks such as comfortable seats and
“Many of the over-the-road Anthems average in the 7+ mile per gallon range, with the highest at 7.82 mpg in the first quarter of 2021. That’s impressive.”

Ryan Mabe, manager of Reliable Carriers

Mattresses, good ergonomics and streamlined storage are greatly appreciated by drivers, especially those who drive over the road.

Ergonomics

Mack, taking a page from the passenger car industry, moved some of the controls previously located on the dash to the stalk. Windshield wiper controls are on the left, turn signal and high beam lights. “And on the right stalk we have the engine brake, which you can toggle from low to medium to high,” Russoli says. “It also has controls for the Co-Pilot display. Radio controls, Bluetooth and cruise control are now on the steering wheel.” These changes were designed to eliminate the driver having to reach to activate common devices.

The Anthem’s Co-Pilot is a driver display that gives the driver key trip information at a glance. “That includes speed and mileage, and iDRIVE information. It shows if the engine brake is on and if cruise control is activated, allowing drivers to keep their eyes on the road,” Russoli says. Co-Pilot is also integrated with Bendix Wingman Fusion. When the vehicle is in operation, it displays all the needed traffic information directly in front of the driver, far ahead of the next vehicle is, speed limit, warnings and braking alerts.

Behnke first tried the Anthem as a rental and said some of his drivers were skeptical about the cockpit’s configuration. “Once they get in them, they comment on how nice it was to have everything at their fingertips,” Russoli adds. “Everything we designed in the Anthem was done with the driver in mind.”

Appearance, power and creature comforts

“The Mack Anthems just work better for us all the way around,” says Kennan Hill, president and owner of Chief Express. The Saagrove, South Carolina, truckload carrier hauls 50,000 loads a year in 34 states with their fleet of 75 tractors — 65 of which are Anthems — and 350-plus trailers. Hill says the Anthem’s appearance, pulling power and fuel economy attracted him to the vehicle. “They pull so much better and ride so much better — everything about them is better — than other makes of trucks.” The drivers really appreciate the Anthem’s bigger cab and the upgraded amenities. “When we hire a new driver, they want the Anthem, and sometimes I don’t have enough of them available, so I tell them they have to wait for their turn.” That problem will be eliminated because soon Chief Express will operate 100% Anthems.

“Mack really did its homework with the Anthem, and our drivers are very happy with them.” Behnke too liked the way the Anthem looked but was really sold on it when his manager drove it and talked about how smooth the truck operated. “He said it was comfortable when he was on the highway driving at 60 miles per hour and really liked how quiet it was in the cab.”

Because United Federal Logistics operates with team drivers, Behnke invested in premium mattresses. “The comfort in the sleeper is very important in long-haul team driving operations. Being able to rest is key for team drivers because one of you is going to be sleeping while the other is driving.”

Behnke sees the Anthems as good driver retention tools because of how comfortable and reliable they are. Johnny Bragg has been driving an Anthem for Reliable Carriers for three years and finds the mattress to be as good as his at home. “I love this truck, it’s so comfortable, plenty of top room, everything is within arm’s reach,” he says. Bragg, with nearly 4 million safe driving miles under his belt, says the Anthem turns heads wherever he goes. “Every time I stop to fuel, a driver comes up and asks me about my truck.”

Delivering maximum uptime

Any time a truck has to be taken out of service on a long-haul run, the fleet’s productivity and driver satisfaction drops. And nothing is more frustrating than having to take a vehicle out of service for a software update. Mack Over The Air allows Anthem customers to make unlimited parameter updates without having to bring the truck in for service. Fleet-activated OTA is standard on the Anthem and allows authorized fleet personnel to implement software and parameter updates themselves when and where it is convenient. For instance, long-haul drivers can update their Anthems while on one of their rest breaks or during their 34-hour reset. OTA eliminates the need to schedule time in the shop. Another benefit for fleet managers is Mack ASIST, a web-based service-management system that helps expedite repairs to maximize uptime. Many Mack dealers also have stepped up their service game by becoming Certified Uptime Dealers with fast lane uptime bays for repairs that take less than four hours to complete — another time and money saver for Mack Anthem customers.

Having access to dealers with certified Mack technicians is especially important to fleets in long-haul operations. Mack’s dealer network stretches across the U.S. and Canada with 420 full-service locations, and many more service only points, so customers can be confident that should a problem arise, it will be taken care of by a Mack dealer. “Our dealers are investing in their dealerships and spreading their footprint in order to match where people are transporting goods and to make sure long-haul Anthem fleets have access to Mack-certified technicians and genuine Mack parts no matter where they are,” Russoli says.

Behnke says that in addition to the Anthem’s looks and power, what attracted United Federal Logistics to it was the Mack dealer network, the Uptime Center, “and all the things on the servicing end. Overall, it was a good match for us.”

Mitchell, too, was impressed with the support from the Mack dealer network and “the support we got from every layer of the organization. Anybody can call you on a truck, but the support and partnership are what is really important.”

Total cost of ownership

No matter how fuel efficient, safe or comfortable a truck is, fleets have to realize a good return on their investment. The total cost of ownership must fit into their business model. Some elements of TCO are easy to determine: the initial purchase price of the truck, the financing costs, the cost of maintenance, the truck’s fuel economy, even the resale value. But TCO goes way beyond those hard costs and includes other factors that may be more difficult to quantify — like the support of the dealer network, the time saved by being able to do over-the-air updates, the ability to get minor maintenance or repairs performed quickly, and the role of the truck in driver retention.

When factors like those are added together, operating Anthems gives fleets a great TCO for their long-haul applications. Russoli says that when a customer is considering a long-haul truck, he揽留 them around and point out everything he liked about the vehicle with the Anthem was to offer great fuel economy, enhanced safety features and extreme driver comfort. The Anthem delivers on all of that and more.”

MACK ANTHEM
Pandemic pivot
How the Mack Uptime Center continued its critical customer service despite COVID-19 obstacles

By Aaron Marsh

When COVID-19 restrictions hit businesses in spring 2020, Mack Trucks had a complicated imperative: Keep the Uptime Center up and running, all while following the rapidly changing COVID-19 guidelines. No small task, considering the Mack Uptime Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and is crucial to the smooth operation of Mack customers.

While planning for the unexpected was part of the Uptime Center’s mission, this global pandemic was unlike anything they had faced previously. However, the center’s disaster plans provided the framework for a successful pivot and the severe weather playbook was converted into an action plan.

“We’re continually providing support for a breakdown event or an unplanned event for our customers,” says Kim Skrzecz, director of uptime support at Mack. “And then, suddenly, we’re hit with the consequences of working in a pandemic environment.”

Early days
Skrzecz says that because they already had weather-related procedures on hand meant Uptime Center employees were primed to work remotely. Much of what was needed to satisfy COVID-19 remote work requirements was already in place, but they still had to figure out how to succeed in the long term.

“We had to pivot quickly, to set up agents to support the customer and be able to provide continued and uninterrupted support for the customer during those initial days of COVID-19.” Skrzecz says.

“Some of the challenges that we faced revolved around equipment and potential Internet outages,” she notes. “We sent agents home with extra equipment, and our IT team had to mobilize to make sure we had proper resources.” She says operations managers helped drive equipment out to agents’ homes, all agents were observing personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distance protocols at those equipment handoffs.

“In a very short amount of time, we all had to leave the building, go home, make sure we were equipped to take calls from home, make sure we were equipped with backup equipment as needed — whatever that looked like — and get support from our IT department, again remotely,” Skrzecz says.

“We were doing a lot of driving of equipment out to agents to make sure that they could maintain the level of support that our customers need, on the phone and working in cases,” she recalls. The objective was “to keep everyone safe but also address the need of being able to work from home in the event of whatever equipment failure or Internet outage that we might face,” Skrzecz says. “And we enacted continuity plans along with backup plans.”

The Mack Uptime Center provides an array of services for customers, including working with a number of vendors to provide towing and roadside repair services. The collaboration with vendors led to some difficulties in the COVID-19 era.

“Some of the challenges that we faced were that vendors were no longer allowing drivers to ride with them to complete a tow service, for instance,” Skrzecz says. “So, we had to act as a liaison between the customer and the vendor and the driver onsite to make sure that those drivers were taken care of. We reached out, contacted the customer team and tried to set that communication between all parties to make sure that the driver would be taken care of.”

The COVID-19 backlog also made things more complicated dealing with tow, repair and other vendors that work with the Uptime Center, since those businesses saw some detrimental effects just as other sectors did.

“There were times, particularly early on when states were shutting down, that it was very difficult to get vendors out for services,” Skrzecz says.

However, due to their extensive preferred vendor network they were able to work through most of those issues. She says the vendors certainly did their part as well to offer support. They communicated via text and calls with the drivers as they remained in their trucks.

As well as the Uptime Center may have been able to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic, the center’s collaborative philosophy may not be as well fulfilled in a remote work scenario, says Magnus Gustafson, vice president of aftermarket quality and operations at Mack.

“Our Mack OneCall team is designed as a customer-facing group, all sitting together.”

Spring forward
“We’re mostly still working remotely,” Skrzecz says, though now some limited onsite work is being conducted at the Uptime Center. Gustafson says he believes the Uptime Center will eventually return to more normal operations, though it may be a hybrid situation. The center has made the most of the pandemic situation in the meantime. “I think the spirit and the intent of how we operate has been maintained throughout, whether we were physically or remotely located next to each other,” Gustafson says. “The key, I think, is to make sure that resources are available to be pulled in to solve customer issues in real time.”

While converting the Uptime Center to a remote operation took ingenuity and unearthed some challenges, the center’s hard work was evidenced in service numbers. “At the beginning of the pandemic, we rose to the all-time highest number of customer satisfaction, as vendors were physically or remotely located next to each other,” Gustafson says. “I think that speaks volumes to what the customers were experiencing on the other end — that continued support — as they themselves were facing uncertainty and the impact of COVID-19.”

The customers agreed that the Uptime Center functioned with their best interests during a difficult time. In fact, Skrzecz says they received a flood of positive comments from customers who expressed how appreciative they were that “we were still working and available to support them.”

Director of uptime support Kim Skrzecz, left, and training delivery specialist Justice Kelly review a customer support case at the Mack Uptime Center in Greensboro, North Carolina, in March 2021.
Adding Anthems

Reliable Carriers’ drivers appreciate increased comfort and safety with Mack Anthem®

When Justin Henderson, second-generation leader of Reliable Carriers, saw the Mack Anthem® at an industry trade show, his interest was piqued and he decided to buy five 2019 models to add to his family-owned Manchester, Tennessee-based fleet.

These were Reliable Carriers’ first over-the-road Mack® trucks. Once they arrived, the process of evaluating the new purchases began. They took a hard look at criteria such as cost of ownership, fuel efficiency, maintenance, safety and dealer relationship. But one of their top criteria was driver acceptance, and that’s where the Anthem really stood out. Ryan Mabe, manager of Reliable Carriers, says he’s always interested in what drivers have to say about the equipment — and they were completely sold on the new Mack Anthems.

“Drivers are always concerned about what the truck looks like. And then, if you can take what it looks like and mesh that with the creature comforts and then also the performance on the road, it serves as a recruiting tool — because if you can get all those at the highest level, then it’s going to draw people in,” Mabe says.

Mabe, who came to Reliable Carriers from the finance and banking industry, puts stock in driver opinion, but he’s also committed to making fact-based decisions on an investment as large as a new truck. The company operates 107 trucks and nearly 350 dry van trailers and employs 83 drivers. The five new Anthems were an immediate hit but still had to pass muster with all the criteria before they eventually ordered 10 more 2021 Anthems — and recently placed another order for an additional 10.

The new Anthems look professional with their Glacier White paint, and powered by MP® 445 hp Super Econodyne engines and Mack eDRIVE™ 12-speed automated manual transmission with grade gripper. The Anthems are SMARTWay certified with a full aerodynamics package. Safety features include Bendix Fusion 2.0 and disc brakes, while the units are also equipped with Mack’s Over The Air software and parameter remote download technology.

The driver-popular interior is a 70-inch stand-up sleeper, with premium steel-gray interior trim, upgraded matching seats, power mirrors and windows, SiriusXM, refrigerator prep, full-size bunk and blackout curtains over windshield, window and sleeper.

“Mack trucks continue to be dependable within our fleet with drivers praising each newer model more and more. Whether it is the handling, the improved interior creature comforts, or simply the stylish profile on the Mack Anthems; these trucks are becoming one of the most popular trucks in our fleet,” Mabe says.

The purchasing process

Mabe says they typically try to turn over trucks every five years and trailers every 10 to 15 years. When making a new purchase decision they run through a detailed process, including creating spreadsheets to monitor costs such as fuel and maintenance and information such as warranty data and driver acceptance. He says he values the services Reliable Carriers’ drivers appreciate increased comfort and safety with Mack Anthem®

over windshield, window and sleeper.

by Carolyn Mason

Photos by Kirk Zutell

Johnny Bragg, company driver for Reliable Carriers, loves the comfort and performance of the Anthem.
such as Mack OneCall™ that keep the trucks rolling and reduce costly downtime. “Because Mack wasn’t known as having an over-the-road truck, this was an unexpected chance to really look at the Anthems and a chance to grow our partnership with McMahon Truck Centers-Nashville,” Mabe says. Jeff Tilley, the general manager, and Nick Triola and the sales team get Mabe’s praise. “They’ve taken care of and won us over.” Triola says that relationship is key to the continuing opportunity to supply and spec Anthems for Reliable Carriers. “Our relationship with Reliable Carriers is really a strong one. This is a relationship business, and earning trust is a big factor for us. It takes time to earn trust. For us, it’s a partnership and we love that,” Triola says.

Fuel economy and driver acceptance
Fuel economy is critical for the profitability of the company and for the drivers who want to earn their fuel bonus. Mabe says they evaluate fuel efficiency on a weekly basis. “In fact, the numbers came in for the newest 2021 Mack Anthem, and they are averaging 7.3 mpg, compared to our other OEM that’s getting roughly 7.0 mpg. Many of our over-the-road Anthem trucks average in the 7s on miles per gallon with the highest at 7.82 mpg. Our local and dedicated Anthem trucks are very close to 7.0 mpg. That’s something that five years ago we would have never expected,” Mabe says.

In addition to the spreadsheets, Mabe believes that talking to the drivers is one of the best ways to make the final decision about the pros and cons of all the equipment. “For me, being new to the industry and being asked to monitor the specs and to make recommendations, there’s no better person than someone who’s spending six days a week in the truck.”

Drivers overwhelmingly report that they enjoy driving the Anthems and note that they like the exterior look and the interior creature comforts. “They gave positive feedback on the way the truck handled, the power that the engine was putting out, and how comfortable the mattress and steering wheels were,” he says. “Just the feel, sitting in the cab. Everything is right there around the driver in that cockpit of the truck, so just convenient. Steering wheel controls at their fingertips, they could tell that truck was built around an OTR driver,” Mabe says.

Driver feedback
David Steele, a driver for Reliable Carriers since 2009, says he loves the maneuverability and power of the truck. “When other drivers see it, they always comment that it’s a sharp truck. I like how Reliable Carriers keeps us in such good equipment and recommend other drivers to come work here,” he says. “Other drivers just swarm me at the fuel station, asking about the Anthem,” says Johnny Bragg, who has been driving an Anthem for Reliable Carriers the last three years. “I tell everyone that I sleep in this truck five days a week and the mattress is as comfortable as mine at home.” Bragg has been driving for 25 years and has nearly 4 million safe miles over his career. He believes the Anthem is better than any of the other trucks he’s driven because of the roomy interior, ease of driving and how well it pulls.

Moving forward
Reliable Carriers, started by Justin Henderson’s father, Frank Henderson, in the early 1980s, was able to stay the course through the pandemic. Mabe says that while it was a little tough during the shutdown, the business quickly bounced back. “For us, we had the immediate drop — so it was a V pattern if you’re looking at how our business flowed through the year. I think that was the end of June, early July when that reverse peak went through, and then it really came back, stronger than ever. It was almost like we were making up for time lost.”

Chad Whitmore, shop foreman for Reliable Carriers, works on an Anthem.
A successful fleet is the result of choices. Choosing the right shippers, the right freight lanes and the right employees, for starters. Chief Express had a choice when it came to its trucks, and it chose the Mack Anthem®.

From its beginnings as a furniture hauler, Chief Express has grown into a diversified carrier while still catering to the small customer niche.

Kennan Hill, president and owner of the Seagrove, North Carolina-based fleet, started the company in 1995 in support of the family furniture manufacturing business. He started with one truck, grew the business and eventually left furniture manufacturing to run Chief Express full time. The fleet now has 75 tractors and more than 300 trailers, hauling in 34 states, mostly running out and back routes, with the furthest going to Dallas and Minneapolis.

In the early days, furniture was the mainstay of the fleet, “but then the recession hit and much of U.S.-based furniture...
The clock struck five. As I stepped into the cozy living room, I couldn't help but notice the warm glow that emanated from the flickering hearth. The aroma of freshly brewed coffee filled the air, mingling with the scent of old books and leather-bound journals. A gentle hum of activity could be heard from the adjacent study, where my father was engrossed in his latest project.

“Hello, dear,” a soft voice called out, pulling me from my reverie. I turned to see my mother, her face lit up with a content smile. “How was your day?”

“I had a great day, thank you. The students were eager to learn, and the discussions were stimulating.”

“Aha! I knew they would be. You always manage to engage them on a deeper level.”

I chuckled, feeling grateful for my mother’s unwavering support and encouragement. “I couldn’t have done it without your guidance and encouragement, Mother.”

“Nonsense! You are your own best motivation. Now, tell me about your project. What did you work on today?”

I settled into the soft sofa, my eyes scanning the notes and sketches spread across my desk. “Today, I focused on refining the design of the new community center. I think we’ve made significant progress.”

“Excellent! I’m proud of you. What are the next steps?”

“I believe we need to focus on cost-effectiveness and sustainability. I’ve been looking into new materials and energy-efficient technologies.”

“Very good. Remember, innovation is key. You must always strive to improve and adapt.”

I nodded, feeling encouraged by her words. “Thank you, Mother. I’ll keep that in mind.”

“Of course. Now, let’s enjoy a nice cup of tea and discuss your progress further.”

As we sipped our tea and exchanged ideas, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of satisfaction and purpose. My mother’s wisdom and encouragement were a constant source of strength and inspiration. Together, we navigated the challenges and pursued our dreams, creating a bond that would last a lifetime.

“Mother, I have a surprise for you.”

I turned to my father, who was smiling at me with a twinkle in his eye. “What is it?”

“Today is your birthday, and I’ve prepared a special meal for us.”

I gasped in surprise, feeling touched by his thoughtfulness. “Oh, Father, you didn’t have to do this.”

“Of course I did. It’s your birthday, and I wanted to make it special for you.”

We shared a warm embrace, knowing that love and family were the truest forms of richness. As we sat together, lost in thought and gratitude, I realized that these simple moments of connection were what truly defined our bond.

“I love you both,” I whispered, feeling a wave of love and thankfulness.

“As do we, my dear. Now, let’s enjoy our meal and make the most of this special day.”

As we savored our food and畅谈了我们的梦想，我无法抑制一股满足和目的感。母亲的智慧和鼓励一直是我坚强和灵感的源泉。一起，我们应对了挑战，追求梦想，创造了一种永恒的联系。
By Denise L. Rondini, photos by Kirk Zutell

White Oak Transportation supports its customers and credits its partnership with Mack for its success.

Stan Mitchell, director of maintenance for White Oak Transportation

“Having good, well-maintained equipment has helped White Oak recruit and retain drivers.”

Mike Limbaugh, founder of White Oak Transportation

A partnership of support

White Oak Transportation supports its customers and credits its partnership with Mack for its success.

By Denise L. Rondini, photos by Kirk Zutell

Since White Oak Transportation started in 1999, Mike Limbaugh, founder, and his team have built the business by providing support for its clients and focusing on its niche, says Stan Mitchell, director of maintenance.

That niche — food grade products and medical products — kept the fleet quite busy during the COVID-19 pandemic as both of those industries were deemed essential during the COVID-19 pandemic as both of those industries were deemed essential.

Headquartered in Decatur, Alabama, White Oak operates its 244 tractors and 1,200 trailers in regional haul in Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee, and in over-the-road applications in Ohio, Kentucky, Louisiana, and Texas. Limbaugh has grown the business by being able to both customers and employees.”

“Having good, well-maintained equipment has helped White Oak recruit and retain drivers,” Limbaugh says. “I have heard drivers over and over, ‘If I am not rolling, I am not making money,’ so we do our best to keep them rolling.”

Mitchell attributes the fleet’s intense focus on maintenance as a reason its trucks — and drivers — keep rolling. “Preventive maintenance is pretty much mandated,” he says. “If you ignore maintenance, it will eat your lunch and leave your drivers so frustrated they will seek out other fleets that have better equipment. Equipment is up there on the top of the list for retention of drivers.”

Mitchell credits Mack for playing a large role in the White Oak’s success. “I interact with the dealership multiple times a day and they play a large role in our operation and with Mack we have developed a partnership of support,” he adds. “We’ve built a relationship to where if I call them they know I need something. These days everyone is stressed because of e-logs, COVID, fuel prices, etc. Having a partnership of support with our customers and with Mack helps us to keep doing our best.”

He explains that the maintenance program means White Oak trucks get seen more often. “You see the trucks more frequently and on a more consistent basis. I think the more you see the units the more investment you get in them from service advisers, your technicians, your drivers. Everyone involved with the truck becomes more invested in looking after it when they see it often. They become more invested in the performance of the unit.”

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The dedication to maintenance is part of the partnership of support White Oak has with Mack. White Oak participates in what Mitchell calls a pre-paid maintenance program that sets maintenance intervals and schedules and requires that maintenance be performed by a Certified Mack Technician. In the case of White Oak this is a technician from its local dealership, Nextran, that works out of one of the service bays at White Oak’s location. “That is very convenient for us because we do not have to shuttle a truck 20 minutes away especially when you consider that sometimes that 20 minutes can stretch into an hour and a half,” Mitchell says. He explains that the maintenance program means White Oak trucks get seen more often. “You see the trucks more frequently and on a more consistent basis. I think the
ON EQUIPMENT

LR Electric: helping build a cleaner, better future

When it comes to the electromobility era in trucking and transportation, Mack Trucks is setting its sights high. With a purpose of moving and building a better world, Mack is now taking orders for the time-tryed LR Electric battery electric refuse truck, which will be built at the company’s Lehigh Valley Operations facility in Macungie, Pennsylvania.

To signify the new era of the LR Electric, the familiar Bulldog hood ornament is now copper colored. The refuse segment is a natural fit for launching the new truck for several reasons. Mack is the leader in the segment with the diesel-powered LR and can wield that experience, mainly because of less engine noise and vibration.

By Aaron Marsh

The drivers have less fatigue, and it’s just been an improved overall experience for the driver,” Fotopoulos says. “And of course, for the external world, there’s less noise pollution and zero emissions.”

Lower cost of operation

Along with the lack of emissions, there’s a lower total running cost and longer service intervals — meaning greater uptime — with these electric trucks compared with a diesel equivalent model, he notes. But the other thing that’s come out in field testing is how to plan a route with an electric vehicle. The LR Electric, due to its fast-charge capability, provides for some flexibility in that regard.

Charging times will vary according to charge power, says Barracough. “At its fastest, we can change up to a 150kW rate. At that rate, we can completely recharge a truck in around 30 minutes,” Barracough says. “If you need a midday recharge, with a fast charger, that becomes a possibility,” he adds. “You may not need a full recharge to complete your route — for example, you hook up for 30 minutes, that could provide enough charge to finish the day. That becomes practical at the high charging rate.”

The LR Electric will be available for traditional purchase, but Mack is also offering the truck through a subscription-type “vehicle-as-a-service” option. “You would pay for a term, and at the end of the term you could choose to buy, discontinue or renew that term for another period,” Fotopoulos says.

A key consideration for LR Electric customers is the charging infrastructure, and Mack can help with that as well, either providing for charging needs through its partner or referring clients for additional charging solutions. Mack will also provide a service offering tailored to the needs of electric vehicles and their fleets.

Fotopoulos notes potential customers can check their states and localities for grants and incentives that may be available to support the purchase of LR Electric trucks and/or charging infrastructure. “There are a number of different options that we at Mack are more than happy to help guide customers on to regarding those funding sources in individual states and provinces, and we’ll be keeping an eye on whether any federal funding becomes available as well,” Fotopoulos says. The LR Electric is an idea whose time has come. “This is the start of the electric era for commercial vehicles,” Fotopoulos says. “Battery technology is at a point where it’s applicable to the use cases in our industry. We are moving toward and building a better world, and we need to do this not only with the current product portfolio we have today, but as part of the e-mobility transformation we are beginning right now.”

“Mack is a company where we are doing more than just putting our pens to paper as we build our plans for the future,” he says.

Important consideration for these customers, says Scott Barracough, Mack’s senior product manager, eMobility. The LR Electric can meet their business needs while helping reduce their carbon footprint, and it’s a very visible sign of those efforts.

Pre-production Mack LR Electric trucks have been in field tests since last fall by Republic Services in Hickory, North Carolina, and at the New York City Department of Sanitation. The former includes longer, more suburban waste-collection routes, while the latter involves some shorter, tighter city routes with frequent stops.

Driver experience

The pre-production units, which are largely identical to the trucks that will roll off production lines, have performed well and generated significant positive feedback. The experiences with the pre-production LR Electrica will help refine the production models. One thing that has stood out with the electric trucks is an improved driver experience, mainly because of less engine noise and vibration.

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**Fast specs:**

**Mack LR Electric**

1. AC motors with 488 hp continuous power and 4,061 lbs.-ft. of torque, available from 0 rpm
2. 6-speed Mack Powsrshift transmission
3. 550-750 volts
4. Lithium NMC batteries, 600V, with fast-charging capability
5. 16,000 lbs. GVWR
6. Mack FXL12 20,000-lb. front axle, Mack S64R 46,000-lb. rear axle
7. Three-mode regenerative braking
8. Up to 150kW charge power with a max current of 200A, 569-786 volts
9. Supported through Mack dealership network

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One year ago, 12 lucky winners were announced in the 2021 Mack Calendar Contest. In previous years only the top vote getter in each category was selected for a professional photo shoot and a one-month appearance in the calendar, which meant six customers total. But for the 2021 issue we chose the top two, to honor all the trucking professionals who carried on with their duties during the pandemic. Our photographers set off across the U.S. and Canada to meet the winners on their home territory — with proper social distancing, of course. From Manitoba to Florida and Missouri to Maine, we went to meet as dedicated a group of Bulldog owners as can be imagined. Here they are, along with their truck information.

**Meet 2021’s Top Bulldogs**

**JANUARY**
Mack® SuperLiner
Francis Rivard (owner) Entreprises Rivard et Frères, Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade, Quebec

**FEBRUARY**
Mack® TerraPro®
Kimberly Langhorst (corporate secretary) AAA Zoellner Materials, Imperial, Missouri

**MARCH**
Mack® LR
Tyler Bissonette (left, operations manager) Michael Shone (right, driver) Waste Connections of Canada, Barrie, Ontario

**APRIL**
Mack® Granite®
Robby Causey (owner) R.L. Causey, Inc., Murrells Inlet, South Carolina

**MAY**
Mack Anthem®
Michel Tariff (president) Transport Dercy, Bauxacville, Quebec

**JUNE**
Mack® TerraPro®
Melissa Polutta (owner) Trash Gurl, Goose Creek, South Carolina

**JULY**
Titan by Mack®
Seth McCoy (owner) Seth McCoy’s Trucking & Excavating, Alfred, Maine

**AUGUST**
Mack Anthem®
Jamie Hagen (owner) Half Bent Xpress, Aberdeen, South Dakota

**SEPTEMBER**
Mack® LR
John Ferguson (asst. director of fleet management) City of Durham, Durham, North Carolina

**OCTOBER**
Mack® Pinnacle™
Michael Nadeau and Natacha Martin (owners) Entreprise MN Nadeau Inc., Sherbrooke, Quebec

**NOVEMBER**
Mack® Granite®
Lou De Berardinis (owner) De Berardinis Heavy Haul, Orlando, Florida

**DECEMBER**
Mack® Pinnacle™
Dave Hood (driver) Grizzly Transport, Hadashville, Manitoba
In the front lines of World War I in 1917, the Mack® AC model earned the nickname “Bulldog” from British troops who witnessed each day the truck’s tenacity. The “Bulldog” Mack AC carted needed supplies across treacherous terrain with an unmatched strength and resilience. The AC model’s reputation for dependability across difficult landscapes made them popular with customers in Canada, who used the trucks after the war not only for hauling goods but for building the roads themselves. And Canadian customers were more than satisfied with that reputation. By 1921, Mack officially adopted the Bulldog as its corporate symbol, and demand for Mack trucks had grown so substantially in Canada that Mack established Mack Trucks of Canada Ltd. in a small downtown Toronto building. The rest is history — 100 years of it and counting.

This year, Mack Trucks celebrates its centennial anniversary in Canada. To mark the occasion, Mack has introduced a special badge incorporating its logo, Canada’s Maple Leaf, and the phrase “Building Canada Since 1921” — or, in Quebec, “Bâtisseur Du Canada Depuis 1921.”

The badge is a symbol of Mack’s commitment to the country and its long-standing relationship with Canadian customers, says Jonathan Randall, Mack Trucks senior vice president of North American sales and commercial operations.

“Mack’s leadership in commercial vehicles goes back more than 120 years, and we’ve proudly served Canada and its diverse regions and demanding applications throughout much of that history,” Randall says. “It’s an honor for Mack to be part of Canada’s story.” Mack Canada expanded throughout the roaring ’20s to become one of the nation’s most dependable and popular truck manufacturers, establishing customer relationships — such as the partnership with Ontario’s Dufferin Construction — that endure to this day. During the decade, Mack Canada moved from one larger facility to the next in Toronto and expanded its operations to encompass distributors and Mack-owned dealerships across Canada. Through the economy’s downturn during the Great Depression led to the collapse of the truck industry, Mack offset many of its losses by selling used trucks and introducing buses — with rubber shock isolators and pneumatic tires to improve ride quality — to great popularity.

In the 1930s, Mack introduced its Mack Jr. and E series models, which became some of Canada’s best-selling trucks. And during World War II, Mack converted its factories to war effort production, recommitting its brand to supporting Allied troops overseas. From the 1950s on was a time of unparalleled expansion and growth, as Mack Canada introduced new models like the L series and A series trucks to match massive demand following the establishment of the Alaska Highway project, an extensive road network in Western Canada, and the major oil discoveries in Alberta in 1947. The versatile and durable Mack B Model, introduced in the 1950s, was a major factor in Mack’s growth in the market. Mack also opened an assembly plant in Oakville, Ontario, which produced more than 60,000 trucks for Canada, the U.S. and export markets between 1966 and 1933. Now, with Mack a proud member of the Volvo Group, Mack Canada remains an innovator, introducing new technological advancements for driver ease, working to minimize engine emissions, and establishing corporate and dealer infrastructures to support Mack Canada’s customers for the next 100 years — and beyond.

About the author
Mark Laine retired after 36 years with Mack Canada, his final position as marketing manager. He’s a member of Automotive Historians Society and American Truck Historical Society.
RVO ramps up, Mack® MD rolls out

Despite the global pandemic, Mack Trucks’ latest truck series went into production during the past year as the new Roanoke Valley Operations (RVO) facility began producing the Mack® MD medium-duty series of trucks. With an emphasis on worker safety and high-quality products, MD models have been coming off the line in growing numbers and going into operation with waiting customers. RVO sits in a scenic valley in the Blue Ridge Mountains, near Salem, Virginia.

Photos by Kirk Zutell

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*Compared to non-MP8HE engine.*
Tell us what you think

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