



Kenworth Truck of Choice for Leading Tow Truck Body Builder Miller Industries and Its Customers

Kenworth Tow Trucks Show Their Brawn

KIRKLAND, Wash. – The art and science of building a tow truck requires four groups to work in unison. Any diversion can mean a tow truck ill-equipped for the strenuous job of towing and recovery.

“End-user, body builder, truck dealer and truck OEM – those are the players,” said John L. Hawkins, vice president of heavy duty operations from Ooltewah, Tenn.-based Miller Industries. “For the most part, especially when you’re dealing with medium and heavy duty trucks, each vehicle is customized for a specific towing or recovery application, so understanding how the vehicle will be used, and subsequently the spec’ing is vital to success.”



Kenworth C500 tow truck used in oil field service overseas.

As the world’s largest supplier of tow bodies, Hawkins said the company’s relationship with Kenworth and its dealers make it a favored choice for his company and customers. “Kenworth gets it when it comes to engineering for the tow industry,” Hawkins said. “We work closely with the company and they know, for example, we need larger air compressors and air storage, bigger generators for amperage draw, and specific areas where we need air dryers, fuel tanks and batteries placed to accommodate our bodies and to shift weight forward.



Anthony Aquilino of Universe Towing stands next to one of his Kenworth T800 tow trucks.

“With wheelbases exceeding 300 inches, a tight turning radius is required and the Kenworth T800’s set-back front axle allows for added maneuverability,” continued Hawkins. “But, the real key is durability and balancing weight, especially moving as much weight forward on the front axle as possible. The only way to pick up a loaded trash truck with a front axle weight that can be in excess of 20,000 lbs. is to have a T800 that Kenworth has engineered for Miller with a high capacity front and rear suspensions and axle ratings.”

Understanding customer needs is also important, a role fostered by truck salesman Charlie Hall of MHC Kenworth-Chattanooga. “We work closely with Charlie who is an expert in the towing industry,” said Hawkins. “He helps in the spec’ing process with customers and Kenworth engineering so that we can provide the total package that exceeds customer expectations.”

For Anthony Aquilino of Universe Towing, located in the Bronx near Yankee Stadium, Kenworth has been his choice for medium and heavy duty wreckers since 1989. “The three Kenworth T800 wreckers and new T270 flatbed join our smaller light-duty trucks to give us 30 tow vehicles,” said Aquilino, who is a third generation tower. “The Kenworths are the big dogs in our fleet capable of towing or salvaging just about anything and they’re a necessity since we’re the authorized NYPD tow service provider for the Bronx highway. We remove big and small vehicles from that roadway.”

With the narrow streets of the Bronx, Aquilino said Kenworth T800’s tight turning radius is an absolute must. “We spec a tri-axle configuration and very short wheelbase, but need to have the brawn and capacity to utilize high capacity rotator booms,” he said.

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“The T800 with three-stage 75-ton rotator boom is my personal truck, and it comes equipped with two 60,000-pound winches and a 50,000 pound drag winch. It’s a great recovery truck and a very nice piece of high-tech equipment, thanks to Miller and Kenworth. It’s big and strong like a heavyweight boxing champion – when I drive it out of the garage everybody watches. It comes back like a warrior, undefeated, until the next call comes in.”

The other Kenworth T800s are equipped with 50-ton integrated boom and a new 40-ton rotator boom, respectively. All three T800s utilize floatation tires on the steers to maximize the vehicles footprint in salvage operations. Each Universe Towing T800 is equipped with Kenworth’s Extended Day Cab, which enhances driver comfort with an additional 6 inches of length and 5 inches of cab height compared to Kenworth’s traditional day cab. The Extended Day Cab also offers 2 more inches behind the wheel, additional leg room, up to 21 degrees of recline in the driver’s seat, and 2 extra cubic feet of storage behind the driver’s seat.

“Driver comfort is extremely important to us, and the drivers love the added room the Extended Day Cab offers,” said Aquilino. “We couldn’t be more pleased. We get a great truck with Kenworth, a great towing package with Miller, and support from our local Kenworth dealer – Gabrielli Kenworth.”



Danny Gayne of Danny’s Towing stands next to his Kenworth T800 tow truck.

Six hundred miles to the south, Danny’s Towing – operating out of Hickory, Waynesville and Asheville, N.C. – relies just as heavily on Kenworth trucks. “We made the switch to Kenworth about three years ago and couldn’t be happier. We run 10 Kenworth T370s in flatbed operations and they’re the best flatbed vehicle we’ve ever run,” said owner Danny Gayne. “We can use the T370 as a wrecker or a tow vehicle since they come to us equipped with side pullers. Our drivers say the Kenworths are extremely comfortable with lots of interior space. All my Kenworths are air-tight and block out the road noise. They drive like luxury cars.”

They look the part as well. Gayne takes great pride in the appearance of his vehicles and enters his showcase Kenworth T800 with a 50-ton integrated unit in scores of tow industry beauty contests. “We recently won best of show in a North Carolina event,” Gayne said. “Image and service is my business. The trucks make a first impression and assist in the professional image of our company – we work with 150 trucking fleets to handle their recovery, towing and road service.

“That goes along with patrolling the 120 miles of I-40. We salvage a rollover or truck in a ditch at least once a week and we’re the only towing company in our area with equipment big enough for major recovery,” Gayne said. “Our workhorse is a T800 in a twin-steer configuration. With a three stage recovery boom, the 75-ton rotator has five winches. We’ve hooked onto a tractor-trailer that was in a ravine 450 feet away, and made the recovery. If we can do that, we can do just about anything.



“Our Kenworths with booms also come in handy for truckers at weigh stations,” added Gayne. “We’ll occasionally be called to reset loads. Awhile back we moved a 52,000-pound transformer to center the weight on the axles for a legal load. That’s not your garden variety towing and recovery operation, but we do it all here at Danny’s Towing.”

Kenworth Truck Company is the manufacturer of The World’s Best® heavy and medium duty trucks. Kenworth is an industry leader in providing fuel-saving technology solutions that help increase fuel efficiency and reduce emissions. The company’s dedication to the green fleet includes aerodynamic trucks, medium duty diesel-electric hybrids, liquefied natural gas trucks, and the Kenworth Clean Power® no-idle system. This year, Kenworth became the first truck manufacturer to receive the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Air Excellence award in recognition of its environmentally friendly products. In addition, Kenworth is the recipient of the 2009 J.D. Power and Associates awards for Highest in Customer Satisfaction for both Over the Road Segment and Pickup and Delivery Segment Class 8 Trucks, and for Heavy Duty Dealer Service. Kenworth’s Internet home page is at www.kenworth.com. Kenworth. A PACCAR Company.