

# Refining Cost Savings

Refrigerated carrier Stevens Transport aims for big equipment savings with oil refiner system

**S**hippers who have been getting a fuel tank full of cost increases from trucking equipment may have some good news from an unlikely source.

Refrigerated carrier Stevens Transport of Dallas says a oil refiner system will save it more than \$1 million a year by extending oil-change intervals, reducing maintenance down time and potentially stretching truck life. And the system could be even more beneficial to shippers and trucking companies with the introduction of more efficient 2007 engines, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The start-up company behind the oil refiner, Oil Purification Systems of Shelton, Conn., says the OPS-1 system is lighter and more effective than competing systems; the company is eyeing an overall diesel-engine market valued in the billions of dollars.

"We do know that the 2007 engines are going to tax the oil even more," said Tom Bock, Oil Purification Systems vice president of operations. "There's going to be more soot put back in the oil, there's going to be more acid development because of that soot with any moisture that's left in the oil, so we see that as an added benefit of using our system."

And the OPS-1 system, which the company has been marketing for about a year, is getting a boost by early tests by Stevens. Recently, the carrier said it completed the first year of a long-term plan to outfit its entire fleet with the OPS-1 system. Stevens said by 2005 it had outfitted

half of its 1,600 trucks. Stevens first installed the OPS-1 on three trucks as a pilot test in March 2003. The first truck operated for 70,000 miles before the oil was changed, more than twice the usual 30,000-mile interval observed by the carrier's maintenance crews.

An analysis of the oil at 70,000 miles

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by a third-party laboratory did not indicate the need for a change, but Stevens said it chose to be conservative with the first truck. The second truck in the pilot ran about 140,000 miles before an oil change; the third about 192,000. After that, the company committed to fleetwide installations.

**E**ric Smith, Stevens director of maintenance, said the refiner system saves money by reducing oil changes and the time trucks are off the road for maintenance. The carrier estimates it achieved an 80 percent oil maintenance cost savings last year on each truck fitted with the system by eliminating three to five oil changes.

"As our entire fleet is outfitted with the OPS-1 system over the next couple of

years, we expect to save more than a million dollars per year on the cost of oil changes alone," Smith said.

Oil Purification Systems is a venture and private capital-funded company founded in 2002 in Tampa, Fla., and recently moved to Connecticut. The OPS-1 system is being evaluated by other carriers here, which Bock declined to identify.

The company faces competition from other manufacturers of filtration systems, including Puradyn Filter Technologies. Last month, Puradyn unveiled impressive test results of its own, in a test



Photo courtesy Stevens Transport

of five Volvo tractor engines used by an oil company for delivering fuel and lubrication products. Four of the five tractors, which normally went through an oil change at 20,000 miles, were equipped with Puradyn's bypass oil filtration system and filled with premium engine oil. The fifth was not equipped with the system.

"The final test results showed that upon inspection of the five engines at approximately 112,000 miles, three out of four equipped with the system were clean with no deposits of sludge buildup and very little wear," Puradyn said.

"The fourth engine showed minimal signs of dirt but did not exhibit any deposits of sludge. The inspection of the engine using premium oil without the system installed showed obvious signs of wear," the company said.

Bock claims the 11-pound OPS-1 system is a quarter the weight of Puradyn's and is more attractive to Class 8 truck operators. He added the technology used by Oil Purification Systems is superior to other systems.

**BY BILL CAREY**

## Carlisle Transportation Expands in Northwest

Anchorage-based carrier Carlisle Transportation Systems acquired assets of Keytrans, a transportation company serving Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. The value of the transaction was not disclosed.

Carlisle said the addition of Keytrans will expand its fleet to 200 trucks and 1,500 trailers. Carlisle now employs 535 people, including 110 in Tacoma, Wash. The company has expanded its operations at Washington's Port of Tacoma with a new terminal.

Other Keystone companies involved in warehousing and other services were not included in the transaction.