



Kenworth 90th Anniversary Celebration

Kenworth's 90 Years of 'Muddy Boots' Heritage Benefits Customers Today

KIRKLAND, Wash. – During the early years of Kenworth's 90-year history it was said that "Kenworth Engineers Wear Muddy Boots."

"The Muddy Boots name symbolized that Kenworth engineers and salespeople weren't afraid to go in the field, crawl under trucks and get dirty. As we celebrate Kenworth's 90th anniversary, we see history repeating itself. We still get our boots muddy and work closely with customers to see how Kenworth can build a better truck to meet their needs," said Alan Fennimore, Kenworth's vocational marketing manager.

Stories and pictures remind the company of its past. According to Kenworth's early archives, "Kenworth engineers had earned a reputation for solving problems in the field, often driving trucks or inspecting them in the middle of a muddy road for signs of failure. John Holmstrom (then Kenworth chief engineer and later the company's general manager) would routinely visit logging sites, crawling underneath vehicles and making notes on how to improve truck design to better withstand the rugged conditions."



Shown is Kenworth vice president and sales manager Vernon Smith (at center of load) with a Kenworth sugar cane hauler on the island of Oahu in Hawaii in 1936.

Vernon Smith, who began a 30-year career as Kenworth's vice president and sales manager in 1923, traveled to Hawaii in the mid-1930s and trod through muddy sugar cane fields in search of new business. "Smith found that sugar cane was being hauled by rail over temporary tracks laid in muddy fields. He told the plantation owners that Kenworth engineers could come up with a better solution – gas-powered, high load capacity six-wheel drive cane trucks – quite a feat for

that era. He got the order on the promise and within 10 years, Kenworth trucks were being used in 13 of the 14 sugar plantations."



Kenworth engineers would go out in the mud and visit truck fleets. This photo from the 1920s is of Kenworth trucks operated by the Holroyd Company of Tacoma, Wash.

John Czarniecki, one of Kenworth's engineers, was quoted in the 1998 book "Kenworth – The First 75 Years," as saying: "This group was very capable and always able to rise to the occasion. No matter what the problem, we could still solve it. I think it was because we had an open mind and were willing to talk to each other."



Early in Kenworth's history it became said that "Kenworth engineers wear muddy boots" as Kenworth engineers were known for gaining first-hand experience of conditions in the field by getting their boots dirty during visits to truck fleet operations. This photo was taken in the 1930s for an early Kenworth brochure.

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Today, challenges still exist, especially in the vocational market, where Kenworth offers a wide range of Class 8 vocational trucks, including the C500, K500 cabover, T800, T880, W900S, W900L and the 963. “Competition is fierce for our customers, particularly in construction, so if they can make more money using our product, then they’re ahead of the curve. Our job is to understand what they need, and figure out how to spec it. That way, we’ll both come out on top,” said Fennimore.



Kenworth K500



Kenworth 963



Kenworth T880



Kenworth W900L



Kenworth C500

Building upon that illustrious, well-earned motto is Kenworth’s Muddy Boots Academy, an intensive three-day ‘boot camp’ training course for Kenworth dealer salespeople which prepares them to work with customers in vocations ranging from quarries and mining to construction, heavy haul and mixers. During the course, Kenworth salespeople learn more about customers’ vocational and equipment needs, and are updated on various regulatory restrictions.



Shown are Kenworth dealer sales participants at the Kenworth Muddy Boots Academy held at the PACCAR Engine Company in Columbus, Miss., in 2012.

“It’s not just about how to sell a truck anymore,” said Fennimore. “Salespeople need to know a myriad of federal and local regulations, be able to do calculations for bridge formula and proper vehicle weight distribution, use creative spec’ing, and understand new technologies that we’re always bringing to the table. Those Kenworth dealer salespeople who go through the course come away appreciating our Muddy Boots heritage and how Kenworth has always worked with customers to better their operations.”

Kenworth’s ongoing Muddy Boots philosophy throughout its 90-year history would certainly bring a smile to Kenworth legends Vernon Smith and John Holmstrom.

Kenworth Truck Company is the manufacturer of The World’s Best® heavy and medium duty trucks. Kenworth’s Internet home page is at www.kenworth.com Kenworth is a PACCAR company.