

Featured Partner: Mesilla Valley Transportation



“*Mesilla Valley Transportation is committed to running the greenest fleet in the country and setting an example for fleets around the world! Participating in SmartWay aligns perfectly with our goals to demonstrate true leadership in freight efficiency.*”

— Royal Jones, President & CEO

WHY SMARTWAY?

Mesilla Valley Transportation (MVT) operates its fleet with a focus on driver performance, technology innovation and customer service. **MVT joined SmartWay ten years ago** in support of its larger goals to haul more freight, use less fuel, and monitor its environmental performance. Its decision to join SmartWay has paid off in many ways.



BENCHMARKING IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR

The first time that MVT measured its fleet's overall fuel economy in 2004, the company was surprised – and disappointed. Based on the size and age of its fleet, driver performance, routes, and other factors, the company expected that its fleet would average 7.5 MPG. But the results showed an **average of 6.8 MPG**.

Today MVT credits **benchmarking** as a key tool for identifying and sharing best practices, and an important factor that contributes significantly to performance. Based on its most current fleet assessment, excluding independent owner-operators hired under contract, MVT estimates that its fleet is running close to **9 MPG**.

“Establishing a baseline and annually benchmarking your MPG every year is critical to setting goals,” said Royal Jones, MVT’s president and CEO. “Trying and testing technologies and strategies, and ultimately adopting those that reduce fuel use – is key to achieving them.”

In addition to its internal performance metrics, MVT also uses SmartWay’s online performance data to help benchmark against its competitors. The online performance data includes a list of all fleets operated by SmartWay carrier and logistics Partners. Fleets are ranked using emissions metrics that can be used to identify their overall environmental and energy performance. As a SmartWay truckload carrier, **MVT has been the recipient of a SmartWay Excellence Award** multiple times, and recognized as SmartWay high performer for its efficiency and carbon scores.

“SmartWay’s performance reports help us check and validate the monitoring we’ve been doing for years – and that corroboration is extremely helpful,” said Jones.

TECHNOLOGY AND OPERATIONAL INNOVATIONS

Throughout its history, MVT has worked hard to stay ahead of the curve by testing new and innovative fuel-saving technologies. In the mid 1980's, shortly after the company was formed, MVT moved all 5th wheels forward and locked them to keep the gap between the truck and trailer as close as possible, improving the aerodynamics of the truck and trailer and in turn, fuel efficiency. MVT found that any gap between the front of the trailer and the edge of cab extenders **beyond 24"** was costing up to **one tenth of a mile** per gallon per inch.

In 2004, the company switched to trucks and trailers with single wide based tires, and equipped all trucks with direct-drive transmissions and idle reduction devices. Today all tractors use **6X2 axle configurations**, and are treated with **low-viscosity synthetic lubricants**. On its trailers, MVT uses **run skirts** and **trailer tails**. In combination, MVT finds these upgrades key to operating a high-performing, energy efficient fleet.

"Drivers are in a constant battle against wind resistance," said Jones. "We're always trying different ways to make the driver's job easier by reducing drag while simultaneously giving them the horsepower and energy needed to move his truck down the road and meet our customer's needs as safely and efficiently as possible."

In addition to technology upgrades, MVT works closely with its drivers on their driving practices to help improve safety and save fuel. The **MVT Training Institute** offers full classroom, field and road instruction for new drivers to obtain their CDL license, and various programs for existing drivers to hone and improve their skills. MVT's fleet is equipped with programmable engines and it closely monitors driving patterns, using the data to reach out and counsel drivers on how to drive more efficiently.



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AS A WINNING STRATEGY

Initially, MVT had assumed that its International ProStar trucks, or its "Trucks of Tomorrow" when fully equipped with a series of fuel-saving upgrades, would get no less than 8 MPG, no matter who was driving them. However, MVT found that even the perfect truck had **variances of up to 3 miles per gallon** based on the driver. It found that drivers in the same type of truck might get below 8 MPG while other drivers were getting over 10 miles per gallon.

This variance inspired MVT to begin **rewarding drivers** for their positive driving techniques. Every three months the MVT driver without any accidents, violations, and the best MPG becomes eligible for a chance to **win a new car**. The new car can only be won by a driver once. However, MVT also rewards the driver with the best MPG for the year with **\$25,000** if the driver doesn't have any accidents or violations; this reward can be won multiple times.

In addition to this competition, and to encourage broader participation, including drivers that might have a ticket or violation, MVT also runs a monthly program. Under this program, drivers are given **financial incentives**, that on top of their monthly pay, provides an additional .01 cents when drivers achieve 8.6 MPG and above; .02 for 9.0 to 9.4 MPG; .03 for 9.5 to 9.9 MPG; and finally, .04 additional cents per mile for over 10 MPG. Based on MVT's operations, the company equates a tenth of a mile per gallon improvement for every mile driven to **20,000 gallons of fuel saved a month** – and it wants all drivers on board, driving as efficiently and economically as possible.



20% Biodiesel

SUSTAINABILITY MANAGEMENT – PRESENT AND FUTURE

Mesilla Valley Transportation cares about air quality and continually looks for ways to reduce its carbon and other emissions in several ways. For example, when at home terminals MVT fuels its trucks with **20% Biodiesel**, and is repurposing its used engine oil as fuel for the heaters in its maintenance shops during the colder months.

MVT also operates **MVT Solutions**, a division of the company that conducts testing on a broad range of efficiency devices, equipment, additives and other products aimed at lowering fuel use. MVT Solutions collaborates with manufacturers as well as other fleets that share its goals to save fuel, money and the environment.

WHAT'S NEXT

MVT is committed to its partnership with SmartWay by **"Getting there with Cleaner Air,"** and plans to continue and expand transportation management and sustainability strategies that have helped it lessen freight's impacts on air quality and reduce our nation's reliance on foreign oil.



Roberto Sandoval, a driver with MVT, represented the company in the **2017 Run on Less campaign**, where MVT and several other trucking companies demonstrated the ability of long haul drivers to achieve an **average of over 10 MPG**.