

First Choice Transport

A growing truckload carrier is replacing its entire fleet with Great Dane P-101 dry freight vans

“When we decided to replace our entire fleet of 175 trailers there was really only one choice,” says Carla Luig, president and CEO of First Choice Transport. “Great Dane’s reputation for building quality products, and its stability—especially in tough economic times—told us they’ll be in business and able to support us for a long time. We’re very happy with this choice.”

Founded in September 2001 by Luig in her own home, First Choice Transport has experienced steady growth and ongoing success. The veteran of trucking and Fortune 500 companies now heads an interstate and intrastate trucking and transportation operation that services customers in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri with 85 company-owned tractors. Based in Fort Worth, the company also provides brokerage service to 42 additional states, as well cross-dock, partial load, consolidation, warehousing, and multi-stop services.

“When we opened for business we didn’t have the financial backing to buy new equipment so we began by leasing trailers,” Luig relates. “Then we bought some used trailers. Now that we’re able to fund our equipment needs, we looked at our options and quickly realized that Great Dane offered the most reliable and durable trailers at a competitive cost.”

In 2011, First Choice replaced 95 of its trailers with 53-ft Great Dane P-101 Series dry freight vans built at the Jonesboro, Arkansas manufacturing facility. The trailers are fitted with sliding air ride suspensions and TIREMAAX PRO automatic tire monitoring and inflation solutions from Hendrickson Trailer Suspension Systems.

The high-cube P-101 dry freight van is a lightweight model with a nominal inside width of 101 inches. Offering more capacity than traditional sheet and post trailers, the P-101 also features a snag-free interior plastic lining that runs full height and is secured to the logistic posts using Great Dane’s unique “hook” design.

“We’re planning to replace our other 80 trailers with P-101s in 2012,” Luig states. “Phasing them in makes sense because it gives us time to sell our existing units. Of course, there is a shortage of used five year old or newer trailers so we could be ready for our new Great Danes sooner.”

First Choice Transport’s decision to replace its entire trailer fleet coincided with a move to upgrade all of its dry vans with a new tracking, monitoring and fleet management system. The R:COM Dot trailer solution from Blue Tree Systems is being installed in the fleet’s new P-101 vans at the Jonesboro plant.

“Great Dane’s willingness to include the installation of our new trailer tracking system hardware in the production of our P-101 dry freight vans cemented our belief that we were doing business with the right company,” Luig says. “We weren’t offered that level of service by other manufacturers.

“For us, Great Dane also stands out against its competitors because it has a network of branches and dealers throughout our entire operating area,” Luig continues. “With Great Dane we have set rates for services and access online to our trailer maintenance records so we’re sure everything is up to date. We also have people within the Great Dane organization who are always ready to meet our needs day and night.”

Luig firmly believes that Great Dane’s exceptional support is simply not available anywhere else. “We also didn’t find any other make that is as solid as a Great Dane,” she says. “In our opinion no other trailer stands up to the big dog.”

Tracking Trailers

“We’ve been using tracking and asset management systems for many years,” says Carla Luig, president and CEO of First Choice Transport. “The ability to manage assets in real-time, have access to a detailed location and tracking history, as well as monitor untethered trailers, is very beneficial in terms of operating more efficiently and productively.”

First Choice Transport is now equipping its entire fleet of new Great Dane P-101 dry freight vans with the new R:COM Dot trailer tracking solution from Blue Tree Systems R:COM Dot is a dry van trailer solution offering capabilities that include vehicle tracking displays of the current location of any vehicle or group of vehicles with road, aerial and bird’s eye views, detailed trailer movement information with tracking history that can include trip, stop and time at location reports, live tethered trailer reports and scheduled reports on untethered units, the ability to name and geo-fence thousands of locations and provide exception-based alerts, cargo control alerts for monitoring door open and close events, and over-the-air programming and upgrades.