

# Carrier Spotlight of the Month: Fortune Transportation, Inc.



Fortune Transportation, Inc., headquartered in Windom, MN, is this month's featured carrier. Started in 1980 by Don and Sharon Olson, Fortune Transportation, Inc., has terminals in Greeley, CO, Roswell, NM, and Windom, MN, and operates 174 trucks/265 trailers—all temperature controlled, as Fortune specializes in hauling food and beverages. Over the last five years, the company has been heavily investing in technology, including upgraded its truck and trailer fleet.

To learn about more about [Fortune Transportation, Inc.](#), I recently talked with Mike Udermann, who serves as the company's executive vice president. Mike manages sales, marketing, contracts, rates, new customer development, and ongoing business relationships with current customers, and he offered some great insight into the company and the industry.

## **What makes your company unique?**

I believe what sets Fortune apart is our attention to detail and to our customers. Our motto, "Dependable Because We Care," is evident in all aspects of our business. Trucking can be a tough and stressful business—we work hard at what we do—but we also have many times throughout the course of the days and weeks where we have fun, too. We engage our customer service, operations, dispatch, and driver teams in a weekly "traffic meeting" and have an open door policy for all within the company. Presently operating under second generation leadership, Fortune is currently adding a new operations/dispatch center at our headquarters in Windom, MN. We run modern, up-to-date trucks and trailers and specialize exclusively in hauling food and beverage products—from fresh to deep frozen, all trailers are ice cream capable.

## **How do third party logistics providers (3PLs) impact your business?**

3PLs play an important role within Fortune's operations, primarily to help us reposition trucks in certain lanes in which we don't have direct customer business. We view 3PLs as an extension of our operations in various lanes, and we believe a 3PL allows us the opportunity to help mitigate our costs.

**When working with a customer for the first time, what are your expectations?**

It is important for all parties involved to understand what those expectations are and to have them clearly defined prior to start of business, so there are no surprises as we begin a new business relationship. For example, as we on-boarded a new customer late last year, we had a number of meetings and conference calls between the customer and our operations/customer service team to define their—and our—expectations. Doing this helps start off the relationship on the right foot. We look for repeatable, long-term business relationships in which we can build upon our growth and the success of both us and the customer. We are an extension of our customer, and it is extremely important that all within Fortune's operations understand this attribute.

**If you could change something about the transportation industry, what would it be?**

Clearly, our industry needs to understand the importance of all within the industry, but as we've been hearing for more than 15 years now, we all need to focus on the needs of the driver. I've recently heard various trucking firms advertising for drivers with starting pay in the mid to high \$80,000 range. Focusing on quality of life and related aspects in our industry will allow all of us to succeed. Here at Fortune, we have invested heavily in new equipment (trucks), and we have driver lounges at our facilities with kitchens, laundry facilities, showers, etc., to show our drivers how important they are to us. If I could change another thing, it would be for the motoring public to understand how hard drivers work and the importance of what they do. Nearly everything that's on store shelves was delivered by a truck.

**What should the general public know about the trucking industry?**

With nearly 3.5 million truck drivers on the road, the general public should know, as I just mentioned, the importance of what our industry does. Think about Winter Storm Jonas recently on the East Coast. News reports showed store after store with empty shelves—shelves that at one point were full, but were quickly emptied ahead of the storm and couldn't be restocked until the roads cleared again. Everything in those stores is delivered by trucks. Understanding the scope of what trucking means to our country is huge: The clothes we all wear, the food we all eat, gas for our cars—nearly everything—is delivered by truck. A simple thank you to a truck driver goes a long way.

**What industry or technology innovations have improved efficiency within your business?**

All trucks are equipped with electronic logging devices (ELDs); we operate with a transportation management system (TMS) dispatch software; trailers are equipped with trailer tracking technology; and our trucks are modern and up-to-date with the latest engine components. All of our trailers are 53-foot temperature controlled units with side skirts, trailer tails, and aluminum wheels, which allows us to haul 45,500 pounds.

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