The ERB Group of Companies
New Hamburg, Ontario

THE REFRIGERATED TRANSPORTATION SPECIALISTS DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISES SINCE 1959.

Background

The Erb Group of Companies (Erb Group) has been a part of the Wellesley and New Hamburg, Ontario area communities since 1959. As the company has grown and expanded across Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and Pennsylvania they have remained committed to their reputation as being a good corporate citizen and employer. A measure of this commitment is demonstrated by their ongoing attention to the environmental footprint they leave behind.

Erb has evolved from a small one-man company into a much larger operation, one that currently employs over 1,300 employees and 140 owner/operators. This family-owned business’ reputation has been built on service, satisfaction and success. Today over 1,800 businesses rely on the Erb Group of Companies for the delivery of time and temperature-controlled products to over 24,000 consignees. To anticipate and meet their customers’ needs they offer over 700 power units and 1000 refrigerated trailers.

The Erb Group now includes not just the original company -- Erb Transport Limited - currently a less-than-truckload (LTL) and truckload transportation and distribution company, with terminals in seven Ontario cities: Baden, Barrie, North Bay, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Toronto, and Trenton; as well as Montreal, Quebec; and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Erb International Inc. is primarily a truckload operation covering 48 American States, from their terminals in Canada. Erb Transportation Solutions Inc., their newest company, started in 1997 with emergency and expedite/courier services. Erb Transport Inc. in Elverson, Pennsylvania is a regional truckload carrier serving the mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. Today the Erb Group drives over 80 million km annually at a cost of almost $34 million in fuel. The company joined the SmartWay® Transport Partner program in 2009.

The Erb Group believes that their continual success and constant improvement initiatives establishes them as an industry leader in safety. Providing employees with the proper tools, communication, training and recognition is the key to their safety success. Their ranking in the top-three positions of the Truck Carrier Association’s National Fleet Safety Awards for six of the past 10 years, as well as making the top 20 list for the “Best Fleets to Drive for” in 2009 and 2011, demonstrates their consistency in safety commitment and performance. This success however, has not made them complacent, as they continually strive to achieve even higher standards. In 2010, Erb Group was recognized by the Niagara Parks Commission for driver efforts in reducing idle time under their Spare the Air program to reduce transport
truck idling in the Niagara River Corridor. They also received Walmart Canada’s Store Delivery Carrier of the Year award that same year.

**Sustainability Programs**

The Erb Group has been an early adopter of many principles of environmental change within the transportation industry, including the use of ultra-low sulphur fuel; the rigorous yearly emissions testing to assure compliance with Ontario standards; and the maintenance of a late-model fleet, with newer and more efficient engines.

They have also recognized the need to support a culture of environmental sensitivity amongst their employees. Elaborate incentive structures are in place to motivate drivers to limit the idling of their trucks in order to reduce fuel consumption and unnecessary exhaust. Bunk heaters or APU’s further reduce the need to idle trucks, and fuel consumption is also reduced by the use of speed limiters within their fleet.

At their terminals, Erb has a wide range of environmentally conscious efforts in place, including: recycling programs in most major terminals (e.g. cardboard, paper, metals, glass, plastic); lights in dock areas, freezers and private offices, with timers or motion sensors in the terminals in which they have been built; yard lighting in Baden that has been changed from 1000 to 400 watt bulbs to save electricity use; environmentally sensitive cleaners that are used for truck washing; and recycling used oil.

**Fuel Economy Program**

**Standardized Equipment Specs**

Although Erb hired, trained and concentrated on driver behaviour for many years, the highest impact in fuel efficiency has been equipment spec’ing.

- Aerodynamics power units
- Weight reduction in both power and trailer units to max out cargo weight
- In the process of implementing LCVs (Quebec and Ontario)
- Logistic trailers to cube out LTL loads with freight that cannot be stacked on top of each other
- Fuel efficient reefer

Equipment specs change from year-to-year and Erb has put personnel and programs in place to address these critical areas.

- SmartWay fuel efficiency - lowering emissions and increasing fuel mileage
- Low cost maintenance - a well-maintained truck increases fuel efficiency on the road
- Driver Comfort - driver comfort translates into a productive driver
- Longevity of the equipment - reduced down time, increased ROI

Reefer Trailers have recently been equipped with EOBR’s (Electronic on-board recorders) to provide regular data. Fuel efficiency can now be determined on each reefer unit in a more efficient manner. This data will enable Erb to target areas that can become more fuel efficient with the reefer units and types of loads.

The Erb management team did a comparative analysis over the period of a year to assess differences spec’ing can make. 2011 model tractors, which were non-SmartWay Certified, were measured against those 2012 and 2013 tractor models, which were purchased as SmartWay Certified. The results of this comparison of fuel mileage benchmarks demonstrated an increase of 3% increase in fuel savings. This analysis paves the way for better equipment selection. At a 3% improvement, using all SmartWay Certified tractors will save over $1 million annually when fully implemented.

**Satellite Communications:**

Erb is currently changing all of its satellite units over to a new platform for enhanced communication, particularly by providing constant feedback to the driver. This creates a more user friendly application.
for the drivers and gives them data in real-time to better understand their driving and sustainability performance.

**Erb Highway to Health Program**

The Erb Highway to Health program was launched in 2009 and has grown to be a very sustainable program. This initiative is designed to assist employees in making healthier lifestyle choices. Employees who have participated in the program have seen a dramatic change in their health, energy level and productiveness.

**Deck Trailers**

Erb Group’s largest markets are food and pharmaceuticals, which are often direct-to-store freight. There are many products, particularly in the food industry that have restrictions on stacking pallets during truck loading based on weight and the fragility of the packaging used. Fruit, yogurt and boxed meats for example, need to be loaded in such a way that, when stacked, the weight of the product does not cause damage during transport. On overnight LTL shipments between Toronto and Montreal for these products, Erb’s cube percentage was much lower than other runs. As a result Erb Group invested heavily in deck trailers. These trailers come with permanent logistics bars that can be adjusted for height to enable shippers to cube out more, taking advantage of the full height of each trailer by using two-tiers.

Deck trailers can average a beneficial 13.8% more in weight capacity as the bars are moved up or down. Over a one year period Erb has been able to eliminate 78 one-way moves between these two cities alone. This translates into an elimination of 40,420 km saving about 15,856 liters of fuel and the associated emissions that creates. Based on 78 moves, that saves 1.2 million liters annually.

**Driver Performance Monitoring**

Erb for many years has monitored speed and idling through use of the Tachograph. In the late 90s, as ECMs (Engine Control Modules) developed on engines, speed governing was set and password protected. In 2006 The Erb Group moved toward EOBR’s for better efficiency monitoring driver behaviour. Through the use of EOBR’s Erb has developed the Erb Pro-Drive Program.

The Erb Pro-Drive Program was implemented to increase driver awareness by creating a means to measure a driver’s performance according to company and industry standards and instill focus on the benefits of good driving habits. The program can effectively reduce a driver’s individual accident risk when a driver operates within the defined company speed limit policy and by reducing hard brake applications to zero. By operating within the company speed limit and reducing idle time drivers also decrease fleet fuel consumption. The financial savings generated can be used to reward a driver based on their performance and help reduce the company’s expenditures and risk, as well as maintaining a competitive edge.

Erb’s Pro-Drive program concentrates on three areas, Idle Time, Speed and Hard-braking. Erb has established standards through benchmarking: when the driver meets the specific parameters in these
three areas, they are maximizing the fuel efficiency for that engine with that particular load and route. It also establishes a strong culture of safety.

A driver will receive an incentive bonus based on their level of performance, with the possibility to be a top bonus earner.

Summary

The Erb Group will continue to monitor new and more efficient ways of doing business as they strive to be good corporate citizens and good neighbours.

They feel strongly that providing superior service to their customers can be done with integrity and responsibility and are proud of their longstanding reputation for both.

The Erb Group has put strategic personnel, resources and sustainability initiatives in place in order to enhance best practices in all aspects of the business. In the coming year their Director of Fleet Operations will be examining the potential for lowering maintenance costs, reducing equipment downtime and improving driver comfort -- all of which represent lower operating expenses. By enhancing their process with internal communications and education across the company -- for both environmental and safety areas - The Erb Group will see the benefits in their organization, community and environment.

For more information on fleet energy-saving opportunities, contact us at:

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This document, prepared through a case analysis provides insight into the history and benefits of a truck carrier participating in the SmartWay® Partner Program.

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