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saving fuel the smart way

It appears that sometimes the SmartWay is also the CheapWay. Trucker Averitt Express reports that it has achieved "substantial" improvements in fuel efficiency since joining the SmartWay initiative two years ago, which has blunted the impact of soaring diesel prices. SmartWay is a voluntary partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the freight industry to reduce greenhouse gases and air pollution and promote cleaner, more efficient ground freight transportation.

How has Averitt saved fuel? Part of the savings have come from equipment upgrades. The carrier has bought tractors with fuel-efficient engines, tested tires that are specially designed to maintain proper inflation (thus increasing fuel efficiency) and installed sophisticated technology to gather fuel-efficiency data from tractor engine computers. But not all of its initiatives required investments in equipment. The carrier has also trained operators on fuel-saving driving techniques, used routing software to design the shortest routes, and participated in an automated vehicle identification program that allows drivers to bypass designated weigh stations, thereby reducing unnecessary tractor idling.

The SmartWay program currently has more than 300 partners, including both carriers and shippers. Collectively, SmartWay partners are on track to reduce approximately 3.1 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, 800 tons of particulate matter and 22,000 tons of nitrogen oxides annually and save approximately 284 million gallons of fuel per year by 2007.

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