

EFS E-Brief

ISSUE #71 - December, 2025



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ARTICLES SOURCED FROM LEADING TRUCKING NEWS ORGANIZERS

NEWSLETTER DESIGNED, CREATED, AND EDITED BY BRIAN MISEVETH, 586-707-0787, BRIAN.MISEVETH@GMAIL.COM

SEASONS GREETINGS:

On behalf of Emergency Fleet Service,
we wish everyone a fantastic holiday
and a wonderful New Year!

- Phil Benedetti, Director of Operations/Sales

US Business Activity Boosted After Reopening Government

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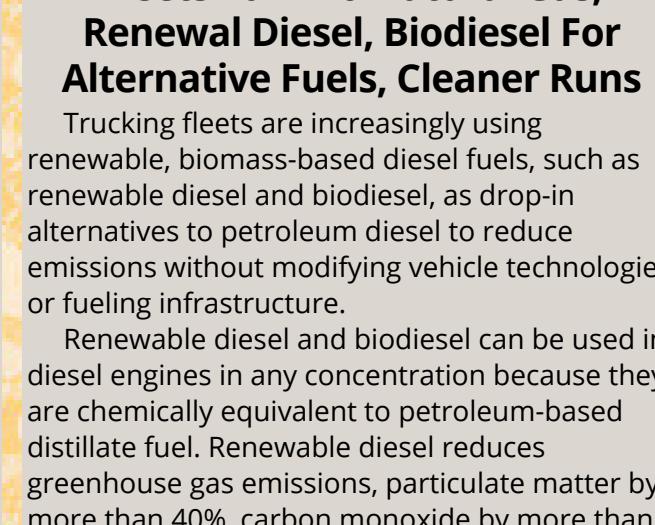
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Fleets Turn To Natural Gas, Renewal Diesel, Biodiesel For Alternative Fuels, Cleaner Runs

Trucking fleets are increasingly using renewable, biomass-based diesel fuels, such as renewable diesel and biodiesel, as drop-in alternatives to petroleum diesel to reduce emissions without modifying vehicle technologies or fueling infrastructure.

Renewable diesel and biodiesel can be used in diesel engines in any concentration because they are chemically equivalent to petroleum-based distillate fuel. Renewable diesel reduces greenhouse gas emissions, particulate matter by more than 40%, carbon monoxide by more than 25%, total hydrocarbons by more than 20%, and nitrogen oxides by 10%. It can be used without purchasing new equipment or changing infrastructure.

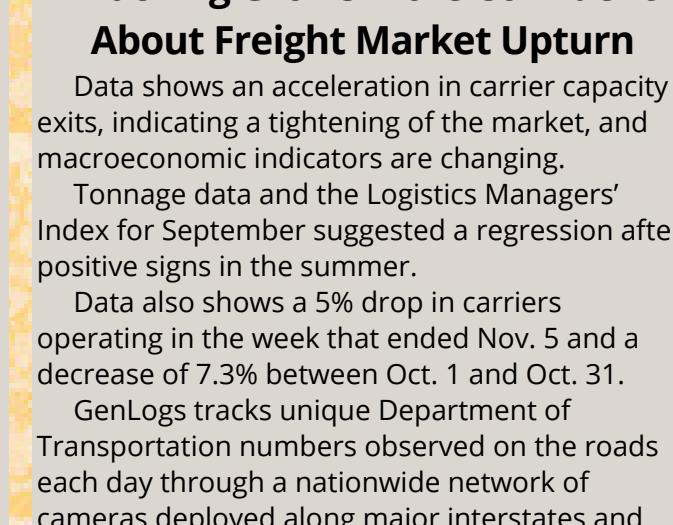
Penske Truck Leasing has been distributing renewable diesel, also known as hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO), for three years at West Coast fueling locations, where it accounts for about 10% to 15% of total bulk fuel sales. The supply of renewable diesel has increased over the past three to five years due to investments in refinery conversions. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported that renewable diesel production averaged about 220,000 barrels per day in 2024, up from 170,000 in 2023, with a projected 5% increase in 2025.

Renewable diesel is limited outside states with low-carbon fuel standards, such as California, Oregon, and Washington. Production is concentrated in coastal areas or regions with ample feedstock. Changes to the \$1-per-gallon biodiesel and renewable diesel blenders tax credit have affected availability and cost.

The adoption of natural gas as a fuel for heavy-duty trucks has increased with the introduction of engines like the Cummins X15N and growing renewable natural gas (RNG) availability. Natural-gas-powered fleets include UPS and Paper Transport, which operate trucks with 9-liter, 12-liter, and 15-liter natural gas engines. Higher initial equipment costs can be offset by fuel savings over time, particularly for high-mileage operations. Practices such as slip-seating trucks can further optimize utilization and reduce total cost of ownership.

RNG captures methane from waste streams, such as landfills and dairy farms, and converts it into a low-carbon fuel for heavy-duty trucking.

Companies like Clean Energy Fuels and Nopetro Energy produce RNG at landfills and dairy farms, and operate fueling stations for commercial fleets. RNG infrastructure in North America includes more than 1,200 CNG and LNG fueling stations, with access to almost 3 million miles of natural gas distribution pipeline in the U.S.



Trucking Grows More Confident About Freight Market Upturn

Data shows an acceleration in carrier capacity exits, indicating a tightening of the market, and macroeconomic indicators are changing.

Tonnage data and the Logistics Managers' Index for September suggested a regression after positive signs in the summer.

Data also shows a 5% drop in carriers operating in the week that ended Nov. 5 and a decrease of 7.3% between Oct. 1 and Oct. 31.

GenLogs tracks unique Department of Transportation numbers observed on the roads each day through a nationwide network of cameras deployed along major interstates and highways. The cameras track truck traffic as they pass, and artificial intelligence is used to extract identifiers such as DOT/MC numbers, equipment type, or logos.

This indicated a dip in the number of smaller unit carriers with 1-10 power units, as unique truck numbers show an October dip of 0.83%.

National shipment volume contracted 2.9% in the third quarter of 2025, according to the U.S. Bank Freight Payment Index, while shipper spending increased. The data showed that shippers paid more to move less freight, partially influenced by higher fuel prices.

A survey of owner-operators and small fleets by Truckstop.com and Bloomberg Intelligence showed changes in optimism among carriers. Truckstop.com and Bloomberg Intelligence surveyed 211 carriers, of which 80% were owner-operators or small fleets with five or fewer trucks.

Macroeconomic factors include the expected resolution of the federal government shutdown, greater clarity over tariffs, and the effects of recent Federal Reserve interest rate reductions. ArcBest, based in Fort Smith, Ark., ranks No. 13 on the Transport Topics Top 100 list of the largest for-hire carriers in North America and No. 8 in the less-than-truckload segment.

Freight cycles typically last 14 to 15 months, and the current downswing has lasted approximately double that.

Rates are steady. The average rate for DAT Freight & Analytics' top 50 dry van linehaul lanes by load volume remained unchanged for a third week, averaging \$2 per mile and 28 cents higher than the national seven-day rolling average spot rate. The national seven-day rolling average for refrigerated carriers decreased by 2 cents, settling at \$2.08 per mile.

The suspension of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits may create short-term headwinds for reefer carriers. The SNAP program serves 42 million Americans, with recipients spending 20% more on groceries than average, representing between 10% and 11% of total retail grocery spending.

Smart Trailer Tech Reshapes

Trucking Operations, Fleet Mgmt

Smart trailer technology is evolving to support fleet operations and can improve efficiency across maintenance, safety, and data management.

An expert panel hosted by Hendrickson on Nov. 13 included representatives from Hendrickson, Phillips Connect, Advanced Transportation Technology, and Anderson Trucking Service. The panel discussed advancements, implementation challenges, and the role of smart trailer technology in fleet operations.

Hendrickson's vehicle technology division focuses on tire inflation systems, battery controls, and expanding into port sensor-related technology to provide actionable data to users.

Smart trailer technology involves adding sensors to trailers to generate data for technicians, drivers, and back-office personnel. The combination of sensors and analytics provides actionable insights for fleet management, including maintenance and safety monitoring.

Data from brakes and tires, such as Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspection violations, are key for fleet maintenance. Tire pressure monitoring systems (TPMS) and automatic tire inflation systems (ATIS) provide critical information for technicians and fleet managers.

Anderson Trucking Service reported that implementing a tire-inflation system reduced CVSA violation scores and enabled systematic tire maintenance. The company noted a decline in under-inflation violations but highlighted the need for education on TPMS and ATIS in some maintenance shops. Integrating these technologies with telematics allows for real-time monitoring of tire pressure.

A challenge for fleets is managing the large volume of data to create actionable insights. Fleets must prioritize IT investments to effectively use data, either by building technology internally or leveraging platforms that simplify integration. Some fleets may require outsourcing to manage the technology efficiently.

Critical data selection is important to avoid information overload. Hendrickson has implemented edge computing, processing data directly on the vehicle via IoT devices and sensors to reduce unnecessary alerts and focus on actionable issues communicated to the back office.

Advanced Transportation Technology noted the use of physics-based AI to analyze trailer and vehicle data, enabling condition-based maintenance and predictive insights for components, rather than relying solely on time or mileage-based schedules.

Rockford, IL Brake Manufacturing

Emerges From Bankruptcy

The Gunite foundry in Rockford, Ill., poured its first iron as a stand-alone commercial vehicle brake drum plant on Nov. 20.

It includes a gray iron foundry and machine shop.

Rockford Brake Manufacturing acquired the facility for \$100,000 in cash plus closing costs. It has approximately 100 people; initial production is 30,000 units per month. Production is planned to increase to 65,000 units per month by mid-2026, with a capacity projected to reach 150.

The holding furnace is a cold-fired cupola lined with brick and refractory materials.

Materials input consists of approximately 85% recycled scrap steel or foundry-grade scrap iron and 5%-10% pig iron. Coking coal is domestically sourced.

Over 90% of the supply chain is Northern Illinois-sourced, with over 85% sourced in Rockford.

The plant supports more than 80 brake drum patterns and has secured over \$10 million in commitments from manufacturers and distributors.

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Ford, Hyundai On Amazon Autos

Ford Motor Co. has reached an agreement with Amazon.com Inc. to sell certified used cars through the Amazon Autos e-commerce platform, joining Hyundai Motor Co. on the site.

Ford is offering its "Blue Advantage" certified used cars through the platform.

Car buyers will take delivery through participating Ford dealers. Dealers in Los Angeles, Seattle, and Dallas have signed up, and about 200 of Ford's 2,800 dealers nationwide have

expressed interest in selling on Amazon.

The used vehicles are sold at a set price, with multipoint inspections completed and limited warranties of up to one year or 12,000 miles. The Amazon platform provides buyers with service history and condition reports.

Ford and Amazon highlighted that the program combines vehicle certification with the convenience of online browsing and purchasing.

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