



Munden Trucking Thrives in Below Freezing Logging Operation with Kenworth T880s

KAMLOOPS, British Columbia – It's 15 below Celsius near Kamloops and that's the way Greg Munden likes it.



“It’s our peak logging season right now and the cold temperatures make the roads better and more uniform,” he said. “It’s still very challenging to work in sub-zero temperatures, with three feet of snow on the ground – especially when temps dip below -20 – but our guys can handle it. We think they’re a cut above, and the hardest working drivers out there. They are a special breed, able to handle the weather and road conditions. They have to constantly chain up, and be razor-sharp when driving ice-covered logging roads. It’s not easy.”



Operating a fleet of 14 Kenworths, the latest being the Kenworth T880, this third generation logging company thrives in off-road trucking, carrying up to 97,000 pounds of logs on quad-axle trailers. Combined gross combination weights can go as high as 140,000 pounds under provincial regulations.



Greg Munden, president of Munden

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“My grandparents started the company in 1966 and we moved to Kamloops in 1986,” said Munden, who is president of the company. “We’ve bought Kenworths from the start and have had great success. About 40 percent of our Kenworths are used to move the logs we cut in our own logging operation. The others are on contract with other logging operations. In logging you’re looking for durability and reliability. We’re deep in the woods – some of our runs are up to 100 kilometers off-road from load-out to the mill. I don’t think there is a tougher truck than a Kenworth and that goes for the T880.”

According to Munden, the company has been running four Kenworth T880s for about six months. The trucks were spec’d with 550-hp engines and 18-speed transmissions. The tractors were all spec’d with tridem-drive axles, and feature severe weather insulation packages. The Kenworths were purchased through Inland Kenworth.

“We’ve been very happy with the evolution of Kenworth trucks,” said Munden. “We’re transitioning out of the T800 into the T880 and have kept the spec’ing the same. This makes it easier for our drivers to move from one truck to another, plus it helps our technicians and parts management.”



While the major components are the same, Munden said the trucks themselves are anything but. “Our drivers were really attached to the T800s, but once they started driving the T880 they saw all the advancements and now just love the truck,” he said. “The wider cab makes a difference, and the visibility is so much greater – which really helps when driving on tight logging roads, and when getting in tight spots where there is no room for error. We just can’t say enough about the T880 – it’s a great driving truck.”



Munden works the forests 10 months of the year and the log trucks average up to 120,000 kilometers per season. “We can’t operate in April and May due to the spring break-up – the roads are just too bad,” he said. “But, this past fall, the roads couldn’t have gotten much worse. The amount of rain we had was something and we often had to chain up to handle the mud. Even with chains we had to be pulled up some inclines by skidders or other equipment. But in the woods, you have to keep going. My dad used to say, ‘you never get back the day you don’t haul.’ ”

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While Munden said the Kenworths have been ultra-reliable due to their design, proper maintenance and inspections keep the trucks moving like clockwork. “We have our own shop and when the economic slowdown happened in 2008, others closed their shops, but we wanted to keep ours going. We were approached and asked if we could handle work on trucks outside of our own. That helped us launch our own commercial maintenance facility and today we are a designated inspection facility and service both scheduled and unscheduled repairs.”

According to Munden, the forests in British Columbia are well managed with most cuts on second-growth timber. “We’re coming off five years of heavy harvests – salvaging timber that was plagued by the pine beetle,” he said. “So, we’re coming back to normal levels now, and we’re well situated to keep the wheels rolling on our Kenworths.”



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