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## J&M Tank Lines chooses Bendix safety technologies

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J&M Tank Lines Inc, named Grand Champion of the 2016 Georgia Fleet Safety Awards by the Georgia Motor Trucking Association, equips its fleet of Kenworth tractors with a growing number of Bendix systems. Most recently, Birmingham AL-based J&M Tank Lines took delivery of 20 Kenworth daycab tractors equipped with Bendix's flagship collision mitigation system, Wingman Fusion.

The carrier began spec'ing Bendix products in 2012, when it selected Bendix ADB22X air disc brakes for all tractor steer axles. J&M gradually moved to air disc brakes on all axles, and expanded its safety offerings to include the Bendix ESP Electronic Stability Program full-stability system, Wingman Advanced, AutoVue lane departure warning (LDW) system from Bendix CVS, Bendix BlindSpotter side object detection system, and the Bendix CVS web portal, SafetyDirect.

A national carrier with a focus on the southeastern United States, J&M Tank Lines operates 13 terminals in Alabama, Georgia, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Texas. The fleet specializes in shipping industrial and foodgrade products, as well as liquid bulk goods. J&M's fleet includes 700 trailers – approximately 625 dry bulkers, 60 liquid tanks, and about a dozen flatbeds.

"Safety is number one at J&M," says Randy Watson, J&M Tank Lines vice-president of safety. "That's our culture. We want to get our drivers back home to the people who love them--and that also goes for everybody riding down the road with them. A safety program is no better or worse than the ownership allows it to be. First and foremost, it starts there. Second, it requires good partners such as Bendix. All of these safety technologies take us to the next level in protecting our employees and our investment."

The ADB22X air disc brake offers straight, stable stops along with greater reliability due to virtually no brake fade or degradation of stopping power. Uptime benefits of the technology include longer brake lining life and quicker pad replacement, leading to lower maintenance costs. The internal self-adjustment mechanism can help lower the risk of out-of-adjustment brakes during roadside inspections, which can affect Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) scoring. While routine maintenance is still important with any brake system, air disc brakes--unlike drum brakes--do not require any additional maintenance associated with out-of-adjustment brakes.

Wingman Advanced delivers active cruise control with braking features, along with collision mitigation technology. Using a radar sensor mounted to the front of the vehicle, Wingman Advanced delivers both warnings and active interventions to help drivers potentially avoid rear-end collisions or, at least, help reduce their severity. It is built on ESP (electronic stability program), which helps drivers mitigate rollover and loss-of-control situations.

AutoVue is a vision-based system that detects when a commercial vehicle begins to drift toward an unintended lane change and alerts the driver. BlindSpotter is a side-radar system designed to alert drivers to vehicles or objects in adjacent lanes.

“Wingman Advanced is a key reason we’ve had only one rear-end collision in the last two years--and it was very, very minor-- because the system helped to mitigate the force of the collision by starting to apply the brakes to the truck,” says Billy Lollar, J&M Tank Lines vice-president of maintenance. “Since we added the Bendix safety features, we seldom have a truck in the body shop. Our total dollars spent on accidents has dropped significantly.”

J&M Tank Lines also takes advantage of Bendix’s user-friendly web portal, SafetyDirect. Linked to onboard safety technologies, the system wirelessly and automatically--via an onboard telematics system--transmits real-time driver performance data and event-based information to the fleet’s back office for analysis by fleet safety personnel. The information transmitted includes recorded video taken from the AutoVue camera. The resulting reports can help a fleet develop more targeted driver support, reward, and training programs.

“SafetyDirect is probably the single most proactive tool that I’ve ever had at my fingertips to identify and affect driver behavior,” Watson said. “We have good drivers. This system helps make them better. Now that I have the system, I don’t know that I’d ever not want to have it.”

The carrier’s drivers see the several layers of benefits, including the existence of video to prove accident fault.

“We had a head-on collision last year. It wasn’t our fault – another truck crossed the road on us,” Watson says. “I had about a three-hour drive to get to the location. Well before I got there, I had the video on my laptop and was able to show it to the state troopers on the accident scene.”

In keeping with its philosophy of wanting to use the latest proven technologies to improve fleet safety, J&M Tank Lines has turned to Wingman Fusion for its 20 new Kenworth daycabs.

Wingman Fusion integrates and advances a proven, road-tested suite of Bendix safety technologies--radar, camera, and the vehicle’s brake system--into a comprehensive driver assistance system. Unlike radar-only systems, Wingman Fusion combines and cross-checks information from multiple sources to deliver enhanced rear-end collision mitigation, alerts when speeding, and braking on stationary vehicles. Wingman Fusion also helps drivers avoid additional crash situations, including rollovers, loss-of-control, and sideswipe crashes, while prioritizing alerts to help reduce driver distraction.

With video, radar, and other sensors working together, and not just in parallel, the system realizes events sooner--alerting the driver and decreasing the vehicle’s speed up to twice as much--to help the driver mitigate potential collisions or lessen their severity. The system camera is powered by the Mobileye System-on-Chip EyeQ processor with state-of-the-art-vision algorithms.

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