



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OAK HARBOR FREIGHT LINES: A CENTURY-OLD FLEET EQUIPS TOMORROW'S SAFETY TECHNOLOGIES

*Long-Running Washington Carrier Adds Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™
to Its Long-Running Safety Efforts*

ELYRIA, Ohio – June 26, 2020 – You don't find trucking roots running much deeper than the ones at Oak Harbor Freight Lines. The Whidbey Island, Washington, city that shares the 104-year-old company's name was incorporated in May 1915, and Oak Harbor Transfer trucks were delivering goods up and down the island a year later. Brothers John, Gus, and Henry Vander Pol became owners of the carrier in the 1930s, merging it with another in 1942 and adopting the Oak Harbor Freight Lines name. Today, the fleet is based in Auburn, Washington, employing 1,500 people – nearly five times the city of Oak Harbor's first census-counted population – and running 800 tractors and 2,400 trailers across five western states.

"We specialize in on-time less-than-truckload (LTL) delivery, and we believe we're the best in the business," said Dan Vander Pol, grandson of Henry and director of maintenance at Oak Harbor Freight Lines. "Safety is naturally a big part of that, so we've always done everything we can to be the best in that respect as well."

As part of its pursuit of safer vehicles and roadways, Oak Harbor began equipping its trucks with Bendix advanced driver assistance systems in 2017. That's when it added Volvo tractors running Volvo Active Driver Assist, which is built on the technology of Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™. The fleet has continued to expand its use of Fusion, most recently adding 45 Fusion-equipped International® tractors.

“We’re big believers in the technology and we’ll keep on spec’ing it,” Vander Pol said. “We haven’t had any rear-end accidents involving our trucks with Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™, and I don’t know how to make a case better than that. It’s difficult to definitively determine when you’ve avoided an accident, but look – if you prevent even one driver from experiencing a collision, you’ve basically paid for the system’s installation on all your trucks. It’s a no-brainer and it sells itself once you start using it.”

Launched in 2015, Wingman Fusion is the flagship driver assistance system from Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC, the North American leader in the development and manufacture of active safety, air management, and braking system technologies for commercial vehicles.

Expanding the Family Business

Having worked with his brothers to develop Oak Harbor into an LTL operation serving the counties of Western Washington, Henry Vander Pol purchased the company in full in 1974 – the same year his sons Edward and David joined him at work. The 1980s saw the fleet expand to serve its entire home state, along with California, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon, a territory that now includes 35 terminals. Currently owned and operated by co-presidents Edward and David, Oak Harbor serves more points direct in the Northwest United States than any other single carrier.

“There are four driving philosophies that began with my grandfather Henry and have always been the pillars of our business,” Dan Vander Pol said. “Family comes first; take care of the customer; lead from the front; and expect exceptionalism. We want to keep our culture positive and differentiate ourselves from our competitors.”

According to Vander Pol, when it comes to safety companywide, there’s a constant focus on what they call purposeful observation, and the empowerment of all employees to speak up when they see something unsafe or against company safety protocols. In the last five years, Oak Harbor has earned two fleet safety awards from the California Trucking Association, and three from the Washington Trucking Associations.

Safety-Supporting Vehicle Technology

By gathering input through radar, video, and a vehicle’s braking system, Bendix Wingman Fusion creates a detailed and accurate data picture by combining and cross-checking the information from sensors that are working together and not just in parallel. This enables Fusion to deliver enhanced rear-end collision mitigation and adaptive cruise control, along with following

distance alerts, stationary object alerts, lane departure warning, alerts when speeding, and braking on stationary vehicles – all while prioritizing alerts to help reduce driver distraction.

Event-based data – including video – can be wirelessly transmitted for driver coaching and analysis by fleet safety personnel. Additionally, because Bendix® Wingman® Fusion™ is built on the foundational technology of the Bendix® ESP® Electronic Stability Program full-stability system, it can help drivers avoid some additional crash situations, including rollovers, loss-of-control, and sideswipe crashes.

The forward-facing camera of Fusion is powered by the Mobileye® System-on-Chip EyeQ® processor with state-of-the-art vision algorithms.

“Oak Harbor has been running trucks for more than a century – and that’s both astounding and admirable,” said Lance Hansen, Bendix vice president – aftermarket sales, fleet, service, and field operations. “To successfully operate an LTL delivery business for that long reflects a remarkable commitment to the safety of their drivers, their trucks, and to everyone on the road around them – which is why we’re so proud to work with the Oak Harbor team.”

Bendix and Oak Harbor both emphasize that no technology can replace a safe, alert, professional driver practicing safe driving habits, supported by proactive, ongoing driver training. Active safety systems are not intended to enable or encourage aggressive driving, and responsibility for safe vehicle operation remains with the driver at all times.

“The support and training we’ve gotten while implementing and optimizing Wingman Fusion have been exceptional,” Vander Pol said. “From helping us educate technicians on how to troubleshoot to the crucial familiarization with the technologies that drivers need before they get behind the wheel, Bendix has been there at every step with open lines of communication and all the information we need.”

Bendix delivers on the areas most critical to fleets’ success – including safety, vehicle performance and efficiency, and unparalleled post-sales support – through its ever-growing portfolio of commercial vehicle technologies. By strengthening return on investment in the equipment and technologies that keep trucks and drivers safe and lower their total costs of vehicle ownership, Bendix pursues a constant goal of helping enhance the safety of everyone sharing North America’s roads.

About Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, a member of Knorr-Bremse, develops and supplies leading-edge active safety technologies, energy management solutions, and air brake charging and control systems and components under the Bendix® brand name for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, tractors, trailers, buses, and other commercial vehicles throughout North America. An industry pioneer, employing more than 3,400 people, Bendix is driven to deliver solutions for improved vehicle safety, performance, and overall operating cost. Contact us at

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