

RELIABLE TRUCKS HELP COMPANY EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

Customers expect reliability from Powell Stone & Gravel. The Massachusetts company expects it from everyone else.

The company's Mack® trucks hold up their end of the bargain.

"We're working on the new Tewksbury Memorial High School in Tewksbury, Massachusetts" said Steve Powell, the vice president who runs the Lunenburg-based company with his brother Jeff. "We're importing 50,000 yards of structural fill and gravel, doing 3,000-3,500 tons of material a day. A lot of guys would have to outsource that. We have our own trucks and materials. We're not counting on someone else to process and move the material. That way we can meet scheduling gradation and compaction guidelines."

The company has taken other steps to control its fate. It has diversified into residential as well as commercial excavation, takes on jobs of all sizes and it rigorously manages maintenance costs.

Owning late-model equipment is another way Powell has built its reputation for reliability. Founded in 1969 by Steve and Jeff's father Ray, the business has grown to 80 employees, 35 trucks and 100 pieces of equipment in three companies, Powell Stone & Gravel, R.A. Powell Construction Corp. and Rip-It-Up Rentals.

The days of working with one guy, a backhoe and a truck are long gone. Powell recently purchased eight Mack Granite® tri-axle dump trucks and two axle-forward Pinnacle™ tractors. All of the 2012 models are equipped with 425-HP MP8 engines and Mack's ClearTech™ SCR system.

That's made a difference in the fleet's reliability.

"We hadn't bought trucks in a couple years due to emissions and the economy slowing" Steve Powell said. "We kept putting band-aids on the trucks. They had anywhere from 500,000-700,000 miles on them."

The brothers knew that to maintain their reputation they had to upgrade their fleet. They tried other brands but in the end returned to Mack for the technology and the service.

"SCR hasn't been an issue at all. Not one truck has had to pull over and do a regen. And the urea is like putting in windshield washer fluid."

He feels good about the fuel economy, too.

"We're getting 5.8 mpg in the new trucks. We were down to 4 mpg or 4.5 mpg on the older ones."

He also likes the service from Greg Day of Ballard Mack. "He's excellent. I can't tell you how many times he's come in here to say 'I'm not here to sell you something, I'm just here to say hi.'"

Service like that enables Powell to demonstrate its reliability to customers. "We've never missed a deadline."

