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DTNA Recalls Workers on Strong 2010 Order Activity

Daimler Trucks North America has recalled about 540 workers to its North Carolina manufacturing plants in response to strong 2010 order activity. The company has also ramped up production at its Mt. Holly and Cleveland plants, where recalled workers will start by mid-July. Recalled workers will also go to the company's components and logistics plant in Gastonia.

The company plans to produce 67 percent more heavy-duty Class 8 trucks in July 2010 than were manufactured in the same month last year. According to DTNA, customers have placed orders for more than 21,400 EPA 2010 vehicles to date, including 16,565 Freightliner trucks.

The recent increase in sales figures results from two major orders placed by the by U.S. transportation companies Western Express of Nashville, Tenn., and Schneider National of Green Bay, Wis. Western Express ordered 900 Freightliner Cascadia trucks, while Schneider National ordered several hundred Cascadia trucks which will give both companies a predominantly Freightliner vehicle fleet. Western Express and Schneider National are both longtime customers of DTNA.

In April, DTNA and the United Auto Workers reached agreement on new labor contracts for the plants. The new contracts include baseline production commitments, which will provide job stability and security for plant employees.

DTNA says customers are responding to the design and technology featured on the Freightliner Cascadia and the heavy-duty engines equipped with BlueTec emissions technology provided by sister company Detroit Diesel. Introduced in 2007, the aerodynamic Cascadia was designed from the ground up to incorporate EPA 2010-certified engines. BlueTec emissions technology, Daimler's solution for meeting emissions standards worldwide, reduces emissions to near-zero levels of NOx and particulate matter as measured at the tailpipe and increases fuel economy by up to 5 percent over other emission treatment systems, DTNA claims.

"We are the only heavy truck manufacturer in North America currently increasing production," said Mark Lampert, senior vice president, sales and marketing for Daimler Trucks North America. "Our Class 8 daily build rate in the U.S. will increase by more than 67 percent this July versus July 2009. We have also been able to sustain operation of all of our manufacturing facilities through the EPA07/EPA10 changeover without shutdown or interruption. That reflects the early readiness and maturity of our EPA10 engine and chassis combination."

Schneider National recently ordered several hundred 2011-model year Freightliner Cascadia tractors, equipped with BlueTec technology. Freightliner Trucks is the primary supplier of vehicles to Schneider National.

"We test all our vehicles extensively for fuel efficiency and operating performance before we buy," said Steve Duley, vice president of purchasing, for Schneider National. "We have accumulated more than 1.1 million miles with EPA10-compliant Cascadia trucks on a test basis since February 2009 and are exceptionally impressed with their performance."