

Lasting Legacy



J.B. Hunt Transport Continues Tradition Of Innovation Created By Its Founder More Than 50 Years Ago

From sharecroppers to shareholders, rice hulls to railways and highways to home delivery, J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc. has experienced a transportation transformation over the course of a half-century though entrepreneurialism and eternal optimism.

This month, *Best Driver Jobs* takes a look back in time at the company's founder, their history and the future of arguably the most recognizable name in trucking.

Humble beginnings

J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc. currently generates more than \$5 billion in annual revenue, but if there has ever been an unlikely candidate for this type of financial success, one would be hard pressed to find a better story than the rags-to-riches experience of the company's namesake, Johnnie Bryan (J.B.) Hunt.

The son of sharecroppers in rural North-

central Arkansas, Hunt was born in 1927 and raised during the Great Depression. He picked cotton as a child and left school after the seventh grade to work at his uncle's sawmill to help support his brothers and sisters.

It was 1939, and the 12-year-old laborer earned \$1.50 a day.

Hunt never returned to school, but received a real-world education and soon showed signs of creative ingenuity, perhaps best illustrated in Hunt's reflections from this passage in the 1993 book, "J.B. Hunt - The Long Haul To Success":

A planer mill produces large quantities of wood shavings as it smoothes the edges of rough-cut boards. Every day, farmers came to the mill and shoveled the shavings into their trucks for use as poultry-house litter. Because the farmers did the work, there was no charge for the shavings.

“I could see that was a going business,” Hunt said. **“So I had my uncle’s carpenter build this big house on stilts. We turned the blower vents to send the shavings up there. Now when the farmers came in, we’d just pull the lever and fill up the whole truck for four dollars a load. I got to making 12 dollars a day selling shavings and four dollars a day working. So I had floated up in the finance world.”**

Hunt worked in the mill until he joined the army in 1945 and returned in 1947 after serving his country. He then added hauling finished lumber and selling surplus boards to his job responsibilities. Hunt also began working with area poultry growers, buying



J.B. Hunt almost always wore a Stetson hat and cowboy boots. After making a considerable amount of money, he was known to dispense \$100 bills to the needy, explaining that his memories of being poor during his childhood were still vivid.

live chickens and hauling them to a packing plant in Missouri. His continued exposure to poultry farms would lead to his first business venture, but the ‘gift of gab’ Hunt picked up selling lumber resulted in a temporary career change as an auctioneer first. After purchasing a livestock sale barn, and quickly going into further debt, Hunt abandoned auctioneering livestock and returned to trucking.

One positive thing from the auction business was meeting the love of his life, Johnelle DeBusk, when she and some friends climbed aboard his sale-barn cattle truck for a ride through town one night. The daughter of an affluent merchant and owner of the local feed mill, Johnelle was as cultured as she was beautiful, and Hunt began a promising courtship with her.

They would become engaged while Johnelle attended Arkansas State Teachers College at Conway, but J.B. felt like his opportunities were limited if he remained in the small town of Heber Springs. He borrowed \$10 from a friend and hitchhiked to Little Rock in hopes of finding more steady work to impress Johnelle. Hunt bunked at the local YMCA and found a job with East Texas Motor Freight, a trucking firm based in Texarkana - where he would soon relocate. For the next year, he lived in the company “bunkhouse” and saved money. Johnelle then left college, married J.B. and moved to Texarkana.

A few months later, while working out of a different locale, Hunt accepted a driving job with St. Louis-based Superior Forwarding Company, who shared a terminal with East Texas Motor Freight. It was 1953, and the Hunts moved to Little Rock, where J.B. was assigned a scheduled route to St. Louis that would have him on the road for a few days at a time.

Back during his truck-driving days, Hunt had a standard reply for anyone asking about his most recent trip. “Every trip is a good trip,” he would state. “I haven’t had a bad day since I stopped picking cotton.” In addition to truck driving, J.B. was also selling cement, flagstone and sod as a side business, and the Hunts would live a relatively traditional lifestyle for the next seven years.

Then J.B.’s entrepreneurial spirit was literally inspired by a cloud of smoke.

From by-product to business plan

J.B. had begun driving an east Arkansas route that brought him through rice fields in Stuttgart. Piles of rice hulls which had been discarded by local mills were being burned in the fields and clouded the skies with their plumes. Hunt was determined he could turn this by-product into a business. He knew the rice hulls were light and spongy and thought they would be an ideal base for poultry houses, which were prominent throughout Arkansas.

Because the hulls were so light, there was not a cost-effective way to transport them, so Hunt designed and patented a system to pressure pack the hulls in bags. He then decided to sell shares to raise the \$85,000 needed to build a packaging plant. Armed with a sizable personal investment and additional start-up financing from a former sod customer, The J.B. Hunt Company was launched in Stuttgart in 1961.

The Hunts risked everything to make the business a success. They sold their house in Little Rock, moved to Stuttgart, and both worked in the business. J.B. kept the packing machines running and drove the truck to deliver hulls. Johnelle, who had been a stay-at-home mom for nearly a decade, assisted with office duties and proved to be quite astute in a



Johnelle and J.B. Hunt pictured in the early days of building their trucking empire in Lowell, Arkansas.

corporate environment. As the company grew, she found herself working more and more - helping with correspondence, financial statements and doing bookkeeping. By the second year, the plant was earning a profit.

Within a few years, bags of rice hulls were being shipped by truck and rail and Hunt's patented packing machines were installed in mills throughout Arkansas and other states. By the end of the decade, The J.B. Hunt Company was the world's largest producer of rice hulls for poultry litter.

A shipping sideline

Hunt's new fortune allowed him to invest in several ventures under the umbrella of the rice-hull business. Always willing to listen to ideas, in 1969 he acted on the suggestion of a rice-hull customer to buy five used trucks and seven refrigerated trailers from a Kansas trucking-firm owner who hauled dressed poultry out of Arkansas.

The J.B. Hunt Company had been focusing on new markets for rice hulls, including being a base carrier of vitamins and medications, and Hunt had built a vitamin premix plant and warehouse in Northwest Arkansas. Hunt used this location as the base for his poultry-hauling operation and began a foray into trucking at a time when new entry was highly discouraged.

Industry regulations by the powerful Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) held back any significant growth and most established carrier-shipper business relations were virtually mandated by federal law.

Under these stringent conditions, it was nearly impossible for the ICC to allow a fleet to haul anyone else's freight. Hunt soon purchased some operating authority from a firm in Atlanta, the first of several limited-scope deals throughout the 1970s.

Even with his superior salesmanship, two decades of driving experience and success in building another business, Hunt struggled to build his

transport division. By 1975, they only had six pieces of permanent authority. Hunt persevered, opened an office in the Rio Grande valley of Texas and increased its authority to 14 permanent ICC certificates. Despite this, the company still had less than 50 trucks.

Designed for deregulation

By 1978, Hunt had mentioned more than once about dropping the truck line, but a Chicago lawyer named Paul Bergant soon convinced him otherwise. Bergant, who later became the head of J.B. Hunt's marketing division and chief legal counsel, thought that deregulation of the trucking industry was inevitable and got his wish in 1980 as the Federal Motor Carrier Act lifted its regulatory barriers and opened the marketplace to free competition.

Rate wars, bankruptcies and industry consolidation among previously dominant LTL operations persisted throughout the 1980s, but Hunt's aggressive attitude and commitment to growth were perfect in a deregulated environment. Hunt and his skilled management team focused on cost control and customer service to carve out a niche as a leading low-cost producer with an envious operating ratio. By 1983, J.B. Hunt had grown into the 80th largest trucking firm in the U.S., earning \$63 million in revenue with more than 500 tractors and 1,000 trailers.

That fall, the company would make a public offering of stock, sell the rice-hull business to pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and focus solely on trucking. Annual growth rates of 30-50% had pushed the fledgling fleet's revenues to \$392 million at the end of 1988 and they were investment analysts' favorite trucking stock.

Greer Woodruff, now Senior Vice Presi-

dent of Safety and Security, came to work at J.B. Hunt during this period of rapid growth. Woodruff said he knew early on that J.B. Hunt would be successful. "We were doubling in size in a single year, and then doing it again," Woodruff stated. "Mr. Hunt was entrepreneurial and we had a young management team led by our President and CEO, Kirk Thompson."



Drivers like Dave Kinsel were the backbone of J.B. Hunt's success as a truckload carrier. Hailing from California, Kinsel was a former Prisoner Of War who proudly drove this military-themed truck across the country, where he accumulated more than 2-million accident free miles. Kinsel also participated in J.B. Hunt's Adopt-A-Driver program, where he sent postcards to school children.

Headed for the 90s

As J. B. Hunt was building a new corporate headquarters in Lowell, Arkansas, his yellow and black "scroll" logo was emblazoned on thousands of trucks traveling throughout the contiguous 48 states. Hunt was on the verge of being recognized as the largest truckload carrier in the nation, but going into the 1990s the company's margins had slowed and the industry was facing a driver shortage.

Woodruff remembers the challenges of procuring enough drivers early in his tenure. "Most people are aware of the current driv-

er shortage, but I've seen it happen before," Woodruff stated. "In my 25 years with the company, I think hiring drivers was only easy for about five of those."

In an attempt to attract more new drivers, the company opened a training school in 1988, offering students free tuition and a job guaranteed upon graduation. In 1990, the company also increased experienced driver wages from 25 cents a mile to an unprecedented 28 -- four cents more than its competitors at the time.

J.B. Hunt also took the lead in improving the working conditions of its drivers, building 18 terminals equipped with showers, laundry services, and lunchrooms. In addition to serving as homes away from home, the terminals facilitated "slipseating" where a tired driver could turn over a load to a rested one.

Such innovations helped J.B. Hunt give drivers better home time and resulted in significant decreases in turnover and accidents, but future profits would depend on new service offerings. The company would soon be adding further forms of transportation and extend its services to foreign markets, while increasing its capability to haul special kinds of freight.

A boost was needed, and J.B. Hunt would find it in the most unlikely of places.

A Quantum leap

Hunt created a partnership with the Santa Fe railroad and dubbed it Quantum. This new intermodal initiative would link rail and truck services to haul freight from the west coast to Midwest cities.

The venture into the intermodal service market sent shock waves throughout the industry. "There was a 'destined to fail' perception because railroads and truckload fleets were such rivals," Woodruff reflected. "People thought we were crazy, but we changed the face of the trucking industry." The move into intermodal was not the only diversification Hunt launched during the time period.

In October 1990, Hunt announced it was expanding operations into the flatbed and short

haul business by acquiring Bulldog Trucking in Georgia. They also launched their own flatbed division, based in Hueytown, Alabama. Shortly after, they announced the formation of Hunt de Mexico, a partnership with Fletes Sotelo of Juarez, Mexico. Believed to be the first corporation formed between U.S. and Mexican trucking firms, it gave Hunt a great opportunity to place older tractors into service and combat an oversupply of used equipment.

The early 1990s was also when a lot of J.B. Hunt's current executives joined the company. Many of them were brought in to run or start new divisions or recent acquisitions. Nathan Smith, now Senior Vice President of Operations, Intermodal, has been with J.B. Hunt since the summer of 1991. Armed with a Logistics degree from the University of Tennessee and attracted to the culture at the company, Smith came to J.B. Hunt's management training program right out of college. Craig Harper, now Chief Operations Officer and Executive Vice President of Operations, came to Hunt in 1992 to work in their Special Commodities division that primarily hauled hazardous materials.

Like the freight the company hauled, their respective roles have morphed over time.

Smith started out as a fleet manager in the OTR world, managed a small hazardous water hauling division, worked in Specialized, and eventually found a home in Intermodal. Harper worked in Special Commodities, Parcel Management and Safety before being promoted to his current role. Both appreciated working in different divisions and credit those moves for shaping the future of the company.

Meanwhile, under Thompson's guidance, the company continued to lead the irregular route trucking industry in developing innovative technology.

Smart communications

J.B. Hunt was always ahead of the curve on communications. They had experimented with telephones in truck cabs in the late 80s, but the technology did not allow for phone lines to be

opened up to all drivers at the same time. Undaunted, the company installed on-board IBM laptop computers in the early 90s, eliminating countless hours truckers spent looking for a phone or waiting on hold before contacting a fleet manager to find out about the next load.

Installed in 1993, their RoadRider system



An intermodal trailer being loaded at a BNSF cargo facility. BNSF and J.B. Hunt moved more than 1,000,000 loads together in 2012.

linked drivers via satellite or radio to company headquarters and reduced the company's long-distance phone bill by 60%. Micromap, a new software program that could simultaneously evaluate 90 different assignment factors, further simplified logistics managers' responsibilities and decreased empty miles by 10%. "These innovations really helped with communication and the on-board technology allowed us to be better managers," Smith reflected. "We were cutting operating costs, enabling more drivers to return home on time, and continuing to grow rapidly."

A billion-dollar business

Profits were soaring and overall revenues were increasing as many competitors struggled. Woodruff, Smith and Harper all recall J.B. Hunt surpassing the \$1 billion mark in revenues for the first time in 1993. That same year, as J.B. Hunt formed an alliance with

Canada's largest railroad to offer its customers seamless service across both borders, Congress passed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), confirming the company's remarkable foresight in matters of international expansion.

By the time J.B. Hunt retired from day-to-day duties in 1995 and former executive Wayne Garrison came back to lead the company as Chairman, the Intermodal division was a 'gamechanger' - generating nearly half of the company's total revenues.

Smith said that 20 years ago no one imagined Intermodal would be this big. "We were the first guys that said we would convert any freight from truckload to intermodal. We offered customers a better way to do business with hybrid form of transportation unified trucks, railroads, and sometimes cargo ships into one system, so that shippers did not have to pack and unpack their cargo each time the mode of

transit changed," Smith stated. "It was also a better environmental play by reducing fuel consumption and our carbon footprint."

J.B. Hunt began to create their own chassis and lightweight containers and has seen their numbers grow from a few hundred in the early 1990s to more than 61,000 containers on the rails today. The company now has 3,950 tractors in the Intermodal division and the largest fleet of company-owned 53-foot containers and chassis in North America. "We also have on-site maintenance to work on our equipment at all rail yards, which reduces downtime and improves service," Smith added.

Today, J.B. Hunt gets priority treatment from their railroad partners, with first on, first off service and has seen their Intermodal division become their largest business segment, representing 62% of the company's revenue.

Another added benefit to the intermodal service was driver retention. "The shorter

lengths of haul allowed drivers to be home more frequently,” Woodruff said. “It made better jobs because drivers could be out 2-3 days instead of 2-3 weeks,” Smith added.

In the mid 90s, as Intermodal was steadily growing, Harper recalls Garrison changing the company’s focus to only keeping divisions that could potentially generate \$1 billion in annual revenue independently. Numerous smaller divisions were sold off, but Smith said none of them were failures. “They served a purpose at the time and allowed us to start serving niche markets, he stated. “Not all of them lasted, but it gave us a chance to branch

off and to give a better lifestyle and distinction to our drivers.”

Another initiative Garrison pushed forward was safety-first driving.

Changing the culture

Harper recalls some reluctance in the marketplace when the company began placing additional emphasis on safety. “We got in the field to work with people, but some saw the meetings as a nuisance,” he said. “We let them know we were going to reduce accidents and save lives – for their well-being and ours.”

In 1997, J.B. Hunt Transport retooled their

Transitional Team

If there are drivers who best personify diversity in J.B. Hunt Transport jobs, it may be David Spore and Steve Kirschbaum, who are currently running a team operation in the Dedicated Contract Services (DCS) division. The talented tandem have 50 years of experience and more than six million accident-free miles - all with J.B. Hunt.

Kirschbaum began his J.B. Hunt career as an Over The Road driver in April 1989, when the company was primarily a Truckload carrier. Kirschbaum had driven tanks and trucks in the military, and said J.B. Hunt’s desire to find quality personnel was what attracted him to the company. “Someone in my unit had applied at J.B. Hunt, but was rejected. Since they were so selective, I thought it was an outfit I could work for,” he said. “I knew how to drive but needed to go through their orientation to learn double clutching and how to complete a logbook.”

Spore also had several fleets recruit him out of the military, but he was attracted to J.B. Hunt’s training program. Starting his J. B. Hunt journey in November of 1990, he soon went to work in the DCS division and has helped start up seven dedicated accounts during his career. Spore has stayed throughout the years because of the financial stability and the company’s reinforcement training. “This is a big company, and I know I will get paid every week and the other benefits pay for themselves in the long run,” Spore stated. “I also enjoy the quarterly training offered by each division. Everytime I go to one of those meetings, I learn a new wrinkle about a law or regulation or something from another driver’s experience.”

Camaraderie is common among J.B. Hunt drivers. Both Spore and Kirschbaum say they have heard a lot of comments about J.B. Hunt



David Spore



Steve Kirschbaum

fleet by switching from cabover to long-nose conventional tractors. The company also closed their training schools to focus on hiring more experienced drivers, and implemented a 33% driver pay increase. Woodruff said the company saw immediate improvements. “We cut out DOT accidents by 50%, and those savings helped fund the pay increase,” he added.

Woodruff recalled a story about a former driver that best illustrated J.B. Hunt’s new safety culture.

The former long haul driver had worked as a trainer for one of J.B. Hunt’s driving schools, but went back over the road once schools were

closed. He ran hard and was known to violate logbooks and bend the HOS rules, so Woodruff brought him in to talk about safety. The driver’s future employment hinged on whether his behavior could be changed.

“I went over the issues and gave him an ultimatum, explaining that he could be involved in an accident that may not be his fault, but could tie us up in litigation. He said he would comply and do his best,” Woodruff said.

A year later, the driver was involved in an accident that resulted in a fatality when a car crossed the median and struck him. Knowing the outcome could have been much worse, his

drivers over the years, but they are no longer the butt of jokes. “Over time, we showed the company has quality in addition to quantity,” Kirschbaum said. Spore added that even the new generation of drivers who may not like governed speed on the trucks have to be impressed with the multiple opportunities and types of technology employed by J.B. Hunt.

“I was an ‘old school’ guy who was around when we first went from telephones to computers and have seen all of the in-cab communications take hold. When the world turned, J.B. Hunt kept up with it,” Spore said. When times get tough on the road, Spore said he appreciates the technology. “It feels good if I am broke down or have an emergency and they can pinpoint where I am to send help,” he added.

Kirschbaum has also worked on several different accounts, including a dedicated run to Los Angeles for Target, and in numerous divisions like Automotive - but he says sticking with one fleet has allowed him to learn skills and better himself with more knowledge. He even worked as a trainer for a few years. “The company needed some help and I thought my military background could help

teach other drivers to have patience and the importance of longevity,” Kirschbaum said.

Kirschbaum eclipsed the three million mile mark two years ago, and said he will get to four million miles as long as he is happy and productive. For him, that includes moving through different groups and divisions at J. B. Hunt to find a new challenge. “I was home daily on my last DCS job, a dedicated run of Wal-Mart freight, but I came to this team operation for another challenge. Our current runs get us home during the week, so I can still take care of my personal business then,” Kirschbaum added.

“I feel the same way Steve does. You can’t get to three million without being happy doing what we are doing,” Spore added. Spore and Kirschbaum began running team together in October 2012. They say the operation as a team can be demanding, but is very rewarding. “Living in close quarters, you have to get along; be a friend and a problem solver and keep a good line of communication,” Kirschbaum stated. “It helps to have somebody else with you, especially in bad weather or in case one of us gets sick,” Spore added. •



Leoncio Vilela, a Texas-based driver in J.B. Hunt's Dedicated Contract Services division.

first call was to Woodruff to thank him.

"What I learned from this is we never want to discount people, and want to keep the great drivers we have," Woodruff stated. "To do things the right way, sometimes individual discussions are needed. That speaks to our culture, which continues today."

Differentiated by dedicated

Another huge success story launched during that time frame was the Dedicated Contract Service (DCS) division. Brad Hicks began his J.B. Hunt career in the field for DCS in 1995, first in Operations in Chicago before finding his way into Strategic Accounts. After developing relationships with several shippers, plus six physical moves, Hicks ended up at Hunt's corporate office 10 years ago.

He is now Senior Vice President of Operations for Dedicated Contract Services with responsibilities for 5,600 total trucks and 17,466 pieces of trailing equipment. When Hicks started in DCS, they were an \$80 million segment; that number now sits at more than \$1 billion, representing 22% of the company's total revenue.

"Dedicated was one of those things that stuck," Hicks said. "In 1997, one of those customers, a large home improvement company, wanted us to offer home or customer delivery from their stores, and even though it was not

in our vision or strategy, we decided to partner with them because the relationship was so good." Hicks said they started the service with two trucks in Austin, TX, making lumber deliveries to jobsites and residential homes. By 2004, J.B. Hunt grew along with the home improvement company, supporting 500 of their stores with this store-based delivery model.

2004 was also the final year Mr. Hunt served on the Board of Directors.

Remembering a legend

Although he had been retired from the day-to-day operation of his trucking firm for almost a decade, J.B. Hunt had remained in Northwest Arkansas — passionately pursuing new opportunities in real estate, construction, development and philanthropic activities.

However, after stepping down as Senior Chairman a few years into the new millennium, Mr. Hunt would pass away at the age of 79.

One of the most successful entrepreneurs in Arkansas history, Hunt was remembered as outspoken ambassador for the growth in the region. He was also recognized for his Christian spirit, which helped guide his life and love for his family.

His wife of 54 years, Johnelle, and their son, Bryan, remained involved with the company. Johnelle held the position of Corporate Secretary until 2008 and currently holds a seat on numerous advisory boards and charitable organizations throughout the state of Arkansas.

J.B. Hunt lived life with energy and optimism and left behind a legacy of hard work, innovation, a creative business mind and an example of what determination can accomplish.

All of those traits would be needed by the

company bearing his name as the country faced an economic downturn.

Rolling through the recession

The recent recession was tough on every fleet in the traditional truckload sector. There was too much capacity with a pre-buy of trucks in 2006 and a huge push by big-box retailers to eliminate waste in shipping. The minimization of products (think iPods versus stereos) took thousands of loads off highways, and there were repositioning charges from hurricanes.

With a spike in diesel prices, some shippers started considering intermodal for the first time, so J.B. Hunt Transport came out of the recession better than most fleets. But it was more diversification in the DCS division that would become the ‘next big thing’ for J.B. Hunt.

opening in big consumer items that weren’t being shipped by UPS or Fed Ex. People were becoming more comfortable with ordering products via the internet and online retailers like Amazon.com were beginning to sell larger products,” Hicks said. “We explored things that required post-delivery services and initially looked outside the company because we did not have the level of expertise.”

The Final Mile

After efforts to find a third-party partner were unsuccessful, Hicks was selected to define and start up what would become J.B. Hunt’s Final Mile Services in 2007.

Final Mile started with a relationship with a national appliance manufacturer and two trucks in Little Rock. The competition for this freight was mostly ‘mom and pop’ 4PLs, with no national providers. Since J.B. Hunt provided

a branded format with consistent equipment, uniforms and a technology advantage like email updates and text alerts, they were able to expand quickly.

Fast forward four years and J.B. Hunt had the appliance manufacturer’s entire network, and began to layer in other customers. Indeed, Final Mile has become the company’s next hot growth area. They now have a network of 89 local distribution centers within 150 miles of 90% of the U.S. population. Each facility

has cross-docks and small warehouses, where they receive products from customers and build efficient routes outbound. With 600 trucks, 750 drivers and 1,200 delivery personnel in the network, Final Mile operates in Hunt’s DCS division and produces annual



A Final Mile Services team in action. Many are two-driver operations, with installation specialists who assist with delivery.

According to Hicks, their home improvement company experiment led the trucking company to add a ‘point of consumption’ model to their service offerings. “We had started doing some feed delivery to farms and food delivery to restaurants, and saw another

revenues of \$180 million today. “Home delivery is the future, and who would have thought that a J.B. Hunt guy would be coming to your house?” Hicks said.

The biggest challenge facing Final Mile is training drivers. “For our irregular route business, driving safely has always been a primary concern. In this job, they do that, but driving is only a small portion of what they do. To work in Final Mile, you have to embrace installs and assemblies and customer service skills are amplified,” Hicks stated. “Final Mile is more physical, so it’s not for everybody, but we are attracting more active and athletic employees. It’s also attractive for college graduates to stay in a local area since it is as close to a normal Monday-Friday workday as you can get in trucking.”

Harper said Final Mile employees must complete a one-month training session, and he has been pleased with the results. “I was fortunate enough to go on some deliveries with our guys recently, and they are so well-trained that I felt like I showed up with Rambo,” Harper said. “It was interesting to see their skills in action.”

The driver of today

Out of 17,636 current employees at J. B. Hunt, more than 12,000 are drivers. As such, the company will always be a driver-centric organization. However, the driver of today is much different than when the company was first formed. So are the opportunities.

“In the first 8-10 years of our company’s history, we were one-dimensional with a poor quality of life for our drivers, but we recognized the need to change it. Our four distinct divisions - Intermodal, DCS, Truckload, and Integrated Capacity Solutions (our brokerage arm) - have afforded diversity in the type of jobs we offer. There is more variety in the work to be performed,” Woodruff said. “We’ve come a long way from the days of just cabovers with van trailers. Today, a J.B. Hunt

driver can learn new skills and be more satisfied with their work. They can also relocate geographically or as their life changes move into a different job within the company.”

Smith echoed Woodruff’s thoughts on the changing career path. “We have several drivers who have gone through the entire range of opportunities. Many of our DCS drivers were OTR guys, and some who have run Intermodal are now in Final Mile,” he stated. Shorter average lengths of haul have created a lot more regional and local jobs to get drivers home overnight. “Today’s driver wants the same things we do. They want to be home often and be able to go to school events, ball games and other activities involving their kids,” Harper added.

More than 50% of J.B. Hunt Transport’s jobs get their drivers home daily or nightly,



Many J.B. Hunt drivers, like this one from their Final Mile Services division, are able to be home overnight.

and the better balance in their family life with work has presented opportunities for retention. Woodruff added that the company’s turnover was more than 100% in the early days, but now 70% of J. B. Hunt drivers have been with the company for more than a year.

Woodruff sees more drivers thinking ahead and taking advantage of company offerings. 67% participate in J.B. Hunt’s 401k program and 85% take advantage of health care benefits.

With CSA scores below the FMCSA threshold, Woodruff says drivers are also attracted

to the company's safety record and their well-maintained equipment, but the pay rate helps keep them. "The top 25% of our drivers earn more than \$64,000 now, with some over \$100,000," Woodruff explained.

What's next?

Defining themselves as industry leaders in customer service, driver safety, and innovative technology, J.B. Hunt is already one of largest trucking companies of any kind in the United States.

With an extremely diverse customer base, and the ability to offer multiple services, J.B. Hunt Transport continues to change and evolve. The entrepreneurial spirit started by their founder has been continued by the company's current leaders, who have confidence to seek opportunities where they do not currently have service offerings in the supply chain.

The creative company is financially sound and continues to master different types of deliveries. Their brokerage operation is expanding, and they have more diverse job opportunities than at any point in their history.

More importantly, the company still holds Mr. Hunt's values of looking at trucking through the lens of a driver. It is as laser-inscribed in the fabric of who they are as their yellow and black "scroll" logo emblazoned on thousands of trucks and trailers dotting the nation's highways, rail yards and front yards.

For your opportunity, call 1-800-297-4321 or visit www.jbhunt.jobs. You can also connect with J.B. Hunt at Facebook. com/jbhuntdrivers. **bdj**



A tribute to truckers

After J.B. Hunt died unexpectedly in 2006, he was buried in a mausoleum in Rogers, Arkansas. During the process, Johnelle noticed a need for a new cemetery in Northwest Arkansas and used their resources to secure some land and develop the property in the years that followed. The result was Pinnacle Memorial Gardens cemetery, along with the accompanying 3,000 square foot Hunt Chapel, which was completed in 2012.

During an appearance at J.B. Hunt's Summit 2013 meetings, Johnelle shared a story about Pinnacle Memorial Gardens that may best illustrate why J.B. was always considered a trucker at heart and the value he placed on their drivers.

J.B. was moved to Pinnacle Memorial Gardens, which is also now the final resting place for Tommy and Lonny Whitman, identical twin truckers who came to work for J.B. Hunt



Identical twins Tommy and Lonny Whitman

in 1977. Both Tommy and Lonny achieved more than four million accident-free miles during their J.B. Hunt careers and epitomized Mr. Hunt's vision of safety-first driving for more than three decades.

Tommy died in 2010 and Lonny passed away in September 2012. Both had been cremated, but Johnelle had made arrangements for them to be placed alongside J.B. "We thought the world of Tommy and Lonny. They were leaders and company people who would step up and do whatever we needed over the years, and I'm so proud they are right there next to Johnnie (J.B.)," Johnelle said. •