

TITAN EXPRESS



No Bunk! Custom Trailer Allows Faster, Safer Loading for Canadian Steel Hauler

Ever since Titan developed Kevin Fairhurst's unique load security system, other steel haulers in southern Ontario have been requesting his specification for flatbed trailers.

The truth is, if you were simply driving by Kevin Fairhurst's K&D Transport yard in Stoney Creek, Ontario, you probably wouldn't give his flatbed trailers a second look. But whenever his fellow truckers see a steel coil getting hoisted onto one of these trailers at any of the steel mills here in southern Ontario, Fairhurst suddenly has a lot of questions to answer.

"... Now the timbers don't slip as the coil comes down, so you always get it on right the first time."

Seeing a K&D trailer on the job, it's obvious this is no ordinary platform trailer – it's a custom-built Titan flatbed specially designed for hauling steel coil, according to Fairhurst's personal requirements.

The object of the attention is the trailer's coil bunk. With the bunk's timbers solidly fastened to the deck with removable pins, the loading process is taking less time than coil usually takes, and there's an extra sense of security once the coil is tied down.

"I wanted a trailer that was all custom for steel," Fairhurst explains.

"Instead of using cleats to secure the timbers, I have a set of steel box-channel 'T's"

that fit into square pockets that I had fabricated into the deck on 24-inch centers. These 'T's' slide right down into the frame to brace the 4x4 timbers that support the coil. Now the timbers don't slip as the coil comes down, so you always get it on right the first time. The system is especially good for loads of slit coil. Because of the slit coils' tendency to "slinky," it's hard to manage as it's loaded." Even customers have asked Fairhurst about his trailers, as they see how K&D gets in and out of their yard more quickly than other rigs.

"The system secures loads extremely well against heavy braking and side-to-side shifting, too," he continues. "When the timbers come off, you still have a perfectly flat deck for loads of drywall or lumber or anything else you can put on a flatbed."



Owner: K&D Transport Ltd.

Location: Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada

Titan fleet:

6 Titan flatdecks

Application/Loads:

- Steel: Slit coils

Custom features:

- Removable coil bunk security system
- Extra long bumper with step
- Roll-rite tarp and tie downs

Kevin could see competitive advantages to a custom flatbed while he was still managing the transport fleet for a nearby steel company. Fairhurst got his start in trucking in 1987 with a small fleet of dump trucks hauling gravel. He bought his first flatbed in 1990 to take overflow work from other steel haulers. In 1991, he sold his own fleet to take over management of Willis Transport, the “house carrier” for Dofasco Steel, one of Canada’s largest mills. During this time, Fairhurst grew the business from 6 to 24 rigs, and began developing his ideas about how to build a better steel trailer.

The next problem was how to put his ideas on the road. He talked to a few other flatbed builders before he went to Titan. “Everyone else just wanted to add options to something they already built,” he recalls. “Titan was the only one that would listen to what I was



Fabricated steel T's drop into square-cut holes in the deck; a choice of three different T positions allows quick assembly of bunks for fast, stable loading of steel coils.

saying.” Fairhurst knew Henry Vandebussche at Titan Trailer Sales, a trailer dealer near Brantford, Ontario, from his gravel hauling days. In conversation with Vandebussche, he described how he thought the coil bunk could become an integral part of the trailer deck.

Vandebussche took the concept to Titan Trailers Inc. and Titan came back with a plan. The President of Titan, Mike Kloepfer, invited Fairhurst into the factory to look at the Titan design and confirm that it did what he wanted. “When you talk to Mike, you find that he’s really interested in building the trailer exactly right for you. He doesn’t want to know just about trailers; he wants to know everything about your business.”

Kloepfer’s approach to designing and building trailers has earned Titan a prominent place in specialized trucking applications throughout North America. Titan patented the original THINWALL™ aluminum smoothside body panel for bulk haulers who needed more volume and lower fuel costs. For truckers hauling heavy “extreme-duty” loads like scrap metal or abrasive aggregates, the new Titan V-Floor™ trailer combines durability with the flexibility for new backhaul contracts.

“I want to help my customers to be successful so they’ll keep coming back for more of our trailers,” Kloepfer says. “I need to know what it will really take for them to be profitable. Every trailer we build here is custom designed for the people who make their living from it – to give them more capacity, longer life, lower operating costs, more efficient, whatever they need. And safer, too! Our success is built on their success, so we have to keep customers on the road and earning!”

Fairhurst was ready to move on from Willis a few years ago to start his own business, specializing in steel hauling. By then, he was committed to building an all-Titan fleet. “With our load security system, you pin right through to the subframe, so there’s no cleats and your dunnage doesn’t move when the coil sets down. The extra stability gives you better control when you’re loading and when you’re on the road.”

But the custom coil bunk isn’t his only reason for building his business around Titan trailers. “I’ve actually known Titan for 15 years,” he says. “I know a Titan trailer will hold its value. A Titan is better built, stronger, lower maintenance. I pay a bit extra for a Titan trailer, but when I sell, I get ‘way more back for it.”



The offset shape of the steel T's provides additional flexibility for positioning the timber bunks.

K&D now runs six Titan coil haulers, and other fleets in the area are asking Titan for the same design. “The only people I know buying cheaper trailers are the big volume guys – they make the broker responsible for maintenance so, if the trailer costs more to keep on the road, they don’t really care. The smaller fleets are now buying Titans, and going for the better lifespan. People around here are learning that, you only get what you pay for.”

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