



Golden Eagle Distributors and Ryder

Delivering savings and sustainability to the beverage industry.

CHALLENGE

Golden Eagle Distributors, a premier distributor of alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages in Arizona, was looking for a partner to launch the largest environmental initiative in its history: A fleet conversion from diesel to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), with the goals of shrinking its carbon footprint and increasing cost efficiency.

SOLUTION

Ryder's Flex-to-Green lease allowed Golden Eagle to ease into a natural gas fleet by having the option to switch their diesel-powered vehicles to greener, more fuel-efficient vehicles – at their own pace and with minimum commitment and maximum lease flexibility. In addition, Ryder converted the four maintenance shops that service Golden Eagle trucks to accommodate CNG technology.

RESULTS

Innovative

- *With Ryder's Flex-to-Green lease, Golden Eagle made a smooth transition to cleaner-burning vehicles with a minimum commitment and maximum environmental benefit*

Sustainable

- *The CNG vehicles produce 95 percent less particulate matter, 80 percent less nitrogen oxide, and provide a reduction of 23 percent greenhouse gas emissions compared to diesel engines*

Cost Savings

- *Reduced transportation costs by 4.3 percent*
- *Minimized investment in fleet equipment and improved return on capital*
- *Gained expense predictability and cost savings with natural gas vehicles*

In 2011, Golden Eagle Distributors partnered with Ryder to launch the largest environmental initiative in its history: A fleet conversion from diesel to natural gas, with the goals of shrinking its carbon footprint and saving money.



It would be a substantial change for Golden Eagle, the leading beer distributor in Arizona offering craft, import, local, and domestic beers, as well as wine, liquor and non-alcoholic beverages. But the company was ready. Having received many local, state and industry awards for its environmental and sustainability programs, the conversion would be an integral part of Golden Eagle's commitment to conservation.

A Ryder customer for more than 40 years, Golden Eagle turned to their long-standing transportation partner to make the conversion.

"The move toward a natural gas fleet is a really big thing for us," says Bill Osteen, senior vice president of operations for Golden Eagle. "We wouldn't have been able to do this all on our own. Ryder has been with us every step of the way, making the conversion a reality."

The successful incorporation of natural gas vehicles in 2011 prompted Golden Eagle to convert additional vehicles in 2013. Ryder also converted the four maintenance shops that service Golden Eagle trucks into natural gas fueling technology. To date, Golden Eagle has converted 34 of its 75 trucks to natural gas. This change was made smoothly, and largely possible due to the flexibility of Ryder's Flex-to-Green leasing program, Osteen says. Payback from Ryder's program was immediate, Osteen says. The costs to run its delivery fleet have gone down 4.3 percent year-over-year since the natural gas vehicles have been operating. In addition, the vehicles produce 95 percent less particulate matter, 80 percent less nitrogen oxide and provide a reduction of 23 percent greenhouse gas emissions compared to diesel engines, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

To fuel the company's natural gas fleet, Golden Eagle partnered with Trillium CNG to build stations on its properties in Tucson and Casa Grande, which are available to other fleets and the public.

Golden Eagle's move to alternative fuels has been so successful that the company is now reviewing plans to build more fueling stations and eventually convert its entire fleet, including small pickups, cars and vans. In addition, the company serves as a role model for the community.

"School districts and businesses have come to our facility to see what we're doing and how they might be able to do it too," says Osteen. Golden Eagle's natural gas vehicles feature "Clean and Green" decals that prompt questions and praise, and make the drivers feel really good about driving these trucks.

Ryder's commitment to helping companies make the transition to natural gas has been recognized nationally. Inbound Logistics magazine has included Ryder in its "Green Partners" listing for five years in a row, and the company is a charter member of the NGV Fleet Forum, as well as a member of the Department of Energy's National Clean Fleets partnership. Ryder is also a recipient of the 2011 NGV Achievement Award.

"We've received accolades all along in our process of converting to natural gas," Osteen says. "The solutions that Ryder was able to help us with were exactly what was needed to make the initiative possible."