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CEO
Minute Man Trucks

Minuteman Trucks History

My brother and I applied to Ford Motor Companies Dealer Development (Truck Division) in the later part of 1989. It was about a two-year process of interviews, creating business plans, more interviews and visiting different Ford Truck Dealership in the Northeast and reviewing financials from those dealerships. More interviews took place and additional business plans were created and reviewed with Ford Dealer Development Management. My brother and I were eventually selected and accepted the dealership in Walpole Ma.

Minuteman Ford Truck Sales (MFTS) was incorporated on October 10, 1990. At the time, it was a subsidiary of Ford Motor Company.

- The Dealer Development Program originated to give under-capitalized and minority origin candidates an opportunity to completely acquire and own an automotive dealership business.
- Automotive dealerships and their relationships with the Original Equipment Manufacturers are governed by Massachusetts General Law 93B.
- 93B prohibits OEMs from owning dealerships for more than one year without a private capital investor being at financial risk.
- At the completion of the acquisition process the dealership is no longer part of Ford Motor Company and becomes a stand-alone business entirely owned by the acquiring candidates.

MFTS began operation and held its first Board of Directors Meeting on January 7, 1991.

- On February 2, 1991, Witcher and Witcher Partnership made a \$100,000 escrow deposit with Ford Motor Company to demonstrate our intent to purchase shares of the business within the first year as required by Massachusetts 93B.

- The money to purchase the remaining shares of the business came from operating performance bonuses paid annually to Witcher and Witcher.
- Annual bonuses had to be used to purchase additional shares of MFTS.
- In March of 1991 Minuteman Ford Trucks, Inc. as part of the Ford Dealer Development program. We had roughly 35 employees and 16 million dollars a year of sales.
- Shortly after taking the reins of the business a very severe recession began and lasted for several years in the Boston market. This recession, the original housing bubble. Education, health services, financial and technology companies are the primary drivers of the Boston economy – little is made, grown or manufactured in Boston which needs commercial trucks. So, “housing” moves the market. And the market was stagnant for years.

In early 1997, Ford Motor Company sold its heavy truck business to Freightliner Corporation. The decision to exit the heavy truck business also included a decision to exit truck Dealer Development Programs and Ownership of truck dealership real estate.

- Although Minuteman was in business for only six years and had limited equity, we made the difficult decision to risk everything and attempt the buyout.
- By December of 1997, Witcher and Witcher Partnership arranged financing to purchase the remaining outstanding shares of MFTS.
- The remaining shares totaled 10,189 and these were purchased for \$1,018,900. In addition, Witcher and Witcher Partnership assumed the initial long-term debt of \$1,122,700.
- Freightliner created a new brand of vehicles from its purchase of Fords heavy truck business.
- The business was no longer selling only one brand of truck but several brands. The business needed a new name, The Board of Directors chose the name Minuteman Trucks, Inc.

With Freightliners acquisition of Ford’s class 8 products they introduced a new brand of trucks call Sterling under the Freightliner brand. The Sterling line of products covered vehicles form class 6 through class 8 for both vocation and on-highway users.

- Our business was thrown into turmoil with the sale to Freightliner: new corporate people, new rules, new processes and new financial requirements. But, the worst impact that took place: no trucks to sell!
- We were absent of heavy truck products for more than 8 months and only had access to limited products after the manufacturing transition to Freightliner.

Ford moved into a joint venture (Blue Diamond) was to produce commercial trucks and parts in Mexico. Starting in 2002, Ford was going to sell its trucks and parts into the United States and Navistar was to sell South into Mexico, Central and South America. Once again, Minuteman had limited medium duty products to sell. This hiatus of Ford products lasted for three years, doing damage to its brand, customer confidence and the resulting products had limited options and didn't entirely suit our Boston market customers.

With concern about OEM vacillation over the years Minuteman sought diversification and advantages not available to other dealers in the Boston market, to balance the ups and downs it had experienced since its origin in 1991.

- In 2003, Minuteman became a Pierce dealer. The sale of first responder vehicles was and continues to be a stable market with Minuteman increasing Pierce market share since our first truck sale in early 2003.
- The stability Pierce has offered was beyond Minuteman's original expectations.
- Unfortunately, not everything associated with Pierce has been entirely stable. Pierce owned and operated an ambulance manufacturer called MedTec. Minuteman had little success with MedTec and Pierce shuttered MedTec operations in July of 2012.
- The loss of MedTec had little negative impact on Minuteman operations.
- Minuteman replaced MedTec products by signing franchise agreements with Road Rescue, a REV company, by the end of December 2012. Success is growing with Road Rescue and Minuteman is increasing its sales volume believing this product will be experiencing a solid up-swing.

In 2007, Minuteman became a certified minority business enterprise with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Operational Services Division of Supplier Diversity

and Minuteman began its relationship with an organization that has become: The Greater New England Minority Supplier Development Council (GNEMSDC) a chapter of the National Minority Supplier Development Council.

- In 2008, Minuteman began the sale of parts to the Department of Defense under GSA contract 23v. Sales of parts to the Federal Government continues today.
- NSTAR (now EVERSOURCE public utility company) nominated Minuteman for Minority Business Enterprise Supplier of the year to GNEMSDC in July of 2011.
- National Grid (a regional electric and gas utility company) nominated Minuteman for Minority Business Enterprise Supplier of the year to GNEMSDC for the year in 2014.
- In 2011 and 2012 Minuteman received the “Defense Logistics Agency Land and Maritime Recognition for Excellence Bronze Award.”

In late 2008 Freightliner announced that it is discontinuing the Sterling brand of vehicles and terminating its franchise agreements with the Sterling dealer body.

- We needed to find another brand to represent we were losing at least a third of our business.
- Minuteman was approached by Navistar (International Trucks) to see if we were interested in purchasing their dealership in Medford MA. We told them we were interested but not interested in purchasing that business because of its reputation and environmental concerns with the real estate.
- We convinced them to let us acquire the franchise and run it out of Minuteman’s existing location.
- Once again, we needed to learn completely new systems and process of a different vehicle manufacture, then implementing/integrating them with Minuteman’s existing process. Plus convince our customers that this change would be good for them long term.
- Minuteman started operation as a Navistar dealer in March of 2009.

Minuteman Trucks continues operating as a private company equally owned by both brothers. The business employs approximately 110 people; sells approximately 450 commercial trucks. Minuteman has roughly 3,000 parts & service customers and sells around 21 million dollars of repair parts and service repairs per year. Minuteman Fire &

Rescue Apparatus sells roughly 50 rescue vehicles per year. Minuteman also provides full service leasing and rental of commercial trucks to the Boston market, we own approximately 265 vehicles.