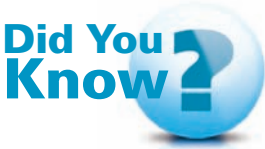


A large yellow tracked excavator is the central focus of the top half of the image. It is parked in what appears to be a service station or maintenance yard. The excavator's arm and bucket are visible, and the background shows other similar machinery. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

# Service Stations on Wheels

and the Compressors That Keep Them Working





Atlas Copco manufactures and services compressed air and gas equipment, generators, construction and mining equipment, industrial tools and assembly systems.

**Heavy equipment is busy at work the world over. When this equipment needs to be refueled or serviced, the operators are rarely in a position to pull over at the nearest gas station or quick oil change shop. Instead, special purposes trucks – essentially service stations on wheels – bring fuel, oil and lubricants to wherever they are needed.**

Southwest Products builds high-end fuel and lube service trucks at their facility in Phoenix, Arizona. “Our customers simply can’t bring equipment in for fuel and service,” according to Rob Hanish, Vice President, Southwest Products. “For example, it’s just not practical to drive a giant shovel from a mining operation at three miles per hour to a distant location to refuel. And even if they could drive it there, the time spent in transit would be time when the equipment isn’t at work making money.”

Hanish says that highway construction sites and drilling operations face a similar problem. “There can easily be dozens of pieces of heavy equipment on a

site,” he explains. “These vehicles are typically unlicensed so you can’t drive them on public roads, and all that machinery still needs fuel, grease and oil. That’s why we make fuel trucks, lube trucks, and preventive maintenance trucks that bring service out to heavy equipment wherever it’s located.”

Such equipment can be found in countries around the world, and so can Southwest Products’ trucks. “We have customers in North America, South America, Africa and the South Pacific,” say Hanish. “We’re working to win an order for three trucks for China, which would be our first foray into that market.”

Depending on the size and application, Southwest Products’ trucks range in cost from about \$70,000 including the cab and chassis to well over \$250,000. There are single purpose trucks for fuel, combination trucks for fuel and lube, and specialized preventive maintenance trucks that incorporate a mechanic’s system and separate systems for fresh oil, used oil, coolant, grease and more. Each customer specifies the custom configuration that suits its needs.

“Our preventive maintenance trucks are generally bought by heavy equipment dealers,” Hanish explains. “These dealers offer manufacturer’s comprehensive maintenance agreements, provided on location where their customers have the equipment in service. These are generally flat fee contracts with thin margins, so dealers that can do the service faster have time to do more services and make more money. Our preventive maintenance trucks provide the speed and reliability these dealers demand.”

Preventive maintenance trucks use large oil recovery systems to collect waste oil. They can suck out oil at a rate of nine gallons a minute, and that speed is important since some pieces of equipment hold more than 100 gallons of oil. They also need to pump in new oil. All of that oil, as well as gasoline, diesel, coolant, hydraulic fluids and grease, are moved using pneumatic pumps. The air compressor has to keep up with the demand.





“Southwest Products has been an Atlas Copco OEM customer since the late 1970s,” says Hanish. “We make the highest-end product in the business and our customers expect everything to be the best. The Atlas Copco compressor we use is the heartbeat of the truck, it truly is. If the compressor goes down these trucks don’t operate. When my phone is ringing I want calls from happy customers who want to buy another truck, not angry customers who need to repair a truck they already have. When a construction project is roaring these trucks typically run double shifts of 18 or 20 hours a day and if the equipment can’t run then no one makes any money. We use Atlas Copco compressors because their quality is the best in the industry, end of story. It’s one less thing to worry about.”

Southwest Products uses the block from Atlas Copco’s proven LE industrial aluminum piston compressor. The V-twin LE compressor block combines extremely robust construction, minimal maintenance, and long service life with high reliability. The standard arrangement for the LE is direct drive using an electrical motor, but it can also be directly driven by a hydraulic motor, diesel or gas engine, or a belt. Southwest Products uses a direct drive hydraulic setup in its service trucks.

“The Atlas Copco LE compressor block offers us a lot of features that other compressors don’t,” says Hanish. “We direct drive it hydraulically which is a great maintenance feature. In our applications, the compressor operates pneumatic pumps that move oil, coolant, lube, and fuel to equipment being serviced, and also to power pumps that move waste products out of equipment being serviced. The pumps demand a lot of air and the Atlas Copco compressor provides it.”

Close inspection of a Southwest Products service truck reveals great attention to detail and uncompromising quality. “My father started the company with the philosophy that we build our products a little better than anyone expects. Quality is a very big deal to us. We use Atlas Copco compressors because we want quality in all we do, no exceptions. Some customers understand the value of investing in quality and we build our products for those customers. We have so much repeat business because our customers know with our products they don’t have to deal with downtime issues. Using Atlas Copco compressors is one way we keep our quality as good as it can be.”

To learn more about Southwest Products, visit:  
[www.southwestproducts.com](http://www.southwestproducts.com)

