

## Hoist throws its hat into the tractor ring

This month, Hoist Liftruck announced that it will be entering the terminal tractor market this year, building its own design at its plant in East Chicago, Indiana. It aims to have the first machines available for delivery from 1 August.

The move comes on the heels of Hoist relocating its production facilities from Bedford Park, Illinois, to neighbouring Indiana, where it acquired a large 550,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility in 2016.

The East Chicago facility is six times larger than Bedford Park, and, in return for tax credits and other incentives, the State of Indiana and the City of East Chicago are looking to Hoist to expand the workforce from around 300 to 500 by 2022. Hoist also builds lift trucks for Toyota Material Handling USA, Inc, but a wider expansion of the product portfolio was always on the cards.

### Made in the USA

Hoist leans heavily on the 'Made in USA' label on its lift trucks when competing against imported brands, but this will not be a differentiator in terminal tractors. Kalmar Ottawa, Capacity, TICO and Autocar all have the Made in USA label on their 4x2 machines, while Terberg is the main imported marque, with a presence in the much smaller 4x4 niche.

Hoist did not make detailed specification sheets available at this stage, but, in response to questions, told *WorldCargo News* it will be offering both DOT (on-road) and off-road options for the Hoist T-Series.

Within the 4x2 sector, the US domestic market is divided into lighter machines for trailer handling at logistics facilities and distribution centres, and heavier machines with a higher GCW for the ports and intermodal sectors. Hoist, however, is planning only one capacity option, but will be offering both a diesel engine and an electric-powered model, with the electric machine called the TE-Series.

In the power train, the DOT machine will have a 200 hp Cummins ISB 6.7-litre engine, and the off-road version the 173 hp Cummins QSB 6.7L, both in Tier IV Final versions. The transmission will be from Allison 3500, with AxleTech axles, and suspension components from Hendrickson, in keeping with Hoist's philosophy to source entirely from

The terminal tractor market could be in for a shake-up as a fifth player with big ambitions enters the US market

components manufactured in the US.

The durability of the chassis is an important feature in the US market. In particular, it plays a key role in the used value of the machine. Kalmar Ottawa had issues using Chinese-built chassis, and recently switched from a box construction to a domestically sourced bolted C-Section, in an effort to improve quality and longevity. Hoist did not comment on its design, other than to say it will be using a modularly constructed frame

that includes integrated mounts for all major components, and a "patent-pending four-point vertical lift mechanism that distributes the load evenly to reduce stress on the entire chassis".

Hoist is also looking for an advantage in the drive train, where it is using a "military grade AxleTech drive axle. Ratios have been optimised to utilise the entire rear range, improving both tractive effort and efficiencies when compared to competitors' performance".



A graphic of the new Hoist T-Series terminal tractor

## Moves in natural gas

Natural gas is shaping up as an important fuel for terminal tractors in the coming years. Last month, TICO announced it is working with Illinois-based engine manufacturer Power Solutions International, Inc (PSI) on a new terminal tractor prototype being tested by TICO with PSI's 8.8-litre CNG (compressed natural gas) engine. PSI's natural gas engines are based on a mass-produced General Motors engine platform.

This month, PSI took a US\$60M investment from Weichai America Corp, a fully owned subsidiary of China's Weichai Power Co Ltd. Weichai is the largest car parts and power system conglomerate in China, specialising in manufacturing diesel engines. It supplies, among others, China National Heavy Duty Truck Group (CNHTC), which makes the Sinotruk HOVA terminal tractor, and the HOWO heavy truck that are common in Chinese ports.

LNG (liquefied natural gas) is set to play an increasing role in the large truck and tractor fleets found at China's ports, partly in response to government initiatives to improve air quality. Earlier this year CNHTC signed a long-term cooperation agreement with Jinzhou Port Group, which operates over 400 CNHTC machines running on LNG. In Shanghai, the port authority has just taken delivery of 160 Sinotruk LNG-powered HOWO 8x4 dump trucks for construction purposes.

