

## VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

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Dave Lambert,  
Vice President for Compliance  
and Government Affairs,  
Tri State Motor Transit



# TRI STATE MOTOR TRANSIT CO.

## SITUATION.

Tri State Motor Transit Co. began hauling explosives for mining operations near Joplin, Mo., where Kansas and Oklahoma meet along the Missouri border. That was in 1931. Since that time, dangerous cargo has been this carrier's specialty.

Today Tri State is still domiciled in Joplin and its largest customers are the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of Energy. The company hauls high-risk cargo such as munitions, explosives and nuclear fuel bound for sites from coast to coast. Tri State tracks its dry van trailers – 70 percent of its trailer fleet – with SkyBitz. Altogether, Tri State runs a total of 1,400 trailers.

## SOLUTION.

“On any day, 85 percent of our trucks will be carrying a placarded load. We haul very little generic freight. Generic freight for us might be a tank or a vehicle for the military or some equipment for civilians,” said David Bennett, Tri State executive vice president. He explained that Tri State considered a number of competing systems before selecting SkyBitz.

“First off, SkyBitz is satellite – not terrestrial, not cellular, which we don't want – and their product is HERO approved,” he said, expressing the company's preference for the wider coverage a satellite system provides in comparison to ground-based system. HERO stands for Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance, a Defense Department program to evaluate and control the risks of stowing dangerous cargos in proximity to electronic devices. “If you don't have HERO approval, you can not use the equipment to transport arms, ammunition and explosives for the Department of Defense,” Bennett said.

Bennett was impressed that two of SkyBitz's major investors are Motorola Inc. and American International Group, Inc. “That told me they had a serious future,” Bennett said. Indeed, SkyBitz has provided serious technology for Tri State. “We've found it easy to read, easy to work with.” It's compatible with our Qualcomm in-cab system and our Fleet Commander dispatch system,” Bennett explained. “We were impressed that SkyBitz personnel were actively involved with the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration and the government agencies we deal with. (Those agencies) have knowledge of SkyBitz as a company.”

According to Bennett, Tri State is working with SkyBitz on a pilot program for HERO approval. It involves flatbed trailers, but beyond that there wasn't much he could reveal. “Let's just say it's an extremely exciting product,” Bennett said.

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### RESULTS.

Tri State also does civilian work that frequently involves dangerous cargo. The company moves some of that freight in individual shipping containers loaded and sealed by the shipper. The containers are loaded on flatbed trailers. Tri State calls this dromedary service. “Dromedary comes from the different size boxes. You can get six or seven on a trailer, which looks like camel humps going down the road. Customers can have their product in a container and sealed,” explained Dave Lambert, Tri State’s vice president for compliance and government affairs. Tri State will be using SkyBitz on individual dromedary containers so customers will know where shipments are and Tri State will know where its containers are. SkyBitz also allows Tri-State to provide the capability of allowing the customer to track their shipments while they are loaded on Tri-State’s equipment.

“What I like about SkyBitz is, as our company comes up with ideas, the (SkyBitz) engineers sit down, evaluate and come up with a way of doing what we need done. We were very impressed by that,” said Lambert. “SkyBitz picks up on questions we ask as tasks they need to work on. That’s their attitude,” Bennett added.