

# Like a good neighbor

Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. goes the extra mile for area residents by instituting a Good Neighbor Trucking Policy.

BY LORETTA SORENSEN

**Q** *uestion: Do aggregate companies have any leverage for managing the behavior of truck drivers who don't work directly for them?*

Tennessee's Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. (MSG) had to answer that question a few years ago when the company received complaints from residents about truck-traffic issues involving drivers hauling its products. At the outset, it seemed MSG would have little power to impose the rules that governed its own employees on truckers hired by a second or third party.

But a determined effort to maintain the corporate policy of safe and responsible trucking helped MSG identify a simple process to influence truck-driving behavior. That realization

led MSG to develop a Good Neighbor Trucking Policy (GNTP) four years ago.

"Our policy contains three essential elements," says Alan Parks, MSG vice president. "First, it outlines both onsite and offsite rules that apply generally to all our facilities and employees. The second component of the policy describes site-specific rules that apply to trucks hauling our products. The third portion of the policy is a compliance agreement, which we strive to provide to everyone who operates a truck in relation to MSG. We ask them to sign an agreement form stating that they agree to comply with our GNTP rules."

General rules of the policy include MSG's reservation to refuse the right to load any truck. The policy also requires that trucks be in good operating condition and in compliance with DOT regulations. All drivers must have a valid driver's license, and each truck is required to clearly display an identification number. Trucks must be within legal weight limits before they're permitted to leave the plant.

**Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. uses a detailed Good Neighbor Trucking Policy to encourage truck drivers to model professional and responsible behavior as part of their daily routine.**

## Take note

MSG has rarely had to enforce the most serious consequences for violating its trucking policy, as efforts to develop and employ an effective policy were quickly recognized by the truckers.

## Careful approach

For many years, MSG has encountered little trouble in dealing with truck drivers who work directly for the company. The obvious incentive for them to follow the rules is retaining their job.

"We tried not to approach this in a way that made us seem anti-trucker," Parks says. "We know that, in reality, most people hauling our products are professionals and they behave accordingly. The trucking industry often deals with the misperception that all truck drivers cause traffic problems. The aggregate industry can't exist without truck drivers, so we knew we had to communicate our expectations to second- and third-party drivers in order to



# PPI SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

**WE'RE MORE THAN JUST PULLEYS & IDLERS.**

PPI manufactures a wide variety of specialty conveyor components. Look to PPI Engineering for all your unique needs. They'll save you time and money.



## **TROUGHER IMPACT SYSTEM**

rugged 1/2" steel plate frame  
withstands extreme impacts

**ROLL GUARD**  
mounts with return idlers to  
provide pinch point protection



**SMART ROLL**  
protects the sensor inside a rugged  
idler roll for simple and effective  
belt speed monitoring

**MAGNETIC SPEED SWITCH**  
patented magnetic coupling makes  
conveyor monitoring a breeze

## **HEAVY DUTY TAKE-UP FRAME WITH HYDRAULIC ASSIST**

all steel construction, available for  
bearing sizes up to 12"



**PPI**<sup>®</sup>  
Precision Pulley & Idler  
An Employee Owned Company

*The Next Generation of Conveyor Components*

Call 800.247.1228 or visit [www.ppipella.com](http://www.ppipella.com)

avoid any driving issues.”

MSG's rules for their own drivers are very specific, tailored to each company site. The policy makes it clear that, if compliance becomes an issue, it can lead to job termination. MSG used the same approach in spelling out rules for truck drivers who answer to other authorities.

“We made it pretty simple,” Parks says. “If they don't comply with the rules, we reserve the right not to load them. If we experience an ongoing problem, we may not do business with the company that employs the driver.”

MSG also made sure its GNTTP is fair to drivers who may be unfamiliar with haul routes or a company site.

“Some of our operations may have more conditions to meet than others, depending on permit agreements,” Parks says. “The GNTTP rules have been designed to be clear and specific to each of our company sites. We also provide all second- and third-party drivers with a supplemental publication that describes each site's haul route and operating hours. If we don't make everything clear, we may see things like drivers who arrive too early at a site and end up backing out onto the highway, causing a safety issue. We want to avoid that kind of situation.”

Most of the GNTTP rules are standard at a quarry or gravel pit. Speed limits are posted at each site. Truckers are asked not to convoy or employ Jake brakes around company plants.

“Approximately 90 percent of MSG's product is consistently moved by the same group of truck drivers,” Parks says. “When we see new drivers, they often only haul a few loads of product from an MSG site each year. We didn't have many truck-traffic complaints to begin with, and we've rarely had any issues since implementing the new trucking policy.”

### Improved safety

MSG has rarely had to enforce the most serious consequences for violating its trucking policy, as efforts to develop and employ an effective policy were quickly recognized by the truckers.

“Word travels fast,” Parks says. “Just

## Off-site rules

- Speed limits along routes near company operations vary, and it is a driver's responsibility to determine posted speed limits. The company recommends speeds be maintained five MPH below posted limits.
- Loaded trucks must follow designated haul routes, unless approved in advance by Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. and/or Lehman Roberts Co. Note: from time to time, exceptions may be allowed when hauling to a specific job.
- Trucks must not park on public roads outside the entrances. Note: Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. and/or Lehman-Roberts Co. will designate safe parking areas.
- Some operations are restricted from loading trucks before a certain time. Do not arrive at the mine or plant before this designated loading time. Times will be posted at the scale house and/or described in the GNTTP Supplement.
- No convoying. Please keep a 500-ft. distance between you and other vehicles when possible.
- Jake brakes are to be strictly avoided on roads surrounding the mine, through towns or near residential areas.
- Littering is against the law, please dispose of waste properly.

taking steps to implement this kind of policy helps put truck drivers on notice that we take safety and responsibility seriously. Probably the area where we've seen the greatest improvement is where haul routes are concerned. Both drivers and plant employees have become more aware of the need for, and benefit of, driving safely.”

MSG reached out to numerous aggregate companies as well as the National Sand, Stone & Gravel Association to obtain information about the trucking policies used by its peers. Efforts to draft the GNTTP involved the MSG company president, facility managers, sales de-

partment representatives, scale house ticket writers and others.

“Since vendors have a level of liability in regard to their drivers, we use our ticket-writing software to maintain written records for each truck we load,” Parks says. “That way we can document that each driver has received the GNTTP and signed the compliance agreement. We maintain that record for all our own drivers, too.

“Truck driving safety isn't just an issue in Memphis,” Parks adds. “Every aggregate products company knows its safety record is a significant element of the permitting process. If we need to upgrade a permit or have any kind of expansion plans, we have to demonstrate that we're committed to safe and responsible business practices. Talk is cheap. Having a truck safety policy that's available to anyone through our website and being able to produce written documents that demonstrate enforcement of the policy helps build our company's credibility.”

MSG's full GNTTP is available on its website: [www.msgravel.com/goodneighbortruckingpolicy](http://www.msgravel.com/goodneighbortruckingpolicy). **P&Q**

Loretta Sorensen is a freelance writer in Yankton, S.D. She produces material on a variety of topics, serves as a ghostwriter, and has authored her own books.

## Participation

It is necessary for each driver to sign the GNTTP Agreement and acknowledge they will comply with these rules and any supplement(s) before their trucks can be loaded. It is necessary to renew the GNTTP Agreement every two years, unless required sooner by Memphis Stone & Gravel Co. and/or Lehman-Roberts Co. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure he or she has obtained the supplemental information applicable to the plant they are hauling to/from.