

Live And Learn

CHARDON OIL AND TANK TRUCK SERVICE & SALES FIND OUT FIRSTHAND THAT KNOCKOFF BRANDS CAN'T SUPPLY THE OPERATIONAL RELIABILITY OF BLACKMER® TX SERIES SLIDING VANE PUMPS

By Jim Becker



Since 1981, Chardon Oil has operated two gasoline stations and has been delivering light petroleum liquids to a traditional customer base that covers northeastern Ohio and stretches into western Pennsylvania.

There's an old saying: "If something appears too good to be true, then it's probably too good to be true." Dave Lawler recently found out the veracity of that statement firsthand—and he hopes to never fall victim to it again.

Lawler is the President of Tank Truck Service & Sales, Inc., which is headquartered in Warren, MI, USA. His company is a third-generation family-owned business that was founded in 1947 by Lawler's grandfather, Harold, and operated for many years by his father, James, who remains active in the operation while enjoying semi-retirement. In nearly 70 years, it has grown from a one-bay repair shop into a multi-state manufacturer, assembler and distributor of tank trucks and trailers of all types, most of which are used to haul gasoline and fuel oil for distributors that operate in the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

One of Lawler's good customers is Chardon Oil, which is located in Chardon, OH, about 35 miles northeast of Cleveland. Since 1981, Chardon Oil has been delivering home heating oil, gasoline and motor oils to a traditional customer base that covers northeastern Ohio and stretches into western Pennsylvania, along with kerosene and mineral oils to the many Amish communities that can be found in the region. In addition, Chardon Oil operates two gasoline stations to which it supplies product.

QUICK FACTS

- Company:** Chardon Oil
- Location:** Chardon, OH, USA, facility
- Market:** Petroleum Transport
- Distributor:** Tank Truck Service & Sales, Inc.
- Challenge:** Needed highly reliable, dependable pump to transport and handle light petroleum liquids
- Solution:** Blackmer® TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps

In 2010, Gary Bulzan, Owner of Chardon Oil, let Lawler know that he wanted to purchase a new delivery truck—and Lawler made a fateful decision.

“We were putting together a new tank for a good friend of ours, Gary Bulzan, and we tried an off-brand pump,” said Lawler. “We had been using Blackmer® pumps for years, since the 1940s and 1950s, but we strayed away from them to try an off-brand pump this one time....”

A Catastrophic Choice

“We were buying a new unit from Dave and, I don’t remember exactly, but they were offering something, maybe different pricing, and he wanted me to try some new pumps,” recalled Bulzan.

So, Bulzan took delivery of the new unit, which had a dual-pump system that featured pumps that claimed to be the equal of the TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps that Blackmer, Grand Rapids, MI, USA, has been supplying to the transport industry for many decades.

“We had no issues with the pump for about three years until it went out all of a sudden,” said Bulzan. “It was a catastrophic failure; I was making a delivery and it just quit and leaked all over the place.”

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The pump was not only leaking, when it was taken apart, “it was totally destroyed,” according to Lawler. To make matters worse, the pump’s three-year warranty had just expired and the manufacturer was unwilling to supply a replacement.

“It was right after warranty and the manufacturer said we could get repair parts for no charge, but when we told them it was totally destroyed and we needed a new pump they would not replace it since it was off-warranty, so we did not want to recommend a new off-brand pump to Gary and Chardon Oil,” said Lawler.

“We were just a couple months out of warranty, not very long, and we both thought we should get something from the other brand, but they told Dave flat out, ‘No,’” confirmed Bulzan.



When the off-brand pump on one of his tank trucks recently experienced a catastrophic failure, Gary Bulzan, Owner of Chardon Oil, made a promise to himself to only use Blackmer® TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps moving forward.



Chardon Oil tank truck delivering fuel to a local gas station. Every one of Chardon Oil's tank trucks now feature Blackmer® TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps.

So, Lawler delivered to Chardon Oil, free of charge, a tried-and-true alternative—a Blackmer TXD2.5 (2.5-inch) model sliding vane pump.

“The TX is the industry standard and just a great, great, great piece of equipment,” said Lawler. “They’ve had no problems since we put the new TX pump on and I wouldn’t anticipate having any for years and years and years to come.”

Up To The Challenge

Blackmer has designed its TX Series pumps to be the best option for handling liquid petroleum products, such as gasoline, fuel oil, diesel, kerosene and light lube oils. TX pumps feature cast-iron construction and operate via Blackmer’s unique sliding vane method that self-adjusts for wear to maintain flow rates. The result is a pump that offers excellent self-priming and dry-run capabilities, and easy maintenance.

Other design benefits include a dual-ended shaft on the 2-, 2.5- and 3-inch models that simplifies installation, mechanical seals and ball-bearing construction, symmetrical bearing support for even loading and wear, adjustable relief valve that protects against excessive pressures, and external ball bearings that are isolated from the pumpage to maximize bearing life and minimize contamination risk.



Blackmer® TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps have become the industry standard for handling light petroleum liquids due to cast-iron construction and a design that offers excellent self-priming and dry-run capabilities, along with easy maintenance.

“We’ve been using Blackmer pumps since the early 1980s and we had never had any issue like we had with the other brand; Blackmer pumps last,” said Bulzan. “We probably get eight to 10 years out of them without a problem. If one were to go that quickly, I’m sure I would have remembered it.”

The second pump on the affected truck is still the TX knockoff model, but Lawler anticipates that won’t be the case for long: “The other off-brand doesn’t get nearly the use, but we’ve decided that at the first sign of trouble we’ll get rid of that pump and put on a Blackmer,” he said.

For Lawler, there is also one more major benefit to recommending Blackmer pumps for his customers.

“U.S.-made is a big deal for us, as well,” he said. “With the other one the castings were made offshore and we want to keep as much business as possible as we can in Michigan because we’re a Michigan company and Blackmer is a Michigan company. For me, it’s Michigan first, then the U.S., then, who cares?”

Conclusion

We all know that the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence, but sometimes it's hard not to fall victim to the lure of taking a peek over there anyway. The positive takeaway of that moment of inquisitiveness, which led to the use of an ultimately failed transport pump, for Dave Lawler and Gary Bulzan is the fact that it has reinforced their belief that Blackmer TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps are the clear choice for applications that require the transport and handling of light petroleum liquids.

"Blackmer TX pumps are very reliable, dependable and all we need to do on them is basic maintenance," said Bulzan.

In the end, Bulzan has a new bottom line when it comes to choosing transport pumps: "We're done with trying the other ones," he concluded.

About the Author:

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Only The Strong Survive

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but when that imitation comes in the form of a substandard product, then the customer must beware of being sold a bill of goods. To combat the specious claims made by some foreign manufacturers that their knockoff versions of TX Series Sliding Vane Pumps perform as reliably, safely and efficiently as the original, Blackmer®, Grand Rapids, MI, USA, has launched a "TX Strong" website that refutes those claims.

The major claim of manufacturers of foreign knockoff pumps is that their models cost less than TX Series pumps, but that initial cost savings is easily gobbled up by the hidden costs of frequent mechanical failures and resulting repairs or replacement. In other words, the truck pump is the beating heart of a transport company's fleet business, so why gamble with an inferior product?

The fulcrum of the TX Strong website is a video that evaluates TX Series pumps against imitation brands in a number of eye-opening lab tests, the results of which prove conclusively the superiority of the TX pumps. The video shows that, compared to knockoff pumps, Blackmer's TX pumps deliver lower cost of ownership that is ensured by the pump's genuine long-lasting parts and components. To illustrate how Blackmer stands behind the performance of the TX Series pumps, it offers a five-year standard warranty and two-year performance assurance guarantee on models TXD2, TXD2.5, TXD3, TXD1200, TXD1225 and TXD1230.

Also offered to visitors to the TX Strong website is a link to a complete list of features and benefits of TX Series pumps, a flyer that offers a side-by-side comparison of the performance of TX pumps versus knockoff brands, a complete literature library for all TX models, and videotaped customer testimonials that highlight the success of TX Series pumps in the field and the dangers of choosing to rely on knockoff brands.



Blackmer® TX Series Sliding Vane Pump



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