

Loud And Proud

BLACKMER® TXD SERIES SLIDING VANE PUMPS HAVE HELPED MIKE AND KABRAUL TASHA
CREATE A WIDELY DIVERSIFIED FUEL-DELIVERY POWERHOUSE HEADQUARTERED ON CAPE COD, MA

By Kent Crawford



Blackmer® TXD Series Sliding Vane Pump

Among the many services provided by Loud Fuel Co., owned by Mike Tasha, right, and managed by his son, Kabraul, is the delivery of large amounts of fuel to ocean-going vessels. One of these is the Atlantis, a research and education ship operated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in Woods Hole, MA, USA, that can be out to sea for six months at a time.

Millions of people collect baseball cards, stamps or coins, but Mike Tasha has made his mark collecting something a little more esoteric: oil companies. Or, more specifically, oil companies that make their home on the insular stretch of Massachusetts known as Cape Cod. Tasha hails from Provincetown, MA, USA, which is located on the far northern tip of the Cape Cod peninsula as it juts out into the Atlantic Ocean. He acquired his first oil company – Cape Cod Oil Co. – in 1974 with his wife, Halcyone, and since then he has completed enough subsequent acquisitions to make the Tasha name ubiquitous around the Cape in regards to fuel delivery, service and supply.

“I’ve been in the oil business for all of my working life,” said Tasha. “When I got out of high school I went to college for a year in Boston, but decided that really wasn’t for me. So I came back and worked for a company called Cape Cod Oil for several years before I purchased it in 1974.”

That set off a series of acquisitions over the next 20 years for Tasha, who added Frank’s Oil Co., Canal Fuel Co., Mooney Fuel Co., East Ham Discount Oil and Cape Cod Propane, among others, to his portfolio. The routine was the same for each acquisition – he and Jason would buy the company, maintain its established name and run it as an autonomous business.

All In The Family

One of Tasha’s last major purchases occurred in 1994 when he acquired Loud Fuel Co. of Falmouth, MA, USA. At that time, Tasha also was completing the purchase of Mooney Fuel Co., while his son, Kabraul, had just returned home from a few years away at college and decided that he wanted to enter the family business. With Mike concentrating on the new Mooney Fuel business, he gave Kabraul the keys to the Loud Fuel operation.

“At that point, Loud Fuel was a pretty small company, around a million gallons a year,” Mike Tasha explained.



Kabraul Tasha stands next to one of Tasha Trucking's 18-wheel fuel transports, all of which are outfitted with Blackmer® TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps.

“He took a million-gallon business and has developed it into a 10-million gallon business. We do a lot of marine fueling here and also have a transportation company (Tasha Trucking) that transports all of our fuel to all of our terminals and Kabraul also runs that now and buys all the fuel and gasoline for our service stations. We have a fleet of CITGO and some Shell stations and he helps maintain and run those with our other managers, along with managing Loud Fuel Co.”

Indeed, Loud Fuel has grown to offer a wide variety of services to a customer base that stretches along Massachusetts Route 3 and U.S. Route 6, which runs like a spine through the Cape Cod peninsula, from Plymouth in the west to Orleans in the east.

“Back in 1994 when we bought Loud Fuel Co., it was basically a one-truck operation,” said Kabraul Tasha. “I drove the truck and wife, Julie, was in the office answering phones and collecting money. Since then, we’ve gone from a heating-oil company to commercial diesel, which took off, then we got into a large portion of marine fueling (see Sidebar). Lately, we’ve diversified more into biofuels. Now we’re hauling a lot of biofuels that come in on rail from the Midwest and we truck them to the source, including having a very large contract with CITGO Petroleum.”

So, an operation that began less than two decades ago with one man (and a supportive wife), one truck and one dream has grown into an operation that features a rolling fleet of 50 six-wheel and six 10-wheel delivery trucks that operate under the Loud Fuel banner and eight 18-wheel fuel transports that fly the Tasha Trucking flag.

The Perfect Partner

Around the same time that Mike Tasha was acquiring Loud Fuel Co., Trask Equipment, Braintree, MA, USA, was completing the acquisition of the Hall Equipment Co. of Quincy, MA, USA. Founded in the 1930s, Trask Equipment had been a supplier and distributor of pumps, meters, valves and tank equipment for “anything that needs to be metered, pumped or stored,” according to Mike Trask, who is part of the third generation of Trasks – along with brothers Billy and Paul – to run the company that his grandfather founded and father subsequently operated. With the acquisition of Hall Equipment, the company name was changed to Hall Trask Equipment Company, with headquarters in Braintree and a satellite office in Providence, RI, USA, which allows the company to supply and service a customer base that covers a 250-mile radius.

With the Tasha oil empire on the Cape reaching critical mass at the same time, Mike and Kabraul were looking for on-truck liquid-handling equipment that could meet the diverse delivery needs of their various entities, especially Loud Fuel, which would soon be branching out into the delivery of propane and biofuels, in addition to the traditional gasoline, diesel and heating oil.

“My relationship with the Tashas started when we bought Hall Equipment 20 years ago,” said Trask. “We sell them pumps, meters, valves, tanks – both aboveground and below ground – and they have gas stations and we service those, too. They also have fueling depots that we service, as well. We sold them all of their oil-delivery vehicles since Boston Steel is their choice of tanks and we are a distributor and fabricator for Boston Steel.”



When Kabraul and Mike Tasha need pumps for their vehicle fleet, they turn to Mike Trask, center, of Hall Trask Equipment Co., who is quick to recommend Blackmer® TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps.

From Sea To Shining Sea

Those who might think that oil and water don't mix aren't privy to the operational capabilities of Loud Fuel Co., Falmouth, MA, USA. Since being purchased by Mike Tasha in 1994, with son Kabraul in charge of the day-to-day operations, Loud Fuel has become a leading player in the supply of marine fuel to a wide variety of vessels that are used in many unique operations.

For instance, Loud Fuel supplies fuel to the Steamship Authority in Woods Hole, MA, USA, which operates the ferries that carry vehicles and residents/tourists to and from Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Island. Loud Fuel also has a supply contract with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI), which is dedicated to research and education designed to advance the understanding of the ocean and its interaction with the Earth system. As part of that research and education, WHOI regularly sends ships out to sea for six months at a time, all of which need to be loaded with upwards of 100,000 gallons of fuel before they depart.

"Over time, we got into a large portion of marine fueling," explained Kabraul Tasha. "After years of doing marine fueling, I got into the Coast Guard manual, which is to fill anything over 10,000 gallons of storage, then we started doing 20,000, 30,000 gallons, and now we do boats that hold 100,000, 200,000 or 300,000 gallons. We do big Navy ships, long-line boats that go offshore for 30 days at a time, two draggers that are probably the biggest on the East Coast, which take 6,000 gallons a week."

While marine fueling has developed into a profitable niche for Loud Fuel, the most unique – and impressive – marine-related job the company has recently completed occurred in the summer of 2012. At that time, the U.S. Navy was building a new guided-missile destroyer, the USS Michael Murphy, which is named for a Navy SEAL and Medal of Honor/Purple Heart recipient who was killed in the line of duty in Afghanistan in 2005. When the Michael Murphy was seaworthy, it was transported to the Newport (RI) Shipyard, where it would need to be fueled before heading to Virginia to be commissioned before heading to Hawaii, where it would be stationed.

"All of our petroleum needs come from Hall Trask, trucks, pumps, hoses, anything to do with an oil truck," said Kabraul Tasha. "They're a lot like us. They know how we want our stuff done. They know when we want our stuff done. It's not just a business relationship, we refer each other to other customers, and we help each other out of jams."



Blackmer® TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps played a pivotal role when Loud Fuel Co. delivered 300,000 gallons of fuel over two days to the USS Michael Murphy, a newly commissioned guided-missile destroyer.

This fueling operation required 300,000 gallons of fuel to be loaded onto the boat and the supplier tasked with performing the operation was Loud Fuel. To do so, though, Kabraul Tasha had to modify his personal 10-wheeler – which is a tricked-up beauty featuring all-chrome trim and accessories – so that it could pump 270 gallons per minute through a 3-inch discharge line. The pump for the job was a TXD3 Series Sliding Vane Pump from Blackmer®. For two straight days a steady stream of fuel transports arrived at the dock in Newport and offloaded through the meter on Kabraul's truck and into the Michael Murphy's fuel-storage tanks.

"This operation is Coast Guard-regulated so we couldn't just come down with 10 different trucks and 10 different hoses; the fuel had to go through that specific hose and that specific meter that were approved by the government," said Tasha. "My Blackmer pump would grab the fuel, throw it through my meter and out the discharge. As we were fueling water was coming off the boat and there was not a stitch of rainbow in that water. It was a two-day pump, it was impressive, and when we were done, all we did was add a little grease to the Blackmer pump and that was it. That pump was on an old truck that's got at least 10 million gallons through it and it came through like a champ. No other pumps come close to these Blackmers. I wouldn't use any other pump on my fleet other than Blackmer!"

The Perfect Pump

When it comes to the transport pumps that are used on Loud Fuel's 10-wheel delivery trucks or 18-wheel fuel transports, Hall Trask had only one recommendation for the Tashas: TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps from Blackmer®, Grand Rapids, MI, USA.

“The Tashas really take special care in their installations and they definitely have a high level of sensitivity to quality,” said Trask. “Everything needs to be done in a certain way, and that’s why they choose Blackmer pumps to fill their needs in pumps. The TXD pumps have been able to meet all of their needs well – real well.”

The TXD pumps are ideal for Loud Fuel’s demands – which are used in 2-, 2.5- and 3-inch configurations, depending on what the application requires – because they have been designed for use in truck-mounted applications for the delivery of a wide array of petroleum-based products. They feature Blackmer’s unique sliding vane design that self-adjusts for wear and maintains desired flow rates, while providing excellent self-priming and dry-run capabilities. The mechanical seal and ball-bearing construction provide maximum reliability while the symmetrical bearing support assures even loading and wear. Maintenance is also quick and easy as any worn vanes can be replaced without needing to remove the pump from the vehicle.

“Every truck I own has a Blackmer pump on it,” said Mike Tasha. “I had some other trucks that had some problems with knockoff pumps and decided, at that point, that Blackmer was the pump for us. Those other pumps are noisy, have leaks and just don’t live up to the promises, but the Blackmers certainly do! The Blackmers need very little maintenance, and they seem to go along a lot longer than what you would even begin to think they would. We do everything with them: we suck out of the ground; we pump overhead; we pump from truck-to-truck, so we certainly use them in a lot more different ways than the average guy that just might deliver oil to a house.”

Conclusion

Mike and Kabraul Tasha aren’t afraid to try new things – from acquiring new oil companies to introducing a new fuel to the Cape, such as biodiesel. But there’s one thing they won’t change – all of their trucks will have Blackmer TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps on them.



Blackmer® TXD Series Sliding Vane Pumps have always answered the call for Cape Cod Oil and Loud Fuel.

“One thing with us is that we can have five trucks sitting out there and they could have five applications, five different pumping speeds, running dry all the time, and we put Blackmer TXD pumps to the test,” said Kabraul Tasha. “Nobody puts them to the test like we do. We have Blackmers on some of our tractors that are probably on their fifth vehicle. We paint them, hook them over and then we never have to do anything to them. We’ve had nothing but very good luck with Blackmer pumps.”

About the Author:

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