



Lake Truck Lines expands with new Permian Basin division

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Stepping out of his comfort zone has resulted in Douglas Cain expanding his company significantly.

"Since I made the decision to leave Houston after 56 years and move to San Antonio, I feel like I'm 25 again. I'm excited," Cain said while in Midland to visit clients.

Cain's father, Joe, founded Lake Truck Lines in 1949 in Houston. Last July, Douglas, now company president, moved the company to San Antonio to take advantage of activity in the Eagle Ford play. Now the trucking company is establishing a Permian Basin division, establishing terminals in Hobbs, Artesia and Odessa and opening a terminal in Monahans this coming week. Lake plans to start with 10 units and expects to provide 30 units to serve all three Permian Basin locations by June 1. Latio Fernandez has been named manager, Permian Basin division.

Among the company's clients in South Texas are Halliburton, Schlumberger and Baker Hughes. Lake hauls cement for Halliburton's operations in Laredo and Mission and now Artesia and Hobbs.

"I was contacted by Halliburton's Midland office. Jerry Santos, my general manager, and I came out and Halliburton asked us to take over Hobbs and Artesia and then start taking over Midland," Cain recounted. "I enjoy a challenge, so within three weeks we had drivers and management in place and located suppliers in New Mexico and Midland."

He said he plans to continue adding equipment and "I would be shocked if we're not at 50 trucks by the end of the year." He utilizes owner-operators. "I own the trailers, they own the tractors," he explained, adding he has more than 40 files from drivers wanting to work for him.

"I have been blessed with the best drivers and management I've ever seen," he said. "We've also been blessed in that we have an incredibly good reputation. The caliber of the work our drivers and dispatchers do helps set us apart. All our units are equipped with the NexTraQ system, which is not just GPS but is a fully integrated communications and mapping system. We're in constant contact; our driver knows exactly where he is and our client can get information on the unit online. It's not just a tool to monitor the driver but to effectively utilize our equipment. It's also a fantastic device for keeping up with maintenance needs."

While he is expanding the company's trucking business with the move to San Antonio, Cain is also expanding in services, teaming up with the Gallegos Group of Mexico to construct oilfield equipment, including bulk barite tanks, cement batch mixing equipment, silos and frac tanks. Lake distributes Gallegos' trailers in the San Antonio area.

Cain began working for his father at age 13, with sweeping out the office part of his early duties. "I learned the value of manual labor and hard work at a young age," he said. He also took away other lessons from his father. He is working with an attorney to establish an employee stock ownership plan, giving 50 percent ownership of the company to its employees and contractors.

"I want the contractors to understand this is their home," he said. "I try to be a visionary and get my people to see where I'm taking the company. This isn't just a trucking company but I want to elevate Lake above and beyond what my contemporaries are. I learned that from my father."

Another lesson, he said, is to ingratiate himself not only with his clients -- primarily Halliburton in the Permian Basin -- but with the local community.

"It matters to me that Lake Truck leaves a legacy of stewardship and generosity," he said.