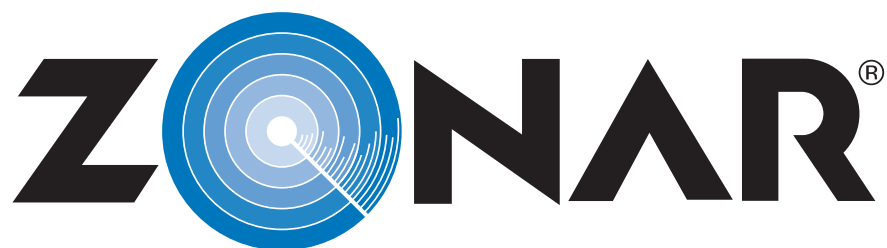




# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

## Smoot Brothers





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#### **New Sheriff in Town**

*Flat Bed Hauler Turns to Retired Trooper and Zonar to Improve Safety Score*

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*Bob Laumann  
Safety Manager  
Smoot Brothers Transportation*



## SMOOT BROTHERS

Mike, Matt and Kenny Smoot were determined not to give up or go out without a fight.

The three brothers had worked too long and hard to build their business from a one-truck operation starting in the late 80s to a transportation company with five divisions, more than 100 employees and 14 owner-operators, and 60 trucks running in the West and all over the country.

Although the company has a hazardous materials hauling business, most of Brigham City, Utah-based Smoot Brothers Transportation's business is moving construction materials, manufactured products, machinery and scrap metal, primarily on flatbed trailers. When contractors need roofing and other construction materials moved across country quickly; or area wholesale retail stores need supplies delivered from warehouses on-time; or manufacturers need machinery and scrap metal supplies to keep manufacturing lines open, Kenny said Smoot Brothers Transportation's number is usually on their speed dial.

Kenny said he and his brothers had always prided themselves on the quick, responsive and friendly service they themselves offered when it was just three of them working.

### **Owners See Need to Change Operating Procedures**

"It's something we've come to expect from the drivers we've hired over the years," he said. "After all, our stock and trade is the service we offer. Our customers not only appreciate that, they've grown accustomed to expecting it from us."

But when the company ran into some compliance issues, they began impacting the business in a big way, even though customers were happy with the company's service.

"Many of our customers supply the big home improvement center chains, which have strict policies about sourcing supplies from companies that hire carriers with good safety scores to move those supplies to their stores," Kenny explained. "While our customers were happy with our service and the friendliness of our drivers, they told us that if our safety record didn't improve, they would have no choice but to end their business relationship with us."

Kenny said they heard a similar refrain from their insurance carrier,



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# SMOOT BROTHERS

which also needed to see marked improvements in the company's safety record. The three brothers knew with the coming rollout of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's new compliance and enforcement program to replace SafeStat, (CSA), they would need to make dramatic changes, quickly. With the new program providing the public, particularly the company's insurance company and shippers, more detailed information about the company's safety record – particularly results of vehicle inspections and HOS violations, the potential stakes were much higher.

## Smoot Brothers Hire a Laumann to Bring More Law and Order to Safety Program

So, in May of 2008, prior to the rollout of the Comprehensive Safety Analysis (what CSA was called before it became known as Compliance, Safety, Accountability), the company hired Bob Laumann, a retiring Idaho commercial vehicle inspection officer, as its new safety manager.

Laumann set to work addressing what he saw as the two major areas of concern – equipment maintenance and hours of service compliance. He emphasized the completion and documentation of annual inspections by the company's maintenance personnel when the company's trucks and trailers were serviced. The changes brought about dramatic improvements in the company's maintenance scores. Laumann also hired technicians devoted to the maintenance and inspections of equipment, especially trailers. He then had the technicians train the company's drivers on conducting proper inspections to identify safety issues.

To address hours of service issues, Laumann placed emphasis on log monitoring and compliance. He used a computer-assisted program to scan and monitor driver compliance and established a driver incentive program that offered drivers rewards for violation-free DOT vehicle and equipment inspections and HOS logs. Laumann sent out a monthly newsletter, which provided driver scorecards and encouraged competition among drivers.

The company received a thorough compliance audit, which found enormous improvements for which the company was complimented by the inspector. But Laumann said the company still hadn't reached the level of compliance needed from a safety standpoint and from a business standpoint, particularly with the drivers' hours of service.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE

### Industry

Commercial/Private

### Organization

Smoot Brothers Transportation

### Location

Brigham City, UT

### Fast Facts

Founded in 1988 by Mike and Matt Smoot with one truck. They currently operate with over 50 Trucks including approximately twenty owner/operators and leasers on staff.

### Website

[www.smootbrothers.weebly.com](http://www.smootbrothers.weebly.com)

### Solution

Zonar's Fleet Management System

- V3™ and HD-GPS
- 2020 with EVIR® Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection
- Ground Traffic Control®

### Benefits

- Real-Time Customer Service
- Increased Driver Accountability
- Pre- and Post-Trip Inspection Compliance
- Better Planned Vehicle Maintenance



## SMOOT BROTHERS

To help drivers with HOS compliance, Smoot Brothers began equipping trucks with the Zonar 2020<sup>®</sup> Mobile Communications Tablet loaded with the Zonar ZLogs<sup>®</sup> hours-of-service application and signature Electronic Verified Inspection Reporting (EVIR<sup>®</sup>) system. Company drivers now have the tools they need to, among other things:

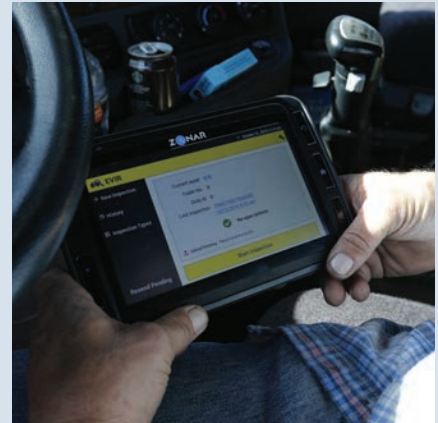
- Closely track their hours of service and submit more timely and accurate reports;
- Conduct consistent and verifiable vehicle inspections and submit inspection reports that are understandable, legible and complete;
- Remain in constant contact on a safe and secure platform with their company, and yet not be distracted by instructions from dispatchers, important safety messages and other critical correspondence.

Just six months after the installation of the Zonar devices, the company's SMS percentile scores are improving. And earlier this year, the best news of all, the company received a clean report following a second compliance review audit by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The inspection officer not only found no issues, but also praised the company and its employees for the hard work they've done to improve the fleet's safety compliance.

Kenny said he and his brothers look forward to realizing more operational efficiencies and savings from the Zonar devices as they become better at making use of the information they gather. But for the time being, the company's primary goal for the telematics devices has been to improve its safety record. And on that score alone, Zonar has done that and more, Kenny added.

"Our score had been impacted by HOS violations involving drivers who weren't carefully tracking their hours," Kenny said. "It was also impacted by missing or incomplete driver inspections, which all led to unidentified maintenance issues that weren't getting addressed in the shop.

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## SMOOT BROTHERS

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"I told them they needed a secure, fool-proof telematics system that could hold drivers accountable for their vehicle inspections and hours of service," Laumann said. "The telematics system also needed to provide the company's drivers and dispatchers a way to stay in contact. That way dispatchers always know at a glance where drivers are and their status. They don't have to call them and interrupt their rest periods, for example."

Based on his professional experience, and what was needed at Smoot Brothers, Laumann said Zonar offered the best options, especially with its electronic verified inspection reporting system or EVIR® and hours-of-service application.

Fred Fakkema, vice president of compliance at Zonar, said because the Zonar ZLogs® application effectively holds Smoot Brothers' drivers accountable for keeping track of their hours-of-service, the company will be in a much better position to comply with the electronic logging mandate when it goes into effect.

"By the time the final rule goes into effect, Smoot Brothers' drivers will have years of experience using the 2020, making the company's safety compliance efforts almost second nature," Fakkema said. "Since the mandate will allow drivers to edit their own logs, creating annotations on entries and edits, Smoot Brothers managers and their drivers will have time to work out the details. For example, they will know how to identify the difference between on- and off-hour activities."

Fakkema said because the 2020 offers fleets like Smoot Brothers the ability to keep their compliance processes much more consistent, they can more easily avoid violations during inspections and significantly improve the efficiency and safety of their operations.

### **Zonar Helps Smoot Bros Improve Score by Holding Drivers More Accountable**

Laumann agrees. Zonar's EVIR not only automates the inspection process by making the inspections much more consistent, but also tracks when drivers conduct them and how long they took, Laumann said. It creates inspection zones using radio-frequency (RFID) tags placed on equipment in critical areas. When the



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## SMOOT BROTHERS

operator passes the Zonar device within inches of each tag, the device reads the tag and then prompts the operator to report the condition of the specified nearby components.

The 2020's high-definition camera allows drivers to take video or photos of faults, if necessary, and include them with their inspection reports. When the driver returns the 2020® to its mount, the onboard Zonar V3™ telematics computer sends the inspection results, photos and video back to a Zonar server, which displays the information on the secured web-based Ground Traffic Control® portal.

The company's managers, dispatchers and maintenance personnel can view the results of the inspections. If the issue involves the truck's engine or emission control system, they can use V3's remote diagnostics capabilities to determine if the driver can continue the run or needs to be towed to the nearest repair facility.

*At first, many drivers were worried about how the telematics systems would be used and what impact they could have on their work, Kenny said. In fact, one driver was absolutely dead-set against them. He said he would quit if they were installed in the company's trucks.*

"But after drivers learned how to use the 2020s and discovered how they make the inspection process and HOS reporting so much easier, they quickly changed their tune," Laumann said. "Drivers appreciate that they can do their visual inspections is less than half the time it took with paper forms."

And because the electronic inspections result in more complete and accurate forms, complete with photos and video, the company's shop mechanics can more easily locate and repair issues, Kenny said. Drivers like the fact that when they fill out their reports, they're much more likely to see those issues fixed.

Drivers also notice they spend less time at weigh stations and inspection sites because Zonar provides them complete and accurate reports, so they can offer law enforcement immediate access to the reports on their 2020 tablets.

### **Zonar Provides Officers Immediate Access to Reports**

"Still, for those officers who insist on getting paper logs, Zonar's

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# SMOOT BROTHERS

Ground Traffic Control provides us the ability to email the logs to them in a variety of forms, which they can then print off,” Laumann added.

Laumann said the biggest impact to the company’s operation has been a dramatic drop in the average number of HOS and vehicle inspection violations commercial vehicle enforcement officers have issued each month to company drivers. Before the Zonar equipment was put in service, it wasn’t uncommon for Smoot Brothers to have several violations issued to drivers each month. But in the first six months that number has dropped to nearly zero.

“We anticipate seeing our safety score to really start dropping as the point values for violations issued to drivers several months ago start to fall,” Laumann said. “Drivers are really starting to see Zonar as a big benefit not only for them, but also for the company.”

*“And that driver who said he would quit if we installed electronic logging devices is now the 2020’s biggest advocate,” Kenny said.*

## ZONAR: IT PAYS TO HAVE THE RIGHT FLEET MANAGEMENT PARTNER

Zonar provides electronic fleet inspection, tracking and operations solutions for public and private fleets. Our products are effective, driven by customer satisfaction and affordable by design. We’ve made it our business to do right by our customers. You will notice the difference.

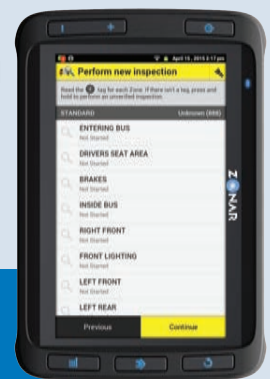


### Innovation

Zonar’s V3™ and V3R™ provide real-time fleet tracking.

### Verified Inspections

Zonar’s 2010 and 2020® Android Tablet offers the highest level of safety with our patented EVIR® Electronic Verified Inspection Report. DOT mandated pre- and post-trip inspections are automated and verified using Zonar’s technology.



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