

Kenworth Truck Makes History at Pikes Peak With Help From Toyota

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Making it to the summit of Pikes Peak in Colorado is a grind. With steep grades and over 150 turns, reaching the 14,115 foot summit is challenging for any vehicle, let alone a Class 8 truck. Add in the extra hurdle of making it to the top with zero emissions and it's clear why this was a daunting effort.

Kenworth, the premier heavy-duty truck maker in the world, knew it would be tough, but it had help from Toyota to overcome the challenge. Although the history-making truck looks like a typical diesel-powered Kenworth T680, there's an emissions-free, hydrogen fuel cell electric system from Toyota beneath the bodywork.

Credit for the unique drivetrain goes largely to a dedicated team at Toyota's Research and Development facility in Gardena, CA. It was that team that ran with the idea of taking the fuel cell electric system used in the first Mirai sedan and adapting it for use in a heavy-duty Class 8 truck.

Since the first prototype started testing in 2017, the Gardena team has been refining the technology and improving the performance with each new prototype. Andy Lund, Chief Engineer, Toyota Motor North America Research and Development, summed up the performance of the latest truck after its historic run.

“The road to the top of Pikes Peak is a long and steady climb, so we were glad to see the Toyota-powered Kenworth T680 truck confirm our expectations and climb to the summit while delivering excellent performance and drivability. It’s another example of the capability of Toyota’s fuel cell electric drive system and we look forward to continuing our work with Kenworth to get Class 8 fuel cell electric trucks on the road.”

Over the course of two days, the Kenworth prototype charged to the summit multiple times to test its limitations. Each of the runs not only validated the impressive performance of the fuel cell electric drive system, they provided valuable feedback that will be used to refine the system for maximize durability and efficiency. In fact, even after multiple trips to the summit, there was still plenty of hydrogen left over in the tanks.

For more information on Toyota’s collaboration with Kenworth to create emissions-free semitrucks, see our [latest release](#) on the promising Zero and Near-Zero Emissions Freight Facilities (ZANZEFF) project in California.