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## Civello takes wheel at Lanter Transport

BY BETH MILLER

Nicholas Civello purchased refrigerated truckload carrier Lanter Transport from the Lanter family and already has big plans for its growth.

The sale of the company, now known as LTI Trucking Services Inc., was effective Oct 1.

While Civello declined to disclose the purchase price, he said the deal involved 300 tractor-trailers and the lease of a 10-acre facility in National City, Ill., where the company is based, as well as the company's logistics division, which operates nationwide. The company has about \$24 million in annual sales.

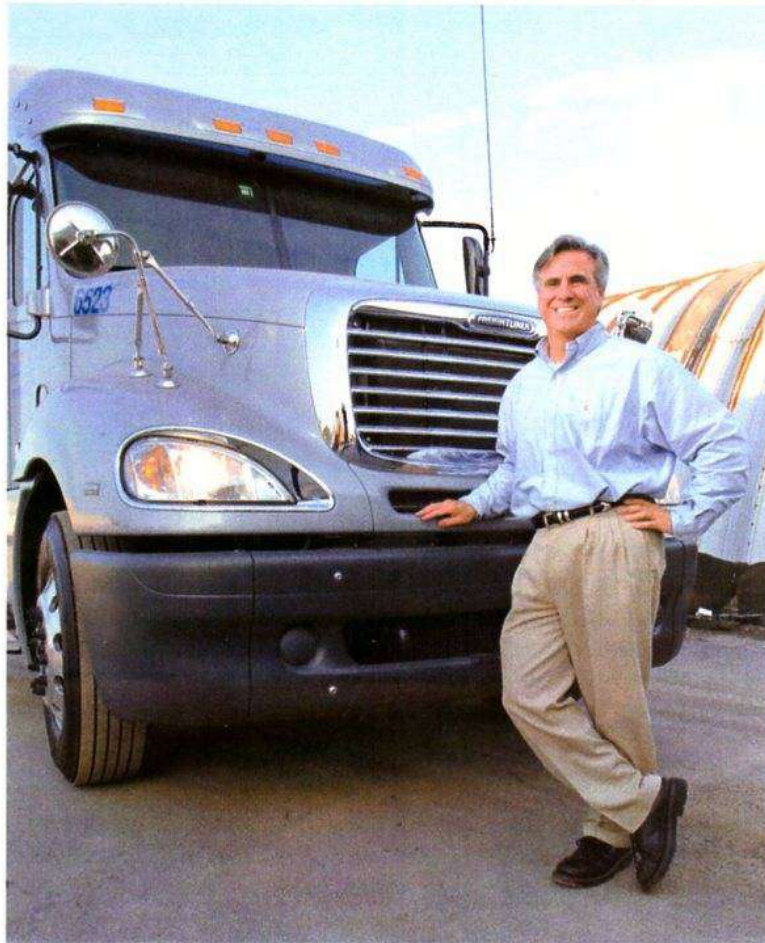
Civello, 47, was most recently vice president of sales and marketing of Lanter Transport, which counts among its customers such food and beverage giants as Anheuser-Busch Cos. Inc., ConAgra Foods, Nabisco, Procter & Gamble, Sara Lee Foods and General Mills. The company serves Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, Georgia and Texas, and has about 150 employees, including drivers. Seventy-five percent of its freight requires temperature-controlled trucks.

Civello has been in the transportation business since 1976, when he was owner and general manager of Freeway Express Inc., a regional trucking company in California. In 1993 he joined May Trucking Co. as vice president of sales and marketing, and joined Lanter Transport in 1998.

Civello said being a part of the development and growth of the company as well as a previous business owner motivated him to approach Steve Lanter, executive vice president of Ozburn-Hessey Logistics and chief executive of the Lanter companies, with an offer, and the two struck a deal.

"What really encouraged me to buy this company was pride in ownership and the success this company had developed with our customer base," Civello said. "It is a fabulous company with a great reputation and great recognition, and in the last five years has really improved as a company with growth and profits."

As the new owner, Civello plans to increase revenue by 5 percent a year in the fleet operations and 10 percent in the logistics operations for the next five years



BRIAN CASSIDY

**Nicholas Civello plans to increase revenue at LTI Trucking Services, formerly Lanter Transport, by adding up to 37 loads per month.**

by adding up to 37 loads per month. He also seeks to increase profit. Already, LTI is in the process of replacing its 300 pieces of equipment with brand new equipment, including 100 new trucks and 200 trailers, and already purchased 80 new freightliners as replacement vehicles. Plans call for doubling the number of its owner-operator trucks over five years to 40 from the current 20. Civello said that would increase revenue by \$230,000 a month with no additional personnel or equipment investment costs.

LTI plans to keep its focus on the region it currently serves and operate

more efficiently, which lowers costs and provides more capacity for customers.

The Lanter companies, which reached \$140 million in revenue in 2004, have been in business for more than 35 years. Last year, Lanter Logistics and Lanter Refrigerated Distributing were acquired by Nashville, Tenn.-based Ozburn-Hessey Logistics. Lanter Transport; Lanter Co., the real estate holding company; and Lanter Delivery Systems were not included in the sale to Ozburn-Hessey.

Steve Lanter was traveling and was not able to be reached for comment before press time.