DEUSA Fleet Success Stories: TireRack in South Bend, IN

Location: South Bend, IN
Fleet type: Medium-duty electric vehicle

Narrative: Tire Rack began an electrification initiative at its South Bend distribution facility through the deployment of Orange EV all-electric terminal trucks. Terminal trucks—also known as yard trucks or hostlers—are responsible for moving trailers around warehouse lots and typically operate with long idle times and frequent stop-and-go movements.

These duty cycles make them ideal candidates for electrification. Drive Clean Indiana (DCI) supported the project by providing technical guidance, emissions analysis, and assistance in navigating available incentives and funding opportunities. By implementing electric terminal trucks, Tire Rack became an early leader in heavy-duty fleet electrification in northern Indiana.

Outputs and Outcomes: The project delivered several meaningful outcomes. Tire Rack successfully integrated zero-emission Class 8 electric terminal trucks into its high-volume distribution environment, demonstrating performance equal to or better than diesel models. Drivers reported that the electric trucks were smoother to operate, produced less vibration, and were considerably quieter, which improved the working environment at the distribution center. The project also strengthened partnerships between Tire Rack, Orange EV, and Drive Clean Indiana, creating a replicable fleet-transition model that other logistics, warehousing, and manufacturing operations across the state can follow.

The deployment generated notable environmental benefits. By replacing diesel yard trucks, Tire Rack is projected to reduce more than 10,000 gallons of diesel consumption per truck annually, eliminating over 100 tons of CO_2 emissions per year. Tailpipe emissions—including nitrogen oxides, particulate matter, and soot—were eliminated on-site, improving air quality for employees and reducing localized pollution. Noise pollution also decreased significantly due to the quieter operation of electric drivetrains compared to diesel engines.

Financially, Tire Rack will experience long-term operational savings. Electric yard trucks reduce fuel costs by an estimated 70 to 80 percent and lower maintenance costs by approximately 60 percent, due to the absence of oil changes, diesel particulate filters, and complex emissions systems. These reductions increase vehicle uptime and lower exposure to diesel price volatility. Based on fleet analysis and real-world data from Orange EV, the project is expected to achieve a return on investment within three to five years, depending on operating hours and available funding incentives.

Best Practices & Lessons Learned: Several key lessons emerged from this deployment.

- Consistent and predictable duty cycles make terminal trucks an excellent first step toward fleet electrification. Early involvement of drivers and operations teams improves adoption and ensures charging infrastructure is integrated smoothly into daily workflows.
- The project also showed the importance of gathering pre-deployment data—such as idle time and fuel usage—to strengthen the business case and justify funding. Most importantly, the project highlighted that partnerships accelerate electrification. Tire Rack leveraged Orange EV's product expertise and Drive Clean Indiana's technical and funding support to reduce risk and streamline implementation.
- Overall, the Tire Rack electric terminal truck project demonstrates how heavy-duty fleet electrification can create measurable economic and environmental benefits without compromising operational performance.

Through collaboration with Orange EV and DCI, Tire Rack proved that clean transportation technologies are not only feasible—but financially and operationally advantageous. The project now serves as a leading example that can be replicated by other fleets across Indiana seeking to modernize operations, reduce emissions, and achieve sustainability goals.