

Truck-tistics

Trailer Shipments Fall 19% in 1982

TRAILER manufacturers shipped 19% fewer trailers in 1982 than they did the previous year, according to preliminary figures compiled by the US Bureau of Census.

Complete truck trailers totaled 95,304, compared with 117,635 for 1981. It was the worst year for trailer manufacturers since 1975 when only 73,063 complete trailers were shipped.

On the positive side, however, shipments in December were at a nine-month high. Manufacturers shipped 9,763 complete trailers in December, up 28% from November and 1% more than were shipped during December 1981.

For the year, only three types of trailers had shipments higher than those of 1981. Refrigerated trailers led the way, climbing from 13,174 in 1981 to 14,914 in 1982, a 13% increase. Livestock vans also were up, going from 595 to 743 last year, a 25% rise. Pole trailers round out the short list of trailers posting increases—up 8% in 1982.

Here is how the different types of trailers performed in 1982:

Total van trailers. Shipments for 1982 were 62,851, down 13% from the 70,928 shipped during the previous year.

Refrigerated and livestock vans, as mentioned, were up 13% and 25%, respectively.

Semi-insulated vans were off 2%—from 1,876 in 1981 to 1,844 last year.

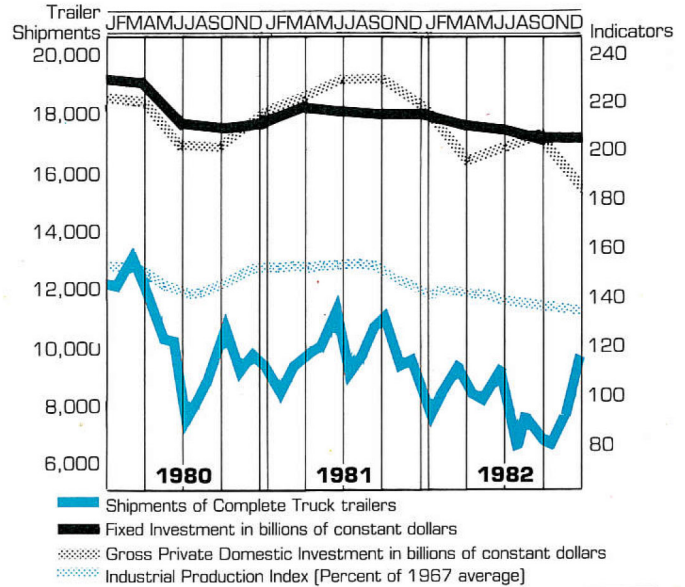
Drop frame vans slipped 7% in 1982—from 2,806 to 2,601.

Dry freight vans went from 49,153 in 1981 to 40,110 last year, an 18% decrease.

Open tops had the most severe decrease among vans, falling 21% (from 3,324 to 2,639).

Tanks. With shipments of 4,981 for the year, total tanks dropped 30% in 1982. Chemical, acid, and asphalt

Truck Trailer Demand [Indicators Vs. Actual Shipments]



Source for trailer shipments: Bureau of Census, "Current Industrial Reports," Series M37L

tanks fell the most—36%—from 2,045 to 1,308. Tanks for flammable liquids went from 2,292 to 1,616 for a 29% decline. All other tanks slipped from 2,788 in 1981 to 2,057 in 1982 for a 26% decrease.

Bulk commodity trailers fell 33% in 1982, from 1,962 to 1,314.

Pole trailers edged up 8% last year, going from 1,134 to 1,228.

Platforms dropped 33%. Factories shipped 13,369 platforms in 1982, compared with 20,050 the previous year.

Lowbed trailers were off even more sharply—35%. Shipments in 1982 were 5,428, down from 8,298 in 1981.

Dump trailers fell 27% on the year—from 6,488 in 1981 to 4,732 last year.

Miscellaneous trailers, including auto transporters, also were off 27% last year. The 1982 shipments of 1,198 were down from the 1,650 shipped the year before.

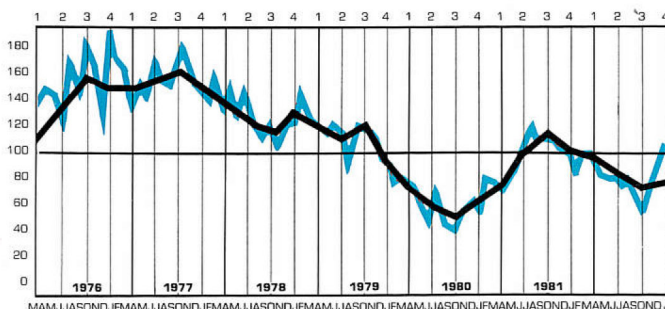
Trucks Tumble, Too

Last year was not a banner year for truck manufacturers, either, particularly on the medium and heavy end of the scale.

Due largely to the success of the domestic compact pickups, factory sales of light duty trucks (gross vehicle weight ratings below 10,000 pounds) jumped 19% during 1982. Factories sold 1,720,532 pickups for the year, compared with 1,445,403 in 1981. Sales in December, however, slipped somewhat. Factories sold 114,802 pickups, down slightly from the 115,211 sold in November, but 7% ahead of the 109,661 sold during December 1981.

Class 6 trucks (gross vehicle weight ratings of 19,501 to 26,000 pounds) suffered the steepest decline in 1982—57%. Factories sold but 27,023 Class 6 trucks, compared with 63,693 for 1981. Sales for the month of December

Change In Trailer Shipments



Change in trailer shipments as a percentage of the same period a year ago. Black line shows quarterly trends, while monthly comparisons are shown in color.

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cushioned the drop somewhat as factories sold 64% more of these medium duty trucks than were sold in the previous month. Despite the increase, sales were 32% below those of December 1981.

Class 7 trucks (gross vehicle weight ratings of 26,001 to 33,000 pounds) were up 13% over 1981. Factories sold 53,772 Class 7 trucks during the year, up from 47,782 sold during 1981. Sales also were up in December. They finished the month at 4,236, up 36% from the 3,105 sold during November and 50% above the 2,827 sold during December 1981.

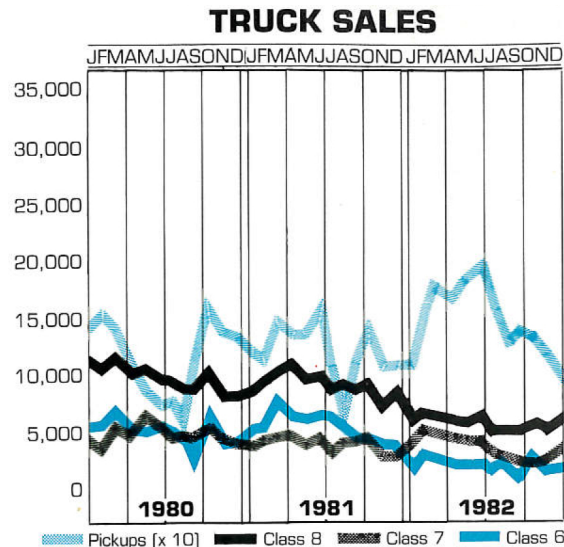
Class 8 trucks finished the year down 32% from 1981. Factories sold 76,043 Class 8 trucks (gross vehicle weight ratings above 33,000 pounds) last year, compared with 112,613 for the prior year. Sales in December were 6,311, up 13% from the previous month, but 29% below the 8,856 sold during December 1981.

Indicators Mixed

Indicators of changes in demand for truck trailers were mixed as 1982 became 1983.

Fixed investment, which tends to lead changes in demand by one or two quarters, was virtually unchanged in the fourth quarter, according to preliminary estimates published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Fixed investment was estimated at an annual rate of \$202.6 billion, compared with \$202.9 for the previous quarter.

Gross private domestic investment, which tends to change concurrently with demand, dropped from an an-



nual rate of \$206.3 billion in the third quarter to an estimated \$183.8 billion in the fourth quarter.

Industrial production, another indicator of changes in demand, increased in January by an estimated 0.9% after a revised 0.1% gain in December, according to the Federal Reserve. In both months, large increases occurred in the output of automotive products and defense and space equipment. In January, the production of construction supplied and of basic metals, particularly steel, also advanced sharply. □