



Most produce from western water projects passes through Utah. (Major growing areas shown in green.)

Today, most of America's fresh produce and frozen foods travel in 53-foot trailers equipped with a mechanical refrigeration unit on the front. These distinctive reefer trucks are a common sight on primary highways across the west. Utah is the crossroads for much of this time-sensitive, high-value freight traffic. The largest reefer truck company in North America, C.R. England, Inc., is headquartered in Salt Lake City, and several other major reefer truck operators are either headquartered in, or have major terminals in Utah.

Photos by Daniel B. Kuhn

For more information on this topic, contact the UDOT Planning Division.



## THE UTAH FREIGHT CONNECTION



Beginning in 1847 on City Creek in Salt Lake City, Utah's Mormon pioneers were the first Anglo-Americans to practice diversion irrigation. As the Mormons settled in other parts of the west, they introduced their fellow pioneers in those regions to this type of agriculture. The passage of the Reclamation Act in 1902, which coincided with advances in both engineering and technology associated with dam building, led to the development of large water storage and diversion irrigation projects across the west.

These two photos show Shasta Dam, keystone of the Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project, rising 602 feet above the Sacramento River in northern California. Glacier-clad 14,162 foot Mt. Shasta, a natural water reservoir, is visible 40 miles to the north in the upper photo.

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Most western water projects are under the jurisdiction of federal agencies such as the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; however, state governments and local irrigation districts also constructed sizeable water projects in their own areas. Nowhere is irrigation more important than in California, where dozens of major water projects support farmers in their annual effort to feed America, Canada and many other nations. Examples of this are the Bureau's Central Valley Project (CVP), the Corp's Pine Flat Dam, California's State Water Project and the Modesto-Turlock Irrigation District.



Pine Flat Dam stores irrigation water on the Kings River east of Fresno, CA



In non-drought years, the California Aqueduct of the State Water Project supplies farms in the western San Joaquin Valley portion of the Central Valley.



CVP's Friant-Kern Canal supplies farms in the eastern San Joaquin Valley in its 152 mile run from Friant Dam near Fresno on the San Joaquin River south to Bakersfield.

The establishment of large-scale water projects coincided with the development of successful and efficient refrigerated transportation of perishable farm products. This allowed western farmers to grow high value vegetable crops on newly-irrigated lands and to transport those crops to midwestern and eastern markets. Prior to the 1960's, most perishables were transported in railroad refrigerator cars known as reefers. With the completion of the Federal Interstate Highway System in the 1970s, the vast majority of perishable movement has switched over to refrigerated (reefer) trucks.



Water release at Friant Dam on the San Joaquin River near Fresno.

Although seriously impacted by California's on-going drought and recently-passed environmental restrictions, the West's large dams continue to be major contributors to the volume of perishable freight traffic passing through Utah by truck. Likewise, Utah's primary freight highways are a vital link in the food distribution network that feeds a large part of both America and Canada.