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HEARTLAND EXPRESS INC  
Form 8-K  
January 19, 2006

UNITED STATES  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549

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FORM 8-K

CURRENT REPORT

Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of  
the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

Date of Report (Date of earliest event reported):  
January 18, 2006

HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.  
(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Commission File Number - 0-15087

NEVADA  
(State of other Jurisdiction  
of Incorporation)

93-0926999  
(IRS Employer ID No.)

2777 HEARTLAND DRIVE, CORALVILLE, IOWA  
(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

52241  
(Zip Code)

Registrant's Telephone Number (including area code): 319-545-2728

Item 9.01. Financial Statements and Exhibits

Exhibit 99.1 - Heartland Express, Inc. press release dated January 18, 2006 with respect to the Company's financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2005.

Item 2.02. Results of Operations and Financial Condition.

On January 18, 2006, Heartland Express, Inc. announced its financial

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results for the quarter ended December 31, 2005. The press release is attached as Exhibit 99.1 to this Form 8-K and is incorporated herein by reference.

SIGNATURE

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, the registrant has duly caused this report to be signed on behalf by the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.

Date: January 18, 2006

BY:/s/ John P. Cosaert

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JOHN P. COSAERT  
Vice-President  
Finance and Treasurer

Exhibit No. 99.1

Wednesday, January 18, 2006, For Immediate Release

Press Release

Heartland Express, Inc. Reports Revenues and Earnings for the Fourth Quarter of 2005.

CORALVILLE, IOWA - January 18, 2006 - Heartland Express, Inc. (Nasdaq: HTLD) announced today financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2005. Operating revenues for the quarter increased 17.3% to \$140.1 million from \$119.4 million in the fourth quarter of 2004. Net income increased 30.7% to \$21.6 million from \$16.6 million in the 2004 period. Earnings per share were \$0.29 compared to \$0.22 for the fourth quarter of 2004.

For the twelve month period, operating revenues increased 14.6% to \$523.8

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million from \$457.1 million during the same period in 2004. Net income increased 15.1% to \$71.9 million from \$62.4 million in the 2004 period. Earnings per share were \$0.97 compared with \$0.83 for the 2004 period.

Heartland Express, Inc. posted an operating ratio (operating expenses as a percentage of operating revenues) of 77.6% and a 15.5% net margin in the fourth quarter of 2005 and an 80.1% operating ratio and a 13.7% net margin for the twelve months ended December 31, 2005. Operating results for the fourth quarter were favorably impacted by gains primarily from the trade of revenue equipment. Gains from the trade of revenue equipment are being recognized in compliance with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 153, "Accounting for Non-monetary Transactions", which became effective July 1, 2005. In addition, the fourth quarter operating results were negatively impacted by record high diesel prices which have continued throughout the quarter.

The Company ended the year with cash, cash equivalents, and short-term investments of \$287.6 million, a \$29.3 million increase from the \$258.3 million reported on December 31, 2004. Total assets increased to \$573.5 million in 2005 from \$517.0 million reported in 2004. The Company's balance sheet continues to be debt-free.

The limited availability of experienced drivers continues to challenge the trucking industry. The Company recently announced a driver pay increase for the third consecutive year. Our most senior and experienced company drivers will be earning \$0.50 per mile while our owner-operators will be earning a base rate of \$0.95 per mile by the end of 2006 with the implementation of the latest pay increase. Heartland Express hires only safe, experienced drivers who understand the importance of customer service and is committed to compensating them accordingly.

The Company is continuing the replacement of its entire tractor fleet. The Company took delivery of 1,000 new Internationals this year including 400 in the fourth quarter. The fleet replacement is approximately 70% completed and is scheduled to be completed by December 31, 2006. In addition, the Company took delivery of 1,000 new Wabash trailers during this year including 300 in the fourth quarter.

During the quarter, Heartland Express declared a regular quarterly cash dividend. The quarterly dividend of approximately \$1.5 million at the rate of \$0.02 per share was paid on January 3, 2006 to shareholders of record at the close of business on December 22, 2005. The Company has now paid quarterly dividends of \$12.9 million over the past ten consecutive quarters.

The Company's outstanding common stock has decreased to 73.8 million shares from 75.0 million at the end of 2004 as a result of the repurchase of approximately 1.2 million shares of its outstanding common stock during the year.

This press release may contain statements that might be considered as forward-looking statements or predictions of future operations. Such statements are based on management's belief or interpretation of information currently available. These statements and assumptions involve certain risks and uncertainties. Actual events may differ from these expectations as specified from time to time in filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Contact: Heartland Express, Inc.  
John Cosaert or Mike Gerdin  
319-545-2728

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HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.  
AND SUBSIDIARIES

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF INCOME

|  | Three months ended<br>December 31, |                         | Twelve months ended<br>December 31, |                         |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|  | 2005<br>----                       | 2004<br>----            | 2005<br>----                        | 2004<br>----            |
| OPERATING REVENUE .....                      | \$ 140,054,233<br>-----            | \$ 119,438,580<br>----- | \$ 523,792,749<br>-----             | \$ 450,000,000<br>----- |
| OPERATING EXPENSES:                          |                                    |                         |                                     |                         |
| Salaries, wages, benefits .....              | \$ 42,987,612                      | \$ 38,341,494           | \$ 174,180,077                      | \$ 150,000,000          |
| Rent and purchased transportation ....       | 6,630,551                          | 8,137,147               | 29,634,983                          | 30,000,000              |
| Operations and maintenance .....             | 40,047,536                         | 27,248,171              | 138,513,070                         | 90,000,000              |
| Taxes and licenses .....                     | 2,463,155                          | 2,357,922               | 8,968,438                           | 8,000,000               |
| Insurance and claims .....                   | 6,120,903                          | 6,089,455               | 17,938,169                          | 18,000,000              |
| Communications and utilities .....           | 958,068                            | 839,546                 | 3,554,328                           | 3,000,000               |
| Depreciation .....                           | 10,967,602                         | 8,413,915               | 38,228,332                          | 20,000,000              |
| Other operating expenses (income), net       | (1,553,200)                        | 3,390,173               | 8,664,039                           | 1,000,000               |
|  | 108,622,227<br>-----               | 94,817,823<br>-----     | 419,681,436<br>-----                | 360,000,000<br>-----    |
| Operating income .....                       | 31,432,006                         | 24,620,757              | 104,111,313                         | 90,000,000              |
| Interest income .....                        | 2,119,595                          | 1,046,434               | 7,372,543                           | 7,000,000               |
| Income before income taxes .....             | 33,551,601                         | 25,667,191              | 111,483,856                         | 97,000,000              |
| Federal and state income taxes .....         | 11,912,143                         | 9,111,854               | 39,578,094                          | 30,000,000              |
| Net income .....                             | \$ 21,639,458<br>=====             | \$ 16,555,337<br>=====  | \$ 71,905,762<br>=====              | \$ 67,000,000<br>=====  |
| Earnings per common share:                   |                                    |                         |                                     |                         |
| Earnings per share .....                     | \$ 0.29<br>=====                   | \$ 0.22<br>=====        | \$ 0.97<br>=====                    | \$ 0.97<br>=====        |
| Weighted average shares<br>outstanding ..... | 73,821,500                         | 75,000,000              | 74,343,969                          | 75,000,000              |

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|                                    |          |          |          |    |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----|
| Dividends declared per share ..... | \$ 0.020 | \$ 0.020 | \$ 0.080 | \$ |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----|

HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.  
AND SUBSIDIARIES

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

| ASSETS                                    | December 31,<br>2005 | December 31,<br>2004 |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS                            |                      |                      |
| Cash and cash equivalents .....           | \$ 5,366,929         | \$ 1,610,543         |
| Short-term investments .....              | 282,255,377          | 256,727,782          |
| Trade receivables .....                   | 42,860,411           | 37,102,813           |
| Prepaid tires .....                       | 3,998,430            | 2,692,090            |
| Deferred income taxes .....               | 28,721,000           | 24,964,000           |
| Other prepaid expenses .....              | 304,666              | 158,267              |
| Total current assets .....                | 363,506,813          | 323,255,495          |
| PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT .....              | 281,710,956          | 253,648,785          |
| Less accumulated depreciation .....       | 81,204,416           | 68,973,751           |
|   | 200,506,540          | 184,675,034          |
| OTHER ASSETS .....                        | 9,494,572            | 9,081,322            |
|   | \$ 573,507,925       | \$ 517,011,851       |
| LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY      |                      |                      |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES                       |                      |                      |
| Accounts payable & accrued liabilities .. | \$ 10,572,525        | \$ 9,722,099         |
| Accrued expenses .....                    | 73,606,801           | 63,142,908           |
| Income taxes payable .....                | 8,064,947            | 7,918,914            |
| Total current liabilities .....           | 92,244,273           | 80,783,921           |
| DEFERRED INCOME TAXES .....               | 48,012,000           | 46,885,000           |
| COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES             |                      |                      |
| STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY                      |                      |                      |

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|   |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Capital stock: Common, \$.01 par value;<br>authorized 395,000,000 shares; issued and<br>outstanding 73,821,500 and 75,000,000 ... | 738,215        | 750,000        |
| Additional paid-in capital .....  | --             | 8,510,305      |
| Retained earnings .....   | 432,952,138    | 380,906,884    |
|   | -----          | -----          |
|   | 433,690,353    | 390,167,189    |
| Less unearned compensation .....  | (438,701)      | (824,259)      |
|   | -----          | -----          |
|   | 433,251,652    | 389,342,930    |
|   | -----          | -----          |
|   | \$ 573,507,925 | \$ 517,011,851 |
|   | =====          | =====          |