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HEARTLAND EXPRESS INC  
Form 8-K  
January 27, 2004

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 23, 2004

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 7. Financial Statements and Exhibits

Exhibit 99.1 - Heartland Express, Inc. press release dated January 23, 2004 with respect to the Company's financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2003.

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Item 12. Results of Operations and Financial Condition.

On January 23, 2004, Heartland Express, Inc. announced its financial results for the quarter ended December 31, 2003. 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 of the undersigned thereunto duly authorized.

HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.

Date: January 26, 2004

BY: /s/ John P. Cosaert

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JOHN P. COSAERT  
Vice-President  
Finance and Treasurer

Exhibit No. 99.1

Friday, January 23, 2004, For Immediate Release  
Press Release

Heartland Express, Inc. Reports Revenues and Earnings for the Fourth Quarter of 2003.

CORALVILLE, IOWA - January 23, 2004 - Heartland Express, Inc. (Nasdaq: HTLD) announced today financial results for the fourth quarter ended December 31, 2003. For the fourth quarter revenue increased 12.0% to \$103.0 million from \$92.0 million in the fourth quarter of 2002. Net income was \$19.0 million and basic earnings per share were \$0.38. The results reflect an adjustment pertaining to self insurance accruals. The impact of the reserve adjustment was an increase in net income of \$5.4 million or \$.11 per share. The reserve adjustment has no impact on cash flows. Heartland Express, Inc. posted an operating ratio (operating expenses as a percentage of gross revenues) of 72.1%. The reserve adjustment reduced the operating ratio from 80.1%.

For the twelve months, revenue increased 18.9% to \$405.1 million from \$340.7 million during the same period in 2002. Net income for the twelve months was \$57.2 million and basic earnings per share were \$1.14.

During the fourth quarter Heartland Express, Inc. engaged consulting actuaries to assist in determining the liability for self insurance reserves. As a result of the actuarial studies management decreased the amount accrued for accident liability claims and increased the amount accrued for workers' compensation claims. This \$5.4 million reserve adjustment, net of taxes, increased fourth quarter earnings by \$0.11per share. Details of the adjustment are as follows (in millions):

Decrease in insurance and claims expense	\$ (11.2)
Increase in salaries, wages, benefits (workers' compensation)	____2.9

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Increase in operating income	8.3
Income taxes	____(2.9)
Increase in net income	\$ 5.4

The Company ended the fourth quarter with cash, cash equivalents, and investments of \$202.4 million, a \$48.5 million increase from the \$153.9 million reported on December 31, 2002. Total assets increased to \$448.4 million from \$373.1 million at December 31, 2002. The Company's balance sheet continues to be debt-free.

During the quarter, Heartland Express declared a regular quarterly cash dividend. The quarterly dividend of \$1,000,000 at the rate of \$0.02 per share was paid on January 2, 2004 to shareholders of record at the close of business on December 22, 2003.

This press release may contain statements that might be considered 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  
319-545-2728

### HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC. AND SUBSIDIARIES

#### CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF INCOME

	Three months ended December 31,		Twelve months ended December 31,	
	2003	2002	2003	2002
OPERATING REVENUE	\$103,015,958	\$ 91,991,577	\$405,116,097	\$340,745,02
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OPERATING EXPENSES:				
Salaries, wages, benefits	\$ 38,840,605	\$ 31,028,763	\$141,292,791	\$109,959,77
Rent and purchased transportation	10,793,789	15,325,211	49,988,074	64,159,36
Operations and maintenance	18,969,711	16,334,060	75,516,232	56,334,76
Taxes and licenses	2,139,066	1,894,192	8,402,986	7,144,07
Insurance and claims	(7,732,134)	1,929,319	2,187,537	9,192,63
Communications and utilities	841,447	716,308	3,604,661	2,956,81

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Depreciation	7,100,937	6,350,883	26,533,937	20,378,72
Other operating expenses	3,352,669	2,591,462	12,538,652	8,843,13
(Gain) on disposal of fixed assets	(38,813)	(422,012)	(45,782)	(273,54
	<u>\$ 74,267,277</u>	<u>\$ 75,748,186</u>	<u>\$320,019,088</u>	<u>\$278,695,73</u>
Operating income	\$ 28,748,681	\$ 16,243,391	\$ 85,097,009	\$ 62,049,29
Interest income	543,800	682,550	2,045,793	2,811,18
Income before income taxes	\$ 29,292,481	\$ 16,925,941	\$ 87,142,802	\$ 64,860,47
Federal and state income taxes	10,252,369	5,754,818	29,921,477	22,052,55
Net income	<u>\$ 19,040,112</u>	<u>\$ 11,171,123</u>	<u>\$ 57,221,325</u>	<u>\$ 42,807,91</u>
Earnings per common share:				
Basic earnings per share	<u>\$ 0.38</u>	<u>\$ 0.22</u>	<u>\$ 1.14</u>	<u>\$ 0.8</u>
Basic weighted average shares outstanding	<u>50,000,000</u>	<u>50,000,000</u>	<u>50,000,000</u>	<u>50,000,00</u>

HEARTLAND EXPRESS, INC.  
AND SUBSIDIARIES

CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

	December 31,	December 31,
	2003	2002
	<u>-----</u>	<u>-----</u>
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and short term investments	\$ 202,431,155	\$ 153,861,422
Trade receivables	36,836,728	33,012,394
Prepaid tires	2,529,580	4,757,850
Deferred income taxes	21,308,000	21,134,000
Other current assets	673,101	620,344
Total current assets	<u>\$ 263,778,564</u>	<u>\$ 213,386,010</u>
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT	\$ 232,650,992	\$ 191,116,893
Less accumulated depreciation	56,951,186	39,715,307

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	\$ 175,699,806	\$ 151,401,586
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OTHER ASSETS	\$ 8,928,186	\$ 8,320,593
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	\$ 448,406,556	\$ 373,108,189
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LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	\$ 15,684,826	\$ 8,632,810
Accrued expenses	53,724,940	52,386,322
Income taxes payable	7,720,875	6,070,318
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Total current liabilities	\$ 77,130,641	\$ 67,089,450
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DEFERRED INCOME TAXES	\$ 39,760,000	\$ 30,089,000
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COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES		
STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY		
Capital stock: Common, \$.01 par value; authorized 395,000,000 shares; issued and outstanding 50,000,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000
Additional paid-in capital	8,510,305	8,603,762
Retained earnings	323,710,296	268,488,971
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	\$ 332,720,601	\$ 277,592,733
Less unearned compensation	(1,204,686)	(1,662,994)
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	\$ 331,515,915	\$ 275,929,739
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	\$ 448,406,556	\$ 373,108,189
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END OF REPORT