



STRAIGHT TALK

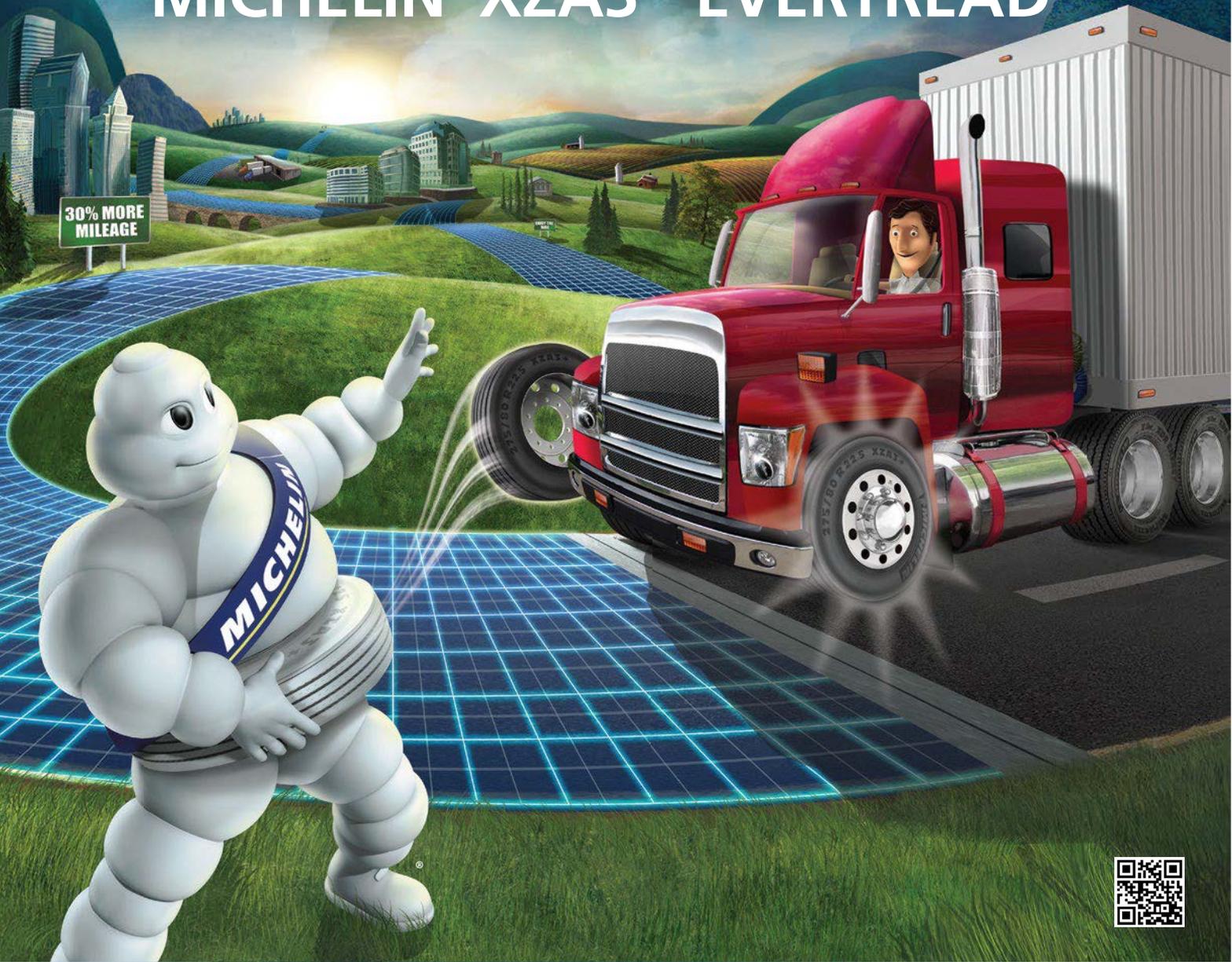
SMART STRATEGIES

VOLUME 6

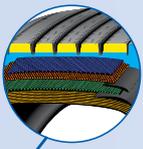
The latest update on
GHG regulations and
the most effective
fuel saving practices

Produced by the editors of Truck News,
Truck West & Fleet Executive
In partnership with Michelin North America
(Canada) Inc.

GET 30% MORE ROAD WITH THE MICHELIN® XZA3®+ EVERTREAD™



**Dual
Compound
Tread**



Thanks to enhanced tread life from the **Dual Compound Tread**, the MICHELIN® **XZA3®+ EVERTREAD™** tire's mileage is 30% greater than the competition* in long haul applications. The MICHELIN® **XZA3®+ EVERTREAD™** tire pushes mileage to never-before-seen levels while offering the same legendary fuel efficiency, handling and retreadability you've come to expect from a MICHELIN® steer tire.

The MICHELIN® **XZA3®+ EVERTREAD™** tire is **SmartWay®** verified.

*Estimate based on comparative rolling resistance data. Actual on-road savings may vary.



©2015 MNA(CI). All Rights Reserved. The "Michelin Man" is a registered trademark licensed by Michelin North America, Inc. Visit michelintruck.com for more details. (C13161 - 05/15)



Straight Talk; Smart Strategies

With the conclusion of our two-part Straight Talk, Smart Strategies series on sustainable transportation practices we delve further into fuel efficiency practices that get results. This report is brought to you once again in partnership with Michelin North America (Canada) Inc.

How much does driver behavior impact fuel savings? A lot, according to Bob Duncan, compliance and safety training specialist for Kriska Transportation. The biggest gap between Kriska's most efficient driver and the least is 15%. It used to be 35% before Kriska embarked on a mandatory fuel reduction challenge program four years ago. The experience from Kriska and other carriers underscores the reality that despite all the technology available to boost fuel savings, the most important element in fuel efficiency remains the driver. Our report, written by our own professional driver Harry Rudolfs, explains how leaders in fuel efficiency are getting their drivers onboard with the fuel savings.

One of the biggest challenges to reducing fuel consumption for Canadian fleets are the heavier loads they have to pull. That was certainly a challenge for Thomson Group when it embarked on its fuel savings journey about a decade ago. Thomson often pulls heavily-loaded tridem and quad axle trailers but it has made some smart spec'ing decisions to compensate. Our case study of this SmartWay carrier shows how it's taking a heavy load off the environment and its fuel bill.

Spec'ing the right tires is a big contributor to fuel efficiency but the savings don't have to stop at the pump. Tires represent one of the top three operating costs for most fleets and retreading is critical to reducing those costs. Typically, a retread costs about 40% of what a new tire of the same make and model costs. Yet some fleets remain reluctant to use retreads due to previous bad experiences. We reached out to Michelin North America (Canada) expert Luc Leonard to outline the technologies in place today that ensure retreads are both a cost efficient and safe bet.

Adopting fuel efficient practices is not just smart business strategy, increasingly it is also necessary to meeting the law. The next phase of the joint US EPA/NHTSA fuel economy standards for heavy trucks is expected to mandate that a typical tractor-trailer be 40% more fuel efficient than a 2010 baseline model and this time the focus will be on the trailer. What are likely the most important elements of the legislation and their impact on trucking? Find out with our report.

I also encourage you to turn to the special Straight Talk, Smart Strategies Knowledge Centre we have created for you on www.trucknews.com for more news, features and informative videos about sustainable transportation practices. The first part in this series is available there as well.

It all makes for a multi-media educational package designed to help you learn and thrive in the years ahead. I hope you profit from it.

Lou Smyrlis

Publisher & Editorial Director

Truck News, Truck West & Fleet Executive



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

4 ENTER THE DRIVER

Sure there is lots of technology that can help but driver behavior is still the most important element in fuel efficiency. Find out how the most fuel efficient fleets are getting their drivers onboard when it comes to reducing fuel costs.

6 RETREADING PAYS

If you're like most fleets, there's a good chance tires represent one of your largest operating costs, after fuel and driver wages. Well, diesel's not likely to nosedive much further than it already has and your drivers won't be interested in taking a pay cut, but if you could reduce your tire costs by as much as 60%, wouldn't it be worth looking into?

8 LEGISLATING FUEL EFFICIENCY

The new standards proposed by the US government on truck and trailer manufacturers are expected to lower CO2 emissions by 1 billion metric tons whilst cutting fuel costs by nearly \$170 billion.

We review the most important elements of the proposed regulations and the impact on the industry and fuel economy.

9 INSIDE THE NUMBERS

What model year engines are SmartWay users running? How likely is a SmartWay shipper to choose a SmartWay carrier? Find out the answers to these questions and more in our special statistics page.

10 TAKING A HEAVY LOAD OFF MOTHER NATURE

One of the challenges facing Thomson Group since it began its journey towards sustainable transportation practices began about a decade ago is that it often pulls heavily-loaded tridem and quad-axle trailers, so its fuel consumption is inherently higher than that of its peers who transport lighter payloads in tandem trailers. Read how it has adapted its spec'ing practices to compensate.



The most important element in **FUEL EFFICIENCY**

SURE THERE IS LOTS OF TECHNOLOGY THAT CAN HELP BUT DRIVER BEHAVIOR IS STILL KEY TO SAVING AT THE PUMPS

BY HARRY RUDOLFS

How much does driver behavior impact fuel savings? A lot, according to Bob Duncan, compliance and safety training specialist for Kriska Transportation. “The biggest gap between our most efficient driver and the least is 15%. Before we started our program four years ago, the gap was 35%.”

The program Duncan is talking about is the Fuel Reduction Challenge Program, mandatory for all of Kriska’s drivers, both company and owner-operator. Drivers are placed into categories depending on the kind of truck they drive and the work they do. Miles per gallon and idle time are charted on a monthly basis. The top ten percentile performers in each category are eligible for a monthly prize and their name is entered into an annual draw for a major prize. Conversely, those drivers scoring consistently in the lower 10% might be flagged for some extra coaching.

Drivers are made aware of Kriska’s fuel-saving strategies as soon as they are hired. “We stress efficient driving from the first day that a driver comes to us, starting with the road test actually,” says Duncan. “We also stress it in the orientation, and in the in-house coaching we do. We take fuel mileage very seriously.”

Kriska, like other top-echelon carriers, bases some of its training on the FleetSmart/SmartDriver train-

ing programs developed for the industry by Natural Resources Canada. These tutorials explain the fundamentals of efficient driving, both highway and city, and come in four e-learning modules that can be completed at the driver’s leisure or at the terminal. The courses take a little more than an hour followed by an on-line quiz after which the participant is issued a diploma.

Thousands of commercial drivers have taken these courses and safety managers like to use them as part of the classroom portion to help explain the fundamentals of efficient driving. The seminar can then be enhanced by a follow-up driving session. An updated version of the FleetSmart/Smart Driver “Highway” learning module is currently being tested and should be available in the fall.

These days fewer drivers are emerging from truck training schools trained on 10 or 13 speed transmissions, but Duncan thinks the progressive shifting techniques that have been taught for years by driving schools should still apply to automated transmissions. “How you apply the throttle to get you rolling is what’s important. Gradually bring the truck up to speed and don’t go beyond 80% of the pedal,” he says. “We also like to see the drivers coast whenever possible rather than staying on the throttle all the time, and this is something that isn’t

being taught in driver schools. Every time you take your foot off the pedal, you save fuel.”

Idle time is a major consideration for carriers, and something over which the driver has the most control. “Four years ago we had idling times in the high teens, even the twenties,” says Duncan. “Nowadays we have guys that idle their trucks less than 1%. Today, even including our day cabs, we have the entire fleet running at about 6% idling time and that’s very good.”

Kriska has yet another voluntary incentive program to enhance fuel efficiency. If drivers are agreeable, they can have their units turned down from 100 kph to 96 kph and get paid one cent per mile extra. Duncan suggests it’s a win-win for both drivers and the carrier. Cutting just a few kph off the top end can result in significant savings, and the driver gets paid a little bit more. “The drivers have to figure out if it’s worth it for them,” he says. “They have to sit down and see how many miles they go and how long it takes them.” Duncan says they have about 80 trucks set at 96 kph and more drivers are considering joining the program.

Satellite tracking systems have been a boon to safety and compliance managers because they can monitor driver and vehicle performance in real time. The data transmitted can include idling time, miles per gallon, over-speed and hard-braking warnings, as well as vehicle stability. One hard braking incident will usually trigger an email to a safety manager who will soon be contacting the driver to find out if everything is all right.

“Hard-braking is the one we get the most frequently and we always call after a notification,” says Steven Newton, director of safety for Challenger Motor Freight, in Cambridge, Ont. “We have two levels of interaction. Usually we’ll contact them by satellite to see what happened, but we might also call them in after repeated hard-braking incidents. Driver behavior runs through everything. There’s not necessarily a direct connection between collisions and other incidents, but some drivers struggling with excessive idling or MPG might be also having problems in other areas like hours of service.”

Challenger supplies each driver with a monthly performance evaluation that shows their board’s average score as well as the driver’s personal stats. Similar to Kriska’s classifications, units are grouped according to the kind of work they do. Drivers have to meet minimum standards in order to collect their quarterly bonus. I.e., idling for team drivers is set at 12%, while single operators have to keep it at less than 15%.

Newton suggests that drivers are enthusiastic about the program, “Because if they miss a target, they’re in here right away to find out why,” he says. “Sometimes there are good reasons for extra idling.” Challenger has invested heavily in technology to improve fuel mileage, but even with the latest equipment, like boat tails, super single tires and trailer skirts, “The driver is still a pretty large factor,” says Newton.

“We stress efficient driving from the first day that a driver comes to us, starting with the road test actually. We take fuel mileage very seriously.”

- Bob Duncan, Kriska Transportation

Another important aspect of driver behavior is trip planning – where and when to stop, and when to fuel. Bison Transport of Winnipeg, Man., relies on its drivers to get the best price at the pumps, since fuel prices can fluctuate wildly both north and south of the border. The company’s “Fuel Advice” program sends the locations and prices along the driver’s route but leaves the decision of where to fuel up to the drivers.

“It’s all about being in the right spot when you want to fuel up,” says Trevor Batenchuk, manager of corporate services for Bison, who oversees the fuel programs. “Some of these truck stops can take an hour to get in and out of, and for a few cents per gallon it might not be worth it. Then again some guys with heavy loads want to run with half-full tanks. Other times you might put in enough fuel to get to the next truck state where fuel is a lot less expensive.”

Batenchuk understands that fueling in the yard in Winnipeg is not always economical. “Fuel might be a lot cheaper in Grand Forks, North Dakota,” he says. “That’s only three and a half hours away and that might be a good place to shut down for the night and start up the next morning. We find that our fuel optimization program gives drivers more leeway to plan their day. Letting our drivers make their own professional decisions, and encouraging them to reduce idle time and economize at the fuel pumps, makes the most sense for everybody. Saving fuel makes sense.” ●

RETREADING PAY \$



If you're not saving money through retreading, you should at least be making some by selling those casings

If you're like most fleets, there's a good chance tires represent one of your largest operating costs, after fuel and driver wages. Well, diesel's not likely to nosedive much further than it already has and your drivers won't be interested in taking a pay cut, but if you could reduce your tire costs by as much as 60%, wouldn't it be worth looking into?

It would be borderline negligent to ignore such an opportunity.

Such an opportunity exists, and most fleets are already taking advantage of it by running retreaded tires. Some choose to have their own casings retreaded while others purchase retreaded tires right from the shop. Typically, a retread costs about 40% of what a new tire of the same make and model costs. Yet still, some fleets and owner/operators are skeptical of the performance or unwilling to take chances following a bad experience, which in most cases likely happened years ago.

A lot has changed when it comes to retreading processes and the ability to collect data and track performance has given tire manufacturers plenty of evidence that retreading is a smart choice for fleets. And really, if it wasn't in the best interest of their fleet customers to run a retread program, why would they be so inclined to promote something that re-

duces the number of new tires they'll sell?

Asked why retreading hasn't been universally adopted across the industry, Luc Leonard, senior retread business manager with Michelin North America (Canada) said "Sometimes it's a bad experience they've had in the past, but today there have been so many changes in the technology of retreading and in the methods of inspection."

Quality retreaders such as Michelin's MRT (Michelin Retread Technologies) have invested in high-tech equipment that allows them to determine beyond doubt whether or not a casing qualifies for retreading.

"In the past, an inspection would be a quick visual inspection of the tire and then they would send it down through the retread process," Leonard explained. "Today, we've got techniques to inspect. We have electronic liner machines to detect any small punctures that are through the liner. Then we also have a machine that we call a CIA (casing integrity analyzer). It looks at the belt package to see if there are any separations in between the belts. Today, I feel comfortable saying that we reject tires that are not good and accept tires that are good, which in the past was maybe hit and miss. A lot of tires (in the past) were disqualified that

could have been retreaded and some that shouldn't have been retreaded were retreaded."

Owner/operators and small fleet owners have long memories – especially if they've been stuck on the side of the road with ample time to think about their tire decisions – so if they received a retread years ago that should've been sent to the scrap pile, it's possible they've yet to reconsider the value of retreading. However, Leonard said if that's the case, they're missing out on an opportunity to significantly reduce their tire costs by taking advantage of new technology that has made retreaded tires as reliable as new ones, a fact the data supports. (MRT's adjustment rate, representing the prevalence of failures, is less than 0.5%, comparable to that of new tires, the company claims).

"Retread processes have become much more robust," Leonard said, noting systems now allow retreaders to buff the tire to a consistent profile so that the new tread provides the exact same footprint as the original tire.

"Also, what we've seen in the past 10 years is a dramatic evolution in the tread compounding and the tread designs," he added. "Today, you're able to buy a very popular tire like the XDN2 new and you can send it to a Michelin retread plant and you can basically get the same tread design, tread depth, tread compound – and you're going to be pretty close to what you got (from the original) in terms of performance and mileage."



New retreading technologies such as electronic liner inspectors and computerized buffers make retreads more reliable than ever.

Another development to make retreading more appealing to small fleets and owner/operators is that they can now enjoy the same service and buying opportunities as the large fleets.

“We can give them reporting on their retreading activity,” Leonard said.

While many large fleets maintain an inventory of quality casings and can ship them in for retreading and patiently wait for them to come back (a turnaround time of two to two-and-a-half weeks can be expected), small fleets and owner/operators can just swap their casings for tires that have already been retreaded.

“The plant buys casings in all different sizes. Then what they do is they cap them up with what moves the most,” Leonard said. “If somebody wants the more popular tire sizes and tread designs, (retreaders) will have them on the shelves.”

As a result of this, trucking companies that still aren’t convinced retreading is the way to go can at the very least turn their quality casings into cash.

“We’re always looking for donator fleets,” Leonard said. “That’s a fleet that doesn’t want to retread and we give them fair market value for their casings. Then we keep them at the plant and we cap them up.”

So if you aren’t *saving* money through retreading, you can at least be *earning* some.

One risk about retreading that remains, is that not all retread shops have invested in the latest high-tech equipment and tooling. Some retreaders will buy treads on the “open market” - including from offshore

- Leonard explained, meaning there’s very little consistency in the final product.

“What I am seeing in the industry is, the ones who want to stay in retreading and are very serious about it, there is some serious investment that needs to be done,” he added. “I think in the long run, the smaller, inefficient, low-volume retreaders will probably not be in business 10 years from now, because when you’re doing 5,000 or 10,000 units in a plant (per year) and you need to go out and buy some of this sophisticated equipment that’s \$300,000-\$400,000 a piece, your return on investment is pretty long.”

While retread quality has improved drastically, there’ll always be questions about safety. But if retreading was unsafe, would the airline industry be doing it?

“Probably 90% of the tires (on aircraft) are retreaded,” said Leonard. “And they can retread them six, seven, eight times sometimes.”

Stephane Beaudoin, segment product manager, commercial trucks with Michelin, pointed out studies have shown road alligators are as likely to be from improperly inflated original tires as from retreads. Tire pressure doesn’t discriminate; it’ll lead to a failure as surely on an original tire as it will a retread.

And if a blow-out occurs on a new tire, you can forget about future retreading possibilities - another good reason to be proactive about maintaining the recommended tire pressures.

“You need to make sure that you check

your air pressure on a regular basis and that your equipment is well maintained,” Leonard said. “A lot of casings that come back to us for retreading are refused. A lot of time the belt separations that we see are caused by improper air pressures.”

So if you’re interested in giving retreading a try, where do you start? A new retread program begins with the purchase of the original tires, experts claim.

“The first thing is, you need to choose the right tire for your application,” Leonard said.

Adds Beaudoin: “If you want to go on a retread program, when you buy your new tires, you need to think about it because you want to have a good casing to be able to retread. The investment you’re going to make in your purchase of the new tires is going to be important for that casing to be able to retread it properly and have more retreads than just one time.”

There’s nothing much new about the concept of retreading truck tires. However, the processes and techniques have evolved in recent years. That makes now as good a time as any to consider a retreading program, according to Leonard.

“I definitely think this is a good time to consider retreading,” he said. “For one, to lower your operating costs. After fuel, tires are the second most expensive item for fleets. The products are getting better and better and you can’t beat it on the cost when you’re paying 40% of what you would pay for a new tire. It’s pretty hard not to look at that.”

The new benchmark

EPA, DOT propose new greenhouse gas and fuel efficiency standards

BY SONIA STRAFACE

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have come out with Phase 2 of proposed standards for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles to improve fuel efficiency and cut carbon pollution.

The standards proposed mid June are expected to lower CO2 emissions by 1 billion metric tons whilst cutting fuel costs by nearly \$170 billion. Oil consumption would also be reduced by 1.8 billion barrels over the lifetime of the vehicles sold under the program, the agencies claim.

"Once upon a time, to be pro-environment you had to be anti-big-vehicles," said US transportation secretary Anthony Foxx. "This rule will change that. In fact, these efficiency standards are good for the environment – and the economy. When trucks use less fuel, shipping costs go down. It's good news all around, especially for anyone with an online shopping habit."

According to the research, the proposed standards are cost effective and the buyer of a new long-haul truck in 2027 would recoup the investment in fuel-efficient technologies in less than two years through fuel savings.

Today, medium- and heavy-duty vehicles are responsible for 20% of GHG emissions.

The proposed vehicle and engine performance standards would cover model years 2021-2027 and apply to semi-trucks, large pickup trucks and vans, and all types and sizes of buses and work trucks.

The research shows that the trucks would achieve up to 24% lower CO2 emissions and fuel consumption than an equivalent tractor in 2018.

The proposed standards do not mandate the use of specific technologies. Rather they establish standards achievable through a range of technology options, and allow manufacturers to choose those technologies that work best for their products and for their customers. (These technologies include improved transmissions, engine combustion optimization, aerodynamic improvements and low rolling resistance tires). They also allow banking and trading emissions credits for most manufacturers.

As expected, the agencies are also proposing the same sort of standards for trailers. Though it will exclude categories for mobile homes, the EPA trailer standard would take effect in model year 2018 for certain trailers, while NHTSA's standards would be effective as of 2021.

The proposal also includes separate engine standards as well, to promote continued progress on engine efficiency.

The proposals announced build on the fuel efficiency and GHG standards that were already in place for 2014-2018 and the standards outlined are harmonized between the EPA and NHTSA.

A public comment period will be open for 60 days after the proposal is published in the Federal Register. Both agencies will host public hearings for stakeholders over the course of the comment period.

The American Trucking Associations has already offered its support for the

proposed standards, though it remains concerned the rule may result in the use of certain technologies on vehicles before they can be properly tested.

"Fuel is an enormous expense for our industry – and carbon emissions carry an enormous cost for our planet," said ATA president and CEO Bill Graves. "That's why our industry supported the Obama Administration's historic first round of greenhouse gas and fuel efficiency standards for medium and large trucks and why we support the aims of this second round of standards."

ATA vice-president and energy and environmental counsel Glen Kedzie added: "We believe this rule could result in the deployment of certain technologies that do not fully recognize the diversity of our industry and could prove to be unreliable. This unreliability could slow not only adoption of these technologies, but the environmental benefits they aim to create. To prevent this, truck and engine manufacturers will need adequate time to develop solutions to meet these new standards."

Kedzie added most fleets want a return on their investment within the first 18 to 24 months.

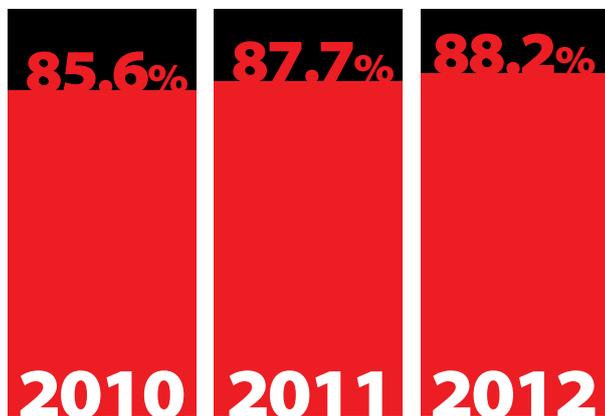
"In 2014, trucking spent nearly \$150 billion on diesel fuel alone," he said. "So the potential for real cost savings and associated environmental benefits of this rule are there – but fleets will need a wide variety of proven and durable technologies to meet these new standards throughout the various implementation stages."

Stay tuned to TruckNews.com for more details on the proposed standards. ●



INSIDE THE NUMBERS

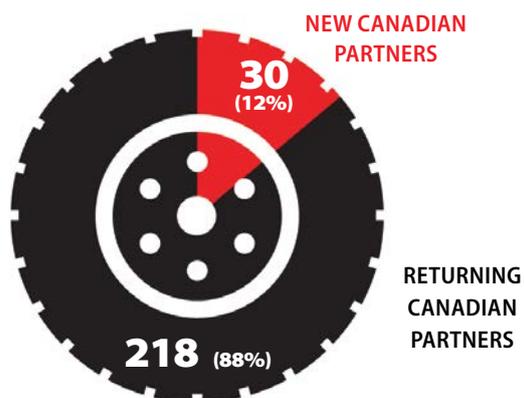
% OF SMARTWAY CARRIER USAGE PER KM



SmartWay shippers are increasingly asking for carriers to be SmartWay certified. In 2012, SmartWay Shippers carried out 88.2% of their activity with SmartWay carriers, a 3% increase from 2010.

While filling out the Shipper Tool, Shipper companies report on their SmartWay-registered carriers as well as their non-SmartWay carriers. As a result, SmartWay shippers are noticing how much they are saving by using SmartWay carriers. Shippers can check out the SmartWay's Partner List to find companies which are committed to reducing their fuel consumption.

In 2013, 88% of Canadian Truck Partners participated in the program the year before. Companies who participate in the program for multiple years have access to yearly data to benchmark their operations over time.



SmartWay Shipper Partners are reducing their CO₂ emissions using the SmartWay Transport Partnership.

In the last year, SmartWay Shippers reduced their emissions by 2% with strategies such as using SmartWay participation and environmental performance as criteria for selecting carriers. Not only did SmartWay Shippers reduce their emissions, but by using less fuel they also helped reduce the transportation costs of moving their goods.

REPORTING YEAR	COMPOSITE TRUCK CO ₂ G/KM
2011	42658
2012	76171

The majority of SmartWay truck carriers operate new and efficient fleets. A new engine contributes greatly to reducing the emissions of harmful pollutants. All engines with model year 2010 or newer are the cleanest and most efficient in terms of emissions reduction.

MODEL YEAR

MODEL YEAR	Count
Pre-1989	542
1989	186
1990	221
1991	269
1992	329
1993	653
1994	1176
1995	2326
1996	2764
1997	4014
1998	5937
1999	9324
2000	12476
2001	10217
2002	9395
2003	11837
2004	15574
2005	28327
2006	38717
2007	53385
2008	17946
2009	32085
2010	41880
2011	42658
2012	76171

Taking a heavy load off Mother Nature

At Thomson Terminals, heavy payloads don't preclude fuel-efficiency

BY JAMES MENZIES

Thomson's journey towards sustainability began in the mid-2000s, around the same time the SmartWay Partnership Program was formed, with the simple goal of increasing its recycling.

"Internally, there were a lot of questions on things like, how do we do simple things like recycle better?" recalled Kevin Farr, director of business development for the Toronto, Ont.-based transportation company. "Surprisingly, a decade ago, there were few options to truly recycle all material at the end of the day; recycling would only include paper and can products. As the green movement started emerging, disposal companies that serviced businesses started allowing for a more diverse range of recycling and we started implementing that."

In 2005, Thomson Terminals, which operates a fleet of 1,000 pieces of equipment out of 12 terminals, wrote its first environmental policy, which was incorporated into its ISO program. The arrival of the SmartWay program was welcomed, because it provided the tools for carriers to more accurately measure their environmental footprint. SmartWay validated many of the fuel-saving initiatives that Thomson had already been employing.

"Our company has always been geared towards naturally trying to create efficiencies," Farr said. "Trying to purchase new equipment and trying to make it lighter allows better fuel economy naturally, so we already had things in place in



our purchasing and maintenance programs (to improve fuel economy)."

One of the challenges facing Thomson Group was that it often pulls heavily-loaded tridem and quad-axle trailers, so its fuel consumption is inherently higher than that of its peers who transport lighter payloads in tandem trailers. Farr feels the analytical tools provided by SmartWay don't yet fully recognize the impact of "payload strategy" which allows for more product to be transported with fewer trucks. However, with the Canadian SmartWay program now up and running, Farr said he's hopeful more will be done within the program to reflect the diversity of the Canadian transportation landscape and to recognize the provincial advantages such as grants and subsidies as well as equipment-related variances.

"The green movement has come light years from where we started, and now there is some fine tuning (required)," Farr said of the program. As fuel-saving technologies have emerged, Thomson has been eager to deploy them, with mixed results. "There have been successes and failures over the years as new systems have come online," Farr said. Auxiliary power units (APUs) have become a standard spec' on Thomson Group's highway tractors

Thomson Group is an asset-based, full-service logistics provider, offering solutions in warehousing, transportation, design build and consulting. Its specialties include: food and beverage; grocery; forestry products; retail and consumer goods; automotive; high-value merchandise; and freezer storage.

along with a multitude of other options and features.

Some of the most effective fuel-saving strategies have involved the maintenance of vehicles, especially tires. “Our tire technicians are excellent,” Farr said. “We try to maintain simple things such as running a good set of tires and having them inflated on a regular basis with very stringent checks.”

Simply buying new tractors and trailers gives carriers the ability to improve their fuel consumption and reduce emissions, without having to develop any radical or elaborate strategies. “We try to take advantage of the natural occurrences that happen when purchasing equipment,” he explained. “This year, we purchased 30 brand new tractors and new trailers and with that, you get the immediate boost in regards to the technology that’s been developed. It’s quite consistent. You’re always getting slightly lighter and stronger axles and wheels and that all helps at the end of the day to reduce your drag and/or TARE weight.” Even the mirrors have become more aerodynamic on the latest truck designs, Farr added.

“Now, our fleet is fairly modern and we get all the benefits of the aerodynamic capabilities.”

When spec’ing new equipment, Thomson is looking for more than just a SmartWay sticker. SmartWay’s approval is important, but it’s not the only factor.

“We work with vendors as much as possible,” Farr said. “Whatever makes sense, we’re going to try to implement.”

Being fuel-efficient not only provides a direct benefit to the company’s profitability but also helps it earn new business. Requests for Proposals (RFPs) often have a check box asking if a prospective carrier is a SmartWay member. Some go further than that.

Thomson has incorporated its SmartWay membership and environmental programs into its marketing materials, which has had an impact with some shippers. While there is still room for improvement with the program, Farr said he’s excited about what the future may entail, specifically more accurate data, delivered more efficiently via on-board computers.

“SmartWay is evolving. What we are doing right now is just the start,” he said. “As tractors become more sophisticated, computer systems will be able to download more data. It will get to the point where you’re just downloading your information (from the engine ECMs) and putting it through a SmartWay system and it will crunch the numbers and really allow it to be completely transparent. Right now, we’re still using Excel-based documents, putting in our total equipment, years, when we bought it and various other things and it’s balancing all those things with our fuel use. How many miles did we run in the city and on the highway? So it’s still kind of rudimentary, but it gets you a number and I think that’s the main point. At some point in time, it will be much more detail-oriented and I look forward to continuing down this road.” ●

Thomson Group’s SmartWay spec’:

Thomson Group is always looking for new ways to reduce its fuel consumption and emissions. Here’s a grocery list of options and specifications that the company has made standard on new equipment.

IDLE REDUCTION

APUs: All Thomson highway tractors are equipped with auxiliary power units.

Engine shut-down: Automatic engine shutdown units are in all new tractors purchased in the last five years.

Hybrid refrigeration units: All reefers run on vari-power, maximizing fuel efficiency.

AERODYNAMIC DEVICES

Aerodynamic profile tractors and aerodynamic reefer units;

Integrated cab roof fairings;

Roof fairings and cab roof deflectors;

Cab side fairings;

Front bumper air dams;

Aerodynamic mirrors;

Trailer gap reduction (cab extenders);

WEIGHT REDUCTION AND ADVANCED LUBRICANT TECHNOLOGY

Weight reduction in trailers and tractors through the use of aluminum in regards to wheels, body components and fuel tanks;

Low-friction engine and drivetrain lubricants;

All tractors have been converted to synthetic products to improve fuel efficiency.

LARGER CUBE AND PAYLOAD STRATEGIES

Larger capacity trailer strategies (Thomson provides high cube, quad-axle equipment for a variety of companies allowing in some cases a 50% increase in payload).

SPEED MANAGEMENT CONTROLS AND POLICY

Speed Management includes both electronic engine controls which is geared to 105 km/h and driver training provided through Thomson’s safety department;

Eco-friendly driver training, consisting of progressive shifting, engine speed optimization, smooth acceleration and braking, anticipatory driving, efficient route selection, speed control and idle reduction.

Stay up to date on
industry news, trends and equipment releases

Visit the industry's most popular website

truck news.com



Discover what more than
500,000 visitors did last year

WE DELIVER
MORE BLOGS
MORE VIDEOS
MORE NEWS

