

TRUCK NEWS

June 2010 Volume 30, Issue 6

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at www.trucknews.com

Canadian Tire wins contract to pump fuel at Ontario's highway service centres

But what's in it for truckers?



Quadrangle Architects Limited

By Harry Rudolfs
TORONTO, Ont. – The recent announcement that Canadian Tire is going to have a fuel monopoly at all 23 of Ontario's 400-series highway service centres provides some comfort, if not heightened expectations, to freeway travellers who have seen some of these sites closed and shuttered for years.

Canada's largest independent petroleum retailer has inked a deal with Host-Kilmer Service Centres to build and operate the fuel bars and adjacent convenience stores for the next 50 years. (And who knows what kind of fuel they'll be selling 50 years from now – hydrogen, natural gas, plutonium?)

Seven of the fuel bars on the 401 are expected to be up and running this summer, including Morrisburg, Bainsville, Trenton North (Wooler), Tilbury North and South, West Lorne and Dutton.

According to Susan Goyette, senior director of communications for US parent company HMS Host, "The fuel offering from Canadian Tire includes gasoline at all sites and diesel in a number of locations. Each site will have no less than two fuelling positions of diesel for commercial vehicles."

CTC spokesperson Rebecca Mills confides that these won't be high-speed pumps or a card-lock system, but she does expect fuel will be "competitively priced." Mills won't speculate on how much fuel CTC will sell at these locations, but I can almost see her eyes light up over the phone when she

mentions that the fuel bar venues are expected to generate "six million transactions per year."

This is a good fit for CTC. They will enhance their brand and get their funny money into the pockets of the travelling public, who might then be enticed to stop at

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Michigan vote could hold key to new border crossing

Canada offers to cover Michigan's share of new bridge

By Ron Stang
WINDSOR, Ont. – Now it will be up to the state of Michigan to decide – and decide soon – whether to accept Canada's offer to provide up to \$550 million to fund the cash-strapped state's share of the proposed Detroit River International Crossing (DRIC) project.

Federal Transport Minister John Baird said his government, frustrat-

ed by decades of fighting and delays over the proposed Windsor-Detroit crossing, decided to come up with the April 29 offer, which he told *Truck News* was not unprecedented.

"This project is tremendously important for Canada," he said. "It's the most important infrastructure project in the country. It's desperately needed. And it's been worked on literally for 20 years."

The Michigan state legislature has set a June 1 deadline to endorse funding for DRIC. The \$550-million offer could help sway that vote.

But the vote might not come easily.

State Republicans, for example, have long argued against the spending of tax dollars on the project, especially in a state ravished by job losses and that in March had the highest unemployment in the US

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EPA2010 from behind the wheel



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FORM MUST BE FILLED IN COMPLETELY AND NOMINEE MUST HAVE CLEAN DRIVER'S ABSTRACT

CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

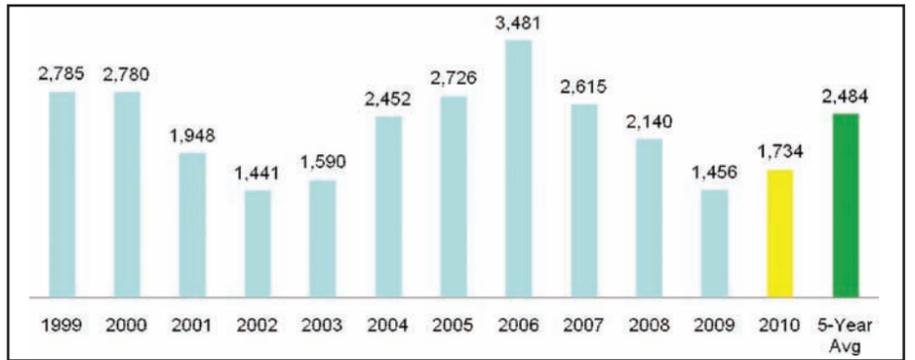
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Monthly Class 8 Sales - Mar 10

The economic rebound was slow to take form in 2010 but carriers are reporting encouraging freight volumes in March and April. Does that mean there is enough confidence to invest in new trucks? Truck sales also appear to have picked up a bit of steam during the final month of the first quarter, coming in at 1,734 units sold. That's still more than 700 units below the five-year average but it is considerably better than last year's disastrous sales records and also ahead of 2002 and 2003.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	409	387
International	409	325
Kenworth	327	142
Mack	105	127
Peterbilt	191	64
Sterling	15	126
Volvo	181	170
Western Star	97	115
TOTALS	1,734	1,456

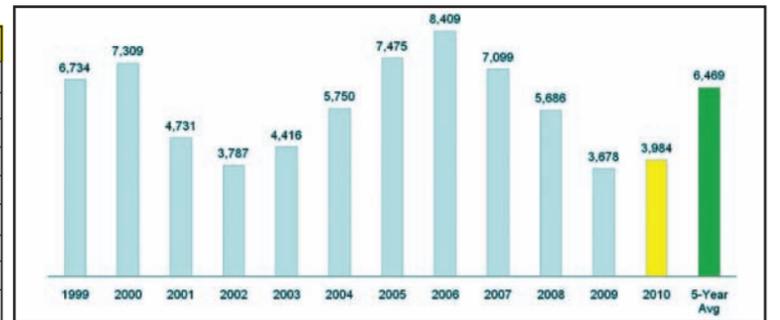
Historical Comparison - Mar 10 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Mar 10) by Province and OEM

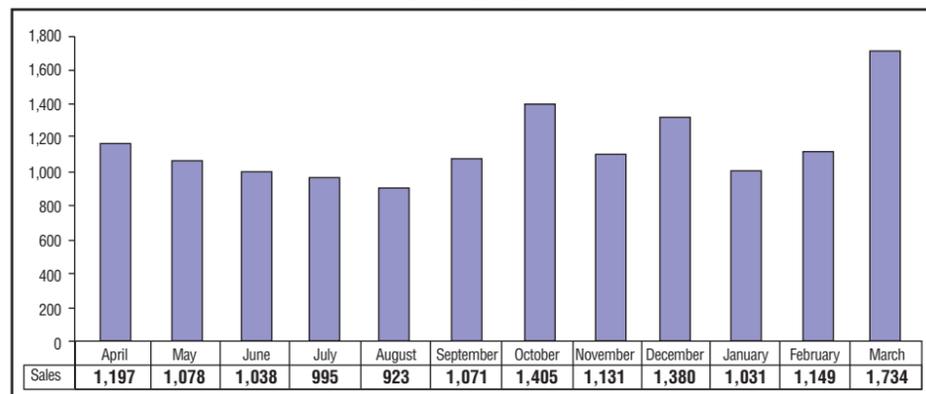
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	60	102	77	55	382	149	61	52	0	3	941
Kenworth	67	206	51	53	144	214	15	0	0	0	750
Mack	10	19	14	24	76	49	8	8	0	0	208
International	62	100	14	58	423	273	33	34	0	13	1,010
Peterbilt	40	74	27	32	73	159	22	14	0	0	441
Sterling	8	11	1	2	2	15	0	0	0	0	39
Volvo	12	26	17	23	142	70	35	23	0	0	348
Western Star	34	64	16	6	55	33	12	26	0	1	247
TOTALS	293	602	217	253	1,297	962	186	157	0	17	3,984

Historical Comparison - YTD Mar 10

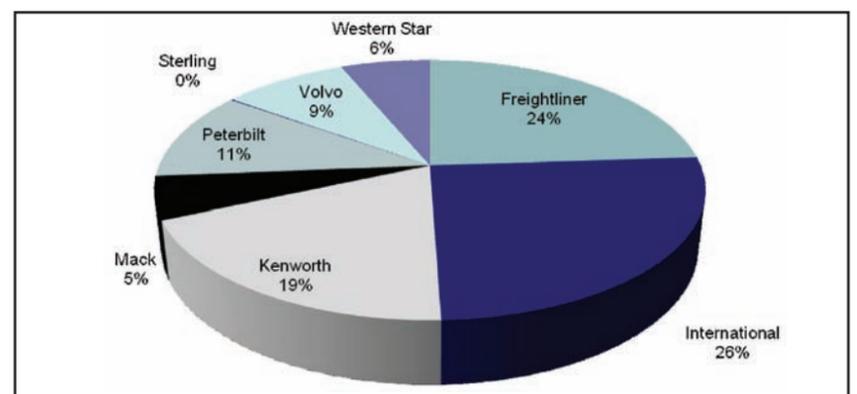


The previous year was the worst year for Canadian Class 8 truck sales of the past decade and one of the worst since the economic slowdowns of the early 90s. The first quarter of 2009 was so weak that, three months into the year, sales were about 3,000 off the five-year YTD average and about 5,000 off the banner year of 2006. The improvement in truck sales during the first two months of the first quarter of 2010 was marginal but March showed a decent pick up. The first quarter ended with sales of 3,984 Class 8 trucks, which although considerably behind the five-year average, is better than both last year's first quarter mark as well as the mark posted back in 2002.

12 - Month Sales Trends



Market Share Class 8 - Mar YTD



There are many reasons motor carriers remain reticent to purchase new trucks. Despite bankruptcies and fleet size reductions, there are still too many trucks chasing too little freight. Although indications are that freight volumes are growing, growth remains tentative. Pricing for trade-ins remains less than appealing and access to capital for new truck purchases remains limited. The new trucks also come with 2010 emissions standards compliant engines, which add about \$10,000 to the price of a new rig.

International, once again, captured the market share crown in the Canadian Class 8 market in 2009, ending up with a commanding 29% share of the market. But the fight for market share this year is proving much tighter with International standing alone with its advanced EGR solution to the 2010 emissions standards compared to the SCR option all other truck manufacturers have chosen. Although it's too early in the game to determine how the market share battle will unfold, after the first quarter, International holds a narrow 2% lead over rival Freightliner for the market share crown.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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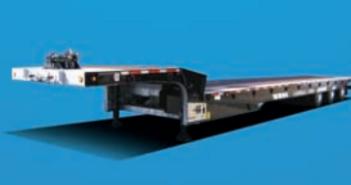
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Are LCV drivers getting their fair share?

I've written quite favourably about Ontario's LCV program and in doing so, I've invited some criticism from drivers and engaged in some lively debates. As I see it, drivers stand to benefit from the program. Carriers have told me they pay 20-30% per-mile premiums for LCV drivers. Here's an opportunity to take the training, get certified, enhance your value and make more money. For the motivated driver, what's not to like about that? If only it were so simple.

In talking to several LCV-certified drivers, it seems there's a significant discrepancy between what carriers say they pay their LCV drivers and what those drivers are actually making.

One such driver, Kassie Gibner, shares her experience: "Although it's quite the experience to pull the LCVs, and the money that's saved and made for the company is sizeable, typically it only pays three cents a mile more than running a single. Not even remotely worth it as a driver to take on the added responsibilities and extra work, only to be under such incredible scrutiny by everyone from the companies themselves to the OTA to the public."

Worse yet, she tells me she's at risk of losing her job because she's the only LCV-certified driver at her company and she's no longer willing to pull doubles for a measly three cents a mile extra. Jumping to another carrier that pays better may be an attractive op-



Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES

tion, but it's now clear why a clause was cleverly tucked into the regulations that makes the LCV certification non-transferrable. She'd have to re-certify if she moved to another fleet.

At any rate, she's not the only one who has told me the extra pay isn't worth the added responsibility and scrutiny. Many drivers say that even with a small per-mile premium, pulling LCVs is a losing proposition when you factor in the reduced speed and extra time spent hooking up and inspecting equipment.

So where are the savings going and why aren't drivers getting their fair share?

Some drivers tell me the big carriers are lining their pockets with the efficiencies afforded by pulling Twin-53s. I don't buy that. I see very few carriers getting rich running LCVs. My suspicion is that the vast majority of the savings are being passed onto the shipper. But why?

Eric Gignac of Groupe Guilbault perhaps said it best at last year's OTA convention: "Why should we give the savings to the customer? That's what I'm hearing in Ontario and that scares

me a lot. You need a shipper who gives you two truckloads at the same time at the same place with the same appointment time with equal weight. If you have that in Ontario, you're lucky. We don't have that in Quebec. You have savings but you also have extra costs – permits, paying more for the driver..."

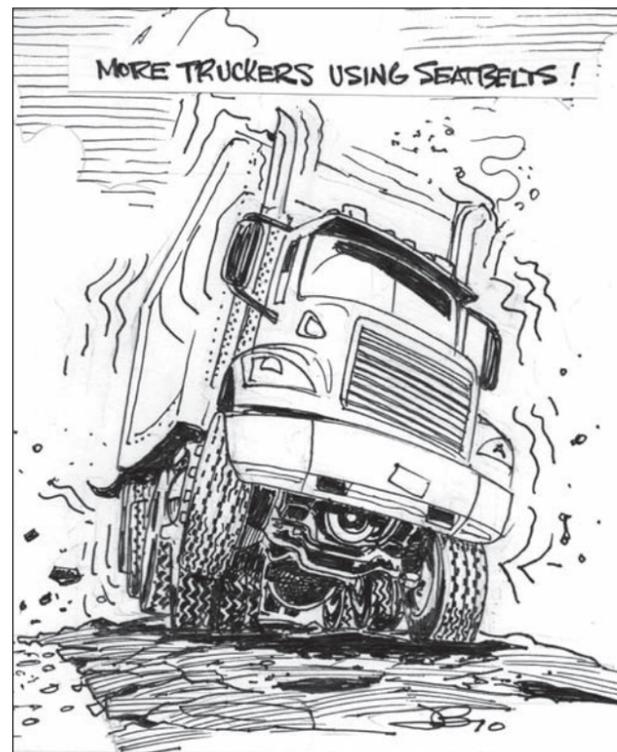
Damn straight.

As an observer, I see quite clearly there's something fundamentally wrong with this picture. More than anything else, the success of the Ontario LCV program hinges on the professionalism and abilities of the drivers. They are being touted as the elite, the cream of the crop. So treat them like they're elite and pay them like they're elite. Otherwise, there's a very real possibility this program will fall flat.

In closing, if you're the manager of a fleet that is participating in the LCV program and pay your LCV-certified drivers fairly, go ahead and tout your LCV pay packages by commenting on my recent blog on this subject at Trucknews.com. Consider it a free ad on me (just don't tell Kathy).

Perhaps it'll put some pressure on the others. In all seriousness, let's get some dialogue going. Fleet managers, what do you pay your LCV drivers? Drivers, what are you being offered to pull Twin-53s? □

– James Menzies can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6896 or by e-mail at jmenzies@trucknews.com. You can also follow him on Twitter at Twitter.com/JamesMenzies.



Don't break out the bubbly just yet

Is your head spinning yet from all the economic volatility and second-guessing about what it all means about our industry's future? After spending the last few days immersing myself in the economic turmoil taking place in Europe and what it could mean for our fragile recovery, I travelled to Ottawa to listen to the economic predictions from the menagerie of economists gathered at the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport's annual Outlook Conference. And I can assure you, my head is spinning. Are we ever going to get a handle on this thing? It seems every second person has a somewhat different take on what is shaping the recovery, if we are even in a real recovery.

Just last month I wrote in this space that it seems we're stuck in a prolonged in-between phase with the recession technically over but with the recovery nowhere near as



Viewpoint

LOU SMYRLIS
Editorial Director

robust as would have been hoped. I mentioned that many of the motor carrier executives I spoke to in January and February were telling me they've seen little in terms of growth in freight volumes. But then March and April appeared to be much better in terms of freight volumes and the government reported that the Canadian economy created 108,700 jobs in March – more than four times as many as expected and the largest monthly gain on record. Industrial growth is looking good again and the GDP gains of the first quarter were impressive. As Peter Hall, vice-president and chief economist for Export Development

Canada, told the conference: "This is the stuff of optimism." Carl Sonnen, president of the respected research group, Informetrica, went as far as to say the near term probability of a "V" shaped recession is moderately high.

Sounds like it's time to break out the bubbly. You've survived the worst economic downturn since 1961 (multiplied by a factor of seven to be precise, in terms of severity). Ah, but if it only were that simple. The economic forecasters are spinning several qualifiers into their forecasts. It seems there are several risks that could push us back into recession, according to Hall.

There is a risk the unprecedented levels of government stimulus that jump started the North American economy will run out before businesses are ready to tackle the recovery on their own, plunging us back into the economic abyss; the

financial markets, perhaps spooked by another Greece, could freeze the availability of credit, choking off business growth in the process; commodity prices are higher than market fundamentals would justify and a sharp correction to their pricing could hurt the economy; the Bank of Canada could get overzealous about controlling inflation and stifle the recovery with higher interest costs; while protectionist sentiments south of the border could start driving trade legislation.

Hate to be the bearer of bad news – would much rather believe the positive first quarter results are an indisputable sign of economy recovery – but it sounds like the next six-month period will be critical in determining if the recovery is real or not. □

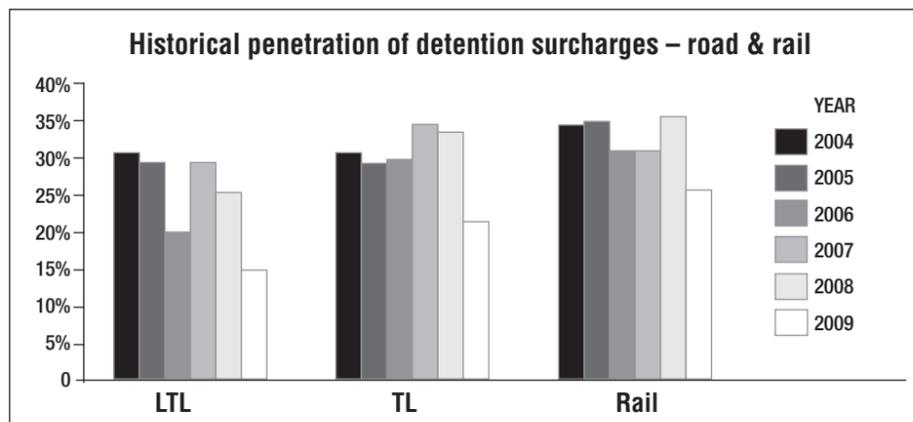
– Lou Smyrlis can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6881 or by e-mail at lou@TransportationMedia.ca. You can also follow him on Twitter at Twitter.com/LouSmyrlis.

Did you know?

The impact of clawbacks on surcharge penetration

For several years during the past decade, carriers from all modes made a concentrated effort to gain back efficiencies lost by wasteful shipper practices such as unnecessary waiting times to load and unload by instituting surcharges. They were also keen to pass on variable

costs such as fuel through surcharges. Tight capacity across almost all modes, combined with high energy costs, and high shipment volumes starting in the third quarter of 2003 made for the most significant transportation cost increases since deregulation and surcharges were an important element. For example, a US study with direct relevance to Canada found that out of a 35-hour driver work week, 23 hours were spent just waiting to load and unload. As a result of such practices, motor carriers began pushing detention surcharges in recent years. But our annual Transportation Buying Trends research, conducted in partnership with CITA and CITT, shows any gains made



since 2004 were completely eroded last year. In fact, the penetration of detention surcharges are now at their lowest level since we began the survey back in 20004.

For more Canadian data sourced

data on surcharges, rates, shipment volumes, capacity, new equipment purchases and more, see our annual Transportation Buying Trends report available for \$99 through www.trucknews.com. □

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IN BRIEF

CarriersEdge to share secrets of 'best fleets to drive for'

MARKHAM, Ont. – After scouring North America for the best fleets to drive for, CarriersEdge is now taking to the road to share some of those fleets' secrets to success.

The company has announced a nine-date, cross-country seminar series sponsored by Marsh Canada. It will kick off May 12 in Kitchener, Ont. and wrap up June 11 in Windsor, Ont.

In each of the half-day seminars, CarriersEdge president Mark Murrell will reveal some insight into how carriers who were recognized as the Best Fleets to Drive For have earned that distinction.

"This year's Best Fleets to Drive For winners demonstrate that effective programs come from all corners of the industry," said Murrell. "Despite a tough economy, fleets of all sizes are still finding innovative ways to provide exceptional workplace experiences for their drivers."

"Best Fleets to Drive For is an outstanding program, providing a wealth of useful information about current best practices in the industry," added Scott Cober, national transportation practice leader at Marsh Canada. "We're very pleased to be presenting this seminar series and helping to share that information across the country."

The schedule includes: May 12, Kitchener; May 14, Ottawa; May 26, Moncton; May 28, London; June 1, Edmonton; June 2, Calgary; June 3, Saskatoon; June 4, Regina; June 8, Mississauga; June 9, Winnipeg and June 11, Windsor. All seminars run from 9 a.m. till noon with breakfast served at 8:30 a.m. Advance registration is required.

To register, call Judi at 905-530-2430, or visit www.bestfleets.todrivefor.com. □

CTA warns feds not to copy US fuel economy standards

OTTAWA, Ont. – Word out of Ottawa that the feds are considering implementing fuel economy standards for heavy trucks has the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) concerned it may not consider the complexities of the Canadian trucking industry.

For instance, the CTA points out there many different requirements for various vehicle configurations and Canadian weights and dimensions are different here than in the states. As a result, mirroring a US standard, which is expected to be based on California's recent fuel economy regulations, may be a bad idea, the CTA pointed out.

"Trucking is not a homogenous industry," says David Bradley, CTA's CEO. "There are all kinds of issues relating to the type and weight of the commodity being shipped, the distance, the region of the country, etc., that need to be considered. You can put certain rear aerodynamic fairings on a van trailer, for instance, but not on a flatdeck."

Bradley also pointed out some of the fuel-saving devices widely used in the US are not yet permitted in Canada.

"The current truck weights and dimensions standards in Canada were developed in the mid-1980's – long before environmental concerns became the consideration they are today," says Bradley.

"Also, while it's obviously a good idea to harmonize with the United States as much as possible, you can't simply take US standards and superimpose them on Canada," he adds. "It's not like cars which can be operated in either country; Canadian truck configurations – in terms of allowable truck weights and dimensions – are different from those in the United States. Canada tends to allow higher weights; the trucks here can carry more payload and in total attain better fuel efficiency, compared to the United States."

The CTA is also urging the federal government to provide incentives for carriers that invest in fuel-saving technologies and equipment. □



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BORDER

Bridge offer draws ire from Michigan government

Continued from page 1

at 14.1%. They also argue the project would be redundant because the state has contributed the lion's share towards the new \$230-million Gateway Project, streamlining freeway access on the US side of the Ambassador Bridge.

This debate takes place against the backdrop of Ottawa, Washington, Ontario – and Michigan, in principle – years ago, having joined extensively in the planning of DRIC. The connecting freeway links, the locations of the new Customs plazas, and the bridge location, have all been chosen. Construction has already started in Windsor on the nine-kilometre Windsor-Essex Parkway – a sunken, six-lane freeway connecting Hwy. 401 to the bridge.

In Michigan, the current debate hinges on a bill to approve public private partnerships (P3s) for highway construction.

That bill was passed by the state transportation committee April 29. Now it goes to the state senate, where Republicans, who hold a majority, are reluctant to pass it, especially if it includes a project on DRIC's scale.

"I'll tell you, number one, take the DRIC project out, you'll have a lot more support," Representative Marty Knollenberg said.

The legislators fear taxpayers will be on the hook for financing if a P3 investor defaults. They also question whether estimated traffic volumes for the DRIC bridge are sufficient

to recoup investors' money.

The legislators say the \$550-million Canadian offer would not pay for the bridge itself. It would only cover costs on the Michigan side of the river for constructing a Customs plaza and access road to Interstate 75.

State Representative Paul Opsommer said the \$550 million offer was "clouding" the debate. He said the offer should not influence the P3 issue, "just because Canada now wants to loan us \$550 million dollars – money that it will make back by tolling our drivers."

State representative Tom Pearce also noted: "The \$550 million has nothing to do with the building of the bridge."

In a separate matter, the offer was also slammed by the competing Detroit International Bridge Co., which owns the Ambassador Bridge, and has long argued it has sufficient capacity – especially with a proposed new six-lane span – to handle future border traffic.

Bridge president Dan Stamper accused Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm of having "caused Canada to offer to buy Michigan's future for \$550 million...Michigan is not and should not be for sale." He also said the governor was aiming to "destroy" the company "that has paid state taxes since the early 1920s."

And, for the first time, the race card was introduced.

Bridge lawyer Patrick Moran accused the Canadian government of "using its legislative power inappropriately to discriminate against an Arab-American businessman who has owned and operated the Ambassador Bridge for more than 30 years."

The owner is Matthew (Matty) Maroun, born in Detroit and who is of Lebanese descent.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador Bridge has also filed a NAFTA complaint over the \$550-million offer, saying DRIC would divert traffic from the bridge, the Windsor-Detroit tunnel and the Blue Water Bridge between Sarnia and Pt. Huron.

"The Canadian government is using its power inappropriately to coerce the Michigan Legislature into adopting legislation necessary to ensure the implementation of the DRIC project," it said in a statement.

Transport Minister Baird said he was "not going to speculate" about what would happen should the Michigan legislature reject P3 financing and therefore whether his government would offer more money to cover bridge construction costs. He said he will be travelling to the Detroit area in the next few weeks to lobby for DRIC.

Asked if his government would compensate the Ambassador Bridge should DRIC get built, the minister gave an emphatic "no" saying there are other examples where the public and private sectors compete. □

CSA delayed

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) says it will delay implementation of its new CSA 2010 carrier safety rating system until the fall.

CSA 2010 was initially supposed to be rolled out in July. In the Federal Register, the FMCSA detailed its new roll-out plans, which were changed in light of "valuable feedback" received by the agency during a series of recent listening sessions.

"FMCSA has decided to move the beginning of CSA 2010 rollout from the summer to the fall of 2010," the FMCSA wrote in the Federal Register. "This will enable the Agency to incorporate comments and lessons learned into the CSA 2010 model prior to national roll-out."

On Nov. 30, FMCSA will begin replacing the current SafeStat system, issue warning letters to carriers and implement a new Inspection Selection System for roadside inspectors.

To see the full statement, visit <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-8183.pdf>. □

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(3) "New" 53' UTILITY DX DRY FREIGHT VANS



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translucent roof, extra lights, Hendrickson air ride
suspension, aluminum wheels, loaded.

(5) "New" 53' TRIDEM UTILITY REEFER VANS



Hendrickson air ride suspension with 6' and 6' spreads,
stainless rear doors, overlays, door hardware and bumper,
16" aluminum scuff liner quad door lock rods, heavy duty
flat floor, Armortuf side walls, 1 row recessed "E" track,
Michelin XZE 22.5 tires.

(10) 2006 UTILITY 53' DRY FREIGHT VANS



Hendrickson air ride suspension, logistic posts, some
with translucent roofs, some with aluminum roofs, all
trailers are clean and certified condition.

(4) 2007 WABASH 53' REEFERS



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CANADA

A natural solution?

Producers, industry look to government to help ease gas pains – naturally

By Jim Bray
CALGARY, Alta. – Could natural gas capture mainstream acceptance as a fuel of choice for Canada’s transportation industry?

It depends on many things, including whether or not natural gas remains abundant and affordable and if the conversion to natural gas equipment can be made attractive enough to the industry.

Thanks to breakthroughs in development and drilling technology, coupled with discoveries of major new gas sources, there’s plenty of the stuff available.

“We’ve got all this gas,” says Alan Boras, spokesman for natural gas producer EnCana, “so the question becomes, what do we do with it? Our view is to expand the use of natural gas in our economy.”

A gas producer pushing gas may not surprise the least cynical among humanity, but arguments can be made that a move toward natural gas could make business sense.

Natural gas – whether compressed (CNG) or liquefied (LNG) – has been little more than an interesting novelty in the transportation industry. Boras says heating and electric power generation are the major markets for natural gas currently and, while he thinks there are opportunities there, the area with the most growth potential is transportation: of the 250 million vehicles Boras estimates are on North American roads today, only some 100,000 or so are fueled by natural gas.

Depending on where you live and work, moving to natural gas could also be a proactive way to keep a step ahead of The Man. Boras says alternative fuels such as LNG are being pushed in California even as you read this. “They wanted to address some of the air issues around the Port of Los Angeles,” he says, “So they called for the use of LNG vehicles to clean up the air and have far lower emissions compared to diesel and gasoline.”

Boras claims the emissions from natural gas vehicles are 25-30% less than those of conventional vehicles

and particulates are way down as well, “so the advantage is you get a very competitive price, you get better environmental benefits and then there’s the economic spin-off.”

The economic spin-off of which Boras speaks is a plentiful, North America-based energy source as an alternative to buying foreign oil. Boras says “the dollars that would go to buy oil would then go into endeavours here, with jobs staying on the continent.”

Ah, but there’s the chicken and there’s the egg, and which came first? Natural gas vehicles and a natural gas infrastructure are unlikely to spring from the ground, fully formed. Existing vehicles may have to be retrofitted, new vehicles created, and places to refuel offered before we’re awash in a natural gas-powered future.

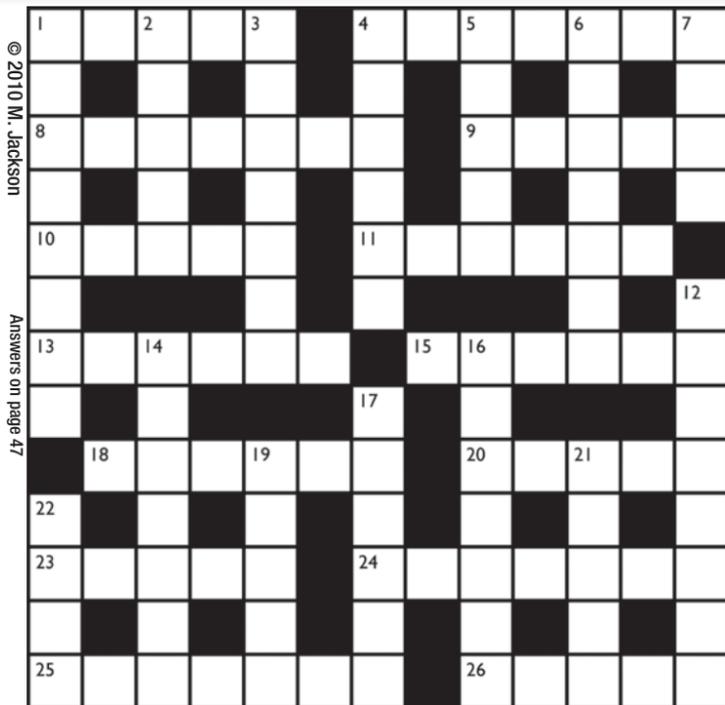
EnCana envisions natural gas corridors along the 401 through Ontario and Quebec in the east and between Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver in the west – the routes with the heaviest commercial traffic. “We looked at the main transportation corridors where the large populations are in Canada,” Boras says, “and we have approached the federal government with the idea of coming up with a policy that would support development of the infrastructure.”

Such a “pipe dream” would require the establishment of facilities to compress the gas and then fuel up the trucks at key locations along the long-haul corridors. And it would probably have to happen before fleet owners show much interest in converting their equipment over to natural gas.

Still, it’s an idea whose time may come. According to Stephen Laskowski, vice-president of the Ontario Trucking Association, the industry is already looking into various alternative propulsion devices – whether they be hybrid-electric, fuel cell or gas – as well as tweaks such as new tire and aerodynamic technologies. But there are many speed bumps ahead.

“You’ve got to look at it from the carriers’ perspective,” Laskowski says. “They’re in the business of re-

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Across

1. Trucked goods, generically
4. Eighteen wheelers (3,4)
8. Used-truck transactions
9. Monster Truck show venue
10. Canadian pumps' diesel-fuel unit
11. Non-standard item on new truck
13. Halifax-based transport company
15. Cab and chassis without powertrain
18. Chassis and wheel-bearing lube
20. Canadian-flag leaf
23. Daily log, a.k.a. ____ book
24. Sterling model launched in '99
25. Purolator hub location in GTA
26. Succumbs to corrosion

Down

1. Diesel-dispenser type (4,4)
2. Trip-odometer button
3. Engine incontinence (3,4)
4. Bean Town
5. New Hamburg, ON-based carrier
6. Seasonal northern route (3,4)
7. Device placed on in-bond trailer
12. SoCal's Ventura, Harbor and Hollywood
14. Ford's top '96 Class 8 offering
16. Speed ____, engine-control device
17. Diesel counterpart to gasoline octane
19. An aluminum-wheel brand
21. Labour's partner on truck-repair invoice
22. Gross combined weight rating, briefly (1,1,1,1)

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turn on investment so if they're going to spend more on capital pieces of equipment they need to know the return on that. That's probably the role of government, to shorten that return on investment, especially in the early stages."

Laskowski says government could help facilitate a natural gas alternative by providing "some type of capital incentive or an operating incentive for the carriers to move toward this type of equipment."

EnCana's Boras envisions a couple of possible incentives. "Government funds could go to the cost of converting existing trucks or to the purchase of new vehicles with engines built to run on natural gas," he says, "and investment could go to people who want to establish the infrastructure, namely the fueling stations along those corridors."

Boras points out that the natural gas piping network goes to all major cities in the country already, so it's just a matter of adding "the fueling component and the vehicle – and you aren't building a whole new vehicle, just changing the powerplant and the fuel that's used."

In the meantime, there's no rule that says natural gas fueling stations have to appear as if by magic at all service centres at once.

"That may be something you do down the road," Boras says, "but in the shorter term when you don't have an infrastructure, you look to fleet vehicles that return home every night – taxi cabs, garbage trucks and the like."

Boras also sees natural gas as a way to lower one's carbon footprint, which could make it attractive for government participation. "If you convert your home to more energy-efficient appliances, such as your furnace and windows," he says, "there are government programs to support you. This is the same kind of thing. If the government decides it's important to do this, then they could come up with programs that would support it."

And the OTA's Laskowski points out that "they have (them) for manufacturing equipment today, so certain types of manufacturing equipment that meet environmental criteria receive very favourable tax treatment and that encourages investment. I think that's what you need with alternative fuels and engines and I think the government does have to step up and take a role here."

Perhaps governments could just reduce taxes overall, leaving more in the corporate account for owners and operators to do with as fits their priorities.

"I do think there may be some who advocate that," Laskowski says. "But if you want specific measures and specific actions you need specific approaches within the tax system."

As for natural gas itself, "we currently have no board position," Laskowski says. "Typically, every alternative fuel or propulsion system technology has its own unique challenges and the market should decide."

Boras says the reaction from governments so far has been positive, though no commitment has been made. He says EnCana has been speaking to the federal and provincial governments in Canada as well as the federal and state governments in the US. "It's one of those cases where people are learning about it, trying to understand what it's about, what

it would take, how it would fit their business and how it would fit government policy. In our view they're very receptive."

And of course the Obama administration is all ears when it comes to green things.

"We're a member of a group that has been active in Washington, talking about the benefits of natural gas, contributing funds and talking to legislators down there about how to expand the use of natural gas in the US," Boras says.

Government participation or not, a conversion to natural gas is obviously not going to happen overnight, yet Boras is confident.

"Sooner or later you have to replace your trucks," he says, "and if this concept is up and running and feasible then why not look at it? If you have the facilities in place – for example you return to a central fueling place each night and you want to convert some of your fleet incrementally – it could be very beneficial."

The OTA's Laskowski says that if natural gas is going to be a long-term answer, there are short-term issues that have to be dealt with to carriers' satisfaction before they're likely to put their money where their trucks are. These include the reliability of the gas network itself, the return a carrier can expect on its investment and what operating challenges there are.

"Even if the tax policy was changed the way we'd like," he says, "no-one's going to go out tomorrow and retrofit their whole fleet of vehicles. They're going to test them and use it as a testing sounding board." □

CTA calls on rail to improve service, reliability

OTTAWA, Ont. – The Canadian trucking industry is calling on rail to get its act together so the two modes can work together and provide reliable intermodal service to shippers.

The point was made by the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) in a submission to a panel formed by the federal government as part of its rail freight service review. In a CTA survey, 82% of respondents said they were not pleased with the current level of service provided by Canada's Class 1 railways. Common complaints included: wait times at intermodal terminals, unreliable on-time performance and the application of demurrage fees.

"Some trucking companies would like to move more freight over rail if only the conditions could be made more palatable," said CTA CEO David Bradley. "Some who have tried have given up in frustration over service issues. If all supply chain partners work together and live up to their service obligations, the freight transportation system as a whole will become more efficient, to the benefit of Canadian manufacturers, importers, exporters and consumers."

The CTA suggested the railways create action plans to respond to the anticipated recommendations of the panel and that improvements be overseen by the Canadian Transportation Agency. The CTA, however, warned against imposing legislative or regulatory fixes.

"Trucking is a bastion of free market competition, and we are loathe to suggest that bureaucratic structures be put in place that would regulate the relationship between business partners," said Bradley. □

CTA launches cargo crime study

OTTAWA, Ont. – The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), working in partnership with the provincial trucking associations, law enforcement and representatives from the insurance industry, has launched a study to examine cargo crime activity in Canada and explore possible solutions.

"The purpose of this study is to identify the trends in cargo crime across the country, identify best practices in combating cargo crime, and develop an action plan for the private and public sector to address this important issue," said CTA CEO David Bradley.

CTA officials said that though the law enforcement, insurance and carrier communities have all taken steps towards addressing the problem of cargo crime, the efforts are not coordinated, which has hindered the creation of a nationwide strategy to deal with the issue.

"This study will be the first of its kind in Canada and will provide CTA with an action roadmap to address cargo crime," added Bradley.

The study will be completed this summer, with results to be discussed at a workshop in Toronto Oct. 5. □

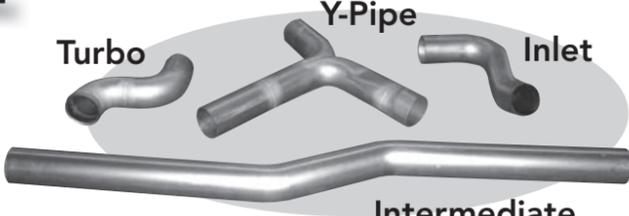
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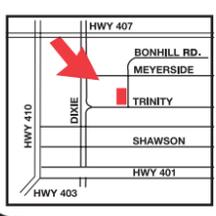
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CANADA

Canadian ground transportation rates increase

TORONTO, Ont. – The latest Canadian General Freight Index data continues to suggest that ground transportation rates have stabilized.

February's results show a 1.6% increase in ground transportation rates

for Canadian shippers, offsetting a similar decline in January, according to Nulogx, the company that created and maintains the index. Base rates, excluding fuel surcharges, increased 2.1% in February, the index indicates.

“February’s results are essentially at the same level as the last quarter of 2009 with less than a 0.5% overall variance,” says Dr. Alan Saipe, president of Supply Chain Surveys.

“These results confirm our opinion that rates are stabilizing within the marketplace as both shippers and

carriers adjust to the current economic situation,” adds Doug Payne, president of Nulogx. “We expect that cost reductions resulting from market factors will become more elusive for shippers in the coming months.”

More info on the index is available at www.cgfi.ca. □



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EAST

By Carroll McCormick
SAINT JOHN, N.B. – It seems improbable that governments would allow the Princess of Acadia to cease plying the waters between Digby, Nova Scotia and Saint John, New Brunswick. But after pulling the plug on the CAT ferry between Yarmouth and Maine last year, it is clearly a real possibility that they might also let the Digby-Saint John service die.

For years, Northumberland Ferries profitably ran the CAT and Princess of Acadia after taking over the money-losing operation from Marine Atlantic in 1997, according to Don Cormier, vice-president operations and safety management, Northumberland Ferries Ltd./Bay Ferries Ltd.

But then the tide turned against Bay Ferries; ie., the collapse of the forestry industry in Nova Scotia was largely responsible for a drop in truck traffic from a historic high of 26,000 to just 10,000 tractor-trailer trips in 2009.

Goodbye Ferry?

Another Maritime ferry is in peril

Since 2006, the Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and federal governments have subsidized the Princess of Acadia: Money already given and money pledged, \$23.1 million in all, will keep the ferry running until Jan. 31, 2011. What will happen after that?

“Currently the company and service is meeting expectations in a very different business climate. There is recognition from governments that this service requires public monies to operate,” Cormier says.

“We don’t want hand-outs. We are proud of our accomplishments. It is not how we want to do our busi-

ness (taking hand-outs). But from a matter of public policy, if a private company cannot sustain this route, it is a good public policy to support ferry infrastructure. They are public highways, they are lifelines to communities the same way as asphalt highways.”

Carriers that use the ferry heartily agree.

“I think it is a vital piece of transportation in this area which we do not want to lose. There is a lot of product going back and forth,” says Brent Chamberlain, manager of Acadian Wipers in Digby.

The Nova Scotia fishing industry is worth \$300 million a year. Many

companies depend on the ferry to get their catch to US markets without delay.

“We bring in boats in the morning, process and pack the fish. It is ready to ship by four o’clock. It is on the New England market by 5:30 the next morning,” says Denny Morrow, executive director of the Nova Scotia Fish Packers Association, which has 59 member companies.

“The Princess of Acadia is part of our business plan. We put \$200 million worth of seafood a year on the ferry.”

Were the ferry to cease operations, trucks could drive around the Bay of Fundy.

That, however, takes six to eight hours extra travel time and requires either a rest stop or an extra driver. This is no way to bring fragile produce to markets that demand freshness.

“Once lobster is out of the water, it is on life support,” Morrow says.

Governments are trying to figure out what to do.

In 2007, Transport Canada issued a Request for Expression of Interest (REI) to see who might be interested in running the service. Seven companies, including Bay Ferries, responded.

“The REI was a process by which the government could answer the question whether anyone has a credible business plan to offer this ferry service without public funding. None of the other participants in the REI had a privately-funded, viable business plan with a positive bottom line,” Cormier says.

There is talk of returning the service to public ownership, but is that wise? In the last fiscal year that Marine Atlantic operated the Princess of Acadia, it lost \$7 million, according to Cormier.

“The only logic to contemplating that is if public ownership was required to access a different source of funding. We believe the private sector-driven model is the preferred one.”

It is about 69 kms from Digby to Saint John as the crow flies.

It is unthinkable that Transport Canada would shut down a 69-km section of the Trans-Canada or any other highway for failing to survive some cost-benefit analysis, but this very thinking threatens the Princess of Acadia route.

Still, notes Cormier, “I think governments recognize, to some extent, that analogy, that ferries, like all highways, need public support, regardless of any particular stretch’s profitability.”

The federal government, through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), has commissioned a South West Nova Scotia Transportation Study, which includes a look at the ferry service. ACOA published an interim report this February.

It underscores the importance of the ferry to the fisheries industry, but notes that the forestry industry is unlikely to rebound.

The final report was supposed to be issued this spring, but it has yet to surface.

“We are still waiting on it,” Morrow says.

“When we get the report we will be heading to Ottawa to do some hard talking.” □



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QUEBEC

Carroll McCormick
MONTREAL, Que. – Some truckers, heads plugged with horror stories, are nervous about coming into Quebec: lots of tickets, big fines, drivers chucked in jail, etc.

There may be a grain of truth in some of the tales swirling around truck stop coffee pots, but drivers reap roughly what they sow, according to Arnold Yetman, a carrier enforcement officer with Control Routier Quebec.

“We don’t just do things (like fine drivers and take them off the road) and let them figure out themselves what to do,” he insists.

Control Routier officers have some discretion in just what fines they levy, and how they write up tickets.

“We can give a \$480 fine for not checking a box on a log book. But I don’t feel right doing that. We take each case on its own,” Yetman says. “Recently, a driver from the States was scared shitless that we stopped him. He had heard

Crossing the line

Happy trucking into Quebec is mostly preparation and a good attitude

so many horror stories. We could have fined him personally for an infraction, but we did not. He was so surprised.”

In the face of a sure ticket, the best thing a driver can do is stay calm and respectful.

Asking for trouble

“We can give one infraction, none, or three or four, if the person is asking for it. I had one driver literally ask for the fines. I won’t tell you what he said before that. We try to give tickets that the trucks merit.

If we fined for every infraction, we would be giving out tickets all day long,” says Yetman.

Going bonkers is useless. “Sometimes people say bad things, even make death threats. And that is a criminal infraction,” Yetman warns.

In a given year, Control Routier might stop 88,000 Quebec-plated trucks, 3,500 from Ontario, 18,000 from New Brunswick, a scattering from the other provinces and a couple thousand from the United States.

Certain problems with out-of-

province rigs come up over and over, like being overweight during the spring thaw.

The biggest infraction from Ontario is having an axle overweight, or exceeding the GVW: Control Routier hands out about 5,000 overweight tickets a year.

Spring thaw

“In Ontario they do not have a thaw period for highways. (Ontario truckers) have a hard time adjusting to (our) thaw period. In Quebec, the reduced weights apply to all roads: highway and city. I have spoken to the Ontario Trucking Association repeatedly in the last couple of years, but the situation still does not seem to have changed very much,” Yetman says.

Drivers sometimes get hot-headed because their company will not send anyone out to help fix the load. They sometimes have to redistribute the load themselves, which they do not like at all.

The next biggest infraction against out-of-province trucks is for mechanical defects, resulting in about 3,800 tickets a year.

“Usually the most common infraction is a general bad mechanical condition; for example, one or two major defects and several minor defects. This shows they are not taking care of their vehicles. We usually remove these vehicles from the road. Drivers really love us for that,” Yetman says.

One truck, Yetman recalls, did not have any brakes. Sometimes he sees trucks that are literally falling apart.

Drivers frequently have problems with their log books, and this is a good time to be on your best behaviour.

“We are just doing our job, and if drivers do theirs too, they will do well by us. A lot of companies do not teach their drivers how to complete their pre-trip inspections, or how to complete their log books. We spend a lot of time explaining log books,” Yetman explains.

Unfortunately, he adds, “We take a lot of drivers out of service.

“I did have a driver from the States push it in my face that his log book was legal where he came from in the US. His book did not show where he stopped, what he was doing or his hours.”

Watch your language

It is true that some out-of-province trucks are frequent targets for enforcement officers, but not without reason: They know, for example, that some trucking companies are involved with the transport of illegal tobacco, and they get checked more often.

Drivers of out-of-province trucks hauling oversized loads often cannot get their act fully together; i.e., forgetting to switch at the border to the red and white banner with the big “D” on it (that’s French for dimensional). The yellow banner “wide load” is illegal.

Getting stopped can be stressful, but there is no point in making matters worse.

“We want to get drivers back on the road. We even contact companies to come help them. We are helpful,” Yetman says. “People expect a bad time and discover that it isn’t as bad as they thought.” □



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ONTARIO

Women in Transportation aims to put women behind the wheel

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – With the devastating recession not quite a distant memory, trucking companies are cautiously beginning to turn their attention back to hiring drivers. Indeed, some fleets are already reporting they're having trouble finding quality drivers, which brings back memories of the early 2000s when competition for drivers was fierce and a lack of quality drivers was one of the most pressing issues facing the trucking industry.

As the economy rebounds, a new group in Ontario is hoping to help, by training women for careers as drivers in hopes the industry will turn to this oft-overlooked pool as a partial solution to the looming driver shortage.

Jane Wilson, director of women services with MicroSkills, offers a

variety of reasons why companies should consider hiring female drivers.

"I think women are interested," she said. "Women are well-prepared. Women, from what I understand, have the potential to be, and many are, excellent drivers. From what I hear, women are very excellent students as well and they really do pick up important aspects of driver training. I understand that women as well, because of their backgrounds in other sectors, possess experience and skills that can create value for their employers, including customer service, versatility and flexibility. I've also heard that women take excellent care of their vehicles and are very detail-oriented."

So they make good hires, but the question remains, why would women want a career in the male-

dominated transportation industry? Wilson said candidates are pre-screened to ensure they know what they're getting into and are aware of the challenges they'll face in the industry. That way, employers can rest assured any graduates of the Women in Transportation program are likely to stick around.

The program has churned out one group of graduates so far, who are now enjoying careers, mostly as D/Z-licensed drivers. The program has a number of partner employers, so-called 'employment specialists' who are committed to helping graduates find employment after they graduate. Employers include companies such as Purolator Courier and the Toronto Transit Commission.

However, Wilson is hopeful some candidates will opt to upgrade to an A/Z and find employment in the

trucking industry.

"The majority are trained with the D/Z, but we are also offering the opportunity for those who are interested and who are a good fit with the lifestyle, to move ahead with an A/Z licence," Wilson said.

Ladies entering the Women in Transportation program come from all walks of life. Some are immigrants with driving experience in other countries. Others are looking for a second career and others still are women looking to enter the workforce for the first time. Before they're accepted, they must demonstrate driving proficiency. Humber College provides the pre-screening evaluations.

Humber also helped develop the training curriculum. Once accepted into the 20-week program, the women will receive an overview of the sector, acquire training in workplace health and safety, CPR and customer service. They'll also receive plenty of behind-the-wheel training.

The end result is a well-trained driver who's enthusiastic about embarking on a career in transportation, Wilson said. For information about the program or to provide employment opportunities to graduates, contact Chris Faulk at 416-247-7181, ext. 2277. You can also find more information online at www.microskills.ca and watch for an interview with Wilson on an upcoming episode of our WebTV show *Transportation Matters*, airing weekly on Trucknews.com. □

Truckers' spirits still improving

TORONTO, Ont. – The Ontario Trucking Association's quarterly Business e-Pluse Survey shows a growing number of Ontario trucking company executives are optimistic about the immediate future.

A total of 72% of respondents said they are optimistic about the industry's overall prospects for the next three months, up 20% from the previous quarterly survey. Only 10% of respondents said they were pessimistic.

That represents the highest level of optimism since the OTA began the survey in the third quarter of 2008, the association notes. At that time, only 17% of carriers were optimistic about the coming quarter.

Optimism has grown steadily in every survey since the second quarter of 2009, with the optimists outnumbering the pessimists for the first time in the third quarter of 2009. Optimists finally became the majority in the first quarter of this year. The OTA said most fleet optimism is due to the recovery of the domestic economy, with 58% reporting an increase in intra-Ontario freight volumes and 65% noting an improvement in inter-provincial volumes. Last quarter, only 29% and 25% were reporting improvements, respectively.

Ontario fleet optimism is being held back by continued worries about the US economy, however. Only 26% of respondents said they've seen cross-border volume improvements over the past three months. □

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vehicle inspection; and an obstacle course.

Five classes of competition will be held: straight truck; single-axle tractor with single-axle trailer; single-axle tractor with tandem-axle trailer; tandem-axle tractor with tandem-axle trailer; and B-train.

The top four drivers in each class will move on to compete in the provincials in Milton later in the year and winners from that event will then go on to compete in the National Truck Driving Championships to be held in Manitoba this fall. For more info, visit www.cortdc.com. □



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ONTARIO

Iconic retailers in-house currency may lure clients

Continued from page 1

their stores in the towns alongside the highway.

It's rare to see a big truck tanking up at these highway stops. It's usually someone who is low on fuel or a lost American driver who doesn't know the location of the next truck stop. But the lure of the cash coupons may be incentive enough. Canadians are intimately familiar with the moustached Scotsman mascot "Sandy McTire," and CTC execs are hoping American motorists will be just as keen on the currency.

According to CTC folklore, the idea of giving in-house cash coupons for gas sales was the inspiration of Muriel Billes, wife of founder A.J. Billes. In the late 1950s, big oil companies were offering dishes and towels as bonuses to customers. Muriel thought that CTC patrons would like to receive vouchers that could be used in any of the stores. The first Canadian Tire money was introduced at the Yonge and Davenport gas bar in Toronto in 1958. It quickly caught on and became part of our culture.

During the mid-'80s, when the concept of "happy hours" (half-priced booze) was going viral in Ontario taverns and watering holes, some of the bars promoted Canadian Tire Happy Hours and openly accepted the bills in payment for drinks.



PREMIUM PRICES: Though the diesel pumps at the new service centres won't be high-speed pumps or a cardlock system, fuel is expected to be competitively priced, according to Canadian Tire officials. *Photo by Gary Morton*

CTC money is still highly regarded and collectable. Numismatists anxiously await new issues, and rare editions of the bills can be worth hundreds of dollars. Most suburban or rural Canadians have fat wads of Canadian Tire money somewhere in their dresser or kitchen drawers. Last month the *Wingham Free Press* reported that a break-in at a house in Mitchell, Ont. had netted thieves a Wii game and "over \$100 of Canadian Tire money was also taken."

CTC has always had a close relationship with its transport providers (Canada Cartage has been hauling their loads for decades). At one time, it was the best-paying job you could get as an owner/operator in Canada. By the time I started working there in the '80s and '90s, banging cans around the Brampton warehouse and delivering them to CN and CP intermodal terminals, the fleet of beautiful rigs and proud independent contractors were just about phased-out.

Not surprisingly, CTC wants lots of work from trucking providers. Their analysts break an hour into six-minute segments so they can evaluate each work unit in decimals. While I was working there, they expected drivers to pre-trip CTC tractors before going on the clock. And they gave us 10 minutes to drop and hook in the yard which was no easy feat when you're dealing with thousands of trailers, some of them blocked in two deep.

However, CTC's perseverance and thriftiness has been its own reward. Beside a network of 475 franchise stores across the country, it operates its own bank, Canadian Tire Financial Services, and has a reciprocal agreement with Mastercard. Its Mark's Work Warehouse outlet stores also stretch from sea to sea.

But it's also had its share of debacles. Older patrons might recall a time when CanTire's auto parts were second-rate and the hired help was untrained and helpless. Over the years, CTC has tried twice to break into the US market and failed both times: first in the 1980s by acquiring the White Auto Store chain, based primarily in Texas, which eventually cost them \$200 million to fold; and in 1991 when they attempted to start the Auto Source chain in the US with ambitious plans to open 100-plus stores in the mid-west, which



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cost it \$80.6 million when it was sold at a loss.

Patrons may humorously call it 'Crappy Tire,' but the iconic brand's connection with this country has deep roots. Alongside Tim Horton's, Canadian Tire is the most recognized brand in the country. The first catalogue was issued in 1928, and most of us began a relationship with the retailer at a young age. My dad bought me my first hockey stick from there while I was still a preschooler at that same Yonge and Davenport flagship store. Customers would fill out slips with their purchase numbers and order-pickers would dash about on roller skates in the basement and send the items up on a conveyor belt. This was fascinating to a four-year-old.

According to Wikipedia, it is estimated that 85% of Canadians live within a 15-minute drive of a CTC store, and that nine out of 10 Canadians will shop at the store at least twice a year.

And while share prices have declined slightly over the last five years, CanTire seems poised to weather the storms caused by retailer giants like Wal-Mart and Home Depot. Most CTC stores are recently renovated, and although the displays seem unfocused and directed towards impulse-buying, the formula seems to work. I stopped at the massive Stockyards store in Toronto recently to buy some Allen keys and came away with paper towels, bird seed, laundry detergent and two bags of sheep manure.

But it's not clear how the CTC highway fuel bars will benefit truck drivers. Truckers aren't mentioned in the press releases, and spokesperson Mills told me that their interest is not "predominantly" commercial drivers. Rather, she says, they are looking to the "consumer" as their primary focus.

Most people don't realize that trucks outnumber four-wheelers on the highways at night, and we use those service centres 24/7. Furthermore, most truckers love to browse in the aisles of a Canadian Tire store. No doubt we will buy windshield wipers and anti-freeze at their kiosks, but perhaps CTC execs will eventually understand that truck drivers are a captive niche market that could be very good for business.

Regardless, anything is better than the current portable washrooms and vending machines in trailers. According to Goyette of HMS Host, when Phase One is completed in September, Wi-Fi connections will be available at the first seven centres, and we can look forward to "enhanced and diverse food offerings - including healthy options."

I don't know about that. The line-up for the first phase reads pretty much like standard fast food fare: A&W, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Pizza, Taco Bell, and Tim Horton's. And just like the old days, how much do you want to bet that Tim's will be the only food vendor open at night? *Plus ça change...* □



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ONTARIO

Truck World wrap-up

TORONTO, Ont. – If you can gauge the health of the trucking industry by the mood at the truck shows, then things have indeed improved. As was the case at the Mid-America Trucking Show in March, Canada's own Truck World was ripe with enthusiasm and a sense that the worst of the economic downturn was behind us.

This sentiment was evidenced not only verbally and anecdotally, but also by the fact there were arguably more new products making their debut at Truck World than in recent memory.

Here's a rundown of items that caught our attention:

Alutrec unveiled a new lightweight aluminum flatdeck trailer that it says weighs in at just 6,950 lbs, providing about 2,500 lbs of extra payload compared to the average aluminum trailer and weighing 1,500 lbs less than Alutrec's standard offering.

The Capacity trailer was tested by FPIInnovations as part of its Energotest project and saved 6-9% fuel compared to other flatdecks, the company announced. The new trailer also offers a lower deck for additional volume, providing more than 100 inches of height, said Alutrec's Jean Fournier.

He also said the trailer has a con-

centrated load rating of 60,000 lbs in four feet and has 1,000 fewer parts than traditional flatdeck trailers.

"That's 1,000 less parts to worry about," he said. The Capacity trailer is in a pre-launch stage. The first 50 sold will involve a follow-up program, where Alutrec will work with the customer to collect data and make any necessary enhancements.

There was a new driver simulator on display which featured stunning graphics and is made in Canada to boot. The **Virage VS600M** is modeled on a standard truck cab and features a motion/vibration system for added realism as well as surround sound.

But it's the visuals that really grab one's attention. The system features a 180-degree forward view plus rear-view mirrors. The graphics reproduce city, highway, industrial, farmland and mountainous environments.

Three high-resolution 52-inch displays show graphics in 1,980 x 1,080 pixels. For more info on the new simulator, visit www.viragesimulation.com.



El Cargo was at the show to debut its new 651-MF Multi-Flip tarp system for vocational trucks. The system operates from front to back using arms

on each side of the dump box. When fully-opened, the electrically-operated tarp allows loading access from either side, the company says.

The vinyl top covers dump boxes up to 32-feet long with a 12-inch overlap on each side to protect against the elements.

For more info, call 877-353-3560.

Shell Canada officially kicked off a new contest that asks professional drivers to nominate Canada's toughest roads. The Rotella Challenge is now on, and will reward a grand prize winner a trip to the fall Nascar race in Charlotte, N.C.

Other prizes are available as well, including Shell gas cards, Rotella-branded merchandise and other prizes. To enter, drivers can visit www.RotellaChallenge.com and submit their information.

The contest runs through Aug. 31.

Shell also provided on-site instant oil analysis at the show, using the company's On-Site Oil Analysis Machine. Shell was able to analyze oil in about 10 minutes using just a few drops of used oil.

If you didn't bring an oil sample with you to the show, the service is also offered at participating Rotella Express sites across Canada.

ArvinMeritor made a big splash with its Meritor MOR-32 heavy-duty single drive rear axle for shunt trucks, which was displayed on a Tico terminal tractor belonging to B.C. Ferry Services.

The company said Tico of Canada Intermodal is the first to offer the axle on port and terminal tractors. It's available immediately on Tico

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Pro Spotter tractors.

“This new axle takes durability and cost-effectiveness up a notch. It delivers the quality and reliability that Tico of Canada customers expect from a Pro Spotter tractor,” said Mark Schneider, business unit director for off-highway, ArvinMeritor. “The Meritor MOR-32 axle reflects our commitment to increasing asset utilization and reducing maintenance costs in demanding port and terminal environments.”

The Meritor MOR-32 is a 32 metric tonne-rated planetary rear drive axle built to handle heavy payloads. It’s available in a range of axle ratios from 8.5 to 24.8 to optimize fuel efficiency and performance, the company announced at the show. Meritor made the claim that the axle can handle up to 20,000 lbs more payload than other offerings. For further info, contact Tico’s Aidan Bolger at 905-267-0207.

There was also plenty of new iron on display at the show. **Paccar** showcased its new MX engine for the first time in Canada. Peterbilt had two new trucks on display, including the new Model 587 which attracted a steady crowd (we know, because the Peterbilt display was directly across from the *Truck News* booth)! The new Model 382 also made its Canadian debut.

Kenworth had its new T700 on display at the show. It too was introduced at the Mid-America Trucking Show in March and made its Canadian debut at Truck World.

Other new products from the OEMs first introduced at Mid-America and then launched to the Canadian market at Truck World included the International ProStar+ and the Mack mDrive automated transmission.



Fontaine Fifth Wheel and **Fontaine Parts Connection** also introduced some new products at Truck World, including four new models.

“We have worked very closely with our customers to develop new fifth wheels that meet their increasing requirements for strength, durability, reliability and safety,” said Henry Bell, president of Fontaine Fifth Wheel. “In doing so, our R&D team has also found new ways to make these products lighter, more convenient and lower maintenance than other fifth wheels. They truly do go beyond the ordinary.”

Displayed at Truck World were the new: Fontaine Ultra NS, which the company claims to be the only fifth wheel to offer infinite, automatic slack adjustment; the Fontaine Ultra LT, which it dubs the lightest-weight fifth wheel slider system available; the Fontaine Ultra HD, a lighter-weight, heavy-duty fifth wheel for severe-service applications; and the Fontaine Ultra HR, a direct replacement for competitive standard-duty fifth wheel top plates.

In Canada, the products are marketed in partnership with Pro Force Marketing. You can find out more at www.fifthwheel.com or by calling 800-874-9780.

It wasn’t just new products and equipment that was showcased at Truck World. Through a new program called Road Trip, the **Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council** (CTHRC) showcased the industry’s career opportunities to area high school students.

“Road Trip highlights the wide variety of opportunities that the trucking industry has to offer,” said CTHRC project manager Tamara Miller. “In addition to introducing participants to specific career options and similar occupations, the new tools clearly explain the essential skills that are required to perform these roles.”

Students were hosted by OTA Road Knights who took them on a guided tour of the show, stopping by select booth to learn about specific career opportunities. About 80 students took part, according to the CTHRC.

Avaal Technology Solutions showcased careers available in information technology while Volvo Trucks Canada discussed occupations in manufacturing. Trimac Transportation ex-

plained the opportunities behind the wheel and Bison Transport showcased the roles of drivers and dispatchers.

Challenger Motor Freight informed the students about careers in safety and human resources. And Centennial College discussed its modified apprenticeship program.

“Road Trip has the potential of giving many high school students their first real exposure to career options in the trucking industry,” said Miller. “And the format lets industry partners bring the information to life.”

And as always, the folks from **NAL Insurance** were busy raising money for Make a Wish through their highly-popular Trucking for Wishes program.

The highlight of NAL’s activities included the head shaving of Challenger Motor Freight operations manager Bruce McGray. McGray was taking part in the Trucking for Wishes ‘Go Blue, Go Bald’ program. He first dyed his hair blue for the week-and-a-half leading up to Truck World and



then had his hair shaved completely off in front of a large crowd at the show.

Challenger’s driver services manager Tanya Theroux donned the clippers and shaved McGray down. Leading up to the show, McGray and his Challenger co-workers were able to raise about \$5,000 for Trucking for Wishes.

For more info on the program, visit www.truckingforwishes.com.

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Four takeaways from tax season

It's early May as I write this, a couple of days after the federal income tax filing deadline, and I have to admit I'm tired and a little cranky. But I am clear-headed enough to make some observations about dealing with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) over the past few months. Here are some lessons learned:

The squeaky wheel gets the grease

If you're not getting a reasonable response from CRA, enlist your accountant to review your return and help you complain about it.

A client of ours did just that. He bought a new truck and on Feb. 3 we filed a claim to refund the HST, a pretty good chunk of change. By April 15, CRA still hadn't assigned the claim to an auditor for review. Our client was

Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR



getting anxious.

We checked the paperwork for mistakes or missing information – everything looked good – and talked to the finance company, an industry specialist who patiently allowed our client to delay the balloon payment on his loan.

If step one is to review the return, and step two is to talk to anyone who might be affected by the CRA sitting on your money, step three is to make yourself heard. Between my yelling on the phone and my client jumping up and down at his local tax office, CRA finally issued his HST refund on

May 5, three months and two days from the date of the claim.

It's ridiculous. If you have an unpaid tax balance with CRA, it charges 5% interest until the amount is paid. But if your refund takes longer than normal to process, CRA pays you just 3%. How come their money is worth more than ours?

In the end, our client got \$73 interest, not even close to adequate compensation for the sweat, anxiety, and effort involved. Thank goodness for an understanding finance company.

Check the math

A few months ago I was contacted by a *Truck News* reader looking for fuel tax help. This owner/operator was on with a US-based carrier and his fuel tax charges didn't seem right, so I asked him to send

me all the details he could. We ran the mileage and fuel through our system. The carrier said the owner/operator owed fuel tax of \$1,026.12. According to our report, he should have received a small refund.

This owner/operator isn't a regular client so I don't know that we had all the information we needed or that what he provided was 100% correct. Maybe the carrier made a simple mistake. Still, there's no other way to explain a thousand-dollar difference: the owner/operator was ripped off.

It's tough for owner/operators to find time to review and organize statements and receipts – and to act when something doesn't add up. This guy did the right thing in asking for qualified help.

And yes, he moved on to another carrier that I hope will treat him and its other owner/operators better.

VDP is a BFD

Not long ago, CRA actually sent out a news release saying, "When it comes to your taxes, a clean slate means a clear conscience." Nice propaganda, eh?

Apparently, it's working. In the 2008-2009 fiscal year, 11,400 people filed applications under CRA's Voluntary Disclosures Program (VDP). That's up from 7,300 in 2005-2006.

VDP allows taxpayers to come forward and correct "inaccurate" or incomplete information, or to disclose information they never reported during previous dealings with CRA. They won't be penalized or prosecuted as long as they file a VDP application before the CRA starts an investigation or audit. So far, VDP has resulted in \$575 million in additional assessed taxes.

There are lots of reasons to come clean. The VDP can save you from an audit or criminal investigation, which can result in penalties, fines, and even jail time. Maybe your conscience gets to you. Or maybe it's the fact that CRA has hired so many more auditors lately. We sure have seen an increase in the number of owner/operators coming to us toting banker's boxes of past years to be done because CRA has been sniffing around.

HST starts July 1

Finally, HST is coming to Ontario and B.C. starting July 1. This will affect everyone who lives or drives there. Just remember that when price comparing from province to province for repairs and other expenses, HST is the same tax as GST and is fully refundable. Which reminds me: Did you see that Ontario PST auditors will get a severance package even though their jobs are guaranteed as they move from provincial to federal employees? No wonder I'm cranky. □

– Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that provides accounting, fuel tax reporting, and other business services for truck fleets and owner/operators. For information, visit www.tfsgroup.com or call 800-461-5970.

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OPINION

Gauging fuel efficiency

Whenever some government or another proposes standards and targets for improvements or reductions, I get a little nervous. All too often, it's the old 'day late and a dollar short' scenario.

Take our failed commitment to the Kyoto Protocol. Canada was one of the first countries to sign on to Kyoto, agreeing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6% over 1990 levels by 2012. But by 2006, four years after formally ratifying the Protocol, our GHG emissions were up by 24%.

So much for targets. When Stephen Harper's newly-elected Conservatives tabled their first budget that same year, it contained no mention of the Kyoto Protocol. It pledged instead to develop a "made-in-Canada" climate change program, and there's been little meaningful progress to report in the intervening four years.

But just a few weeks ago, our Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, announced that Canada would introduce mandatory vehicle emissions reductions – fuel economy standards – for passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks. These rules would mirror regulations recently unveiled in the US, so we'll effectively have North American fuel economy standards for cars. Yahoo!

And Prentice, like the Americans, has said he'll also introduce plans to set fuel economy standards for heavy-duty trucks – possibly within the next couple of months. Whoa!

While there would be certain benefits to building cars to a continental standard, Prentice and his standard-setters need to understand that what passes for suitable fuel economy standards (GHG reductions) for American heavy trucks might not be achievable in Canada.

But there's a much larger question that would need to be addressed first: how can you possibly set a fuel economy standard for a vehicle population as diverse as this industry's? Could Prentice be foolhardy enough to adopt US heavy truck fuel economy standards as our own – and in such a ridiculously short timeframe?

That's why I get nervous when I hear governments are about to start setting standards. The problem lies in the measurement. Fuel economy standards for cars – the typical X mpg, or X L/100km – cannot be applied to trucks because of the tremendous variation in vehicle size, weight, power requirements, and the number of different applications. An 80,000-lb, five-axle combo would do well to get 7 mpg US. But you'd never see a number like that with a tri-axle, a quad, or a Super B-train.

A better way to measure truck fuel economy is load-specific fuel consumption or gallons per tonne-mile. With this method, you're measuring the amount of work done per gallon of fuel.

Another method of measuring "fuel economy" would be to rate engines on their thermal efficiency, or their competency at turning diesel fuel into useful energy. But the technology to increase the thermal efficiency of today's best engines by even 10% is at least a decade away, certainly not within Prentice's time frame of "later this spring."

Other possibilities for improving heavy-truck fuel efficiency would be

Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE



wide-scale adoption of energy-saving technologies such as aerodynamic fittings on trucks and trailers, reducing or eliminating idling through truck stop electrification and anti-idle equipment, and using more fuel-efficient wide-base single tires.

Were Prentice and his provincial counterparts to think in practical terms like these – or of lifting weights and dimensions restrictions, or letting trucks be as efficient as they can be like, say, opening up HOV lanes to trucks – we might get somewhere on the fuel economy front. Or – here's a novel idea – how about freeing up some money to help fleets and owner/operators overcome the capital cost hurdles of going green? There's little money left in industry's pockets; we're still reeling from the \$15,000 upcharge resulting from EPA07 and 2010.

The other dilemma that Prentice will have to resolve is who to regulate: truck maker, engine maker, or end user? The auto consumer has a choice between, say, a Prius and a Lincoln Navigator. Either will get you to work and back, but at what cost? When it comes to trucks, it's not that simple. With trucks, would we be forced into a ProStar with an 11-litre engine when we really need (or want?) a W900 with a 600-hp ISX? A genuine need exists for the high output engines in some applications, but is it government's place to determine that need? And by what criteria? Would truck makers be held to the CAFE standards (Corporate Average Fuel Economy), where compliance is determined by the number of fuel-efficient vehicles offered and sold? Or would carriers be required to have a percentage of high efficiency vehicles in the fleet?

Or how about the owner/operator whose truck is overpowered for a particular application? Maybe the last job

was hauling lumber on Super-Bs, but the current carrier hauls mattresses in dry vans. Would the owner/op be penalized for running too big a truck for the job? Setting so-called fuel economy standards for heavy trucks is no simple matter, and given that Prentice's ministry has done no consultation with industry up to now, I'm thinking that whatever emerges "before summer" should get tossed right back at him before Canada Day. I think it would

be to this industry's advantage to have some means of gauging efficiency, where the smart operators are credited for their efforts and ingenuity. But simple fuel economy standards aren't the way to go – especially if the measurement tools aren't even our own. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Do fuel economy standards measure up? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call 888-794-9990.

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OVER THE ROAD

Remember to stop and smell the roses

On the Wednesday following Easter I found myself in Edmonton enjoying a day off.

The sun was out and the mercury would climb up to 15 degrees before the day was out. I was clawing my way back into the routine of getting some regular exercise and this was the perfect day to go for a run. I had changed into my running gear and was on my way out of the yard when I bumped into Art and Sherry, one of our teams.

It had been months since I had seen them and we took the opportunity to catch up on personal news, company gossip, and small talk.

We spent a lot of time talking about how busy this trucking life is. Teams are always on the go and we were soon on the topic of things you see on the road that make you stop and pause from your hectic routine. 'Jaw droppers,' as Art called them.



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

One of these jaw droppers was the recent show of the Northern Lights across the prairies.

We were soon relating experiences of some of the incredible scenes we had witnessed while travelling through the night away from the

light pollution of the cities.

As our conversation came to a close, we agreed that we don't take the time to stop and smell the roses as often as we should.

We are often so caught up in where we have to be that we don't take the time to appreciate where we are at that moment. I think we (drivers) are our own worst enemy when it comes to taking a little personal time during the day. Stopping to smell the roses isn't about waiting for a jaw dropper to come

'I think we (drivers) are our own worst enemy when it comes to taking a little personal time during the day. Stopping to smell the roses isn't about waiting for a jaw dropper to come along and grab your attention. It's about taking the time each day to do something of benefit to yourself.'

along and grab your attention. It's about taking the time each day to do something of benefit to yourself. This is what my daily run or walk is all about.

The poor economy has intensified the normal stress factors in a driver's daily life and added additional ones. It has become more important than ever for me to take some time each day to deal with those stresses. Income and home time are where I have felt the most pressure over the last couple of years, but there have also been sweeping changes across the industry.

Combine the fact that I'm not getting any younger with the issues of the day and it is no wonder I have been feeling the blues of late.

Allowing yourself some personal downtime each day often goes against the grain and can add stress to your day if you don't keep it in the right perspective.

A number of years ago, when I first started getting some regular daily exercise, I had to force myself to do it. At first it was just another task to squeeze into my already busy day. I don't view it that way any longer.

The repetitive nature of running or walking at a steady pace takes my mind away from the issues of the day and recharges it.

I started to exercise to improve my physical health but in time found it was a greater benefit for my mental health. The physical benefits are now more of a side effect.

Do I think exercising every day helps keep the body and mind healthy? Do I feel that exercise can help a person cope with the stresses of daily life?

Certainly I do. But I have come to that belief out of my own experience over a period of years.

There are many ways to cope with stress and it is up to each of us to find our own path.

The path starts with a commitment to take some time for yourself each day. It sounds so easy, but it is anything but. It's a personal lifestyle issue. We have all heard that there is an impending driver shortage, that employers will be scrambling to find qualified drivers in the near future. I don't think we should take that for granted.

It will take a long time for this industry to recover from the shrink it has experienced over the last couple of years.

Employers will have no choice but to find creative ways to control costs as they rebuild their market share.

I think the changes we have seen in the first decade of the new millennium will pale in comparison to what we will see in the coming decade. Drivers will face many new challenges, good and bad.

I am certain of the fact that facing those challenges is much more enjoyable when you are healthy and at ease in your own mind.

Finding that good health and ease in your life starts with taking a little time each day to stop and smell the roses. □

- Al Goodhall has been a professional long-haul driver since 1998. He shares his experiences via his 'Over the Road' blog at <http://truck-ingacrosscanada.blogspot.com>. You can also follow him on Twitter at Twitter.com/AlGoodhall.

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INDUSTRY

Setting national fuel economy standards for trucks requires unique understanding

Recently, Canada's Minister of Environment, the Honourable James Prentice, indicated through the media that the government of Canada, perhaps in conjunction, or at least consistent, with the federal government of the US, will be unveiling draft regulations to introduce new fuel economy standards for heavy commercial vehicles.

The announcement, we are led to believe, could even come by the time you read this article or shortly thereafter.

The Canadian trucking industry has always been the leader in North America in terms of fuel efficiency.

For a number of years now, CTA has been promoting the enviroTruck initiative for reducing air contaminants and greenhouse gases (GHG) from trucks. We foresaw the day when fuel economy standards would become a reality and wished to be proactive on that front.

It is hard to respond to something you have not seen – and to date there has been virtually no consultation on this – but CTA's knee-jerk response is not to oppose measures that can assist the industry in improving its fuel efficiency.

Indeed, a regulation that is consistent with the equipment and technologies promoted by CTA's enviroTruck initiative and which is accompanied by appropriate financial incentives, regulatory flexibility, etc., could be a positive thing. But, there is still a lot of water that needs to go under that bridge before we can give the thumbs up or the thumbs down to whatever the minister is thinking about doing.

If, for example, anyone thinks you can basically follow the same thought processes for establishing a fuel economy standard for trucks as for cars, they would be sadly mistaken. The trucking industry is not a homogeneous entity.

Trucks are used as the conveyance to ship all types of commodities and products, from the lightest of weights (ie., potato chips) to the heaviest (ie., industrial machinery) and any number of products requiring specialized tractor and trailer equipment. A one-size-fits-all fuel efficiency regulation will not work.

This was highlighted in a recent paper from the National Academies (NA) entitled: *Technologies and Approaches to Reducing the Fuel Consumption of Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles*.

Secondly, heavy truck weights and dimensions standards in Canada fall principally under provincial jurisdiction, which complicates the setting of national standards.

The current vehicle standards were developed in the early 1980s and while they have served the country well (indeed they have allowed for more fuel-efficient goods movement in Canada versus the US in many respects), they were not developed with environmental concerns

Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY



in mind. Consequently, in many instances they now represent a barrier to adopting some of the technologies that will be required to comply with new fuel efficiency standards.

Transport Canada's manufacturing standards have also recently been identified as being similarly problematic (ie., impeding the use of rear trailer aerodynamic devices commonly referred to as boat tails).

Third, CTA is extremely concerned that the above issues are not well understood and if the thought is to simply adopt Made-in-USA standards, the Canadian trucking industry could be placed at a competitive disadvantage compared to US carriers and ultimately, shippers who rely upon trucks

for getting their goods to market, or for receiving much-needed inputs into their business processes, could be negatively impacted.

The prevailing truck weights and dimensions standards in the US and Canada

are quite different.

In general, the Canadian provinces have adopted a more liberalized weights and dimensions regime than what exists under federal and state law in the United States.

It is conceivable that the US trucking industry could meet new fuel economy targets by "coming up" towards the Canadian standards already in existence.

This would place an added burden on the Canadian industry to adopt additional measures to achieve similar order of magnitude fuel efficiency gains.

While enviroTruck has many parallels with the US Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay Transport initiative and with the recently introduced California Air Resources Board regulations aimed at improving truck fuel efficiency, it also takes account of the uniqueness of the equipment used in the Canadian heavy truck fleet.

Again, in principle, CTA does not oppose the setting of fuel efficiency standards for heavy trucks in principle. However, we need to ensure that it is done properly and in a way that is fair to Canadian motor carriers.

We have already seen policies created in the absence of a basic understanding of the complexity of the trucking industry and the uniqueness of the Canadian industry in particular.

We can't afford to see it happen in the setting of fuel economy standards. □

– David Bradley is president of the Ontario Trucking Association and chief executive officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

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INDUSTRY

Surveys: Boone or bane?

Have you ever been asked to complete a survey? Okay, that was a rhetorical question.

We are all regularly inundated with requests that we complete surveys on all manner of topics: which newspapers we read and why?; what do we think of the services provided by the cities or towns in which we live?; are we in favour of a nuclear energy plant in our neighbourhood?

As often as not, these surveys arrive through the postal system despite the 'No Junk Mail Please' notices that we post on the box. (I wonder when a spam filter for postal deliveries will be invented?)

And there are the telephone surveyors who want to elicit our opinion on the state of the economy or your views on current affairs. Of course if you're really lucky there is a trip to Florida on offer if you answer a few questions.

Now, if you are like me, for the most part the paper-based surveys that arrive at home end up in the blue box on collection day, while the telephoned approaches engender a polite (as polite as I can be on a Tuesday night at supper time, or during Saturday morning's leisurely breakfast), "Thanks, but I'm not interested," type of response.

I simply can't generate enough enthusiasm about most of these issues to make me take the time to express my views (assuming I even have one) to strangers and I'm certain I'm not alone in my thinking on this one.

Private Links

BRUCE RICHARDS



Recently, with a fairly innovative approach, one such survey that arrived at home included a twonie that I was invited to use to 'enjoy a cup of coffee while I answered the questionnaire.' Well, it was a nice touch, but as it happens, I don't drink coffee and in any event the time it would have taken to answer all the survey questions would have required more than one cup of anything.

At the office, there is no end of consultants calling for information about the industry, and they all want it for free. They, in turn, sell that information to their respective clients, so as much as I understand that everyone needs to eat, I seldom respond to those folks on principle.

But – and there always is a but – sometimes we've just got to participate. Information is critical when you work in an industry as diverse and dynamic as trucking, with its enormous economic and social impact. The ability to analyze such industries is critical to industry watchers, to investors, to suppliers, and particularly to government. And include in that list the associations to which you belong that need to gather statistics and to understand mem-

bers' views on a variety of subjects. Effective analysis requires sound information and the source of that information is the people who work in the industry.

I'm not suggesting that anyone offer up privileged information such as a company's revenues or customer contact lists. I'm referring to more generic information that would help shed light on the demographic of an industry such as ours. And there is value in that information.

For example, absent a clear picture of the magnitude and importance of the trucking industry, there would be little reason for government to support proposals for regulatory change, or initiatives designed to improve conditions and help the industry prosper.

Fortunately, many in the trucking community do respond to industry-related surveys from responsible parties. The information gathered has, in many cases, been used to drive improvements. Some examples are the surveys conducted by the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council. Over the years these surveys have identified needs for improved training for entry-level and professional drivers, dispatchers, and owner/operators. That in turn led to support from the federal government for the development of training tools that the industry had identified as critical.

Without solid information on the impact of trucking on the economy as a first step, I doubt that the support mentioned above would have been made available. Once the value of the industry was established,

the door opened a little to allow us to express what we needed if the industry is to remain effective in providing the services Canadians have come to expect.

Another type of survey is the one that consolidates information on operational best practices. If adopted more broadly, these best practices could make the trucking industry even more effective than it is today, which in turn would make it interesting to the bright and energetic young people that we want to attract for our future. These are the types of surveys that PMTC periodically conducts among private fleets because we, and the participants, think the results are helpful at ground level.

We know that in the private trucking community, fleet operators are willing to share information on operational practices with each other. Since these fleets don't generally compete on a trucking level and since they are all looking for ways to make operations more efficient and effective, sharing information and ideas on best practices is actually good for everyone.

So, if it sounds like I've come full circle on the subject of surveys, that's only partly the case. I'll still ditch the ones that don't matter to me, but I will definitely pay attention to those that can help move the industry forward. □

– The Private Motor Truck Council is the only national association dedicated to the private trucking community. Direct comments and questions to trucks@pmtc.ca.

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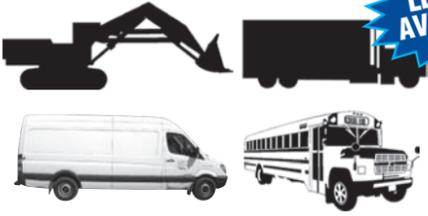
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HEALTH

Take good care of your eyes

As a professional driver, taking care of your eyes is essential. Regular eye check-ups can help you stay on top of any deterioration in your sight. They can also discover unusual conditions that may affect your eye health itself, such as cataracts.

A cataract is a clouding of the clear lens of your eye. Looking through an affected lens is like looking through a frosty or foggy window. The severity of the cataract determines just how much you can see. Cataracts develop slowly. When they begin to develop, they don't initially affect your eyesight.

But as the lens becomes cloudier, your vision increasingly gets worse. At the beginning, better lighting and prescription glasses will help you get along, but as the condition progresses, you may need to have the cataract removed just to maintain your regular lifestyle. Fortunately, getting a cataract removed is usually safe.

As a cataract develops, the cloudiness may only affect a small part of the lens. However, as it grows, it affects a larger portion of the lens. The increasing cloudiness distorts the light passing through the lens more and more, eventually causing blurred or distorted vision.

A cataract may or may not affect the entire lens. Although cataracts can develop in both eyes or independently, usually they develop in



Preventive Maintenance

KAREN BOWEN

parallel in both eyes.

Since cataracts are usually not painful, you may not even know you have them.

Some common signs and symptoms of cataracts are: clouded, blurred or dim vision; deteriorating night vision; halos around lights (especially at night); sensitivity to light and glare; fading or yellowing of colours; double vision in one eye; a need for brighter light when doing finer activities (reading, working with small tools); and a frequent need to have your eye glass prescription renewed. You may find that you blink more often to clear your vision.

Certainly, when these symptoms occur, your driving will be adversely affected. Time to see an eye doctor! Because even if you are experiencing these symptoms, when you look at your eyes in the mirror, you probably don't notice anything unusual.

Usual eye complaints, such as pain, itching, redness, aching, irritation or an eye discharge, don't usually happen with cataracts.

In fact, cataracts don't really affect your eye in those ways at all.

However, if the cataracts become completely white and opaque (over-ripe cataract) it may cause pain, inflammation and a headache. Definitely, if a cataract causes discomfort, it must be removed.

A person may get cataracts for a variety of reasons. Aging is considered the main cause, although what actually happens to the lens of the eye during the aging process is unclear. It may be that the lens becomes less flexible and the protein fibers within the lens itself begin to clump together.

Or, free-radical damage may be the cause. Smoking and UV exposure may also play a part in their development, along with general wear and tear.

In addition to the regular aging process, the following increase your risk for getting cataracts: diabetes; a previous eye injury or inflammation; previous eye surgery; a family history of cataracts; prolonged use of corticosteroids; exposure to radiation; too much exposure to light; and/or smoking.

In fact, 75% of North Americans who are 65 years old have some amount of clouding in their lenses. By the age of 75, 70% will have severe enough cataracts to significantly reduce their ability to see.

If you have cataracts now, but it's not time yet to have them removed, you can deal with the symptoms in the following ways:

Keep your eye glass prescription up to date. Use a magnifying glass

to read. Make your reading areas brighter by using stronger light bulbs. Wear sunglasses when you're outside or driving to reduce glare. Limit your night driving.

These steps will help for a while, but once a cataract has formed, it will continue to develop. Surgery is the only way to eliminate them.

If you don't have cataracts forming yet, here are some ways to reduce your chance of getting them. Don't smoke. Smoking causes free-radicals which damage your eyes. Eat well, including plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Protect your eyes from the sun. Use sunglasses that block UV rays. Manage your overall health. Follow your doctor's treatment plan for any ongoing health conditions.

Then, if you do ever have to have cataract surgery, your body will heal well.

If you do end up having cataract surgery – replacing your cloudy lens with a clear one, rest assured – your vision should remain constant after the surgery. As well, the new lens should remain clear. If it doesn't, only laser treatment and not surgery will be necessary to fix it up.

As a professional driver, your good eye health protects you and the thousands sharing your roads. It's nothing to wink at. □

– Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant, and she can be reached at karen_bowen@yahoo.com.

A warning about Lyme disease

During the summer months, many people venture outdoors to participate in activities such as hiking, biking and camping. Spending time in heavily-wooded or grassy areas increases your chance of contracting tick-borne conditions such as Lyme disease. I recently treated a patient whom I suspected to have this illness.

According to recent statistics, Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness in Europe and North America. Lyme disease is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. In most cases in North America, this bacterium is carried and transmitted by deer ticks. These tiny ticks are about the size of a pin head and are brown in colour. Deer ticks mainly feed on the blood of



Back behind the wheel

DR. CHRIS SINGH

mice, small birds and deer but may also feed on the blood of humans and other animals. Often, they live in small bushes or tall grass. In order to contract Lyme disease, you must be bitten by an infected deer tick. The symptoms of Lyme disease can vary greatly from person to person.

This is due to the fact that this illness can affect different parts of the body. The most common symptom is a rash that begins as a small red bump. This rash, which may grow

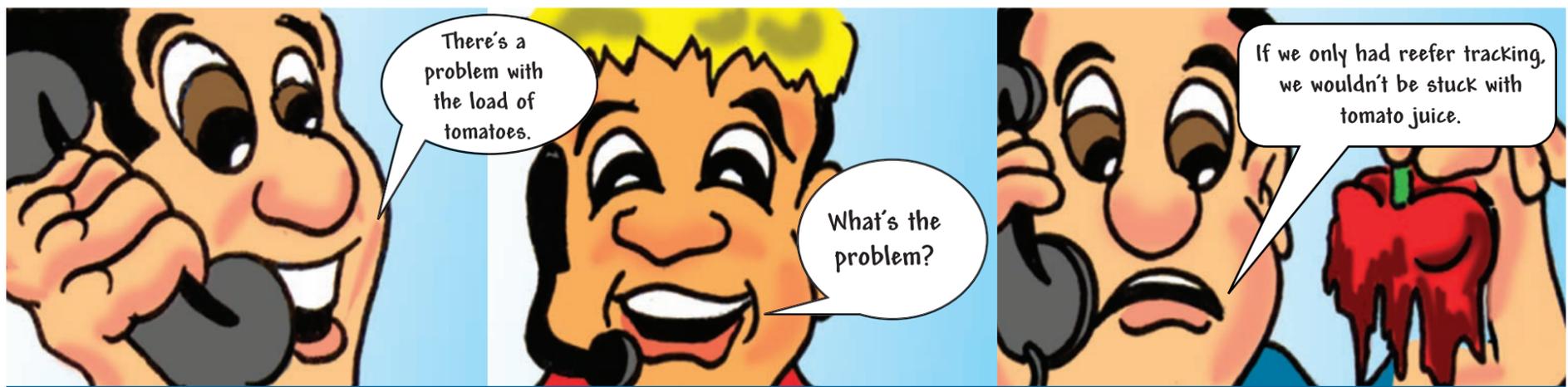
up to 12 inches in size, often resembles a bull's eye, with a red ring surrounding a clear area and a red center. This rash is called an erythema migrans and affects about 70-80% of infected people. In addition to a rash, Lyme disease can cause other symptoms such as joint pain, flu-like symptoms, and neurological problems. The latter is caused by inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain. In rare cases, people experience heart problems, eye inflammation, hepatitis and severe fatigue. It is important to seek medical attention if you have been bitten by a tick and experience any symptoms as the treatment of Lyme disease is most successful if administered early.

Lyme disease is treated by antibiotic medications. Oral antibiotics are the standard treatment protocol for the early stages of the illness. A

10- to 14-day course of antibiotics is usually sufficient. In cases where the disease has progressed, intravenous antibiotics are effective in eliminating the infections however, may causes side effects such as lower white blood cell count and mild to severe diarrhea.

There are precautions you can take to decrease your risk of getting Lyme disease. Firstly, wear long pants and sleeves when walking in wooded or grassy areas. Also, use insect repellents which contain DEET with a concentration of 10-30%. Lastly, check yourself and your pets for ticks and shower as soon as possible when you return inside. □

– Dr. Christopher H. Singh runs Trans Canada Chiropractic at the 230 Truck Stop in Woodstock, Ont. He can be reached at 519-421-2024.



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ROAD TEST

More than the sum of its parts

Volvo makes strong case for vertical integration with VN780, D13 EPA2010-compliant engine, I-Shift transmission and integrated safety systems

By James Menzies

GREENSBORO, N.C. – In the months leading up to the launch of EPA2010-compliant engines using selective catalytic reduction (SCR), much was made of the driver's role in ensuring compliance by monitoring and maintaining diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) levels.

As if to apologize for imposing that minor inconvenience on drivers, Volvo has added several enhancements to its EPA2010 truck and engine combo that will more than compensate for the time and energy spent periodically replenishing DEF. Several new features will introduce new efficiencies into the driver's day while also benefitting the owner's pocketbook.

Chief among them is a handy new Pre-Trip Assistant, which automates cumbersome parts of the pre-trip inspection process, making it a simpler one-person job.

Pre-Trip Assistant

When activated, the Pre-Trip Assistant first checks the tractor and trailer's entire lighting system for any electrical faults. It then notifies the driver if a problem is detected via the in-dash driver message centre.

The system will also notify you if a lamp is out, but not the specific bulb – the driver will have to get out of the truck to determine which bulb needs to be replaced.

The Pre-Trip Assistant will also cycle through the lights so a driver doesn't have to return to the cab multiple times as he or she completes the walk-around. Activating the system will cause it to cycle through (left signal, right signal then four-ways as well as high and low beams) so the driver can check all the lights in a single lap around the vehicle. It's important to note, the Pre-Trip Assistant is just that – an assistant. It's not designed to replace a walk-around and complete inspection, just to help streamline the process.

The new feature also includes an air leak monitor that helps the driver



complete an air brake system check. It instructs the driver to depress the brake and then it provides a one-minute countdown and displays the pressure and the pressure drop between the primary and secondary systems, Volvo Trucks' Frank Bio explained before we headed out on the highway for a test drive in North Carolina.

"It would show you how much the pressure went down in that one minute and whether it passed or failed the test," Bio said as he demonstrated the system. "You don't have to watch the gauge, it will tell you all that information."

Before we hit the road, I noticed a couple interesting items on the exterior of the VN (a VNL64T780, to be precise).

One item of interest was a new integrated fifth wheel from Fontaine, available as an option exclusively through Volvo – at least for the next year. The fifth wheel saves about 100 lbs by eliminating parts and using the existing truck frame for support. Volvo helped develop the fifth wheel (hence the exclusivity), which turned out to be a nice marriage since Volvo's frame

has a consistent stiffness from front to back, Bio pointed out. The integrated fifth wheel is suitable for on-highway applications and is one way to gain back some of the payload lost to the new SCR-related components.

Another interesting feature on the exterior was an adjustable trim tab roof fairing extender mounted to the back of the cab which can be raised or lowered to optimize air flow over the trailer. Bio explained the system is designed for companies that can't optimize their trailer gap, which in a perfect world would be less than 40 inches.

"As the air passes over the roof of the vehicle, this pulls the air down and matches the top of the trim to the top of the trailer," Bio explained. A diagram on the back indicates which groove the trim tab should be set at, depending on the trailer height and the gap between the cab and trailer.

"A lot of people think what you're trying to do is push the air over the top of the trailer, but in reality what you're trying to do is bring the air down to the trailer so it flows evenly across the top of the trailer," Bio explained. "If you push it up high, it goes up and then tumbles along the top of the trailer and that creates drag."

The adjustable trim tab is an inexpensive option, costing about a couple hundred bucks. It would be rendered pretty much ineffective on our drive, however, since we were pulling a lowboy trailer with a Volvo loader that was not exactly aerodynamic, or lightweight, for that matter. We grossed 80,000 lbs on the button as we pulled out of the Volvo parking lot.

Inside the cab, the Volvo we were driving was equipped with an optional battery-powered no-idle cab comfort system that provides heating and cooling. It also came with the Bendix SmartTire tire pressure monitoring system which has been integrated into Volvo's driver information display.

The VN also had a heated windshield, designed to prevent snow and ice accumulation while driving – another option that'll be useful in Canada if not on our five-hour drive through the rolling hills of North Carolina.

On the road

From a performance perspective, the transition to EPA2010 will be pretty much seamless for the driver. The VN I was driving had a gauge on the dash that displayed DEF fluid levels. If not for that, it would be impossible to determine it had a 2010 engine under the hood. The needle on that gauge, incidentally, barely budged over the course of several hours of driving.

While Volvo engineers were busy developing their EPA2010 solution, they still found time to build some new enhancements into the engine.

Volvo engines now come with a feature called Eco-Torque, which automatically switches between two torque outputs in the top two gears, depending on driving conditions.

The 500-hp D13 I was driving, for instance, was rated at 1,550-1,750 lb.-ft. torque. In the lower gears it always had the full 1,750 lb.-ft. of torque but in the top two gears where the upper range was no longer required, the engine utilized only 1,550 lb.-ft. of the available torque. When driving situations necessitated a boost, like when pulling a long grade, Eco-Torque kicks in, providing a 200 lb.-ft. boost and making the full 1,750 lb.-ft. available.

Volvo's powertrain manager Ed Saxman, describes Eco-Torque as a "new software personality." An attentive driver will be able to feel when Eco-Torque has been engaged and may even notice the needle jump slightly on the boost pressure gauge. Saxman said Eco-Torque saves fuel by allowing the transmission to remain in top gear under conditions that would normally warrant a downshift.

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required, the engine reverts back to its normal operating characteristics; in our case it once again becomes a 500-hp, 1,550 lb.-ft. engine.

On an Eco-Roll

During my drive through the beautiful rolling hills of North Carolina, there were plenty of opportunities to experience the Eco-Roll feature built into the I-Shift transmission. Eco-Roll, active only when cruise is set, saves fuel by allowing the engine to free-roll in certain situations, such as when descending a long, gradual grade. It's ideal in terrain with rolling hills and kicked in frequently during my drive.

You can tell Eco-Roll is functioning when the needle on the tach drops and the engine noise cuts out. Miles run with Eco-Roll active are basically free miles. Volvo likens the feature to riding a bicycle downhill – why spend energy pedaling when simple physics will work in your favour and get you down the hill effortlessly?

With Eco-Roll active, I sometimes had to avoid the temptation to get back on the throttle a little sooner than the engine wanted to kick back in. It seemed to me that we lost a little too much momentum before the engine re-engaged. I mentioned this to Saxman and he assured me otherwise. A great deal of engineering went into determining when the engine should re-engage, he told me.

Why must we always try to outsmart the electronics?

Another noticeable improvement is that the Volvo's cruise is less aggressive than it once was. It used to charge back up to the set cruise speed quite aggressively, now it makes the climb more gradually, saving fuel as a result.

Safety features

The truck I was driving was equipped with several safety systems, including Volvo Enhanced Cruise (VEC) – Volvo's version of the Bendix Wingman Active Cruise with Braking system. VEC provides audible alerts when following a vehicle too closely. The warning point can be customized, but the default following distance is 2.8 seconds.

I admit I triggered a few alarms, but it wasn't my fault – I swear! It was mostly due to aggressive motorists pulling in front of me. I can see how VEC would improve truck safety, especially when the driver is drowsy, the eyelids are getting heavy and the attention span is waning.

The high-pitched alarm is enough to jolt a driver from a restful state – and probably even a sound sleep. The shrill beeps may not be appreciated by the sleeping member of a team, especially when the alarms are inevitable such as when navigating heavy traffic. It would seem VEC is best-suited for single drivers at this point. In addition to providing audible alerts, VEC can also intervene with active braking when a collision is imminent.

Fortunately, I didn't have to put that particular functionality to the test.

The VN I drove also came with the Vorad radar side-detection system that sounds an alarm if the right turn signal is activated while there's a vehicle alongside the truck or trailer. This blind side detector provides peace of mind just by being there, provided of course, that the driver is signaling lane changes.

SCR inducement strategies

The fact I was driving an EPA2010-compliant vehicle was, quite frankly, forgettable, since the SCR system went about its business completely transparently.

Much has been made about how regulators would ensure truckers keep their DEF tanks filled, thereby allowing the SCR system to do its job. Volvo has gone to great lengths to ensure that when an engine is derated due to insufficient DEF levels, it will only do so where there's DEF available.

But if you ever find yourself in a derate situation, you may be better served parking the truck and throwing the key into the nearest river, because you probably shouldn't be driving in the first place. You'd have to willfully ignore a whole lot of audible and visual warnings before the truck is actually derated.

The first line of defense comes in the form of that new gauge on the dash that displays DEF levels at all times. The VN780 we drove was fitted with an 18.5-gallon DEF tank that weighs about 160 lbs when full and should last about 4,000 miles before requiring a refill. A blue cap ensures drivers don't mistakenly fill the DEF tank with diesel fuel and in case they should try, the neck has been designed so it's too narrow to fit a standard diesel nozzle. Someone, somewhere will inevitably put diesel in the DEF tank but there's really no excuse.

When DEF levels dip below the quarter tank mark, drivers will receive an alert via Volvo's standard in-dash message centre and a lamp on the dash will light up.

The pop-up alert on the driver message centre can be programmed to appear in French or English and will be accompanied by an audible alert, making it difficult to miss. It will remain there until the driver acknowledges it by pressing the Escape button on the control stalk.

If the driver chooses to ignore these warnings, the engine will eventually be derated by 25% – enough to get the driver's attention but not render the vehicle undrivable. The driver will also be warned that a 5 mph maximum speed will be imposed if DEF isn't soon added. But even when the 5 mph major inducement is armed and loaded, it won't be activated until

triggered by the addition of diesel fuel, Saxman explained, so in theory DEF should be readily available.

"The mere fact you just put diesel fuel in the truck means you are either at a truck stop or perhaps at your home facility. Either way there's likely DEF on-site," Saxman explained. "Not only do we not shut the truck down, when we get a major inducement on a Volvo truck, it happens at a truck stop. But by this time, the driver has ignored a whole lot of clues that he needs to add this stuff. So far, we haven't had anybody run out of DEF on a highway."

Conclusion

Somewhere along I-40 near Greensboro, it occurred to me that this was more than just a test drive, it was also a lesson in the benefits of vertical integration. Some of the more advanced features offered in the I-Shift are only possible as a result of the high level of integration between engine and transmission.

And the safety systems such as Volvo Enhanced Cruise, or for that matter the tire pressure monitoring system on the truck I drove, were also fully-integrated into the vehicle with messages appearing on Volvo's in-dash message centre, thus reducing the potential for driver distraction.

Even the fifth wheel, built by Fontaine by fully integrated into the Volvo chassis, provided benefits such as weight savings, which will be ever-important going forward as manufacturers try to claw back payload lost to the hefty SCR system, which, while packaged cleanly, still adds several hundred pounds.

Now that Volvo can finally move beyond preparing for 2010 and focus on developing new enhancements and exploring how they can mine further benefits from the sophisticated integration of their powertrain products, I'm excited to see what they'll come up with next. □

Want a chance to drive the same truck I drove? You'll get your chance when the Volvo Driving Success Tour reaches Canada later this year. For a complete schedule, visit www.volvotour2010.com.



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FLEET NEWS

As economy improves, Challenger revs up

Fleet adds capacity to operate 1,200 LCV trailers

By James Menzies
CAMBRIDGE, Ont. – Dan Einwechter has seen the future, and the future is long. That’s the conclusion one could arrive at following a recent visit to Challenger Motor Freight headquarters. Parked in the yard was a 2011 Volvo VN hooked to two shiny new 53-ft. Stoughton trailers.

In mid-April, Challenger took delivery of 300 identically-spec’d Stoughton trailers supplied by Trailers Canada. Each one comes equipped with side fairings, wide-base tires and, not insignificantly, a pintle hook. Einwechter said he’ll have 300 more such trailers by year end, providing capacity of up to 1,200 long combination vehicle (LCV) trailers if he should deploy each one as the lead trailer of an LCV configuration. And it sounds like he may do just that.

“From our perspective, we know we need to become a bigger player in the LCV business out west,” Challenger CEO Einwechter told *Truck News*. “We needed some new trailers and because the trailer industry is still in a depressed state, it was the right time to buy the equipment at the right price.”

Current pricing may not last long. According to the latest *State of the Industry: US Trailers* report from ACT Research, commercial trailer net orders rose 165% year-over-year in March, with dry van orders up 233% year to date. Conny Weyers, president of Trailers Canada told *Truck News* the Canadian trucking industry is sitting on a lot of older trailers and is being forced to rejuvenate itself. He also pointed out the strong Canadian dollar means a new trailer today costs less than it did in the ’90s.

The first of Challenger’s Ontario-based LCVs hit the road last month running Cambridge-Montreal, and Einwechter is hopeful the pilot project will be expanded.

“That’s our big hope,” he said. “Otherwise, we’ll be restricted to doing it from Manitoba to Alberta, but we’re hoping based on the performance the government has seen so far, that we will continue for the rest of this year in Ontario and they’ll follow through (after that), because it makes so much sense in so many ways and we’ll have a market that we can go from Windsor to Riviere du Loup, in essence, or from Winnipeg to Calgary.”

Challenger has also been buying new tractors to pull those trailers. The company has taken delivery of 150 Volvo VNs (with a mix of pre- and post-EPA2010 engines) and will soon be placing orders for as many as 486 tractors to replace those coming due for replacement over the next 18 months.

Meanwhile, Challenger has also been investing in new equipment for its specialized divisions to haul windmill blades and other oversized equipment for an emerging industry.

“We have spent millions of dollars to buy equipment for the wind turbine industry,” Einwechter said. “We have quite a few nine-axle trailers, some blade trailers being delivered shortly, tri-drive tractors and we’re buying tandem tractors with pusher axles, so we have a lot of stuff going on this year.”

Even during the downturn, Challenger has made some key specialty acquisitions and the diversity has helped the company weather the storm, Einwechter said.

“When one area of the company suffers, another may be a lit-



GOING LONG: Challenger has purchased 300 new Stoughton trailers, with 300 more to come later this year, in an effort to bolster its long combination vehicle (LCV) fleet. Two LCV configurations are now on Ontario roads, while the remainder will be deployed in Western Canada. *Photo by James Menzies*

tle stronger. That has helped,” he said. “The acquisitions have all been done, not because there’s big money changing hands, but rather because it was time for those other players to exit the industry. They were good companies, just the wrong time.”

So should Challenger’s ambitious spending spree be taken as a signal the Canadian trucking industry has finally turned the corner?

“It signals I’ve lost my mind,” Einwechter joked, before adding: “We need to make investments in the future. At the end of the day, I tell everyone when times are tough it’s not the end of time, it’s a point in time. We definitely delayed our equipment trade cycles for quite some time but it was time to do it.”

Still, Einwechter isn’t ready to declare the difficulties of the past few years officially over, as excess capacity remains an issue.

“There’s still too many trucks,” he said. “I’ve talked to a bunch of US dealers and carriers and they’re all much more optimistic than I would



EASE OF ENTRY: Challenger’s new trailers come with a clever customization, an extra step and grab handle.

be as a Canadian carrier. Do I see we have some uptick, some positive improvement? Absolutely. We think there still needs to be some tightening of supply here and the high Canadian dollar doesn’t help, but I still feel pretty optimistic about the balance of this year and next year.” □




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Hair: Light Brown

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APPS delivers donated GM engines to local schools

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – A generous donation of 128 GM engines to Toronto high schools has been matched by an equally generous offer from APPS Transport.

GM donated the engines to the Toronto District School Board, for distribution to 19 high schools across Toronto. Problem was, getting the engines to those schools in downtown Toronto would require the services of a transport company, and those services could be costly.

That's when APPS Transport stepped up and offered to deliver the engines free of charge. The engines were picked up at GM's St. Catharines plant and the first of those powerplants reached their new home on May 4 at Central Technical Institute in Toronto.

Making the delivery was professional driver and Ontario Trucking Association Road Knight, Guy Broderick.

APPS president Rob McDonald was also on-hand for the hand-off. But when he stepped to the mic, it was McDonald doing the thanking.

"I'd like to thank the Toronto District School Board and GM for including us in this project," he said. "We're proud to be a partner in the initiative and we look forward to completing the task with any new ones that come on-board."

McDonald added "We believe that education is the pillar of society and the foundation of our future. Having relevant equipment to work on in the schools is key to making a better transition to the future for our students. We



SPECIAL DELIVERY: Warehouse manager Lance Lund (left) and APPS driver and OTA Road Knight Guy Broderick prepare to unload some new GM engines at Central Technical Institute in Toronto. Photo by James Menzies

hope that our donation of some time and equipment really helps and that our contribution to this

project helps make these students successful in the future."

Students assembled at the ceremony were genuinely enthusiastic and could hardly wait to begin working on the new engines, a combination of V6s and V8s.

"The value of this donation is immense in the automotive teaching area," said Tony Rende, automotive co-op teacher at Central Technical Institute.

"The engines that GM is donating are in pristine condition, essentially cutting edge technology. Students will leave our program with experience working on state-of-the-art engines which will help them in their career path."

The transportation of the engines required two 53-foot trailers, engine hoists and forklifts. □

Bison Transport receives 'green' award from SCL

WOODBRIIDGE, Ont. – Bison Transport was awarded the 2010 Supply Chain and Logistics (SCL) Green Supply Chain Award May 5 at the organization's annual supply chain and logistics conference.

Don Streuber, president and CEO of Bison Transport, was on-hand to receive the award.

The company was selected because of its ongoing commitment to reducing its CO₂ and NO_x emissions and in recognition of its continued efforts to improve the environmental performance of its freight operations, SCL announced.

"As one of Canada's largest transportation companies, we have a responsibility to our customers, and to the communities in which we operate when it comes to delivering eco-friendly transportation solutions" said Streuber. "We do this by combining state of the art technology with computer based training to ensure that our fleet and our drivers are the most fuel-efficient on the road."

Among other initiatives, Bison runs fuel-efficient tires, transmissions and engines, equips trailers with side fairings and adds auxiliary power units to tractors. Bison also operates long combination vehicles (LCVs) wherever possible to reduce emissions by as much as 40%, the company claims. □

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Top petro product haulers awarded

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Call it a twofer for Wheeler Transport.

The Port Moody, B.C.-based hauler snagged the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute Western Division's 2009 Best Carrier Performance award, the second year in a row it was awarded that particular honour.

Other CPPI Western Division Fuel Carrier Safety Awards went to companies from Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon.

At a luncheon ceremony in Calgary on April 22, CPPI's Western Division v.p. Ted Stoner noted that the CPPI's benchmark target for incidents was lowered for 2009 in recognition of a declining frequency of incidents overall. Yet, he pointed out with satisfaction, the carriers' actual performance came in below that, with 0.34 incidents per 1,000 deliveries compared to the new benchmark of 0.4.

"CPPI members certainly congratulate and appreciate the carriers' work, and it's showing up in their performance throughout the year," Stoner said at the ceremony. "These awards are our appreciation in recognition of that."

The Common Carrier Awards Program was started by the CPPI Western Division in 2004 to encourage and recognize contracted common carriers for reducing the

frequency of incidents compared to the previous calendar year. It also stresses overall safety performance and promotes driver and fleet safety within the transportation industry.

Awards were also handed out to ECL Transportation for Most Improved Mixes, Denwill Enterprises for Most Improved Spills, Mantei's Transport for Most Improved Vehicle Accidents and Petrohaul for Most Improved Personal Injury.

As for what Stoner referred to as the "Grand Poobah" award given out each year, he said it went to "The best overall carrier who excelled in all safety areas" and noted with satisfaction that it was the second year running that Wheeler Transport had earned it. Tony Spring and Kelly Stead, who had flown in that morning for the awards luncheon, accepted the plaque and obelisk and hard hat stickers on behalf of Wheeler. "Our employees are a real asset to the company," Stead remarked, "and one of the things we really strive to do is reinforce all our training. At the end of the day we just want them to all go home safe."

Stoner said the CPPI hopes to expand the awards throughout all of Canada and challenged the carriers in the room to become national winners when that happens. □

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FEATURE

Are energy drinks a loaded gun for young drivers?

Contents may do more harm than good

By Ingrid Phaneuf

TORONTO, Ont. – So-called energy drinks: The new generation of truckers is increasingly relying on them, instead of coffee, to get from point A to Z without the ‘Zs.’ But are they really an effective cure for drowsiness? Or is consumption a loaded gun for drivers who rely on them too heavily?

Researchers at the Transportation Research Board appear to be asking the question, but are unwilling to provide any answers as yet.

“We don’t even have a first draft yet,” was all research project manager Donna L. Vlasak would say when asked what preliminary re-

sults are showing. Still, the study, sponsored by the Commercial Truck Safety Synthesis Program, and titled *Chemical Substance Effects on Driving Performance: Stimulants, Hypnotics and Nutritional Aids* would seem to indicate there are concerns.

Indeed, scientists from the John Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore have called for prominent labeling for energy drinks listing caffeine doses and warning of potential risks. They’re also recommending doctors become familiar with signs of caffeine intoxication, a syndrome recognized by the Diagnostic and Statistic Man-

ual of Mental Disorders (psychiatry’s official guidebook of mental illnesses) whose symptoms include nervousness, anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, upset stomach, tremors, tachardia (rapid heart beat) and agitation.

In other words, drinking too many energy drinks may actually increase fatigue by depriving drivers of rest when they turn off the engine and cause them to drive more aggressively when they turn it on. Those are serious side effects when you consider that aggressive driving actually caused five times more highway crash fatalities on US highways in 2006 than drowsy driving (30,731 versus 5,464), according to recent figures from a National Cooperative Highway Research Program. And when you consider that the use of energy drinks is growing, not shrinking, among younger and yes, even Canadian drivers, despite the dangers, those side effects become even more alarming.

A recent report from Agriculture

and Agri-Food Canada indicates that since energy drinks broke into North America in the early 2000s, their use, especially among young males and time-conscious consumers (ie. truck drivers) has increased dramatically. According to the report *Market Update: Energy Drinks in North America* released in August 2009, “With over 210 brands in the North American market alone and a value growth of 43% from 2003-2008, competition (among energy drink manufacturers) is intense...While there are exceptions (Red Bull and SoBe’s line of juices, elixirs and teas), the energy drink segment is dominated by sales to males, most notably the 20-30 age range. These energy drinks are generally high in sugar, caffeine, taurine and other booster ingredients that claim to increase energy and alertness.”

As the market for young men becomes saturated, states the report, and “as the older generations pay more attention to their energy needs, it creates an opening for new marketing techniques or new entrants with differentiating product claims. Targeting mature consumers based on time pressures may be beneficial for new energy drink brands or product launches. An example is the introduction of energy shots (a new category of energy drinks) into the market.”

Indeed, it appears that, thanks to the “shot,” energy drinks have already become more attractive to an older audience, one not just interested in studying or partying, according to the report, which states that the market for shots increased 100% in 2008 alone. According to the report, “the shots target the older adult market and a wide variety of occupations with non-traditional hours of work such as truck drivers, nurses, and office workers. Overall, these products are pushed by a much tamer advertising campaign, more generic packaging, and promoted by figures that are respected outside of the traditional energy drink celebrity sphere (ie. Lance Armstrong).”

The good news is that brand name shots like 5-Hour Energy, which, at the time of the report had 60% of the market share in convenience stores (including truck stops) and with sales reaching \$169.7 million, claim to not just rely on caffeine for their kick. In fact, there is less caffeine in a two-ounce 5-Hour Energy shot than there is in a cup of coffee, a substantial decrease from drinks like Red Bull, which contain the equivalent of several cups. But can you drink just one?

It all comes down to whether drivers over-consume energy drinks, no doubt a question that will be addressed by the Transportation Research Board study currently underway. For now, the data is largely anecdotal. According to industry insiders, age and, to a lesser degree, health-consciousness, is the determining factor.

Older = wiser?

According to older, more seasoned trucking industry professionals, the caffeine and sugar kick provided by most energy drinks, shots or even coffee is a temporary fix and may even get in the way of good driving and good health.

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“Our fatigue training emphasizes that, regardless of what you’re using to give you a perk-up when you have a lull, it’s going to be very short-lived,” says Bob Halfyard, director of safety and compliance for Challenger Motor Freight, headquartered in Cambridge, Ont. “And what you have to know is that, if you try to artificially heighten your energy or alertness with caffeine or sugar, you’re going to get a big bounce for 20 minutes or a half hour and then when you come down, you’re going to come down harder.”

Still, everyone is going to have a cup of coffee from time to time, says Halfyard, who himself admits to having cut down from up to 15 cups of coffee per day to three cups per week.

“The only way to combat fatigue is to rest,” Halfyard says. “You can try to use artificial means, but eventually it will catch up with you, in terms of your health and in terms of your ability to drive.”

Indeed, the increased health- and safety-consciousness of older and more experienced consumers (and truck drivers) has energy drink manufacturers scrambling to create healthier, less caffeinated alternatives.

One such manufacturer, new to the US market and hoping to make in-roads in Canada, is a working independent owner/operator himself. Danny White is the proud creator and owner of Big Ol’ Trucker Energy Juice, coming soon to a truck stop near you.

White’s drink, developed in collaboration with a chemist he hired with money from his own pocket, is rapidly gaining press in the states. In fact, trucking blogger Allen Smith has even reviewed the drink, touted as a healthy, low-cal, no-caffeine energy drink for health-conscious truckers, on his popular AskTheTrucker.com Web site.

“I actually enjoyed it,” wrote Smith, who is not a fan of energy drinks in general, due to the caffeine and sugar content as well as what he calls “other ingredients” (like taurine – also present in red wine) which tend to make him leery.

“A lot of drivers use energy drinks,” says Smith. “The 5-Hour Energy shot seems to be the big one they like, but they like it because you don’t have a crash afterwards – they tell me there’s no after-effects – you don’t come crashing down and feel totally exhausted after they wear off. As for me personally, I think it’s a bad thing and don’t need to be high on anything when driving a rig. For me it’s a safety issue, I don’t want to have any kind of high – whether it’s caffeine or not. I have known some drivers who used them (energy drinks) and I would see them standing there with shaking hands at the truck stops. I had to wonder to myself, are they in need of a fix? I don’t want that guy out there on the road.”

Smith’s concerns mirror White’s.

“More aggressive driving is definitely a possibility,” says White, based in Illinois. “Caffeine speeds you up, you become less patient in traffic and you’re not alert the way you need to be as a driver. You can make erratic lane changes, take unnecessary chances, and it all happens unconsciously. Drivers need sustained alertness, not the kind of hyped up sudden alertness you get from caffeine.”



WHITE KNUCKLE DRIVING: Can too much reliance on energy drinks make drivers a road risk? One school of thought suggests so.

Health concerns were also a major driver behind White’s creation. “Truckers suffer from things like high blood pressure and obesity, so drinks with lots of caffeine and sugar just aren’t good for them. Truckers need a healthy source of energy.”

In response, White and his chem-

ist-for-hire came up with a drink that has only 70 calories per 16-ounce serving, sweetened with stevia (an organic sugar substitute) and chock-full of ingredients as crunchy-granola sounding as hawthorn berry, “recognized for its contribution to the cardiovascular system which may

contribute to the enlargement of blood vessels, the lowering of blood pressure and the strengthening of the heart muscle,” according to a brochure endorsement from naturopath Sherin Lee.

Birkenstock-wearers aside, the drink is fast headed towards being a hit with truckers, at least according to White’s marketing man, Mike Carr, a former sports drink shill.

“When I began to look at the branding, it made perfect sense,” says Carr. “There’s nothing like it out there – drivers are eating and drinking so poorly and they need a healthy drink to help them stay awake while driving. That’s how Big Ol’ Trucker Energy Juice was born.”

The nescient company has a Web site flush with trucker video testimonials to prove its popularity, points out Carr. (Never mind the pin-up girls, also stimulating, and also non-caffeinated).

Now if only someone could invent a way to allow drivers to get a good night’s sleep. □

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BOOK REVIEW

Roll On

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – On Sept. 12, 1993, Claudia Belair lost her husband and best friend Jean-Claude. He was a born trucker who worked hard to provide for his family. His sudden death of a heart attack stunned the family and left them swimming in grief.

Consumed by her own grief, Claudia realized she needed help in comforting her children, particularly 12-year-old Marc. Not knowing where to turn, she sent a letter to the editor to then *Truck News* editor Brenda Yarrow (now *Truck News* sales rep, Brenda Grant).

What happened next forever changed the lives of Claudia and her son Marc and is the subject of a new book called *Roll On*.

The letter to the editor, which ap-

“I froze as I listened to his words. I felt fear and panic throughout my entire body, ‘Oh my God,’ I thought, ‘he wants to die, he wants to die to be with his dad. What am I going to do?’

Does this mean he would commit suicide? Could he?’

In his grieving state, I believed he would be able to go that far.

I had to do something, but what? I was struggling to keep my

own grief under control, how in God’s name was I going to

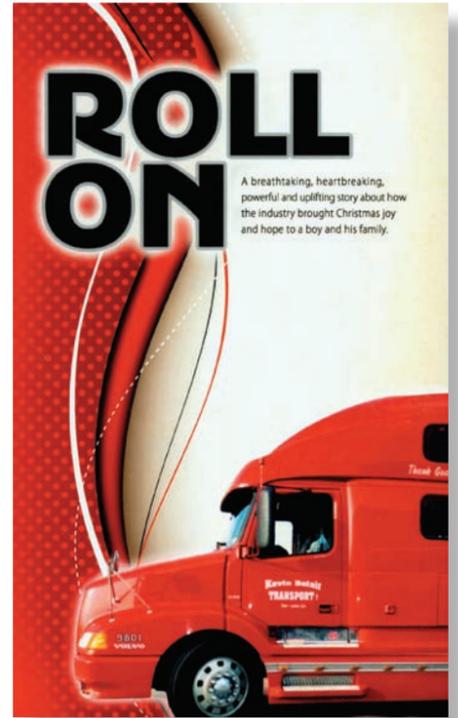
save my son if I could not even save myself?”

peared in *Truck News* shortly before Christmas 1993, struck a chord with many readers. Like a scene out of a movie, the Belairs’ postal worker began showing up at their door with bags of letters, postcards and gifts, mailed to Marc from truckers and industry suppliers all across Canada.

There were hats, jackets, model trucks, pictures and everything imaginable.

“Almost every day became a new day of surprises,” Claudia writes in her book. “We never knew what to expect.”

The highlight of the trucking industry’s generosity came in the form of a special day dubbed Marc Day, provided by local fleet Big R Express. The company invited Marc to visit their operations, let him sit in the trucks, presented him with



a company jacket and took him to lunch. He was basically able to live his dream of being a trucker for a day.

Claudia describes her book as: “A true story about a young mother’s struggle dealing with grief and loss, and how the Canadian trucking industry came to her rescue and the amazing events that took place to help her young son deal with the loss of his father.”

In a world where the trucking industry is often villainized, or at least misunderstood, it’s a refreshing read. Those who’ve been around the industry may even recognize some of the characters – folks who took the time to write and are still involved in the industry today.

The book includes a list of all the people who wrote Marc including several pages of letters that he received.

Claudia said she wrote the book as a way to give back to the industry and recognize how caring and compassionate its professional drivers are.

“*Truck News* is one of the main reasons for my book. If they hadn’t printed my letter at the time, the chain of events would never have happened and who knows where our family would be right now?” Claudia told me. “Through the thoughtfulness and kindness of your readers, they gave us our strength and courage to not only go on in our lives, but to go on knowing that people really did care about other people.”

Publishing the book has proven to be a struggle. Claudia spent years working on it and then published it herself. The purchase price of \$20 is just enough to cover her printing costs and she’s donating \$1 from every sale to the Breakfast Clubs of Canada, a charitable organization that has helped her through the years.

Claudia will begin marketing the book in earnest this summer, first with an appearance at the *Truck News* booth at the Stirling Truck Show June 19.

The book can be purchased at the show, or ordered directly from Claudia for \$20 + \$2.35 shipping and handling by sending payment to: C. Belair; 600, 16th Avenue; LaSalle, QC; H8P 2S3. You can also find Claudia online via the *Truck News* facebook page at www.Facebook.com/TruckNews or you can e-mail her at bella.bonn@hotmail.com. □

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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Trailer dealer introduces scrap program to rid industry of old equipment

By James Menzies
BRESLAU, Ont. – Does Challenger’s recent order of 600 trailers (see pg. 34) signal the recovery of the trailer industry? Perhaps not on its own, but there’s reason to believe the trailer industry is improving.

ACT Research, a US researcher that tracks trailer orders, published recent data showing dry van orders are up 233% year to date through March. The industry’s improving health is also palpable on a local level, says Conny Weyers, president of Trailers Canada, the Stoughton dealer that filled Challenger’s 600-trailer order.

“The industry is sitting on a lot of old equipment and it’s pretty well being forced to rejuvenate itself,” Weyers said. “Nobody has bought any trailers to speak of in the 2000s.”

It seems the trailer industry is recalibrating, following peak sales of well over 200,000 units North America-wide in the late 90s.

“We don’t know what a normal year is anymore, because every year there’s been less and less,” Weyers said.

Since the trailer industry’s hey days in the late 90s, Trailers Canada’s Bob Breadner said fleets have been steadily reducing their truck-to-trailer ratio.

“They’ve been forced to, from a profitability standpoint,” he said.

The decrease in sales has forced

trailer dealers to reinvent themselves. For Trailers Canada, that meant diversifying and focusing on maintenance as the US and Canadian economies dove into recession.

“Two years ago, we sat here and said ‘We can see this industry changing.’ It was moving quickly and you could see a storm coming,” recalled Weyers. “A lot of large companies in this area had closed down completely. We sat down and said we had to look at our company. Leasing and sales were coming down, so we went heavy into maintenance and that’s what kept us going.”

The company launched a mobile service that provides trailer maintenance right at a fleet’s own location. That segment of the business has grown so rapidly, Breadner said the company has had to turn away some business.

“We don’t want to mess up what

we’ve got and we keep going back to our core values and understanding what made us successful,” he said.

The company now runs eight mobile service trucks around the clock, providing service within an 80-km radius, Breadner said.

“We hired when everyone else was firing,” Weyers added.

Looking back, Breadner credits Weyers with making tough decisions that helped the company survive the downturn.

“Two years ago, we had a lot of arguments about how conservative we should be,” said Breadner. “And I’m not conservative. But he was right. We backed off in certain areas and developed our service business.”

Now, the company is in the process of introducing a scrap program that will address the overpopulation of old, unroadworthy trailers. A third-party scrap company will visit a fleet,

shred or tear up its trailers and haul them away as scrap. The program will target trailers that are 12-13 years old or older.

Many older trailers are worth little more than a grand, said Weyers, and they’re worth about the same as scrap metal. Of course, some trailers are worth more than others as scrap, and some will cost money to have hauled away.

“At least we’re providing an alternative,” said Breadner, noting most dealers will simply turn away old trailers. “Everybody is sitting with old stuff in their yards. We travelled down the states to learn about their scrap programs and figured out how to do it here.”

The scrap program will be up and running later this year, and Breadner said some local fleets have already shown interest. For more info on the new program, call 519-648-2273. □

US fleet orders 1,050 Kenworths with Paccar MX

KIRKLAND, Wash. – A major order of 1,050 Kenworth T660s with Paccar MX engines may serve as further evidence the North American trucking industry is on the mend.

TransAm Trucking, a refrigerated transport fleet out of Olathe, Kansas placed the order.

“This order from TransAm Trucking is a remarkable way to help introduce the Paccar MX engine into the North American market,” said Bill Kozek, Kenworth general manager and Paccar vice-president. “Kenworth and Paccar very much appreciate TransAm’s strong support and commitment. We look forward to delivering the first of the fleet’s 1,050 fuel-efficient Kenworth T660s with Paccar MX engines beginning this summer.”

The MX engine has been spec’d at 485 hp and 1,650 lb.-ft. of torque and the T660s are fitted with 72-inch AeroCab Aerodynamic sleepers.

“We’re very confident in the Paccar MX engine. We have studied Paccar’s global engine capabilities, their engine technology and validation processes. Combined with Kenworth’s excellent dealer service, we are confident in the Paccar MX engine,” said Russ McElliott, TransAm Trucking’s president. “We value our relationship with Kenworth and (dealer) MHC and consider the Kenworth T660 with Paccar MX engine a winning combination.” □




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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Canadian dealer crowned Mack's best

REGINA, Sask. – Mack Trucks has named Redhead Equipment in Regina, Sask. its 2009 North American Distributor of the Year. Each year, Mack acknowledges the efforts and contributions of its dealer network by honouring high-performing distributors in its North American and International business units.

Selection criteria include sales, facilities, personnel, service, parts, general management, customer satisfaction and community service.

Founded in 1990, Redhead Equipment has expanded to include four other locations across Saskatchewan

and 360 employees. Gary Redhead acts as current dealer principal. Mack also named 2009 winners for each of its US regional sales divisions.

“These businesses have done an outstanding job supporting our customers during very challenging times,” said Kevin Flaherty, Mack senior vice-president, US and Canada. “We are proud to recognize the best of the best for 2009. And since Mack’s overall network of distributors remains very strong, I am confident that 2010 will continue our w110-year tradition of excellent customer service and support.” □

Volvo names Truro dealer tops in Canada

TRURO, N.S. – Mackay’s Volvo Truck Centre of Truro, N.S. has been named Volvo’s Canadian Dealer of the Year for 2009.

The award honours each dealership’s entire organization and its employees for overall accomplishment and performance. Selection criteria for the annual awards include outstanding performance in new truck and parts sales, Volvo engines, customer satisfaction index and investment in facilities.

Founded in 1980 by David Mackay (current dealer principal) and his father, the dealership has grown from a small three-bay shop to two locations with a total of 30 service bays and 75 employees.

In addition to the Nova Scotia dealership, Volvo Trucks North America also named its top US Dealer of the Year: Truck Enterprises of Harrisonburg, Va.

“It’s great to acknowledge and reward a job well done, especially in the challenging times our industry has faced recently,” said Ron Huibers, senior vice-president of sales and mar-

keting. “In honouring Truck Enterprises of Harrisonburg and Mackay’s Volvo Truck Centre, we recognize the fact that they lead their dealerships to excellence and continue to represent Volvo in an outstanding way.” □

Kenworth offers rebates to OBAC members

TORONTO, Ont. – Kenworth is offering Owner-Operator’s Business Association of Canada (OBAC) members rebates of up to US\$1,500 towards the purchase of qualifying Kenworth trucks in 2010.



The rebate program runs from April 15 to Dec. 31, 2010, Kenworth and OBAC announced. Buyers must show their OBAC membership card to their Kenworth dealer at the time of purchase.

Eligible trucks include new Kenworth T660, T700, T800 and W900s equipped with sleepers. Qualifying purchases of new Kenworth T660, T800 and W900 day cabs – including some dump, logging and other vocational chassis configurations – are eligible for a US\$1,000 rebate, the company announced at Truck World.

“Kenworth is pleased to support owner/operators with a rebate of up to \$1,500 this year in cooperation with OBAC,” said Gary Moore, Kenworth assistant general manager for marketing and sales.

“OBAC values the support of Kenworth Truck Company in taking this step to improve the prospects for success of our owner/operator members,” added Joanne Ritchie, OBAC’s executive director. “There’s a truck in the Kenworth line-up to meet nearly every need of our varied membership. We anticipate strong uptake of this rebate program.” For more, visit www.obac.ca. □

Maxim Truck and Trailer wins community award

WINNIPEG, Man. – Maxim Truck and Trailer has won the 2010 HSBC Bank Canada Business Award.

The award recognizes the efforts of local businesses that encourage employee volunteerism and that actively participate in a project to better the community by providing funds, other resources or people.

Maxim Truck and Trailer was nominated by CancerCare Manitoba Foundation for its efforts in The Challenge for Life project, among other projects it participates in within the province. The award was recently presented at the Annual Volunteer Service Awards Dinner.

“It is with sincere appreciation that we say thank you to all the Maxim volunteers who make our province a beautiful place to live, grow and prosper. Volunteers build communities,” says Maxim president, Doug Harvey.

Maxim Truck and Trailer has 15 branch offices and over 560 employees in 10 cities from Vancouver to Montreal. □

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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Canadian International dealers awarded

WARRENVILLE, Ill. – Two Canadian International truck dealers have been awarded Navistar's prestigious International Circle of Excellence award. The company's 30th Annual Circle of Excellence awards ceremony was held recently in Washington D.C. and featured 28 winners in total.

Canadian dealerships receiving the honour were Glover International Trucks (dealer principal Brad Glover) and Kemptville Truck Centre (dealer principal Gerald Tallman).

The Circle of Excellence program was established to honour those International dealerships that achieve the highest level of performance in terms of operating and financial standards, market representation, and customer satisfaction.

"This award is the highest honour an International dealer principal can achieve from the company," said Aida Tanaka, vice-president of dealer operations. "The Circle of Excellence award recognizes the effort and dedication of all the dealership's employees. A highly skilled, professional staff is a critical success factor for any commercial truck dealership. Our 28 Circle of Excellence dealers are clearly committed to growing their businesses and being recognized by customers as the dealership of choice in their market." □

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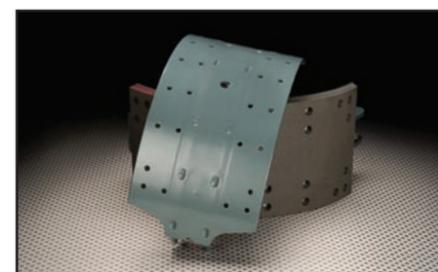


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Meritor rolls PlatinumShield out to OEMs

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – ArvinMeritor has expanded the availability of its award-winning PlatinumShield coated brake shoes.

Beginning in May, the shoes have been available on new, OE production heavy-duty trucks and trailers. PlatinumShield brake shoes were initially released to the aftermarket. The coating helps prevent rust-jacking by resisting micro-abrasion caused by the movement of the brake lining against the shoe table under normal use.

"The performance of PlatinumShield has been clearly demonstrated in the field, and we're confident its performance will exceed the customers' expectations. With PlatinumShield, new vehicle customers will now receive the benefit of an even longer life brake shoe. The product will help North American truck operators meet their brake maintenance goals regardless of the road and weather conditions the truck experiences," said James Taylor, foundation brake product manager, ArvinMeritor.

The shoes come with a three-year, 300,000-mile warranty against rust-jacking. □

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A new **Nord-Lock wheel nut** is now available, with the promise of reducing the risk of wheel-off incidences. The company's distributor says the Nord-Lock wheel nut eliminates unintentional loosening of wheel nuts, which is the main cause of wheel-offs. The nut fastens easily to flat-faced steel rims, the company says. It secures the wheels by maintaining a high clamp force, even under severe operating conditions, according to the company. For more info, call 954 677 8056 or visit www.nord-lock.com.



Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions (BBTS) has come out with a new Bridgestone **Greatec M825 wide-base single tire** offering extended life and low cost-per-mile. The wide-base drive tire is deeper and wider for longer tire life and offers weight savings compared to duals, the company claims. The tread is 29/32" deep and it also features a stabilizing solid shoulder design to protect against side forces that can cause irregular wear. The latest Greatec offering is available in the 445/50R22.5 size with an "L" load rating. For more info, see a Bridgestone dealer or visit BridgestoneTruckTires.com.

PeopleNet has partnered with PressurePro to offer **tire pressure monitoring** capabilities. The partnership makes tire pressure monitoring available through PeopleNet's legacy systems beginning with BLU In-Cab PC, the companies announced. Tire pressure monitoring will be available from PeopleNet by the end of the second quarter, the company announced.

Accuride has come out with two new sizes of its **Gunite Optimum Lightweight Drum** which will help fleets meet impending new stopping distance requirements. The new regulations go into effect Aug. 1, 2011. The new 16.5x8-inch (9020X) and 16.5x8 5/8-inch (9019X) Gold drum sizes round out the line-up and allow fleets to meet the new standards with drum brakes. Accuride says the Gold version also allow fleets to save 76 lbs compared to full cast drums, offsetting the weight penalties associated with running larger front and rear brakes. For more info, visit www.accuridecorp.com.

Webb Wheel Products has added two **aluminum trailer disc wheel hubs** to their OEM product offering. The new Webb aluminum hubs have been rated for 25,000# axle gross vehicle weight (GVW), matching or exceeding competitive aluminum hubs, and weighing 1 to 3 lbs. less. Part number 4023 for TN axles

weighs 31 lbs complete with studs and bearing cups and the TP axle hub, part number 4343, weighs in at 33 lbs, the company claims.

Components

Alliance Parts has come out with a line of **EZ-Assist clutches**, which the company says require 35% less pedal effort compared to a standard angle spring clutch. The clutches can reduce leg fatigue as a result, the company says. They're available in three torque ratings from 1,400 lb.-ft. to 1,850 lb.-ft. They're manufactured from 100% new components, the company says, and they also meet all standards set out by Daimler Trucks North America and are compatible with all makes and models. The EZ-Assist clutches come with a one-year, unlimited mileage warranty and are available through more than 1,000 locations in the US and Canada. For more info, visit www.alliancebrandparts.com.

Glacier Bay, manufacturer of the ClimaCab **all-electric cab comfort system**, says it has teamed with Trojan Battery Company to offer improved battery performance. The company developed the OverDrive AGM 31 battery exclusively for ClimaCab to make the system more efficient, the companies jointly announced. Glacier Bay says the

Continued on page 46

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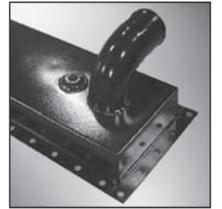
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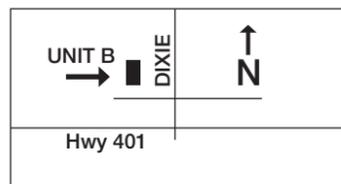
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NEW PRODUCTS

Continued from page 45
new battery provides a steady current over extended periods of time while the truck engine is off. For more info, visit www.climacab.com.

Wheel Monitor has introduced the Proviso **electronic lift axle control system**, which it says lifts and locks in reverse like its RM-50 and RM-60 products but also has automatic lift capabilities based on axle load weight. It can be set to lift or lower the axle based on the trailer's load and it monitors the position of the lift axle, providing an in-cab light and lift axle switch for axle position monitoring and lift control. Wheel Monitor says the automatic lifting and the

ability to lock the steer axle can reduce tire wear and mechanical wear of the axle. It meets logging trailer requirements set out by the Alberta Ministry of Transportation, the company adds. For more information, visit www.WheelMonitor.com.

Thermo King has added to its T-Series line of **temperature control units** for straight trucks with the T-600R and T-800R. The new reefers boast increased capacity over previous models as well as what Thermo King has dubbed "industry-leading high ambient temperature operations." The units also use the TSR-2 control system. The TRUs can be spec'd with electric standby

so they can be plugged into a power source, saving fuel, Thermo King announced. For more info, see a Thermo King dealer.



Kinedyne has published a Canadian **catalogue** of cargo control products. The 60-page catalogue features detailed product information and high-resolution images, the company says, making it easier for customer to find what they're looking for. New additions to the 2010 calendar include cast mandel winches, E/A series beams, StrapPak and half barrels - bulk chain. To order a catalogue, call 800-268-3530 or visit www.kinedynecanada.com.

Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) is now offering customers

e-mail notifications to keep them up to date on special offers including instant savings on commonly-used parts. The e-mail alerts will also provide useful tips and industry news, the company says. You can sign up for the e-mails online by visiting either the Freightliner, Western Star or Detroit Diesel Web site.

Cummins Filtration has introduced an environmentally-friendly Fleetguard **Compleat Organic Acide Technology (OAT) Coolant** in a nitrite-, amine- and phosphate-free formulation. The company says its NAP-free formula offers solid liner pitting protection and better aluminum protection than conventional OAT coolants containing nitrite. The coolant comes with a 300,000-mile (500,000-km) service interval and provides protection in temperatures as cold as -34 F, the company says. □

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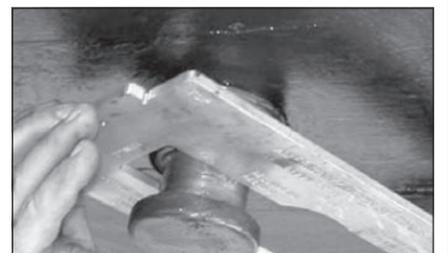
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NEW PRODUCTS

ArvinMeritor unveils new trailer suspension series

By Adam Ledlow

FRANKFORT, Ky. – Determined to push any lingering thoughts of “recession” behind, ArvinMeritor has unveiled an all-new series of durable, trailing-arm air-ride trailer suspensions: the Meritor Trailing-Arm Air (MTA) suspension series.

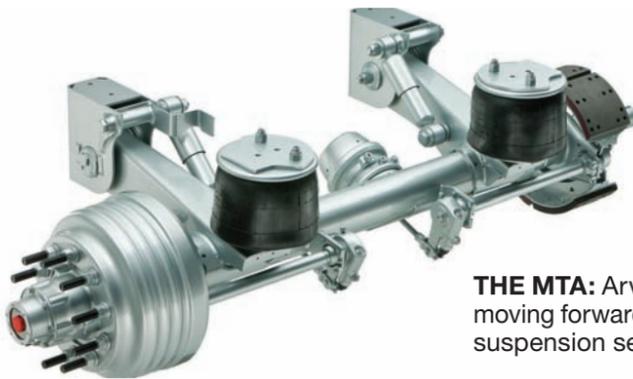
Coming on the heels of its Meritor 14X tandem drive axle launch at the Mid-America Trucking Show in March, the manufacturer invited both trade media and customers back to Kentucky to get a close-up look at the MTA series, designed for North American truck-trailer operators in vocational markets – including platform, tank, grain, dump, chassis, bulk, specialty, lowboy, livestock and specialty vans.

The series was revealed in Frankfort, Ky., at the heart of the company’s US trailer products operations, and though the struggles the economic downturn created were discussed

by ArvinMeritor executives, the overwhelming sentiment conveyed was one of rejuvenation, renewal and a sense of moving forward.

“We’re standing here because we survived,” said Joe Mejaly, president of aftermarket and trailer for ArvinMeritor, while also mentioning the strides forward the manufacturer has made in other markets such as India, China and South America, post-recession.

And with those strides forward, the MTA series of top-mount and low-



THE MTA: ArvinMeritor is moving forward with a new suspension series.

mount models completes the company’s line-up of air suspension solutions, according to officials.

The first model of the group to be launched, the MTA23, will have any kinks with customer integration and manufacturing readiness ironed out this summer, with its production launch slated for the fall.

“We are focused on and committed to providing only the highest quality suspensions,” said Craig Frohock, general manager of trailer products

for ArvinMeritor. “Over the coming months, we’ll work closely with our customers, our supply chain, and our manufacturing and quality teams to ensure flawless delivery and product performance for our customers.”

The five subsequent models will be unveiled in the last quarter of the year and through summer 2011.

Officials say the suspension series features three technology advancements with distinct operational benefits. The first is a patented pivot bushing which is designed to absorb road input resulting in a softer ride, more cargo protection, and reduced torsional stress on the vehicle’s structure. Patented steel interleaf shims in the bushing are designed to provide improved fore-aft stiffness aiding in dynamic axle alignment, better tire wear, and controlled roll steer.

The second advancement is larger, more robust shock absorbers which have been specifically tuned to Meritor suspensions with three times the damping power over competitors, according to the company. Larger bore design for greater suspension control, and more consistent tire contact with the ground also assist in reducing tire tread wear, improved braking and enhanced handling, ArvinMeritor claims.

Lastly, the series’ products feature a unique, patent-pending axle wrap design for a secure and durable axle connection. It also contributes to superior suspension durability, according to company engineers.

The integrated design includes Meritor trailer axles and brakes, and is available with Q Plus cam or air disc brakes, automatic slack adjusters, the SteelLite X30 drum and lightweight hub, and the MTIS (Meritor Tire Inflation System) by PSI.

“This new suspension series provides customers an engineering-proven solution in our suspensions portfolio. Our track record of serving OE and fleet customers with specifications – quality manufacturing – and ‘after the sale’ support is unsurpassed,” said Frohock. “It’s another way we can help provide our customers with superior suspension technology and reliability.”

The suspension offers a five-year, 500,000-mile warranty.

“We’ve listened closely to our customers,” said Frohock. “The time is right, the technology is honed and proven, and as our customers consider purchasing and specifying trailers, they must closely consider the Meritor MTA series suspension.”

“The Meritor brand stands for strength and dependability that transcends to the company’s commercial vehicle axles, brakes and suspensions, products which carry some of the toughest loads imaginable on roadways all across North America,” Frohock added.

The company says its district managers located across the Canada and the US will assist fleets and dealers with specifications, technical support, and training and service of the new trailer suspension series.

For after-the-sale support, officials say the company’s aftermarket business, complete with parts inventory and service specialists in Florence, Ky. and Brampton, Ont., is prepared to supply the aftermarket channels with comprehensive service parts to support the new suspension for minimal downtime and maximum operating time. □

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The Series - Truck News - Best of Multimedia
to Adam Ledlow - Brad Ling



OPINION

Don't count out long-nose conventionals just yet

It appears as though Jim Hebe has stirred things up yet again. Mr. Hebe is a well-known exec over at Navistar who reported recently that long-nosed Class 8s are losing market share. He is correct, market share for these beautiful beasts is on a constant decline, but that doesn't mean you'll stop seeing them anytime soon.

You see, owners of these machines are a passionate lot. They eat, drink and sleep long-nose and to even suggest changing to a more environmentally-friendly truck would, at the very least, result in a long-winded heated debate (a debate that will probably go on for years).

I, for one, love to see these rigs rolling down the road. You just know the person behind the wheel is a trucker in the purest sense. I sup-



pose it's something that I absorbed at a very young age. In those days, as I'd watch our old RCA, it seemed that whenever Hollywood needed a truck, they'd feature a long-nose driven by a John Wayne-type guy. (Sorry ladies, there weren't any Mrs. John Wayne-type girls driving way back when).

Bragging rights may have a lot to do with why someone runs a long-nose. I'd think there'd be very few who would deny the beauty of a washed and waxed traditional-style tractor. Sure, they may drink more diesel than others but their owners

know this going in.

They argue that there are many factors that contribute to fuel efficiency, and just because it's a long-nose conventional doesn't mean it's not fuel-efficient.

One could compare this debate to the classic muscle cars of the 70s. They were all the rage back in the day, but slowly lost market share as gas prices ramped up (remember 39 cents a gallon? Me neither, but it did exist). Anyway, 40 years later they are back and a growing segment of the new car market.

I love the new Camero, great lines and it goes like stink. It's a perfect example of why the classics, despite what some perceive as ancient technology can survive and prosper when fueled by the passion of their owners.

The long-nose conventional

will survive as long as the passion remains.

I'm betting that the majority of future long-nose owners will be the sons and daughters of today's long-nose owners. It gets in your blood, or so I've been told. □

- Rob Wilkins is the publisher of Truck News and can be reached at 416-510-5123.

PEOPLE

The Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) is looking for a replacement for its executive director.

According to incoming AMTA president Dean Paisley, the current executive director, **Mayne Root**, will be leaving his post at the end of the year. Paisley made the announcement shortly after taking over the gavel from outgoing president Richard Warnock at the group's Annual General Meeting, held during its 2010 Management Conference at the Rimrock Resort Hotel in Banff.

"We've got some challenges ahead," Paisley said early in his initial address as president, noting that they're going to "put the past presidents to work" looking for someone to take over Root's duties.

A Toronto-area International sales rep was a finalist in the recent International Truck Customer Solutions Rodeo. **John White** of Western Toronto International Trucks, was among six International brand truck dealer sales reps that competed in the North America-wide competition. They were tested on their knowledge of International brand trucks and Navistar's OnCommand customer service offerings. The grand winner was **Phil Johnston** of Selking International in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Leading up to the final event, contestants were judged on walk-around presentations and scored on how they explained product features and their ability to relate the features to specific customer issues such as appearance, serviceability, driver acceptance and safety. □

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MAIL

No way to hourly pay

Dear Editor:

This is in response to the letter to the editor on page 50 in the April issue of *Truck News*, with the lady and her husband who wants to get paid at \$15/hr.

To me, it is absolutely out of the question. Simple reason is, I have had drivers and I couldn't get them to work, even when they were paid by the mile and pick-ups and drops. What would one do if they were to be paid by the hour? I can't imagine what that would do to the industry. Trucks parked everywhere, anytime. I don't mean to be harsh, but that is my experience. □

Philip Dionne
Via e-mail

Back off long-noses

Dear Editor:

Re: Viewpoint, April 2010. As long as there is a buyer's demand for a certain model of truck (long hood), makers will continue to build one. Too bad Lou, you had nothing to write about last month. I've run and owned three long hood 379s in the past 12 years on a west coast US lane, all good resale, all paid off, and all three had top fuel mileage for the 30-truck fleet I was contracted to. □

M. Bormann
Newmarket, Ont.

Railways, dim the lights

Dear Editor:

This is an open letter to the railways: I drive from Winnipeg to Calgary and/or Edmonton once a week through the winter.

I find I must constantly try to gain the attention of your engineers when adjacent to the Trans-Canada Highway so they will dim their lights. These lights are blinding, especially in a snow storm. On far too many occasions your engineers take no notice or refuse to dim.

I am left to wonder if they have families or relatives travelling out here, would they perhaps care then?

This is a blatant disregard for public safety and has to stop.

On one morning this winter before Christmas I called 911 from Borden, Sask. A train was sitting at the siding by the grain elevator facing west with all lights on and I was travelling west. I met an eastbound pick-up truck which came to a stop when he became blinded and couldn't see the road he was attempting to make a right-hand turn onto. There were many trucks on the road coming up behind him and they were braking to avoid him.

Surely there is technology available to ensure the lights of your trains are dimmed when travelling adjacent to a highway, as your engineers can't be trusted to do so. □

Franklin Swark
Winnipeg, Man.

In defence of long-noses

Dear Editor:

Re: Viewpoint, April *Truck News* I normally take the bypass lane past the editorial comments, but as a long-nose owner, I had to read on.

So now you're onto hating long-nose conventionals? Why don't you just admit you hate trucking, period? Cause that's all I get from the "doom and gloom" for the seasoned driver. You pound global warming hogwash into us trying to make us believe in this hoax.

C'mon, Lou! You can't be

serious. You predicted shippers would not load us because our trucks may get less fuel mileage? And then you predicted banks would not lend money to the evil long-nose owners? Just when our industry and professional drivers have been kicked down from a recession and more government interference than ever before, we pick up the *Truck News* and have to read about another possible setback. □

Jeff Long
Ingersoll, Ont.

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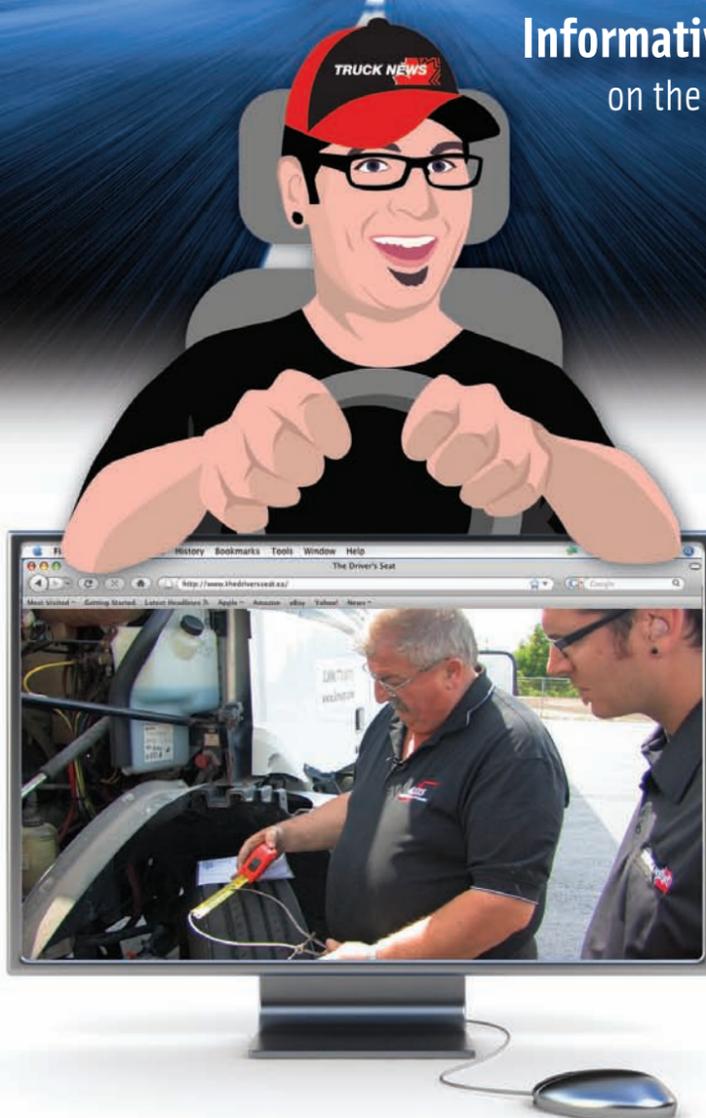
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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

Licence renewed

By Edo van Belkom

The story so far...

Mark is looking for a load. Bud has a sweet one to California that won't be ready for a few days. In the meantime, Bud asks Mark to help an older driver, Charlie Knowles, get his licence renewed. Charlie's a real character and Mark agrees to help out.

After a call to the MTO to get an idea of what's needed to renew an A/Z licence, Mark meets up with Charlie. The man is as abrasive as ever and is worried Mark will be charging him for his help. When Mark tells Charlie he's doing a favour for Bud and there's no charge, Charlie starts making demands, testing Mark's patience.

"Before we begin," Mark said, "I want to know if you've got the preliminaries taken care of."

"What are you talking about?"

"Well, have you had your physical?"

"Aye."

"And?"

"What do you think?" Charlie said, annoyed. "I passed it with flying colours. The doctor told me I'm as fit as a 35-year-old... I bet I'm in better shape than you."

Mark didn't doubt it. Charlie was a small, wiry man who could probably run farther, faster and longer than Mark could on the best of days.

"You need to stop eatin' those sausages and bacon so you can be lean and mean... like me." Charlie punctuated his words by gritting his teeth, balling his hands into fists and flexing his arms and shoulders.

Mark tried to watch what he ate, and did some exercises to keep in shape, but it was tough sticking to a routine when he was on the road all the time. But while Charlie didn't seem to have any trouble keeping fit, he did wear a pair of glasses. "What about your eye test?"

"My eyesight's not the best, I'll admit. But I've have the same prescription for glasses for the last 10 years and nothin's changed."

"So you had your eyes tested?"

Charlie looked annoyed again. "Of course I did. I have to have them tested now, don't I?"

"Right," Mark said, somehow feeling silly for asking. He almost didn't want to ask the man any more questions, but there were still aspects of the licence renewal he had to get through. "What about the written test?"

Charlie didn't answer.

"Well?"

"I haven't done that yet," he said, soft spoken... almost timid.

"Why not? You've got to get it done be-

fore your road test."

Charlie sighed. "I don't like written tests. I didn't like them when I was in school, and I certainly don't like them now."

"You want me to go through the book with you?" Mark asked. "You know, help you study?"

He shook his head. "I've been through the book half a dozen times. I know everything that's in there by heart. It's just something about sitting down and being tested that makes me nervous. I get so worried I can't sleep, and on the day I just know I'll be so flustered I won't remember a thing."

Mark could understand Charlie's fears. He'd had similar troubles in high school and never did well on math tests no matter how much he studied. So Charlie's problem wasn't so much learning the material as it was getting through the test. And if that was the case, then Mark had a few ideas about how to help.

"If you're going to have that much trouble with the test, we could cheat."

"Eh?"

"I could do up some cheat sheets with all the answers so you could look at them during the test."

Charlie beamed. "Now you're talking."

Mark grabbed the training booklet, a pad of paper and a pen. Then he opened it up to a page on road signs and began making notes.

"You're a good teacher," Charlie said.

"How's that?" Mark didn't look up from his paper.

"I feel better about taking the test already."

A while later they'd found a quiet coffee shop around the corner and – sitting across from each other – went through the book, page by page. As Mark questioned Charlie, it was obvious to Mark that the man had a great deal of driving experience. He had road smarts by the trailer load, but came up with less-than-a-load when it came to the book-smarts department.

For example... "When you've experienced a breakdown on a roadway," Mark asked, "how far back from the end of your trailer must you place the road flares?"

"What?"

"How far?"

"What do you mean?"

Mark didn't think he could ask the question any more simply, but he tried. "How far back do you put your flares?"

Charlie shook his head. "Far enough behind so people coming up the road can see them."

It was a good answer, and he'd probably place them the right distance apart if he ever had a breakdown, but the test required the answer to be a bit more specific. "I'm looking for the distance in meters."



"Meters?"

"Yeah, how many?"

"How should I know?"

"You should know because you're going to be tested on it."

"The number of meters?"

"Yes."

He said nothing more, obviously thinking hard.

Mark decided to try and help the man find the answer he probably already knew. "Try this," he said. "Imagine putting the flares out on the roadway... and then estimate how far they are from the back of the trailer."

"Aye, I can do that." Charlie closed his eyes a moment, then said, "I'd guess 100 feet... that would be about what, 30 metres?"

Mark looked at Charlie, and smiled. "See, you knew the answer the whole time."

"Is that the right answer?"

"One flare 30 metres in front and one 30 metres to the rear of the vehicle," Mark said, writing the answer on a narrow slip of paper Charlie would be able to tuck away in his sleeve.

Charlie was smiling. "Maybe it won't be so bad."

They carried on for another hour until they'd gone through the entire book.

"I think you're ready," Mark said at last.

"You really think so?"

Mark nodded, looking at his watch. "There's still time. Why don't I drive over to the DriveTest facility so you can take the test."

"What? Today?"

"Right now!"

"I don't know," Charlie said, his voice suddenly edged with fear and self-doubt.

"You know the answers," Mark said.

"And even if you don't..." He held the cheat sheets in the air and waved them back and forth. "You've got these."

"Right," Charlie nodded. "Let's do it."

"Now you're talking."

Mark took Charlie to the DriveTest facil-

ity in Brampton and parked in the Home Depot parking lot next door. As Charlie readied to leave Mother Load, Mark handed him a few slips of paper – all blank – to slip under his sleeve.

"Wish me luck," Charlie said, getting out.

"You won't need any."

Just over an hour later, Charlie returned to the truck, a sheet of paper in his hand and a big grin on his face.

"How'd you do?" Mark asked, as Charlie climbed into Mother Load.

"Near perfect score."

"What about the cheat sheets?" Mark asked.

"Didn't need them. I knew all the answers and when you know the answers, the test is easy."

"What'd you do with them?"

"Tossed them in the garbage on my way out. I didn't want to have them... you know, in case I got stopped or something."

Mark put a hand on the man's shoulder. "I knew you could do it."

"Of course I could," Charlie said, chest out and looking like he might call Mark a loser at any moment. "I've been driving for 45 years. It'll take more than a wee written test to get me off the road."

Mark smiled. Charlie had every right to be pleased, but it was a bit too soon to be overconfident. "Now all that's left is the road test," he said.

"Oh yeah, the road test," Charlie sighed, his spirits coming back down to earth in a fireball of uncertainty. "Thanks for reminding me." □

– Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of *Licence Renewed*.

Did you know that there are two full-length novels featuring Mark Dalton?: Mark Dalton "SmartDriver" and Mark Dalton "Troubleload." For your free copy register with ecoENERGY for Fleets (Fleet Smart) at fleetsmart.gc.ca



The continuing adventures of *Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator* brought to you by **MICHELIN NORTH AMERICA (CANADA) INC.**



SAFETY

Every inspection report will count under CSA 2010

It would be difficult to underestimate the growing role of safety-related data in the business of trucking. Shippers are analyzing more of this information than ever before when deciding who should carry freight; insurers are using similar factors to calculate risks; banks are digging through the data to identify emerging financial troubles; and regulators are using it to target sanctions.

Every one of these groups will soon have access to a new source of information thanks to CSA 2010 – a system that will monitor the actions of fleets and drivers who travel in the US.

Despite recent delays, the associated Carrier Safety Measurement System (CSMS) went online in April, while enforcement personnel are preparing to use the reports to draft warning letters and schedule on-site compliance reviews as early as this November.

Rather than simply counting the number of collisions and out-of-service violations, the data in this system focuses on seven 'Basics,' including reports of unsafe driving, fatigued driving, driver fitness, use of controlled substances and alcohol, vehicle maintenance, cargo-related issues, and crash indicators. Results from each roadside inspection will also be used in the various calculations, even when findings are favourable or limited to an issue like an overweight axle or mechani-

Ask the Expert

RICK GELLER



cal problem that can be fixed on the spot. And the profiles that emerge will be published for the whole world to see, making it particularly important to ensure the data is as accurate and favourable as possible.

The process of managing the data begins by educating drivers and other fleet employees about the new system, and by tracking the related information that it can offer.

The CSMS reports hardly need to be a surprise to anyone. With the help of an insurer, fleets already have the chance to analyze 30 months of existing violations, identifying issues that need to be addressed before enforcement personnel ever make a call. Carriers, meanwhile, will have the opportunity to track any changes in the records by monitoring the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) Web site or by signing up for automatic updates.

These are not the only ways that record-keeping procedures will play an important role.

A commitment to check every related violation report, for example, will help to spot the inspection results that actually belong to another fleet. And safety managers who

file inspection reports by state will have the opportunity to identify jurisdictions where they haven't been given credit for favourable inspections. (Equipment that tends to record an out-of-service rate of 4% shouldn't suddenly fail 90% of inspections as soon as it crosses a particular state line). It is all part of an ongoing commitment to evaluating the quality of the data behind the reports.

Once information like this is in hand, it is a matter of establishing the procedures that will lead to positive results. If an anomaly in the data is discovered, the odds of a successful challenge are actually in a fleet's favour. Looking at the 41,000 situations that were reviewed between February 2004 and September 2008, the FMCSA revised its data 64% of the time.

Meanwhile, drivers can play their own role in the paper shuffle of CSA 2010 by requesting a copy of a favourable report every time they pass a roadside inspection. Sometimes it will just be a matter of making a polite request, and enforcement officers will likely finish the document if they learn that the driver earns a bonus for that simple piece of paper. But even if an officer refuses to fill out the paperwork, drivers can still give safety managers the information they need, recording details about the time, date and location of the inspection as well as the related patrol number and badge number.

Most driver-related out-of-service issues also tend to include Hours-of-Service violations. If a fleet spots a problem before CSA 2010 becomes a reality, however, it will be able to initiate the corrective actions that will be seen in a favourable light.

Equipment-related out-of-service rates can be analyzed in a similar way. When most of the violations appear to be linked to problems that should be caught during a pre-trip inspection, it's safe to say that regulators will want to see proof of retraining initiatives to correct the issues. It proves that the data from CSA 2010 is about more than a paper-pushing exercise. It is a tool which will offer insight that a fleet can use to become as safe and profitable as possible. Everyone should welcome that. □

– This month's expert is Rick Geller. Rick is the director of safety and signature services for Markel Insurance Company of Canada and has more than 25 years experience providing loss control and risk management services to the trucking industry. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Markel is the country's largest trucking insurer providing more than 50 years of continuous service to the transportation industry. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to info@markel.ca.

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TSQ

BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – The announcement that Canadian Tire will become fuel provider and convenience store operator for all of Ontario's 23 service centres along the 400-series highways has stirred up a variety of reactions in the trucking industry.

Some have expressed confusion about the choice, while others remain cautiously optimistic that the retailer will keep truckers' interests in mind. Others are simply pleased they'll be able to collect Canadian Tire money at the locations. Harry Rudolfs, who once drove for Canadian Tire, explores the issue further in this month's cover story, but for now, let's head to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. and see what drivers there had to say.

Clyde Huycke, a driver with LMB Transport in Belleville, Ont., says that an organization as renowned as Canadian Tire will likely do well running the facilities. As for



Truck Stop Question

How will Canadian Tire perform running Ontario's service centres?

ADAM LEDLOW – Managing Editor



Clyde Huycke

improvements that could be made to the service centres, Huycke suggests the availability of parts, tires and proper equipment to clean your truck.

In general, Huycke says, truckers

just want the service centres back open to help lessen the disruptions of the past several months. "There's a lot of dead time now; you have to pull off the road and just sit and wait until your appointment time because they won't take you 15 minutes prior, and if you're late by an hour they won't take you at all," he says.

Rob McLaughlin, an owner/operator with New Brunswick-based Belle Tran Limited, says the whole process of the ownership change will be a learning experience both for Canadian Tire and for truckers.

"The big fuel outlets now have a system in place. I'm not sure if Canadian Tire will be able to do



Rob McLaughlin

that immediately or if it's going to be a learning process," he told *Truck News*. "We are to the point right now where we're almost desperate for rest areas because of all the closures at once, so any news is welcome news, but I'm not so sure (how Canadian Tire will do) because I'm familiar with Canadian Tire as an old gas bar in New Brunswick for small vehicles, but not in the commercial traffic application."

Ty Alexander, a driver based out of Trenton and Belleville, Ont., says he could care less who actually runs the new service centres so long as they get them up and running again.

"I have no idea what kind of job they are going to do. I think just as long as somebody gets the damn things up and running again, because I think it's ridiculous that they've got them all closed down at the same time. It's a real pain not having them there."

As far as improvements are concerned, Alexander says bigger and more parking spaces for trucks would be ideal so there's more room to maneuver "so it's not so crowded that you're sleeping on the highway."

Paul Shandz, a driver of 34 years who works for an Ontario-based feed and supply company, says he's lucky enough to not need to use the service centres much because of his schedule, but does have suggestions for improvement.

"I know before they shut them down there were quite a few of them that could have used a lot more parking space. There's not nearly enough parking space for trucks in those service plazas and when they're rebuilding them I don't know if that's going to be included in that or not, but that's a big thing."



Wayne Armstrong

Wayne Armstrong, a driver with Meyers Transport out of Belleville, Ont., says he thinks Canadian Tire will do a pretty good job. "They do a pretty good job with everything else they do," he says. Armstrong says that most of the service centres he visits have just about everything you need, especially the presence of another renowned Canadian franchise – Tim Horton's. □

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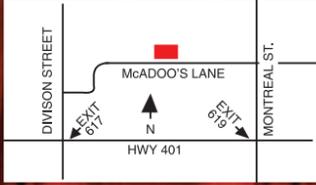
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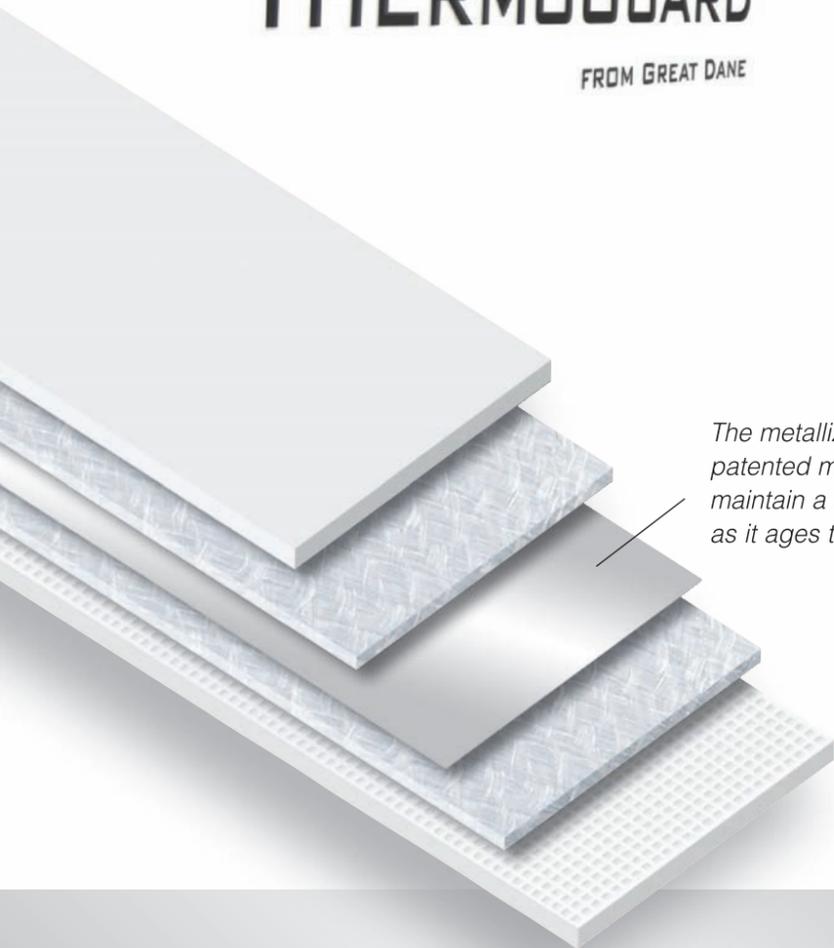
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