

# TRUCK NEWS

January 2013 Volume 33, Issue 1

SPECIAL  
2013 Calendar  
of Events

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at [www.trucknews.com](http://www.trucknews.com)

## Deconstructing a deal

MSM's Mike McCarron  
on why he sold, what  
he learned along the  
way and why *you*  
should be planning now.

Photo by Adam Ledlow

**LET'S MAKE A DEAL:** When Mike McCarron, founder and managing partner of MSM Transportation sold his business to Wheels Group in October, we wondered why? And then we asked him. This wide-ranging candid interview explains it all.

**By James Menzies**  
**ETOBICOKE, Ont.** – On Oct. 23, 2012, Wheels Group announced it had acquired MSM Transportation in a major deal worth \$18.6 million.

The announcement came as a surprise, in part because Mike McCarron, managing partner and the public face of MSM Transpor-

tation was just 52 years of age – seemingly too young to be considering retirement.

What was the reason for the sale? Why was the timing significant? And what was learned along the way about the arduous process of selling an established business?

For the answers to these questions

and more, we caught up with McCarron for an exclusive interview.

When we spoke to McCarron, he had just assumed a new position in mergers and acquisitions with Wheels Group (a role he was mindful not to discuss with Wheels until after the sale of MSM had been

**Continued on page 51**

## Warmer reception

*Industry softens stance  
on Walmart's 60.5-ft.  
trailer after permit  
conditions revised*

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Walmart Canada's controversial 'supercube' configuration, consisting of a cabover tractor with dromedary box pulling a 60.5-ft. drop-deck semi-trailer, will operate under revised permit conditions that reflect the concerns raised by the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA).

The 18-month trial will allow five qualified carriers to operate the new configurations, with each receiving four permits.

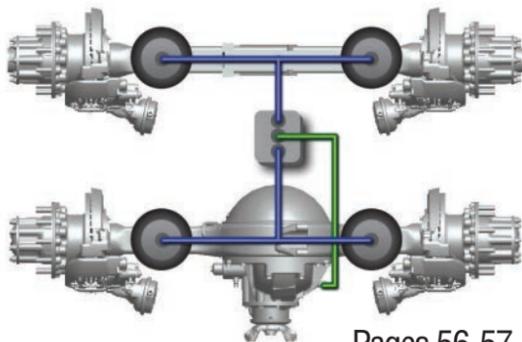
The OTA had voiced concerns about the initial permit conditions, which seemed to grant the permits to Walmart itself rather than the CVOR-holding carrier that would operate the equipment. The association says the revised permit conditions "reflect most of the recommendations put forward by OTA in recent weeks."

"While for the most part the trucking industry would prefer to not have to deal with the whole question of extended length trailers, the association's long-standing position is that it will not stand in the way of changes to Ontario's truck weights and dimensions standards that would enhance the productivity of the industry, its customers or the provincial econ-

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## Here come the 6x2s

The low-hanging fruit has been picked.  
So, what's the next big fuel-saver?



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### Inside This Issue...

- **What's your score?:** Significant changes to CSA went into effect in early December, and in many cases they are retroactive. How will your US safety rating be affected? Page 8
- **How's your health?:** An Ontario research group has completed a first-of-its kind research project examining the health of professional drivers. Page 20
- **Tire tips:** We turn to some real tire masters for advice on maximizing your investment. Page 48
- **Collision Course:** Dalton's anger grows when he realizes he's been set up. Page 60

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Road Knight



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Brian (pictured right) and Lee,  
Team Drivers since 2010  
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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

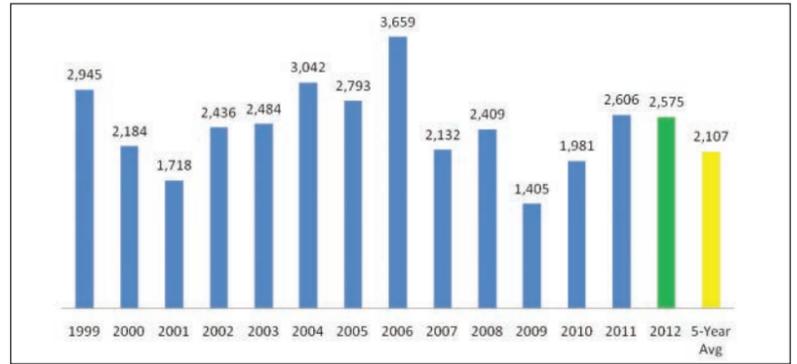
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Class 8 truck sales in October once again topped the 2,000 mark but sales have been slowing during the tail end of the year and this month actually fell below last year's total. The 2,575 Class 8 trucks sold into the Canadian market in October was 31 units fewer than last year's performance. But the total was more than 400 units better than the 5-year average. It made for only the sixth best October since 1999. The slower sales growth in August, September and now October is further indication of a slowdown in truck purchases for the remainder of 2012.

### Monthly Class 8 Sales – Oct 12

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	617	599
International	377	656
Kenworth	454	467
Mack	163	125
Peterbilt	334	301
Volvo	383	332
Western Star	247	126
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2575</b>	<b>2606</b>

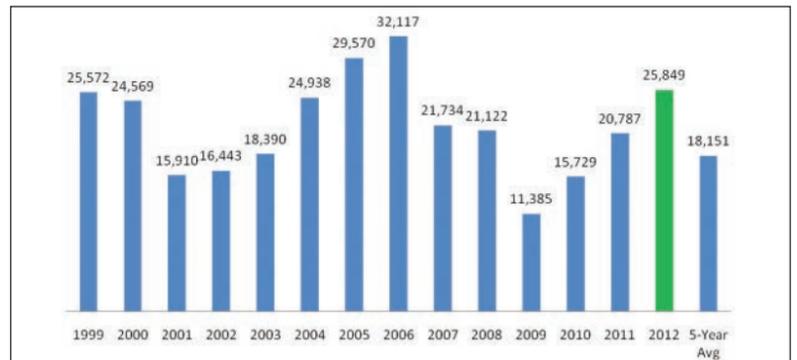
### Historical Comparison – Oct 12 Sales



### Class 8 Sales (YTD Oct 12) by Province and OEM

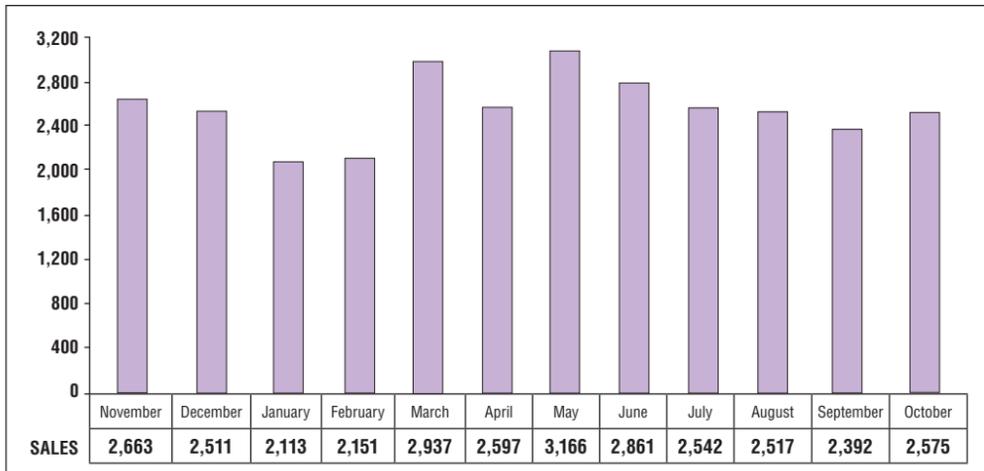
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	512	661	198	505	2,948	1,098	288	126	24	14	6,374
Kenworth	556	2,116	335	187	911	913	98	0	0	0	5,116
Mack	91	351	170	95	769	335	69	36	0	23	1,939
International	138	668	71	221	1,713	784	151	73	24	53	3,896
Peterbilt	330	1,164	264	463	598	508	144	24	0	0	3,495
Volvo	197	256	97	231	1,465	634	103	59	0	6	3,048
Western Star	344	711	75	43	275	344	68	107	5	9	1,981
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,168</b>	<b>5,927</b>	<b>1,210</b>	<b>1,745</b>	<b>8,679</b>	<b>4,616</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>25,849</b>

### Historical Comparison – YTD Oct 12

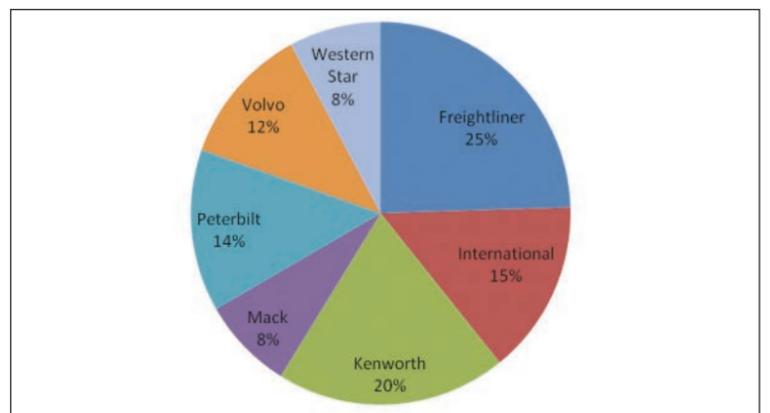


The Canadian and US economies have slowed over the summer, particularly in manufacturing, but there is still economic growth. Many industry experts believe the economic softening will impact Class 8 truck sales for the remainder of 2012. So far sales in August, September and October have shown signs of a slowdown but the earlier monthly sales totals are helping boost 2012 to the third highest YTD total dating back to 1999. The 25,849 trucks sold after the first 10 months in the Canadian market are more than 7,000 better than the 5-year average.

### 12-Month Sales Trends



### Market Share Class 8 – Oct 12 YTD



Truck sales came in above the 2,000 mark for the 13th straight month, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007. The 2,575 trucks sold in October also reflect a break from four consecutive monthly decreases since the highpoint of 3,166 trucks sold in May. Our Transportation Buying Trends Survey found that 46% of Canadian carriers expect to purchase new Class 8 trucks in 2012. Question is if most carriers are looking to simply replace older equipment rather than add capacity, how long will the buying spree continue?

With just two months of sales reports left to close out 2012, Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, is having a banner year, commanding a quarter of Class 8 sales. Kenworth is in the number two spot for marketshare and enjoying the fact that its strong western network is able to tap into the stronger western economy. Troubled Navistar International is at 15% share of the market after announcing a change in direction with its engine technology and changes to its management team. Peterbilt has moved upwards to grab a 14% share. Volvo is the only other OEM to enjoy more than 10% market share.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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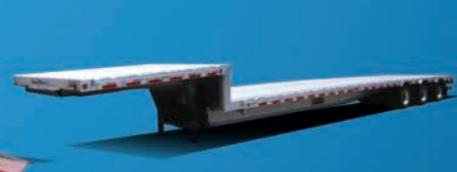
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**2008 GREAT DANE 48' QUAD AXLE VANS**  
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**2006 UTILITY 53' HIGH CUBE REEFER**  
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**2003 GREAT DANE 53' TRIDEM MULTI-TEMP**  
 53', 72" Tridem Air Ride, 22.5 Tires on Polished Aluminum outer wheels, Stainless Steel Front & Rear, Aluminum Duct Floor, Carrier Multi-Temp Reefer unit, Well Maintain and clean Inside & Out.



**(2) 2004 TRAILMOBILE 53' DRY VANS**  
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**(5) 2009 CAPACITY TJ5000 SHUNT TRUCKS**  
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# What lies beyond the low-hanging fruit?

The trucking industry is about to step into a bold new age for fuel- and weight-saving technologies.

Let's face it, all the low-hanging fruit has been harvested. Think of all the easy-to-deploy and inexpensive technologies that have become mainstream over the past five years in an effort to curb high fuel costs?

Wide-base tires are now commonplace, and so are trailer side skirts. Trailer tails will be too, once the government gets its act together and allows for their use.

All the truck manufactures have within their stables extremely aerodynamic tractors that slice through the air with ease. Even aerodynamic mud flaps are available.

The question becomes, what next? It seems all the obvious solutions have been developed, deployed, proven out and widely adopted. But fuel continues to be the highest operating cost for fleets and owner/operators.

It seems OEMs and component manufacturers are already working hard on the next generation of fuel-saving technologies. One of the more promising technologies is waste heat



recovery, which will allow the excess heat created by the engine to be captured and then used to power certain functions of the vehicle, decreasing the load on the engine.

Another intriguing technology is the use of 6x2 axles, which until recently would seem unthinkable in Canada, with our wintery conditions. However, advancements in electronics are making 6x2s a more compelling proposition, even here in Canada.

Fleets can save about 400 lbs by running a dead axle, increasing payload or improving fuel economy by more than 2%. This solution won't work for everyone, but the 6x2 is a standard spec' in Europe, including in some of the most rigorous applications.

Electronics can now shift the weight of the load onto the powered axle in low traction situations, automatically and transparently to

the driver. I saw a demonstration of Meritor's soon-to-be-released 6x2 SMARTandem this past month and was impressed by its capabilities.

Truck operators are going to have to get creative when it comes to ferreting out further fuel savings and productivity improvements from their equipment. Government needs to keep out of the way when some of these systems and technologies are brought to market, provided safety, infrastructure and environmental health aren't put at risk.

As always, there is no magic bullet that will deliver double-digit fuel savings, but there are still plenty of opportunities for incremental improvements. Some of these emerging technologies, like 6x2 axles, will require fleet owners and owner/operators to take a leap of faith and abandon some of their preconceived ideas.

Stepping outside of our comfort zone and doing things differently than

what we're accustomed to is never easy, but it's necessary to stay ahead of the game.

I, for one, am interested to see what the next big thing will be, now that all the no-brainers have been exhausted. □

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## The new rail reality

At CITT's recent Reposition 2012 conference, I heard something during a C-Suite discussion on shipping by rail that caught my attention and should interest all motor carriers, whether they see railways as competitors or partners. Until recently it was commonly accepted that the economics of rail surpassed the economics of trucking services at around the 750-mile mark. During the discussion, however, it was revealed that may have shifted down to 500 miles. And, in some cases, rail service may be considered viable by some shippers at as little as a 350-mile distance if used to avoid congested corridors such as Toronto to Montreal.

Is rail ready to made significant inroads into trucking-dominated markets? Industry analysts point out that as truck capacity tightens, placing upward pressure on trucking rates, intermodal's savings of 10% to 20%



will look increasingly better. The Class 1 railways have all made significant investments in their intermodal operations. In fact, the LTL and small parcel segments of the trucking industry themselves are becoming large supporters of placing their freight on rail. Some truckload carriers are doing the same as a way to reduce fuel costs and deal with the driver shortage.

Our own annual Transportation Buying Trends research is showing strong growth for intermodal among shippers.

Then again, industry experts have been forecasting significant growth in the penetration of intermodal services for two decades now. It has always fallen short of expectations due to poor service and less than stellar relations with shippers.

There are developments I've seen of late though that will likely go a long way towards improving the shipper experience with rail. The first involves a decision just reached on the legislative front, which addresses shipper frustrations in dealing with railway penalties or ancillary charges they consider unfair. Back in 2008, a provision was added to the Canada Transportation Act, which, for the first time, allowed shippers to file complaints to the Canadian Transportation Agency when they found themselves at odds with their railway service providers over such charges. It was a big deal because for some shippers, such charges amounted to millions annually. It was a big deal for the railways too, and they have been fighting it in the courts since then. At the start of November, however, the Federal Court of Appeal decided shippers are now free to file complaints on penalty and ancillary charges even if a confidential contract is in place. So there should be peace on that front, with the Agency able to step in when

necessary to handle disputes. The second development that will help broker a peace is Ottawa's stated plan to pass legislation to better manage the relationships between rail companies and their customers. Shippers have been pushing hard for mandated service level agreements to give them more negotiating power, particularly when they have only one choice for a rail carrier. If Ottawa sticks to its promise (and our sources say that it will), we could see the proposed legislation before the year is over. Once passed, that too should help reduce the bickering.

Truckers working with the railways stand to gain if legislation forces the railways to act with more consideration for their customers. At the same time, however, it may turn the railways into more viable competitors on certain shipments than ever before. □

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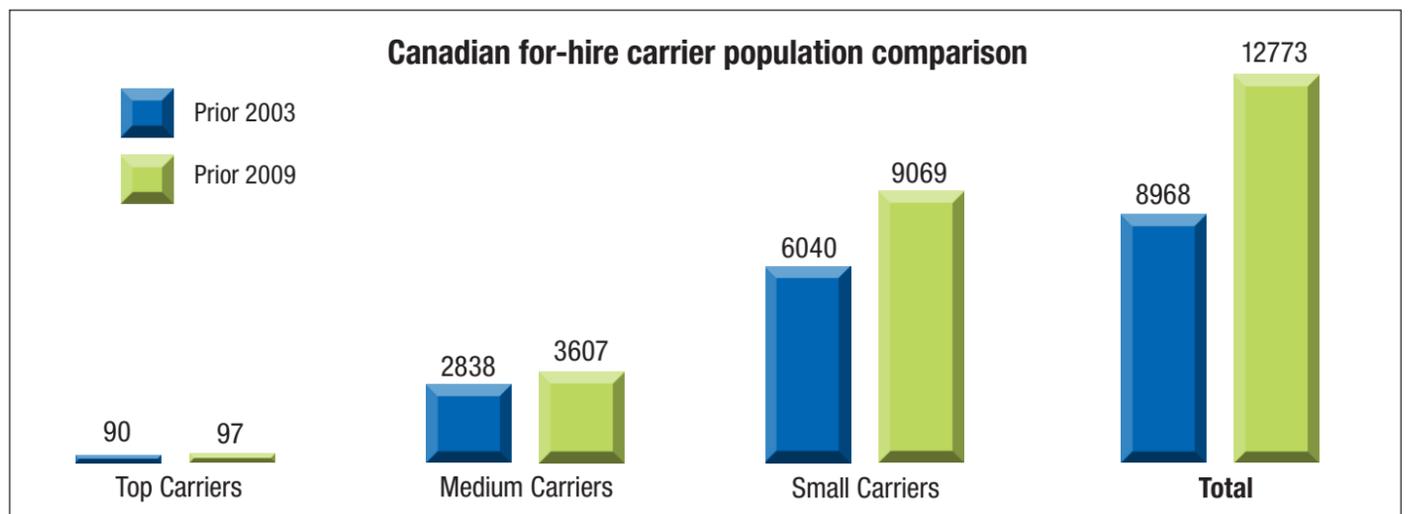
## Did you know?

### The perception and reality of trucking capacity

Canadian shippers surveyed by our research division, Transportation Media Research, indicate they believe the less-than-truckload sector to be close to balanced capacity and the truckload sector to be heading into a slightly tight capacity situation.

That's a marked difference in perception from the past few years when shippers believed TL, and in particular LTL, to have such excess capacity that they could get aggressive with rate reduction demands. The end result was several years of considerable downward pressure on rates.

Motor carrier executives are optimistic the shedding of equipment since the Great Recession has returned



them to balanced capacity levels and that this will place upward pressure on rates as the economy heats up. We estimate about 12% of capacity has been removed since 2008. Our annual Top Tier report on the capacity of the nation's top 100 carriers shows they've grown just 0.001% since 2008.

But as the charts above indicate, excess capacity may be more of an issue

with smaller fleets than large fleets. Back in 2003, when the Canadian economy was about to head into an incredible five-year growth spurt, there were just 8,968 for-hire carriers serving the market. By 2008, with the economy about to collapse, that number had ballooned to 12,773 for-hire carriers. Most of the growth came among the small carrier ranks.

Bankruptcy statistics also indicate that carriers proved remarkably resilient during the economic turmoil with bankruptcies steadily declining since 2008 and never reaching the high levels from the start of the previous decade. And if that continues, it may dampen the tightening of capacity required to place strong upward pressure on rates. □

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IN BRIEF

**Wakefield Canada wins workplace-oriented awards**

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Wakefield Canada has won two recent awards for its corporate culture and human resources practices. For the first time in its history, Wakefield was recognized for having one of Canada's 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures of 2012 in the 'mid-market' division. The contest is run by executive search firm Waterstone Human Capital. The selection is made by a "prestigious group of well-connected executives, from the private and public sector, most of whom represent an organization that is a past winner of the program," the company announced.

Wakefield also was recognized as a repeat winner of the Best Small and Medium Employers in the Greater Toronto Area. Wakefield achieved the 17th top ranking.

"If employees speak positively about their employer, want to continue working there and go 'above and beyond' to help the organization succeed, we identify them as being highly engaged," organizers said.

Bob MacDonald, president of Wakefield Canada, thanked the company's staff and added: "We're not done, and it's not easy. I thank each and every one of you for contributing to our company's success."

Wakefield distributes Castrol lubricants in Canada and manufactures and distributes H2Blu diesel exhaust fluid. □

**Canadian transportation CFOs outline predictions, top concerns in GE survey**

**TORONTO, Ont.** – A survey of corporate chief financial officers found that transportation CFO sentiment is in line with the overall mean when it comes to the current state of their industry, the US economy and the global economy. The GE Capital Mid-Market CFO Survey, which included CFO input from a variety of sectors, found that transportation CFOs were the most optimistic about Canada's economy over the next 12 months compared with other sectors, with 52% predicting expansion during that period.

They were also the most optimistic when it came to industry growth, with 45% saying the transportation industry will expand over the next 12 months. Transportation CFOs are nearly equally divided when it comes to company growth, with 45% expecting their company to be in a moderate growth phase and 48% expecting a cyclical/limited growth phase for the next one to three years.

Fifty-five per cent expect their company's revenues to increase this year, while 33% expect revenues to remain about the same. More than half (52%) expect their cost structure to stay about the same, while 39% expect it to increase. The top business concern is energy costs, including oil and gas, named by more than three-quarters (76%) of transportation industry respondents. The second-greatest concern is labour costs at 70%.

More than half of transportation CFOs (52%) plan to keep pricing stable, while 39% plan to increase prices. Seventy-nine percent of transportation CFOs have been hiring this year, and 76% anticipate hiring in the next 12 months. More than half (52%) anticipate spending more money on equipment this year, and 73% said that credit from their lender has remained the same.

**Transportation-specific questions**

Regarding questions only asked of transportation respondents, the top concern is safety/CSA regulations, followed by truck size and weight regulations. The majority of transportation CFOs (79%) plan to rent equipment if they need it this year. The second-most popular option (73%) is to finance new equipment with a loan. Only 18% of respondents said they did not plan to add new equipment this year.

According to transportation CFOs, the greatest business opportunities this year are acquiring new customers, chosen by 79%, and increasing tonnage volume from existing customers, chosen by 48%. According to GE, respondents to the survey have revenues of \$61 million and an employee count of 214, on average. □

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## BORDER

# Changes to CSA, implemented in December, could change your rating

By James Menzies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Carriers operating in the US will see changes to how their safety performance is scored under CSA, after changes to the safety measurement system went into effect in early December.

The latest rendition of CSA's scoring system has been dubbed SMS 3.0. Data mining company Vigillo has been on top of changes to CSA and held a Webinar recently to educate fleets on how the changes will affect them. The revisions are significant and in many cases retroactive, and could immediately change a carrier's CSA scores, Vigillo officials warned.

CSA (Compliance Safety Accountability) was launched in December 2010 as a way of measuring and monitoring the safety and compliance of carriers operating in the US. Since its launch,

subtle changes have been made in response to feedback from the trucking industry and other stakeholders. The changes included in SMS 3.0 are among the most drastic. The three principle changes include: expanding the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC to include cargo violations; replacing the former Cargo-Related BASIC with a new HazMat BASIC; and the reweighting, renaming and elimination of certain violations.

As part of the overhaul, more than 100 violations have been transferred from the Cargo-Related BASIC into Vehicle Maintenance, which was already the category containing the greatest number of possible infractions. In

the Cargo-Related BASIC's place is the new HazMat BASIC, which is heavily focused on compliance-related issues, such as proper documentation and placarding.

Drew Anderson, director of sales with Vigillo, said the changes stemmed from the concerns of flatdeck and open deck carriers that felt they faced increased scrutiny

when compared to van operators, solely due to the visibility of the freight they haul.

"This change has been two years in the making," Anderson said. "There was a huge bias against flatbed and open deck carriers under the old methodology. They were subjected to more mainte-

**'Watch your HazMat, even if you're not a HazMat carrier,'**

Drew Anderson, Vigillo

nance inspections as opposed to dry van and tanker trucks. Industry stakeholders went to the FMSCA and lobbied for this change."

While the changes were made in response to industry demands, Anderson pointed out they present a new conundrum.

"Be careful what you ask for, it just may happen," he quipped. "Indeed what we see is the bias shown against flatbed and open deck carriers is eliminated. As the Cargo BASIC fades into the sunset, all open deck and flatbed carriers with a Cargo BASIC alert, that alert goes away because the BASIC goes away."

What's left of the former Cargo BASIC now falls under the newly-created HazMat BASIC. Because of this category's emphasis on placarding and paperwork, Anderson said it can be argued that the focus of CSA is shifting more from safety towards compliance.

"What we see here is that the remaining HazMat BASIC really doesn't have a direct impact on safety, it's much more compliance related," Anderson said.

Adding to this phenomenon, the Cargo BASICs that were moved over to the Vehicle Maintenance category have in many cases been reweighted and made less punitive. As a result, the cargo-related violations have been effectively buried within the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC.

Vigillo ran an analysis of 2,000 customers to see how their current CSA scores would be affected by the changes contained within SMS 3.0. The top cargo-related violation doesn't appear until number 41 on the list of violations within the revamped category.

"This illustrates that the old non-HazMat cargo violations do sort of get lost within the new Vehicle Maintenance BASIC," Anderson said. The 41st most prevalent infraction, incidentally, is "leaking, blowing or loose cargo," which has been downgraded from a 10-point violation to a seven-point violation.

The result of all this is that seemingly serious violations have been diluted, in a sense, and buried within their new category.

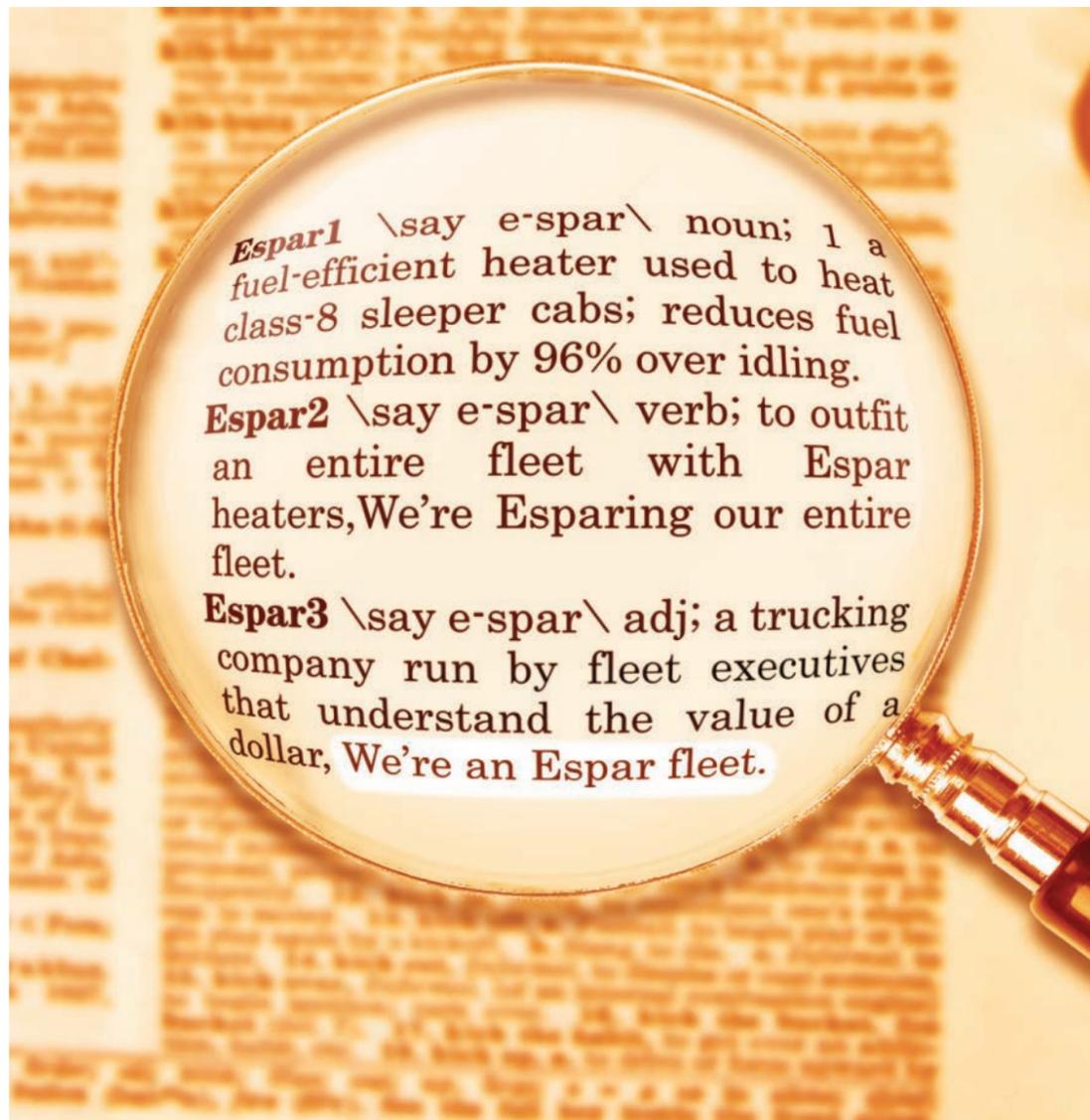
The second major change, according to Sloan Morris, director of client services with Vigillo, is that the former Cargo-Related BASIC will be identified as the HazMat BASIC. These scores will be kept from the public's view for the next year. You don't necessarily have to be a hazardous materials hauler to be measured under the HazMat BASIC. Even hauling a few placarded loads will subject carriers to scrutiny under this BASIC, so carrier will want to ensure they are complying with all requirements as they pertain to placarding and paperwork. Because of the thinning of the former Cargo BASIC, the new HazMat BASIC now becomes the thinnest of BASICs in terms of violations, and as such, the most sensitive to violations.

One large carrier evaluated by Vigillo, running 1,900 power units and travelling 183 million vehicle

Continued on page 10

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**BORDER**

# CSA cause and effect

## For every improvement to CSA, it seems new concerns arise

Continued from page 8

miles, would immediately receive an alert in the HazMat category when the changes are made, Anderson pointed out. This despite the fact that carrier incurred only 10 violations under the new HazMat BASIC over the past two years, and for infractions that don't directly affect safety.

"The moral of this story is, watch your HazMat, even if you're not a HazMat carrier," Anderson warned. "It's not going to take much at all for you to go over the threshold."

In fact, of the top 10 violations found under the HazMat BASIC, only one is directly related to safety.

The third major change that came into effect when SMS 3.0

went live, is that violations were reweighted retroactively, meaning some carriers saw changes to their CSA scores. Those weightings will continue to be adjusted even after SMS 3.0 is rolled out, Morris warned. Anderson noted the same changes will affect carriers within your own peer group, so don't feel you're being picked on.

Examples of impending changes include: eliminating the violation for speeding 1-5 mph over the limit; specifying whether or not driving with a suspended licence occurred while the licence was suspended for safety-related reasons; and changing the wording of the fatigued driving violation to hours-of-service compliance, to reflect the reality that not all HoS violators are fatigued. □

## CSA a 'fundamental game-changer'

By Lou Smyrlis

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – It hasn't changed a single US law, yet the Compliance Safety Accountability (CSA) program is proving to be a "fundamental game-changer" for truck transportation, according to Dave Heller and Chris Burruss from the Truckload Carriers Association.

"It is putting documenting safety to the forefront. Putting safety to the forefront is a good thing to do. But it needs to be done right," Heller told a large crowd of trucking industry professionals gathered for a Driving for Profit seminar.

In a spirited morning address, Heller pointed to several current flaws within CSA, including inequities in the way the 50 different US states handle data and enforce the legislation.

Heller's remarks echoed industry concerns in recent months that while CSA is a step in the right direction towards reducing commercial vehicle crashes, injuries and fatalities, it requires further work.

For example, Scott Mugno, vice-president of safety for FedEx Ground Package System, recently told the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit that data weakness in the program is preventing the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) from having enough information to properly evaluate carriers, as well as methodology issues that count all crashes – regardless of preventability – against a carrier, as among the most significant issues with CSA.

To its credit, the FMCSA did announce changes to the program in late August this year, which went into effect in December (see above story). Burruss, president of TCA, told the Driving for Profit seminar he is a fan of CSA.

"It has its problems and it needs to be tweaked but it is better than what we had before," Burruss said.

Driving for Profit is a series of half-day seminars, organized by NAL Insurance and sponsored by Dalton Timmis Insurance, Daimler Truck Financial and *Truck News*. □

## US truck tonnage crunched by Sandy

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – US for-hire truck tonnage dove 3.8% in October, following on the heels of a 0.4% decrease in September (which was revised down from a 0.1% gain that was first reported).

October's drop represented the third consecutive month-over-month decrease, totaling 4.7%, according to the American Trucking Associations Truck Tonnage Index.

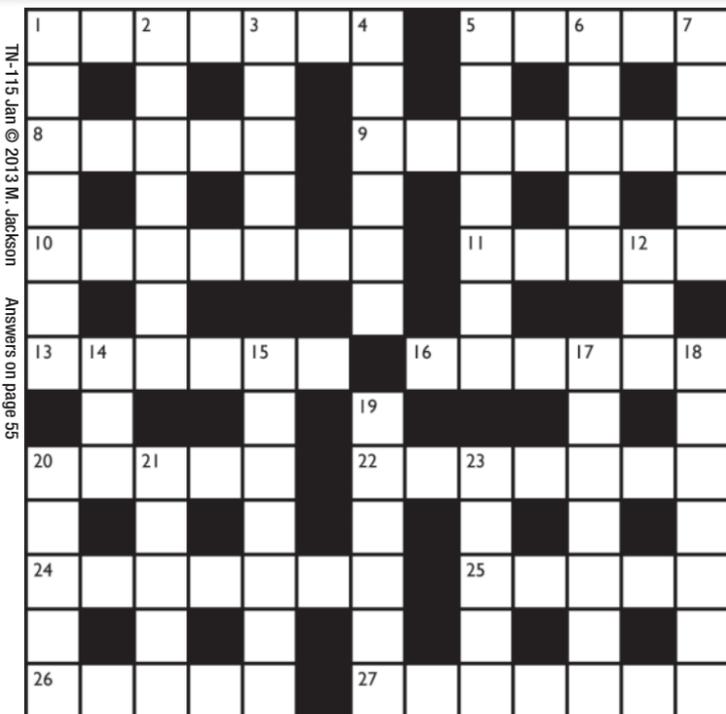
Seasonally-adjusted truck tonnage reached its lowest level since May 2011. October's tonnage was 2.1% below the same month last year, marking the first year-over-year decrease since November 2009. Year-to-date, US truck tonnage is still 2.9% above the same period last year.

"Clearly Hurricane Sandy negatively impacted October's tonnage reading," ATA chief economist Bob Costello said. "However, it is impossible for us to determine the exact impact."

Costello noted that a large drop in fuel shipments into the affected area likely put downward pressure on October's tonnage level since fuel is heavy freight, in addition to reductions in other freight.

"I'd expect some positive impact on truck tonnage as the rebuilding starts in the areas impacted by Sandy, although that boost may only be modest in November and December," he said. "Excluding the hurricane impacts, I still think truck tonnage is decelerating along with factory output and consumer spending on tangible goods." □

## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**Across**

1. Vehicle volume
5. Colour between red and green
8. RUB, acronym for rich \_\_\_\_ biker
9. Taxi-ride description
10. Used-truck buyer's quest
11. Hazzard County smokey Coltrane
13. Cool eyewear
16. Company making engine retarders
20. Bunk-heater brand
22. Sleazy-motel rating (3,4)
24. Multi-car collisions (4,3)
25. Emergency-vehicle sound
26. Saskatoon-based carrier
27. Up-and-down engine items

**Down**

1. Tourist-transport vehicle (4,3)
2. "Wild Rose Country" plates' home
3. "Easy Rider" star Peter
4. Building site sight, \_\_\_\_ truck
5. Sterling medium-duty model
6. Farmers' tractor garages
7. Dash feature since the '30s
12. Driver's compartment
14. Allowable road time acronym (1,1,1)
15. On the road, in other words (2,5)
17. Home of 400-series highways
18. Suspension-system elements
19. Adds coolant or oil (4,2)
20. E on fuel gauge
21. Temporary traffic diverter
23. Zigzag road sections, slangily

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**BORDER**

# Turn regulatory challenges into a competitive advantage: Prime Inc.'s Low

**By James Menzies**  
**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – Fundamentally, the business of trucking hasn't changed much over the past few years.

Robert Low, president and founder of Prime Inc., told attendees at the most recent Driving for Profit seminar that the keys to success remain the same.

"You still have to operate safe and efficiently, watch your costs and charge adequately for what you do," Low explained. "Don't over-expand, and focus on your people; take care of them and they'll take care of the company."

On the regulatory front, it's a different story. There have been plenty of legislative changes with more looming on the horizon. Carriers will have to embrace change and adapt to it, if they wish to succeed.

Low pointed out new regulations can be competitive advantages for well-run carriers. Take CSA for example. A carrier that runs a safe operation can use its CSA scores to secure new business and position itself as a preferred partner in the eyes of its customers.

"I think CSA is a game-changer, and while it's imperfect, it provides a more comprehensive view of each carrier's safety potential," Low said. "And now, with the public nature of most of that information, shippers have at least some implicit obligation, if not more than that, to review that information and to make decisions not just based on the lowest price. CSA is going to be a watershed for safe truckers and truckers who can manage CSA and keep those scores good."

Other regulations on the horizon, including a widely anticipated law that will require the use of electronic logs, will also benefit compliant carriers, and eventually the entire industry, Low noted.

"The driver who's out there working 110-120 hours a week and crowding it into a 60-hour paper logbook is killing themselves. What good is all the money in the world if you're sacrificing your health and safety?" Low pointed out.

"And in many cases the benefits from all that hard work – and the exposure to the health risks – is accruing to the shippers. Drivers are just making a wage out of that. Wouldn't it be better if we could cooperate legally, get some rest, improve your health, improve your longevity and make a decent living? That's a much bet-

ter outcome than developing this huge efficiency and giving it to the shipper."

Low said carriers that aren't using electronic logs will find it very difficult to maintain a clean CSA record.

Low, who serves as chairman of the Truckload Carriers Association, also said he'd like to see the trucking industry take on a more united front when addressing new regulatory requirements.

"Here's how we're hurting ourselves the most," he said. "There are some voices out there saying 'Don't pay any attention to CSA. Don't even look at it. If you don't look at it, you don't take on this obligation to the public.' What's right about that? There are voices out there that advocate they hate CSA just because of their own profit motivation." □

## Sensors to measure benefits of FAST lanes

**SARNIA, Ont.** – A six-month pilot project at the Blue Water Bridge will measure the time savings for truckers using dedicated FAST lanes.

About 1,400 trucks will be involved in the pilot project, announced Dec. 7 by Sarnia-Lambton MP Patricia Davidson along with the Canadian Trucking Alliance, Canada Border Services Agency, the Blue Water Bridge Authority and blueRover.

As part of the project, trucks using the dedicated FAST lanes will be fitted with a dash-mounted blueRover sensor, which measures traffic flow.

The idea is to measure how significant the time savings are for trucks using FAST lanes to cross into Canada at the Blue Water Bridge.

"Time savings translates into a huge cost savings for trucking companies and the economy," said Loreto Saccucci, CEO of blueRover. "It's exciting to see blueRover technology become a big part of the solution to moving goods across the border far more efficiently."

It's expected trucks using the FAST lanes will prove the time-saving benefits of the program, through shorter border crossing times.

"This technology is being used for the first time to measure FAST lane crossing times," added Saccucci. "We're confident blueRover analytics will show a time saving and clear benefit for trucks using the FAST lane."

About 6,000 commercial vehicles cross the Blue Water Bridge each day, making it Canada's second busiest commercial crossing. It's estimated that border delays costs Canada's economy between \$15 billion and \$30 billion per year. □




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## CANADA

## Transportation inflation will be driven by the talent shortage

By Lou Smyrlis

**HALIFAX, N.S.** – The greatest driver of inflation in transportation pricing will not be rising equipment costs but the need for talent, according to Doug Harrison, chief operating officer of Day & Ross Transportation Group.

The need to find talent will also prove to be one of the greatest limiters to growth for Canada's transportation industry, Harrison told a packed room of shippers and carriers attending the Multi-Modal C-Suite Panel at CITT's Reposition 2012 conference.

Not only is talent hard to find, it's also hard to retain, at least in the trucking industry. Harrison pointed out that driver turnover among some of the larger truckload fleets in the US tops 100%.

He questioned how fleets besieged by such high turnover can train their drivers and engage them in providing superior customer service.

The graying of the current transportation workforce will also add to the shortage.

The talent shortage was the first of three key issues which Harrison felt would impact commercial trucking. What the industry has to do to ensure its capacity is in line with the new normal of a slowly growing economy was another issue Harrison considered. Carriers have to consider how much capacity they can remove and still provide quality service, he said.

Certain to have an impact on trucking capacity levels and the need for drivers are changing shipper attitudes towards using intermodal services.

Traditionally it was commonly accepted that the economics of rail surpassed the economics of trucking services at around the 750-mile mark. During the discussion of the C-Suite Panel, however, Harrison said that may have shifted down to 500 miles, with many motor carriers themselves using rail services. And, in some cases, rail service could be viable at as low as a 350-mile distance as a way to avoid congested corridors such as Toronto to Montreal.

The need to make heavy investments in technology is another key issue shaping transportation, according to Harrison.

"Companies are looking to be a lot more responsive at the last minute. This creates pressure on suppliers to be very agile," Harrison explained, and that agility requires the visibility into supply chain operations that allows fast and intelligent decision-making. Technology is necessary for reaching that state. □

## Driver shortage a good news/bad news story: Prime's Low

By James Menzies

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – Prime Inc., a 5,000-truck outfit based out of Springfield, Mo., has constructed a Millennium Building for its drivers that could be considered the envy of the industry.

It includes: a cafeteria; aerobics equipment and gym with personal trainers; a weight room; a small movie theatre; a certified, subsidized day care; a day spa and hair salon; a doctor's office; showers and hotel-style dorm rooms; and mailroom.

Prime's president and founder Rob Low meets with drivers weekly to host an open mic-style drivers' meeting, where any questions or concerns are addressed head on.

All that, and still Prime's annual driver turnover sits at about 54%. Granted, 54%, by US standards, is well below the going rate. But still it's a number that's difficult to com-

prehend given the lengths to which Prime has gone in an attempt to accommodate and provide for its drivers.

Low spoke at the most recent Driving for Profit seminar in early November. The driver shortage was one of many issues covered during the seminar's popular How They Did It section.

"The bad news is, we're going to have a driver shortage and the good news is, we're going to have a driver shortage," Low said. "The driver shortage is the one constraint, in my opinion, that exists in the marketplace to keep that lid on capacity and prevent us from overexpanding. The folks aren't out there in the numbers required to grow this industry to respond with adequate capacity to fill the needs of every shipper if we get a little more growth in the economy. I think we're at the

tipping point now. Business is not great, but it's not horrible. If the economy gets back to the level it should be growing at, trucks are going to get tied up, rates are going to go up, drivers incomes are going to go up and to me, that's a really good thing."

Asked how high driver salaries will need to go before trucking is viewed as an attractive career, Low said it's not all about the money.

"I think part of the solution is making the job better, making the lifestyle better, getting them home more, treating them with more respect," Low said. "If they're getting treated like second class citizens, even making \$100,000 a year might not be enough to tolerate that."

Low said the solution lies in employing more sophisticated routing techniques, getting drivers home more frequently and treat-

**Continued on page 14**



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CANADA

# Home time, respect as important as money

Continued from page 13  
ing them with respect.

Prime's investment in its 40,000 sq.-ft. Millennium Centre is one way the company has chosen to show it

respects its professional drivers. "Our idea is for the Millennium building to be a slice of the contemporary middle-class lifestyle," Low said. "Our feelings are that drivers

aspire to those same kinds of things that you and I would, and if you can provide them with that which they are largely deprived of while driving in many respects, you have a leg up on your competitors that maybe don't value those things."

Looking ahead, Low said an abil-

ity to recruit and retain professional drivers will be of monumental importance to carriers.

"Companies that can't recruit and retain high quality, safe, productive drivers are not going to make it in this environment," he said. □



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**EAST**

# Eassons introduces performance management system

*Technology helps fleet get things done, reward top performers*

**By Carroll McCormick BERWICK, N.S.** – Who wants to write company policies and procedures, only to have them ignored? Who wants to do their job well, yet see low performers get the same pay? A tool called performance management solves these problems. Its premise is to: explain to employees what they have to do; reward those who do what's asked of them; and retrain or discipline those who don't.

Berwick, Nova Scotia-based Eassons Transport started implementing performance management in 2010. Using performance management to measure truck variables like speed or idling is standard stuff, but Eassons is using it to drive, motivate and measure just about everything that the company does.

"This was a huge change and significant shift in the company culture," says Trevor Bent, human resources risk manager, Eassons Transport. He set up the performance management program and oversees it.

To get a sense of how performance management works, it is illustrative to look at what it has done for Eassons' drivers and, by extension, the company. In their online accounts, drivers check for new tasks they have to complete. Say, for example, Bent e-mails a new company policy to everyone. In the old days he could only hope and trust that it would be read. Under the performance management system, he not only can tell who has or has not read it, he knows that employees are motivated to read it.

Company driver Randy Delaney talks about these tasks: "When I go into my account, I see what I have to do. There is a list of documents to be read. Each is basically a course. I read each one and then do a brief test afterward with anywhere from four to 40 questions. You are scored on each one. If you don't pass, you have the option of going back and doing it again. As I complete the documents, they disappear."

Each task completed adds points to a driver's monthly scorecard. The higher the score – the maximum per month is 200 – the bigger the bonus. Bent can tell in a few keystrokes how well everyone is doing, anytime. On one fall day, for example, he sees that 84 out of 120 drivers were over 175, 54 scored greater than 190 and just 13 of 120 below 150.

This level of job monitoring caused some early resistance, but most drivers rose to the challenge and are happily pocketing hundreds of dollars in bonuses every month, just for doing their jobs well.



**NEW APPROACH:** Eassons assigns duties to its drivers and then rewards those who complete tasks in a timely manner.

"I don't see it as spying," Delaney remarks. "Performance management makes you accountable for your job. I have no problem with that. If I am out there speed-

ing, not turning in my log sheets, not washing my trailer, etc., it makes other drivers' jobs harder."

Performance management also feeds into an element of the com-

pany's long-term growth strategy: that of reducing driver turnover.

"We focus our hiring efforts on drivers who are detail-oriented.

**Continued on page 16**

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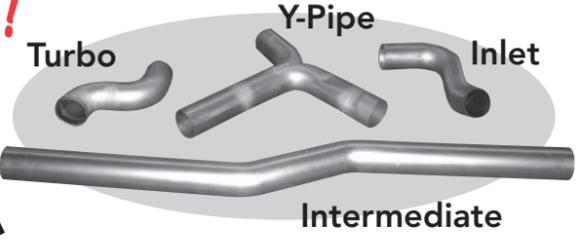
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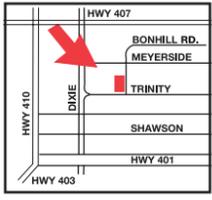
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## EAST

## Performance management platform helps streamline administrative work

**Continued from page 15**

Turnover has been in the high 20s, percent-wise, for years. This will drop as we fill the company with the drivers that are aligned with the company's values, goals and objectives," Bent predicts.

The structure that performance management imposes on Eassons and its employees is critical, Bent says. "When you are growing, the last thing you want is no structure."

Take something like the weekly payroll exercise. "I am expected to fax my trip report to payroll by noon each Monday. If 120 drivers were to fax them in on Tuesday, payroll would fall behind, working extra hours to process the late trip reports," Delaney says.

Bent continues, "Some see performance management negatively, that it is about getting written up.

I see it as a way within your organization to align everybody to a common goal...to identify gaps and fix them."

What does Bent mean by common goals? In part, he means putting on paper everything the drivers are expected to do, from properly filling out their log sheets to renewing their passports. Train them. Test them. Tell them what is expected of them. Leave no doubt and make no exceptions.

"If you can measure it and keep it objective, you can keep it fair and keep it consistent," Bent says. "Align drivers around the company's expectations. If they don't know what they are, how can they possibly deliver on them? Performance management can be a pull system. Employees now monitor their own performance. If they don't know how to do something

they come to us for assistance. We don't chase drives like we did in the past. We want all the drivers to perform, to be responsible, to be on top of their duties. We are creating a culture where drivers are taking ownership of their own performance."

Take, for example, a new policy. Bent writes it and distributes it out to the drivers. He can count on 50% of them to review it within a week and a half. He may motivate drivers with the chance to win a gift certificate for reviewing documents that are not obligatory reading.

Regular tasks that cost drivers points if they don't complete them include administrative duties such as cargo temperature checks, proof of deliveries and filing time sheets. Human resources items worth avoiding, because they cost

points, are things like preventable incidents, speeding, leaving trailers unwashed and logbook violations.

There is driver improvement training, keeping identification and permits current – all of the things that a pro should be doing.

Every month drivers get a scorecard out of 200: the more of the tasks they do that are expected of them, the higher the score.

Bent turns to his keyboard for a few seconds. "Out of 120 drivers now, we have about 50 who are over 190."

Fleet managers, each of whom oversee 30 drivers, also get scorecards and bonuses based on their teams' performance. They can access drivers' dashboards and are there to help their drivers or contact the terminal manager about driver issues.

"We go to our fleet managers if we have problems. If a driver is consistently scoring poorly, the fleet manager can go to the terminal manager, who contacts the driver to ask him 'What's up?' It might be that the driver didn't know he had to do X or Y, or did not know he could check idle-time on the satellite. Maybe a driver does not realize that he is doing something wrong and needs more training. This is a way of monitoring and going to a driver if he has a problem," Delaney observes.

"The motivation of performance management is put on the individual. You can do it or not," Delaney adds. "The company does not call me every three days and hound me. To cut to the chase, these tasks are all part of my job." □

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### Dates announced for Atlantic Truck Show

**MONCTON, N.B.** – The 15th edition of the Atlantic Truck Show will be rolling into Moncton June 7-8, 2013.

The Moncton Coliseum will play host to Atlantic Canada's largest trucking show, which will feature the latest in commercial truck and transportation equipment. Trucking and logistic companies on the hunt for new talent will also be at the event, easily identifiable with 'Recruiting Here' branding at their booths.

"The market in Atlantic Canada is thriving," says show manager Mark Cusack. "This was evident at the Atlantic Heavy Equipment Show in 2012 and if the last edition of the Atlantic Truck Show was any indication, this should be a banner year as well."

According to organizers, nearly 12,000 visitors attended last year's event.

"Exhibit sales are way ahead of our last edition at this stage of the game. We are sitting at nearly 75% sold out at this point and we could not be more pleased," said Cusack.

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# Maximum rubber

*Nitrogen inflation + wide-base tires = winning combination for Dan Freight*

**By Carroll McCormick**  
**JOLIETTE, Que.** – In 2001, looking to capitalize on their promised fuel and weight savings, Joliette, Que.-based Dan Freight Systems tried using wide-base tires. Pleased with their performance, the carrier converted its entire fleet of tractors and trailers to them in 2003-2004. To this day the company runs 100% wide-base tires on its 100 tractors and 120 two-axle trailers.

“We got 9-10% fuel savings without doing anything else,” says Claude Laporte, executive director, Dan Freight Systems. That is big coin, considering that each of the carrier’s trucks logs around 480,000 kilometres a year. There is also the advantage of some 200-250 lbs of weight savings for each axle. “We do the West Coast, California, Nevada, Arizona, etc. A paying load is very important,”

Laporte points out.

As for weight restrictions in some provinces for wide-base tires, Laporte explains, “The maximum weight limit does not affect us at all. We always travel in the US and carry 80,000-lb GVW or less.”

Putting the frosting on the cake, in 2004 Dan Freight switched to nitrogen inflation. The value of inflating tires with nitrogen has been hotly debated and the chemistry and physics that would predict any advantage to running with it is hard to pin down. In the shop, Laporte acknowledges, “At the beginning, maintenance was very skeptical.” Over time though, Dan Freight collected data that indicated that the fuel savings attributable to nitrogen was just over 1%. The data also showed there was less over-inflation, less irregular wear and far fewer flats.



**A TIRE STRATEGY THAT PAYS:** Another Dan Freight rig rolls up to the shop for its weekly inspection.  
 Photo by Carroll McCormick

Drivers also found the ride more comfortable.

“The improvement after we started using nitrogen inflation was dramatic. We went from four to five flats a week to less than one,” Laporte says

The cost of fixing a flat is a pain point, but the three to four hours of downtime is far worse.

“The savings are more on the level of the failure of the tires. The big cost is the loss of time,” Laporte says.

In the early days – its first Michelin brand was the XDA-HTA – the wide-base tires lasted only half as long as duals. Since then Michelin, which represents 95% of the wide-base tires Dan Freight runs, has improved its tires to the point where they run just as far as duals; ie., the Michelin XDN2 lasts 500,000 kilometres.

After years of research, Dan Freight has settled on the Michelin XTA on its trailer positions and the Michelin X One XDA Energy on the drive axles. The carrier continues to test Michelin wide-base tires and some other brands.

It is safe to say that the benefits of wide-base tires are conclusive for the right fleets. As for nitrogen however, its benefits are reminis-

cent of the pitch in the beer commercial: “Those who like it, like it a lot.”

One argument for nitrogen-filled tires is that they maintain their air pressure far longer than air. “When you roll with nitrogen it is easy to maintain the proper pressure with wide-base tires,” Laporte says. And it is a fact that properly maintained tire pressures yield the best fuel mileage.

Laporte also reports that the insides of nitrogen-filled tires heat up less than those inflated with air. They therefore wear better and are less susceptible to getting flats.

“The principle problem was the over-inflation of tires and irregular wear in hot states. The temperature can rise by 15-20 degrees Celsius inside an air-filled tire filled to 100 psi and running on a 40 C day, but only by 2 C in the nitrogen-filled tires.” This statement seems remarkable but Laporte simply states, “We’ve done all the tests.”

A challenge for fleets committed to filling tires with nitrogen is keeping them that way. Flat tires are likely to be refilled with air, since nitrogen inflation stations are not everywhere. Dan Freight gets around this problem with a rigorous tire maintenance program, aided by the fact that the trucks and trailers all return to Joliette every week. If a truck has a flat, the driver will call the person at headquarters responsible for receiving mechanical calls, who will then open a work order. The driver also makes an entry in his on-board computer. “There will be a note to check the tire because it has been repaired. The mechanic will know that a tire has been inflated with air,” Laporte says.

The tractors and trailers are inspected in the carrier’s scrupulously clean drive-through, seven-bay shop. An Ingersoll-Rand 80-cfm nitrogen generator feeds nitrogen through permanent piping to every workstation. Mechanics purge and refill any flagged tires with nitrogen. The pressure of all the tractor and trailer tires is checked with every weekly visit to the shop.

This kind of diligence would be the envy of any fleet running air-inflated tires and, Laporte adds, “It costs peanuts to check tire pressure every week.” □

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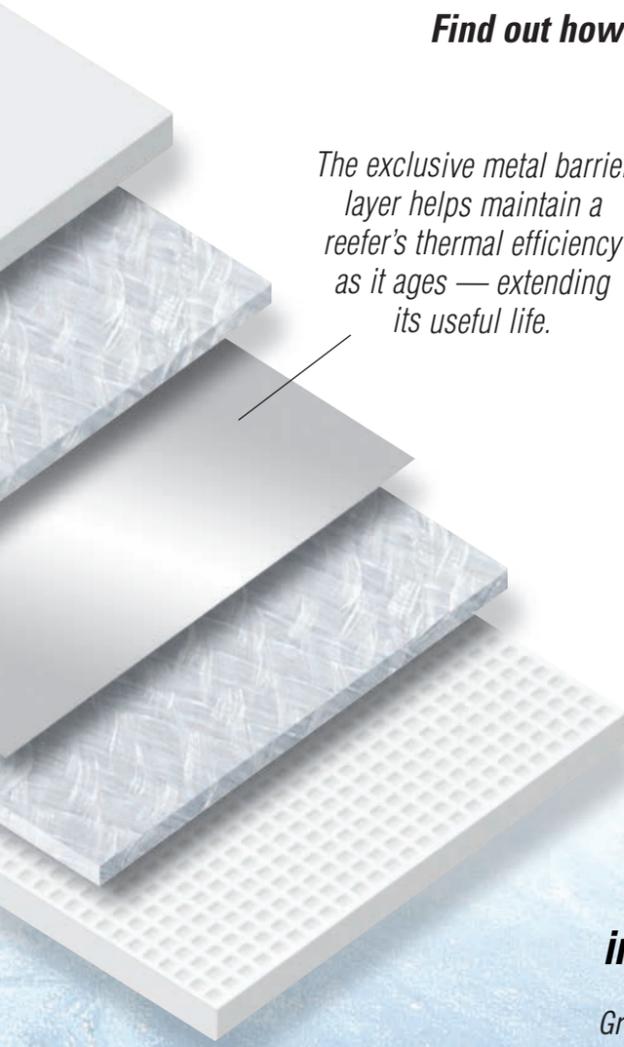


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ONTARIO

# New research project shines light on driver health

**By James Menzies**  
**HAMILTON, Ont.** – A first-of-its-kind study on the health of Ontario truck drivers has painted a pretty grim picture. But at least one of the researchers involved in the project wasn't surprised by the findings.

"My father was a truck driver. He had severe hypertension and he was overweight," Beatrice McDonough, one of the researchers who spearheaded the project told *Truck News*. "He had his first hypertensive issue when he was 50 and he continued having hypertension issues and mini-strokes and passed away at 67."

The loss of her father and familiarity with the working conditions facing professional drivers inspired McDonough to launch the research project, after finding nothing similar had been done in Canada.

"I've noticed over the years that women's health seems to be at the top of the agenda for funding support and for a lot of programming; there was a lack of programming for men's health," McDonough said. "Men's health, and particularly the trucking industry, was not well represented in terms of health programming or attention."

The study, conducted jointly this year by McMaster University Department of Family Medicine and the City of Hamilton Public Health Services, found that: 82.4% of truckers had salt intake above the recommended daily intake, 31.5% smoked

daily, 53.2% were overweight and 48.4% had a poor diet.

The results were the culmination of a survey of more than 800 professional drivers in the Hamilton area. McDonough assembled a research team and applied for funding, which was granted by the Canadian Institute of Health Research. The group then solicited the help of local truck-

ple will underreport their weight and overreport their physical activity when taking such surveys. But focus groups seemed to indicate drivers were honest when filling out the reports.

"They know they don't eat well and they know they're overweight," McDonough said. "They know that. But from our focus groups, they just

out of 406 respondents indicated they knew anything about OH&S initiatives within their companies," McDonough said. "There seems to be a disconnect in terms of communicating what's available."

For example, McDonough noted 10% of respondents indicated they'd like to quit smoking within the next six months, but few are aware of free publicly-funded programs such as a Smoker's Helpline (877-513-5333), or even programs offered by their employer to help them stop smoking.

Surprisingly, more than a third of respondents said they'd be willing to participate in workplace wellness initiatives on their own time.

McDonough said that while many drivers feel unable to achieve a healthy lifestyle because of long hours and a sedentary occupation, implementing small changes could go a long way towards improving their health. Research shows as little as 150 minutes of brisk physical activity per week can improve health, and that can be broken down into 10-minute increments.

"It doesn't have to be joining a gym," McDonough implored, adding drivers who take a brisk 10-minute walk in the morning, at lunchtime and again in the evening five times a week would notice some health benefits. For drivers whose home time seems too limited to spend exercising, McDonough said a

'They know they don't eat well and they know they're overweight. . . They're almost resigned to the fact that this is their lot in life, given the job they have chosen.'

Beatrice McDonough, researcher

ing companies and welcomed Fluke Transport and Rims Transport on as "champion" companies. These carriers helped facilitate the distribution of surveys to their drivers.

"They were a little skeptical as to whether drivers would fill it out," McDonough said.

But in the end, 49.4% of the 822 surveys distributed were completed and returned. Of these respondents, 48.5% were 50 years of age or older and 96% were male. The surveys were anonymous and those who participated were rewarded with a \$5 Tim Horton's gift card. The surveys were distributed beginning in February and collected by April.

Typically, research suggests peo-

said 'What can we do? We work 70 hours a week, we sit for up to 14 hours a day, what can we do?' They're almost resigned to the fact that this is their lot in life, given the job they have chosen. It will require a shift in thinking, because there are things you can do, but it requires the company to allow that as well, not all the onus is on the driver."

One of the key findings of the survey was that drivers, in many cases, aren't aware of the health and wellness services provided by their carriers.

"We asked drivers what they knew about the occupational health and safety programs that are available in their workplace? Only 37%

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nice brisk walk with a spouse would be a great start and wouldn't take away from a driver's time with their family.

Having compiled some reliable research, McDonough's team is now looking to offer some solutions. The researchers have assembled a

Design Team, consisting of insurers, health professionals, industry stakeholders and drivers. They meet quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month to discuss how to "action the results."

Already, the group has created a food fact sheet entitled *Behind*

*the Grille: Chewing and Changing Gears*, which can be downloaded at [www.transporthealth.ca](http://www.transporthealth.ca). It's chock full of healthy eating tips and written specifically for truck drivers, who often have little choice but to eat on the road.

The group wants to expand its

research to include hard measures, which would involve measuring truckers' blood pressure, waistlines, etc.

"Men's health is a huge area that really needs attention," McDonough said. "We want to get the message out there." □

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## ONTARIO

# Fleet executives look ahead during OTA convention panel discussion

By Julia Kuzeljevich

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Executives from five trucking companies met in November at the Ontario Trucking Association's annual convention to discuss the state of the trucking industry, and issues of concern to all as the new year approaches. Steve Paikin, TV Ontario's senior editor and anchor of *The Agenda*, moderated the session, and panel speakers included Rob Penner, executive vice-president and chief operating officer, Bison Transport, Jeff Bryan, president, Jeff Bryan Transport, Scott Tilley, president, The Tandet Group, Gord Smith, president, Manitoulin Transport, and Ron Tepper, CEO, Fastfrate.

What are the key issues for trucking executives going into 2013? Growing their business is a priority, but there's frustration around how long this may take to happen. There are some pockets of strong activity going on, depending on location.

"It's everywhere from flat to very busy, depending on location," said Tepper, who noted that the timing of things has changed.

Manitoulin Transport's Smith spoke of a concern over a "flat fall" going into the winter months. The up and down market is probably the hardest on the drivers, said Tilley.

"They are looking for regular work. When we're running some big mileage, they're happy. When we turn it off they get restless and so do we. The challenge is to try and keep everybody on an even keel," he said.

"We have been stealing from our logistics business and consuming our own freight (to keep drivers utilized)," said Penner, adding that there are still many fleets, especially south of border, that are struggling to renew their fleets in terms of investing in new equipment.

"If you look at our budgets going forward, we've kind of flat-lined it – we're probably looking at GDP plus 2%. But we've all been here before – there's a top and a bottom to a cycle, and the top may not be for 2013 but

beyond," he said.

According to Smith, "the best case scenario is that things are likely to go sideways for a few years. In the worst case scenario, things will go down."

"I think we're pretty well there at the top and that things are going to stay flat. We have to tell people in our organization to figure out how to make it work," added Bryan.

"We tell people if you want to earn more you have to *earn* more, bring forward ideas, think out of the box. That's the only way you will move your organization forward," said Tilley.

How is that kind of message being received in the organization?

"It depends on the generation. For the most part people like to be challenged to think differently, although most people do come to work for a paycheck. But when you give people the leeway they come up with some pretty interesting ideas. We've had so many things come out of that process," said Tilley.

"It's a different conversation depending on where in the country you're having it. We've acknowledged we have to create avenues; where are employees going in the organization? Can we provide something other than a singular line career path? Can we educate them? We are trying to make ourselves the most challenging to our employees so they want to be proud of the organization and come to work in the morning," added Tepper.

Penner said at Bison there is a message of cautious optimism.

"We know we'll experience some pressure on pricing but we've built a bunch of projects, opportunities for people to win. These are pay for performance programs that are starting to work," he said.

Many carriers are experiencing issues around overcapacity in some lanes, though Smith said you can always push more freight through the terminals in an LTL environment.

"I think there's overcapacity in segments and there are ways to deal with it. I think it's a short-term problem

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though and we may be underwater very quickly with the ability to serve our customers, once the economy improves," said Penner.

"We're under capacity on the north-bound and we're trying to capitalize on that, making sure our operations guys understand that strategy," added Bryan.

"In general, in the marketplace there is still too much capacity. We're all chasing the same freight to a degree. But there are a lot of old trucks out there that will eventually not be able to run anymore. Old trucks and old drivers are going to retire. The challenge for us will be to put 'buns' in those seats," said Tilley.

"We have way too much capacity for what we require. There are 37,000 trucking companies competing with low barriers to entry. As long as there is this much capacity we will not have pricing power in the industry. I'm not big on regulation but I think it should be a lot more difficult to get into our business," said Tepper.

Frustrations are high that thresholds for entry in the industry are so low.

"We're not sending rockets to the moon; we're driving trucks up and down the road. We all know there are good operators and not-so-good operators out there. Those are the things that are frustrating for us – that people can get into this business without a lot of thresholds," said Tilley.

"But these thresholds should also not be preventing competition. We're better than we were 10 years ago because there is that competition. The regulations that do make sense are things that level the playing field, like

EOBRs. Our drivers complain but for the most part they like what the tool can do for them," he added.

Smith said it's not about more regulation, but more enforcement of the current regulations, like driver CVORs. A lack of good driver candidates plagues trucking companies.

Tepper said he doesn't have a short-

dates.

The drivers he wants "are the ones that can think of doing business the way you want your business done."

Tepper said that in his company they've changed their strategy of recruiting so that "driving should be a two- to five-year experience before moving on to other things in our com-

'One of the things we've noticed is that flexible home time accommodation means so much more than money,'  
Jeff Bryan, Jeff Bryan Transport

age of drivers right now, "but we've got an expensive system to hire. We have all company drivers."

"The quality of the applicant is scary," said Penner of the scarcity of good drivers in the industry. He said that Bison hires about nine of 100 applicants.

"We have had to put people in place to constantly monitor and train drivers on proper equipment inspections, that is so important to us to keep our equipment safe," he said.

Tilley echoed concerns that driver candidates are showing a lack of technical expertise and know-how.

"We've noticed we've got a whack of drivers that don't know how to read a map properly, or plug in the correct information in the GPS," said Bryan.

Tandet Group's hiring process includes a strict pass-fail psychological test and Tilley has been resisting changing that narrow band between successful and unsuccessful candi-

pany," so that drivers can gain a deeper understanding of what vendors and suppliers face.

To recruit and retain drivers in some areas of the country, many companies are trying to ensure the drivers' work and family lives gets attention.

"We're a little better spaced in terms of the fact that 90% of our driver group in LTL are home every day. It's a little more challenging for the TL guys. Certainly, though, in areas like Alberta we are having issues. We're now buying residential homes to attract our drivers there," said Smith.

In northern Alberta, added Tepper, with an oil industry that often offers sign-on bonuses of several thousand dollars, plus higher pay rates, trucking has a hard time competing for candidates.

Are trucking companies doing new or different things on salary or benefits to get people to stick around?

"The retention is 'pay fair and treat

them fair.' It really is about equality, giving drivers the opportunity to hear what's going on, to give some input," said Tilley, who said he recently took an owner/operator out for what turned into a six-hour breakfast, when the O/O said he was going to quit.

"I think our driver retention is more important to us than anything. We've got a driver advisory board that keeps us well informed about what it's like to be a driver, and we build programs to help satisfy what they want. Pay programs have gotten more complicated. There's some regional complexity, though our base rate has not changed. Our turnover rate for this calendar year is 18% and we force half of it," said Penner.

"One of the things we've noticed is that flexible home time accommodation means so much more than money. With all our new hires, we've also put two driver mentors in place and this has helped as well," said Bryan, adding that their turnover rate is at 7%.

The Ministry of Transportation has recently made it easier to get an A/Z licence. Is the truck driver training industry doing enough to bridge gaps in driver abilities?

"Our pass rate is not only related to the ability to drive a truck. It's also closely tied to work history. One-tenth fail the road test, three-tenths fail inspection requirements. Those who fail the road test don't work for us," said Penner.

"I think training is everything – people should understand you don't have a driver just because they have their licence. It's up to the carrier to form a lot of that training," he added. □

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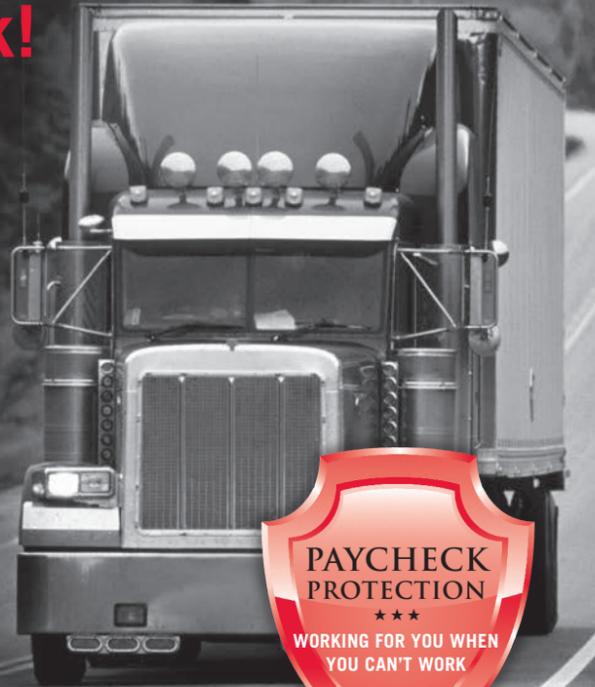
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## ONTARIO

# Glider kit gray area under the microscope

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Even before Walmart spec'd a glider kit Freightliner Argosy as part of its new supercube configuration, the Canadian Transportation Equipment Association (CTEA) was seeking clarifications from Canadian regulatory bodies on whether or not they're allowed.

Glidors consist of a chassis, usually fitted with most components and electrical system, but lacking the powertrain, or parts thereof. However, as per Transport Canada, glider kits don't qualify as a "vehicle" or "truck" under the Motor Vehicle Safety Act, Sec. 2 because a vehicle must be "capable of being driven or drawn on roads by any means other

## OTA welcomes permit changes

Continued from page 1

omy at large – so long as the proposed vehicles maintain or enhance highway/road safety; meet or exceed provincial dynamic performance standards; produce environmental benefits such as reduced GHG emissions; and allow for a sufficient return on investment," said OTA president David Bradley. "In addition, OTA has also long held that only carriers with acceptable safety records – those who are prepared to ensure the safety of their fleets and their drivers – should have access to such special permits."

Revisions to the permit conditions include:

- Stricter conditions, requiring the carrier to have been in the trucking business for at least five years and to hold a minimum of \$5 million in liability insurance;
- Increased qualification requirements for drivers, to account for the configuration's "swing-out" characteristics. Drivers will need to have five years of provable tractor-trailer driving experience and will require additional training;
- Specified origins and destinations.

The OTA also appealed to the province for a gradual phase-in of the number of operators and permits available, given the heavy investment the industry has already made in the industry-standard 53-ft. trailer. The revised permit reads: "based on the results of the (trial) evaluation, MTO will determine whether to and how to proceed with a measured roll-out of extended semi-trailer operations."

The OTA is now more receptive to the supercube concept.

"It is clear that what we are now talking about is a very small, tightly controlled trial of a specific trailer design, not a wide open roll-out of a new, longer trailer standard," Bradley said. □

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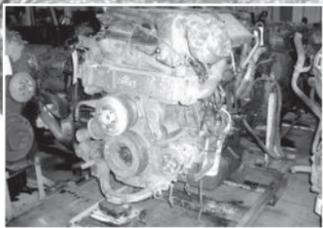
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than muscular power exclusively.”

Don Moore, executive director of the CTEA, wrote in a recent paper for members, that a glider kit is not a vehicle as per Canadian law, but rather an “assemblage of parts,” up to the time the powertrain is installed.

“Then the questions become, does this resulting vehicle need to be certified to the Canada Motor Vehicle Safety Standards CMVSS, and if so, who is responsible for certifying the compliance of the vehicle?” Moore wrote.

Theoretically, since a glider kit, sans engine, is not considered a vehicle, then it stands to reason that the company or individual that installs the engine is then the de facto manufacturer, and as such required to provide dynamic brake tests, seat and seatbelt anchorage tests, throttle return timing, glazing markings, flammability testing, noise testing and all the other responsibilities that fall upon a vehicle manufacturer.

“Most of our members are not in a financial position to do this, and so I strongly recommend against it,” Moore warned CTEA members. “There is also a heavy liability burden placed on the intermediate or final stage manufacturer who takes on such a glider build. These manufacturers would be taking on the full responsibility of the vehicle. Yes, as long as there is an OEM emblem on the front of the hood and the OE has the deep pockets, they will likely get pulled into the fray, but the labelling and documentation would imply the acceptance of responsibility by the subsequent manufacturer(s).”

The other issue is whether or not it’s okay to install a previous-emissions level engine into a current model year chassis. In the case of the Freightliner Argosy used by Walmart, an EPA02 engine was installed inside the body of a new Argosy chassis.

The Canadian Environmental Protection Act, enforced by Environment Canada, indicates in Sec. 15 that “...a diesel heavy-duty vehicle of a specific model year, other than a medium-duty passenger vehicle, shall (a) be equipped with a heavy-duty engine that meets the requirements of these regulations and (b) conforms to the evaporative emissions standards applicable to diesel heavy-duty vehicles of that model year.”

Moore concludes “the emissions from a given model year vehicle must be met, so the engine must meet those requirements, ie. a 2012 model year vehicle must be able to meet 2012 emissions requirements for the given class of vehicles and/or engines.”

When the issue of glider kits resurfaced with the Walmart Argosy, Moore told *Truck News* he sought further clarification on the matter.

“I have spoken with Environment Canada and took about an hour to walk through their regulations and confirm that new model year heavy-duty engines and vehicles must meet the current emissions standards,” he told *Truck News*. “The only leeway is within the two year less a day that can be used for any given model year designation. This model year requirement exists in both the Motor Vehicle Safety Act and the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.” □



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## OPINION

# How Walmart's 'supercube' trailer fails the environment

A new tractor-trailer configuration developed by Walmart, which increases cubic capacity by 30%, requiring fewer truck trips to deliver the same amount of product, could in fact be much worse for the environment than modern conventional tractors pulling 53-ft. trailers.

Walmart unveiled its 'supercube' trailer Nov. 6, amid claims the environment would benefit from fewer truck trips. The 60.5-ft. trailer features a lowered floor with a 126-inch interior clearance. It is pulled by a cabover tractor with a dromedary box mounted to the back of the cab, adding another 521 cu.-ft. of carrying capacity and improving overall cargo volume by 30%.

The configuration doesn't ex-

### Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES



ceed existing length or weight restrictions, but has the potential to reduce truck trips by 30%, Walmart claimed. Painted sky blue with fluffy white clouds, the trailer reads: "Delivering more products using fewer trucks."

However, *Truck News* has learned the innovative trailer is pulled by a Freightliner Argosy cabover glider kit with a refurbished EPA02 generation engine. A glider kit consists of a new chassis, complete with drive-line and electrical system, that's delivered without an engine and transmission. An older generation EPA02 engine has been installed into the tractor, which falls well short of current emissions standards for heavy-duty diesel engines.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) passed stringent emissions standards in 2007 and again in 2010, which dramatically reduce the allowable output of the smog-forming pollutants particulate matter (PM) and oxides of nitrogen (NOx).

An EPA02 engine had a regulated output of 2.5 grams NOx and 0.1 grams per brake horsepower hour of particulate matter. The EPA10 limits are 0.2 grams NOx and 0.01 grams of particulate matter.

That means an EPA10 engine is 12.5 times and 10 times cleaner than an EPA02 engine in terms of NOx and PM emissions, respectively.

By installing an EPA02 engine into a new chassis, Walmart has effectively sidestepped the two most recent rounds of emissions standards.

By its own calculations, the fuel economy of the 'supercube' tractor-trailer will not differ substantially from current configurations widely used today.

"We don't anticipate there being any significant difference in fuel consumption," Andy Ellis, senior vice-president, supply chain and logistics for Walmart Canada, told *Truck News* at the trailer's launch.

Improving the cubic capacity of the trailer means the new configuration would be able to eliminate approximately one truck trip for every three deliveries. Granted, that will lead to a corresponding reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> output (the EPA07 and EPA10 regulations didn't address CO<sub>2</sub>). Every truck trip that's eliminated, every gallon of fuel that's not consumed, will benefit the environment from a greenhouse gas/CO<sub>2</sub> perspective.

But even with this in mind, could an increase in smog-forming NOx and PM offset any environmental benefits achieved through fewer truck trips and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> output? I put that question to several respected mechanical engineers who work in the trucking industry and together we've bandied about dozens of possible scenarios.



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For starters, it's important to note these calculations are an inexact science, at best. It's impossible to take into account every single variable that will influence emissions output. Still, it's a worthwhile exercise, as the conclusions arrived at in every instance fail to support any claim that the Walmart supercube is better for the environment than a conventional configuration consisting of a tractor with EPA10 engine pulling a standard 53-ft. trailer.

Let's begin with the GHG calculations, which indeed paint a favourable picture for the supercube. For our experiment, we assumed a standard 53-ft. van trailer has a load capacity of 4,000 cu.-ft. and the supercube trailer can contain 5,270 cu.-ft. (actual numbers cited by Walmart are 3,900 cu.-ft. and 5,100 cu.-ft., respectively), and a sample size of 42,000 cu.-ft. of cargo.

A standard tractor-trailer could deliver this cargo making 10 trips, while the supercube could move the same amount of freight in just under eight total loads. We'll assume a trip length of 250 miles (400 kms), averaging 60 mph (96 km/h), totaling 4.1 driving hours per trip.

Over the contracted haul, the old configuration would require 41 total operating hours while the supercube could do the job in 32.8 hours. (We're going to account for the fact that an EPA10 engine with SCR should get slightly better fuel mileage than an EPA02 version, especially in light of aerodynamic improvements made to today's top conventional tractors).

**Supercube with EPA02 engine:** At 6.7 mpg (assumed), it would require 597 US gallons of diesel over 4,000 miles of travel, resulting in approximately 13,730 lbs of CO2 over the course of the required trips.

**Standard tractor-trailer with EPA10 engine:** At 7 mpg, it would consume 715 US gallons of diesel over 5,000 miles of travel, resulting in approximately 16,450 lbs of CO2 generated over the required trips.

The result: the supercube would lessen CO2 emissions to the tune of 2,720 lbs over the course of our scenario, hauling 42,000 cu.-ft. of product. This is all very encouraging. But what of the NOx and PM emissions; smog-forming pollutants that were reduced by law in 2007 and 2010? Using the same scenario as outlined above, the NOx and PM emissions would be as follows:

**Supercube with EPA02 engine:** 2,603 g NOx + 1,037 g PM per load x 32.8 engine hours = 85,378 g NOx and 34,013 g PM.

**Standard tractor-trailer with EPA10 engine:** 267 g NOx + 133 g PM per load x 41 engine hours = 10,947 g NOx and 5,453 g PM.

All other things being equal, the simulation indicates the supercube truck-trailer configuration could increase smog-forming pollution by a multiple of approximately seven when delivering the same amount of freight. Put another way, for every

10 truckloads of product delivered via supercube, the amount of smog-forming PM and NOx pollution generated would be equal to about 70 truck trips using a traditional configuration with an EPA10 engine.

This clearly contradicts the environmental objective Walmart set out to achieve with its supercube trailer. It also flies in the face of its environmental mandate, as a member of the US EPA Smartway program.

Of course, as previously acknowledged, these calculations are an inexact science. The engineering source who helped me run this simulation cautioned that a precise comparison is not possible without a CRAY computer and knowing every single spec' on both vehicles. I sought a second opinion from a mechanical engineer who said the above numbers look "reasonable."

A third engineer, who works for a respected research organization, took a different track but reached a similar conclusion.

Because the EPA10 maximum output of NOx and PM are 12.5 and 10 times lower, respectively, than an EPA02 engine, and the supercube can do the same job in 22% fewer hours of drive time, he applied a multiplier of 12.5 and 10 to 78% (to account for fewer trips). The result was that total NOx output would be 9.75 times greater and PM output 7.8 times greater than an EPA10 tractor pulling a standard 53-ft. trailer.

Today, much of the attention is on greenhouse gases and CO2 is the next target on the EPA's hit list. The supercube receives a passing grade

where CO2 is concerned. Still, NOx and PM are harmful for the environment as well, not to mention the health of its citizens, which is why the EPA chose to target those pollutants first. We can't ignore the importance of what's been achieved over the past five years in reducing those harmful pollutants to the tune of about 90%.

Some may wonder why Walmart doesn't solve this issue by simply installing a current generation engine? Unfortunately, it's not so simple. There are currently no cabover tractors engineered for today's North American emissions standards. Pre-owned Freightliner Argosies are hard to come by, and importing a cabover from Europe isn't an option because of the tight footprint required to stay within Ontario's maximum overall vehicle length.

I believe what we have in the supercube is an interesting new configuration, cleverly designed, that accomplishes its objective of carrying more freight, but fails to fulfill its other mandate in reducing pollution.

The concept has been sold to the industry, the public and the government, based largely on its environmental merit, but when considering total emissions output and not just CO2, it falls short of being the environmental saviour it's been billed as. The supercube may be great for Walmart, but in my opinion it fails society and the environment. □

- James Menzies is executive editor of Truck News and Truck West magazines.

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**OPINION**

## Sixty-foot trailers: The Ontario experience so far

By now, most everyone in the trucking industry – not just in Ontario but certainly across Canada and perhaps in the US, too – knows that Walmart Canada recently announced it was seeking a permit from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation to conduct a one-year trial of a “super-cube” tractor-trailer unit that includes a semi-trailer of 60.5-ft. in length – 7.5 feet longer than the current North American semi-trailer standard of 53 feet.

By now you have all seen the pictures. While today the issue is limited to Ontario, there is little doubt that the proponents of this new configuration would like to see it introduced across Canada and who knows where else? No other jurisdiction al-

**Industry Issues**



DAVID BRADLEY

lows semi-trailers (except for special non-divisible loads) of the length proposed by Walmart although a few jurisdictions like Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma come close.

Perhaps, therefore, the experience in Ontario and how the Ontario Trucking Association approached the issue will be of interest to those from elsewhere.

The first thing to understand is that the proposal to allow the longer trailers is not something the trucking industry was asking for. The industry has grown comfortable with standardization at 53-ft. trailers (and has invested billions of dollars in the 53-ft. fleet). The controlled expansion of Canada’s long combination vehicle (LCV) network in recent years has provided a significant productivity boost.

Not surprisingly then, the idea of a 60.5-ft. trailer does not enjoy anywhere near the level of support from the trucking industry that the move to 53-ft. trailers or the controlled used of LCVs did.

This proposal was clearly thrust upon the industry and many did not and do not welcome it. Most have enough other things on their plates to worry about without having to come up with the capital to re-equip their fleets, even if it is just Ontario for now, or how in the heck their drivers are going to be able to get these things in or out of so many shipping docks. And if things go wrong, it will be the trucking industry, not the shippers, who will wear it.

If OTA were simply to have posed the simple “yes” or “no” question to its members: Do you want 60.5-ft. semi-trailers in Ontario?, the majority would most assuredly have said “no.” Of that there is little doubt. However, there are always other considerations.

This is not a simple “yes” or “no” matter. Strident opposition can simply take you out of the debate, especially where decisions and undertakings have already been made on an issue. There is also the question: What is the right thing to do?

Over the past number of years, there has been a flight of business – particularly in the manufacturing sector – from the province. Ontario is competing with every other jurisdiction in the world for direct investment. A productive and efficient goods movement sector is a magnet for investment. And, the more direct investment, the more economic activity and the more business for truckers.

Consequently, the association’s long-standing position is that it will not stand in the way of changes to Ontario’s truck weights and dimensions standards that would enhance the productivity of the industry, its customers or the provincial economy at large – so long as the proposed vehicles maintain or enhance highway/

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road safety; meet or exceed provincial dynamic performance standards; produce environmental benefits such as reduced GHG emissions; and allow for a sufficient return on investment. In addition, OTA has also long held that only carriers with acceptable safety records – those who are prepared to ensure the safety of their fleets and their drivers – should have access to such special permits.

There can be no doubt that for certain freight and certain operations, the proposed extended length trailer does support productivity enhancement.

Right now, the allowable design is restricted to the designated drop-deck trailer, so in the scheme of things the overall productivity gain may be less than some anticipate. Nevertheless, for OTA the issue becomes one of: a) that the proposed vehicles hold up to scrutiny under the accepted dynamic performance criteria; b) that they will be operated safely where they are to be used by properly qualified carriers and drivers; and c) that there is a properly monitored, controlled and managed process of introduction and eventually rolling-out of the 60.5-ft. trailers over time. Basically, what is needed is something that is directionally consistent with the pilot and rollout of LCVs.

The initial proposal fell well short, in our opinion. For starters, OTA strenuously objected to the clauses in the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transportation and Walmart, which clearly stated the permits would be held by the shipper. There can only be real control and oversight of – and adherence to – the permit conditions if the permit is held by the entity in care and control of the vehicle – ie., the carrier. This was non-negotiable for OTA.

OTA also felt that the proposed permit conditions themselves were too weak and again should directionally be similar to those established for the Ontario LCV program. In other words, they should mandate a meaningful level of carrier qualification (certainly more than what was being proposed – ie., that the carrier only had to have a satisfactory safety rating).

OTA also felt there needed to be driver qualifications (there were none in the original proposal), especially given the swing-out characteristics of the proposed trailer and the fact a shorter tractor – the tractor in the Walmart proposal actually built from a glider kit, but presumably a cabover or a day cab would also work – would be needed to fit within the current envelope. And, OTA felt (at least during the trial) the permits needed to prescribe specific origins and destinations.

Furthermore – from both a safety perspective and in consideration of the fact that the industry is already heavily invested in 53-ft. trailers – the MTO should adhere to a multi-year gradual phase-in of the number of operators and permits available, again along the lines of the LCV program.

The Walmart semi-trailer would appear to mainly have application as a specialized trailer for dedicated runs, but if other designs are allowed, the floodgates could be opened and the consequences could be enormous. OTA argued the ground rules needed to be set before heading any

further down the road.

In the end, a workable and credible compromise was found. No doubt you will, or have already, read the details of the revised permit conditions, of the limited nature of the trial itself and the commitment to a gradual, measured phase-in if the limited trial is successful.

OTA's key concerns were addressed: the permits will – as they should – be held by the carriers. This leaves the business decision of whether to invest in and use the extended length trailers in the carriers' hands.

The qualifications for the carriers and the drivers were upgraded so not just any operator will qualify to be in the program and during the trial, at least, the permits will prescribe specific origins and destinations. □

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

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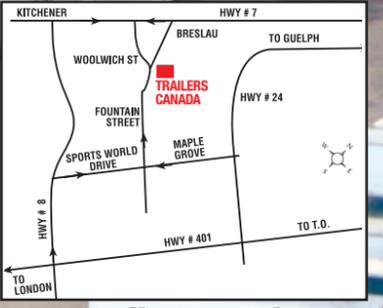


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## OPINION

# Walmart should be lauded, not criticized, for its supercube innovation

Sometimes writing this column is so easy, it becomes difficult. Huh? What do I mean by that? My challenge is to make my long-winded opinions fit in the allotted space, which is a struggle because the subject matter is so plentiful it's almost impossible to cover in one page. December's *Truck News* with its cover story on Walmart's 60.5-ft. supercube trailer (pulled by a Freightliner Argosy cabover with dromedary box) almost sent me into overload; it was a subject that I can relate to on several fronts.

It caught my eye immediately because I've always liked cabovers. The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) apparently doesn't share my enthusiasm. I want to throw in a quick disclaimer here, before the nasty e-mails start. I realize this organization does a lot of work in this industry of great benefit, most recently getting the ridiculous senior road testing requirement re-written – well done. However, based

## Small Fleet, Big Attitude

BILL CAMERON



on my short time as a member, I feel that small carriers, even if members, are largely ignored by the OTA. I also have been bothered by their perceived stance that any opinion differing from theirs, is simply wrong. The OTA's initial comments regarding the Walmart truck appear to fall into that category. The organization is not in favour of this truck, partly because it differs so much from the industry standard – and apparently because their input wasn't requested.

My response to these points is, who cares who designed it? Isn't innovation the key to advancement in any industry? If we didn't advance with the times, 44,000 lbs would still be consid-

ered a maximum US payload, being pulled by a 6 mpg truck, with no air-conditioning, spring seats, and manual steering. If key industry members with deep pockets didn't think outside the box, the equipment in this industry would make Fred Flintstone's loader look high-tech. (We small carriers, being the vultures some see us to be, wait for any technology to be perfected before we buy in, because we obviously don't have the resources to participate in the R&D game).

If someone outside of any industry organization comes up with a better mousetrap, congratulations. If played right, we will all benefit.

Any single truck capable of carrying 30% more freight deserves a good, fair test. This industry has, for too long, been recruiting drivers with minimal experience and shaky driving records. We constantly gripe about a driver shortage, fuel costs, and equipment and maintenance costs. What

could be the problem with reducing the need for as many drivers or trucks? I have, in the past, recommended to customers that they utilize rail more often. Why would I encourage my customers to require more trucks, when I can't find qualified staff to offer more equipment?

It's for these reasons that I think the Walmart truck should be explored, and if it works out, carefully copied by everyone who has the resources to, and the customer base, to use it with. My logic isn't too deep: we have a shortage of good drivers, and equipment and fuel is costly. Most dry vans cube out before weighing out. Admittedly, these trucks would cost more to buy and operate, and hopefully would be a good excuse to raise driver pay.

Offer your customers freight rates based on available cubic trailer space. For example, 30% more space offered for 25% higher cost. High-volume customers save money, you need fewer trucks, and your new specialized equipment has more than paid for itself. Everybody would win.

But it'll never happen under the current mindset controlling the industry. When LCVs hit the 401, I read a quote from a large carrier CEO that they would need to convince their customers to ship loads in pairs to realize savings. What? You had to invest in special equipment, special permits, and special terminal access. Why should the customer see any bonus savings from this?

The additional overhead and operating costs for an LCV come out of your bank account, so I figure that's exactly where the additional revenue should go. Stop trying to find new ways to work even cheaper and to give away any innovative business practices. I can't count how many times I have loaded two US loads together on B-trains, then gone to reload facilities in border towns, where they were reloaded onto two tandem trailers to finish the trip. My customers were able to continue moving their freight with a small carrier, where service was more reliable and predictable, but moving volumes of freight that could usually only be handled by a large carrier. They put out no extra expense or organization – we did. So any savings stayed in our bank account, not theirs. Innovation is necessary, but shouldn't be benevolent. I think Walmart is exhibiting a level of innovative thinking that should be encouraged, not scorned. Baby steps get baby-sized results. We need some big steps.

The last few years have made everyone far more creative, financially conscious and responsible. On the other hand, we've milked almost all the efficiencies out of the current tractor-trailer combinations that we can. It's an overdue time to reinvent the wheel. I think a lot of people are angry they can't claim responsibility for such an innovation, and as a result Walmart is not being besieged with inquiries about its new toy, as it should be. Too bad, I say. □

– Bill Cameron and his wife Nancy currently own and operate Parks Transportation, a four-truck flatdeck trucking company. The company was founded in 1999 with a 20-year-old truck, rented flatbed trailer and a big dream. Bill can be reached at [williamcameron.bc@gmail.com](mailto:williamcameron.bc@gmail.com).

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**OPINION**

## Finding Christmas spirit through film

So here we are, Christmas 2012. Once again, I find myself spending my evenings surfing up and down the digital remote looking for a holiday movie that will help me find the spirit of Christmas.

It's not like I'm a Scrooge or a bah-humbug type of guy. It's just that life is just so busy these days that I don't have time to even think about what this time of year should really be all about.

Sadly, I usually don't catch the Christmas spirit until it's almost over.

In my house, we make a point of watching the classics, including: Scrooge, It's a Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street and my favourite of all time, A Christmas Story. For any of you who haven't seen this one, it's set in the late '50s and tells the story of little Ralphie and his quest to unwrap a Red Ryder BB Gun on Christmas day.

Every time I watch this movie, it reminds me of growing up in the east end of Toronto. From Randy's snowsuit, to having my mouth washed out with soap (my mom's lectures about swearing being a sign of a weak mind would always proceed this punishment).

If you're in your 50s or 60s, it's going to take you back. Don't be surprised if you laugh until you cry.

Although not a classic by any means, I also enjoy Home Alone.



**Publisher's Comment**  
ROB WILKINS

Granted, the Christmas message plays a poor cousin to the slapstick abuse that Macaulay Culkin installs on the bad guys, but the importance of family is loud and clear in the movie's final moments.

I suppose the classic of all classics is Alastair Sim's Scrooge. I recall the first time I watched this on the old RCA black and white. To be honest, I spent a good portion of that production with the blankets pulled over my head. As a four- or five-year-old, the ghosts were just a little too real for my liking.

My holiday programming usually ends on Christmas day with the Yule Log burning on my TV. It's safe, easy, and won't burn my house down. Some stranger's hand can be seen from time-to-time stoking the fire and he even plays my favourite Christmas tunes, with no commercials!

However you celebrate this time of the year, I wish you and your family health and happiness in 2013. Drive safe everybody! □

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

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**PEOPLE**

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Over the past 20 years, Magi has held positions in a range of capacities within the property casualty insurance industry including underwriting and portfolio management positions in the personal lines areas, before moving into areas focusing on the transportation industry sector. Prior to her appointment at The Guarantee, she was national director of transportation at a major global insurance company.

A graduate of Flagler College in St. Augustine Florida with a B.A. in Political Science, she has her CIP designation through the Insurance Institute of Canada.

Erb Group has announced the hiring of **Jim Pinder** as corporate fleet director. Pinder assumed his new role Dec. 10, working out of the company's New Hamburg, Ont. headquarters. He'll report to Erb president and CEO Wendell Erb and serve on the company's executive team.

"Jim has experience in a variety of senior positions within the fleet management capacity," Erb announced in a memo to staff and vendors. "He has held positions with truck manufacturers, carriers and an aftermarket supplier to the truck industry. His experience will benefit Erb greatly as we pursue our goal of developing and maintaining cost effective asset management and maintenance strategies while maintaining a safe and reliable fleet."

Kinedyne has announced **Paul Wolford** has rejoined the company as vice-president of sales and marketing. He replaces **Larry Harrison**, former v.p. of sales and marketing who announced his resignation from the company.

In other personnel news, Kinedyne announced the resignation of **Ralph Abato** as vice-president of strategic initiatives.

The Allied Trades Division of the Ontario Trucking Association has elected a new board of directors and chairman for the 2012-2014 term. **Kim Richardson** of Kim Richardson Transportation Specialists has been named chairman.

Other appointments include: vice-chairman, **John Bennett**, Freightliner Trucks; treasurer, **Rob Hall**, Toromont Cat; and secretary, **Peter Currie**, Volvo Trucks Canada.

Trailer Wizards has appointed **Jonathan Assels** as parts fulfillment manager for Ontario. Based out of the Mississauga office, Assels will be responsible for maintaining and further building Trailer Wizards' parts department in all of its Total Customer Care Centre locations as well as developing the retail parts counter expansion.

Assels started his career as an inventory controller and yard manager at a local automotive recycling yard before moving up to trucks and trailers eight years ago, Trailer Wizards announced. □

## OPINION

# Out-of-service rates for new engines tough trade-off for cleaner air

It's that time of year again. Hopefully you have all overindulged over the holidays and are now starting your New Year's Resolutions. I have a couple.

The first is to quit the smokes, but the second is going to affect all of you. I am actually going to try and put a positive slant on this column and bring you good news each month.

Now statistically most resolutions fail before the month gets into double digits, so to improve the odds I'm going to have to narrow down my choices. I was going to try and keep them both, but I'm missing my smokes and I'm feeling a little grumpy, so normal service is about to resume.

So what has got me bent out of shape? Regulations of course, specifically emissions.

I've just read a survey by the very well respected J.D. Power & Associates. It tells a very sad story, one that has a chance of changing the face of trucking as we know it.

Reading the survey, I was shocked to discover that the out-of-service numbers for 2012 model Class 8 trucks was 46%. Yes, that's right, 46%. There was nearly a one in two chance that your new \$140,000 purchase would be in the shop for repair within its first year.

Not only is there a 46% failure rate, the average length of time the trucks were in the shop was 13 days.

Now, there will have been quite a few cases where trucks were in and out of the shop on the same day, so in the world of averages, if some were only in for one day, others were in the shop for a whole month.

A month without any earnings from the investment is a month of frustration and despair.

This sad story emphasizes one thing: trucks today are far too complicated and not enough people know how to fix them when they inevitably break down.

Something has to be done about this situation before companies start going to the wall through circumstances beyond their control. It's time to take control, but how? As I see it there are two, maybe three, options. Firstly we could all get together and force the regulators to take notice that their regulations are strangling our industry and could have serious implications to the whole economy, because as we all know, trucks keep our economy moving.

Or we could keep what we've got and rip all the emissions junk off the engines and go back to relatively trouble-free motoring, but that's illegal and we cannot advocate that. If enough people got together and made themselves heard, maybe we could make it so that it wasn't illegal, but unless there are some big changes to the way we're represented, it'll never happen, so we're left with another option.

Glider kits, they could be the future. I can see that's raised a few eyebrows and got more than a few of you shaking your heads, es-

You say tomato,  
I say tomahto

MARK LEE



pecially those of you that remember the gliders of the past. But think about it, you can get a brand new rolling glider kit from several of the manufacturers. You source a pre-emission engine from your manufacturer of choice, bolt it together and you go to work.

You don't get any failures from EGR valves, EGR coolers, variable geometry turbos, turbo actuators, DPF filters, SCR and all the other mumbo jumbo that contributes to the vast majority of the 99% of breakdowns that affect 46% of all new trucks. What you get is a solid, robust truck that gets the job done like it's sup-

posed to do. However, in Canada, we don't have that option. Environment Canada has a rule in place that a chassis must have an engine of the same model year's emissions level.

Obviously, the tree huggers have more power than our industry. "No," they cry, "the dirty exhaust will kill babies and small furry animals."

They speak and everyone listens. We, on the other hand, say absolutely nothing and of course, nobody hears us. The simple facts are this: a properly functioning pre-emission engine puts out far less harmful exhaust gases than a truck with a malfunctioning EGR system that belches thick black smoke from its stacks.

And without all the emissions junk on an engine, it's far more likely for that engine to function properly.

They may puff out a bit of black smoke every once in a while, but that's just a sad fact of life. There has to be a compromise. The regulators cannot expect the trucking industry to be on the receiving end of the compromises all the time. You cannot make an omelet without breaking a few eggs. We need to have a voice as loud as that of our opposition, rather than keeping quiet as we head into the poor house on the back of a tow truck.

Oh, and before I forget, Happy New Year. □

— A fourth generation trucker and trucking journalist, Mark Lee uses his 25 years of transcontinental trucking in Europe, Asia, North Africa and now North America to provide an alternative view of life on the road. You can read his blog at [www.brandttruck.com/blog](http://www.brandttruck.com/blog).

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## OVER THE ROAD

# Coping with stress at home and on the road

I've been feeling pretty stressed out over the last couple of weeks. The reason being, our 16-month-old grandson was undergoing a major surgical procedure.

Despite the fact this procedure was planned well in advance and not an emergency, it still weighed heavily on my mind as I drove. I found myself wishing for bad weather so that I had a distraction to occupy my mind.

When things are easy out here, I often find that my mind has a mind of its own. It will take off into thought and fantasy when given a 'What if?' scenario. Having a loved one in the hospital is the perfect 'What if?' scenario, isn't it?

Well let me tell you, that little grandson of mine has had a strange hold on my heart since the day he was born.

No matter how many times I

## Over the Road

AL GOODHALL



grabbed hold of my mind and pulled it back into the present moment over the past couple of weeks, all my mind wanted to do was chase down every dark thought that would arise and blow it out of proportion.

Independence is one of the great attractions of the trucking lifestyle for me, but there are times when personal circumstances transform that independence into nothing more than a feeling of helplessness. That was the source of my stress over the past few weeks. I'm sure many drivers can relate to that feeling.

Coincidentally, workplace

stress within the trucking industry is the topic of a meeting I will be attending in January.

After my experience over the past couple of weeks, I've been pondering other issues we face within our industry which add to our stress.

The issue of driver health is a source of stress in many different ways. The fact that a licence can be revoked if a minimum health standard is not met is something that many drivers have to face as they age and their health declines.

Many drivers are the primary wage earners in their household and a health issue that cuts a driver's career short a decade or more ahead of their planned retirement can be catastrophic for a driver's entire family.

This is a topic many of us don't address until it is too late.

Our families are aging also.

Death and dying isn't something our society does a good job of addressing.

So it is usually a source of great stress within most families. In many cases a person's death is usually preceded by a period of time that requires hospitalization, home care, or some form of assisted living.

This period of time can go on for weeks, months, or years.

For a driver and their family, this can be incredibly stressful since the driver is on the road most of the time.

As a result, a driver's partner or siblings end up taking on most of the day-to-day responsibility for the family member that requires the care.

This can be a huge source of stress within families.

Would it not be beneficial to help drivers and their families prepare to face these issues before they arise in order to minimize the stress?

We can thank our lucky stars that we don't have to deal with illness and end-of-life issues on an ongoing daily basis. When it arises, we deal with it.

Rather it's the little things in life that we miss out on that can be the most stressful. These are the things that we often assign a priority behind that of working and earning a living.

Things like: family birthdays, anniversaries, family gatherings, sporting events for our kids, school events, and the like. These things are very important to us and numerous. We plan to be there for as many of them as we can but even the best-laid plans go awry.

Equipment breaks down, loads are delayed overnight, weather gets in the way, and so on. If you're a driver, you know the story. Sometimes you just can't make it back in time despite your best efforts.

I don't think there is anything worse than disappointing your spouse and children.

A broken promise is a breach of trust within our families. It's a job hazard we all deal with and a major source of stress in the trucking workplace and within trucking families.

This is definitely not an exhaustive list of stresses we face as truck drivers.

On top of these personal issues, the global belt-tightening continues to add stress to all our lives. Drivers are held more accountable for their actions than ever before.

We seem to be working longer and harder and reaping fewer benefits. There's lots of stress to go around. I certainly haven't found the magic bullet to slay this monster.

All we can continue to do when we get up each day is to suck it up, paste on a smile, and keep on trucking. □

— 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/Al\\_Goodhall](https://twitter.com/Al_Goodhall).

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holidays!

## TAX TALK

# More flags than in a pennant factory

In something of a New Year's tradition around here, we once again take a look at Canada Revenue Agency's blotter of tax fraud convictions. The agency posts these summaries on its Web site and releases them to the media hoping that we'll see them as cautionary tales and not make the same mistakes ourselves.

Personally, I don't think anyone here made a "mistake." These are criminals who consciously tried to rip off you, me, and the rest of Canada's taxpayers. Still, each case points out lessons to remember as you start thinking about your 2012 tax returns.

### Ya gotta file

CRA processes almost 25 million personal income tax returns a year. Do you really think they'll miss yours if you "forget" to file?

## Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR



Ask Lawrence W. Armstrong of Prince Albert, Sask. He pleaded guilty to charges of failure to comply with a court order to file his 2004 to 2006 personal income tax returns.

He was fined \$4,500 and sentenced to 60 days in jail. Of course, the court also ordered Mr. Armstrong to file the required tax returns within 60 days of his release from jail. He's not going to get off that easily.

I know you're busy. I know tax forms are complicated. But if you end up in court for not filing your tax returns, chances are you'll be

financed and/or jailed, and be made to file them anyway.

File your income tax return. Death and taxes, you can't avoid them.

### What you earn is income

Lee Williams didn't just enact a tax evasion scheme for himself, he actually organized and taught courses on the subject. Naturally, Williams never reported income or paid tax on earnings from teaching fees and the sale of course materials.

His wife, Tania Kovaluk, was his best student: She implemented Williams's scheme in her dental practice and failed to report \$2,578,987 in income she earned from 2003 to 2007.

This case has more red flags than a pennant factory. First, Kovaluk reported income earned through her dental practice as sub-contract ex-

penses and not as personal income. Report your income properly.

Second, keep business and personal records separate. Williams used his wife's Canadian bank accounts to deposit cheques that were in fact business income from his teaching work.

Williams did not report the income he earned, or remit the proper amount of GST in relation to his business venture as an educator. In doing so, Williams evaded paying \$39,643 in personal income tax and \$17,113 in GST.

Kovaluk was sentenced to two years and five months in jail and was fined \$887,328. Her husband, Williams, was sentenced to five years in jail and a fine of \$56,756. The fines represent 100% of the total taxes evaded.

### They know where you live

Robert Parnell of Seven Sisters Falls, Man., used to be a commercial airline pilot with Air Canada. For the years 2003, 2004, and 2005, he used a Calgary address belonging to a friend for filing his income tax returns instead of his actual address in Manitoba.

With those false statements, he reduced his provincial taxes from \$79,000 to \$46,000 for the three-year period.

It didn't take much of a CRA investigation to see what Parnell was up to. He pleaded guilty to tax evasion and was fined \$24,750.

### Get that taxable income down

Zoran Sudar of San Antonio Carriers, both of Hamilton, Ont., falsified documents and cheques to show payments of approximately \$500,000 to a fictitious supplier. The falsified payments were then used to cover Sudar's personal expenses. By deducting these falsified expenses, he underreported approximately \$500,000 in corporate income.

He also evaded \$124,000 in personal income taxes, and his company dodged payment of corporate income taxes of \$75,000. San Antonio also claimed input tax credits for these falsified expenses and received \$53,841 in GST refunds for the periods from January 2005 to December 2007.

Sudar pleaded guilty to two counts of income tax evasion and one count of GST evasion. San Antonio Carriers was fined a total of \$115,380 and given nine months to pay. Mr. Sudar is to be sentenced on Apr. 19, 2013.

### Do it right

If you're looking for a New Year's resolution, make sure your invoices, income slips, bank statements, and receipts are in hand. Work with your accountant to understand all the credits, deductions, and exemptions you're entitled to take.

After years of working with clients in trucking, I can tell you that the owner/operators who do things the right way always have something to show for their efforts. □

— Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, providing accounting, bookkeeping, tax return preparation, and other business services for owner/operators. Learn more at [www.tfsgroup.com](http://www.tfsgroup.com) or call 800-461-5970.

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Every day, Erwen works alongside his four sons - Doug, Darrell, Terry and Tom - who all play prominent roles in the Company.



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**FLEET NEWS**

**Kriska completes  
move into  
headquarters**

By James Menzies

**PRESCOTT, Ont.** – When Kriska Transportation bought the former RCA television factory just up the road from its Prescott home in the mid-90s, the idea was to move all its operations and support staff into the facility.

That move took longer than planned, but finally became a reality in November. Kriska hosted an open house Nov. 21 to celebrate the completion of renovations at its new headquarters at 850 Sophia St., which now houses its entire administration, operations, customer support and driver services staff, as well as senior management. All that's left back at Kriska's 300 Churchill Rd. location is the maintenance operations.

Mark Seymour, CEO of Kriska Group, said bringing the team together under one roof has been a longtime goal.

"We've, for a number of years, intended to get all our people together," Seymour told *Truck News* at the open house. "We've been separated in two different buildings for the last four or five years. We never intended for it to be that way for as long as it ended up being, but the recession certainly put our best plans on hold. We've weathered that storm and this is something we've wanted to do for some time. Our people deserve a place to work that they can be proud of and a comfortable environment that's conducive to health and wellness, and this was our way of giving that back to them in return for all they do for us."

About 140 people attended the open house, including suppliers, partners and other guests.

With tall ceilings that harken back to its days as a factory, the new office area is spacious, tastefully decorated and extremely modern. A large training centre is available for driver orientations, staff meetings and the like.

A smaller training room houses Kriska's driving simulator, which is used for refresher and post-accident training.

Kriska's boardroom boasts advanced teleconferencing equipment, which allows for meetings between staff in the company's Prescott and Mississauga facilities.

"We're really trying to cut down on our travel," said Caroline Blais, recruiting manager with Kriska. The set-up includes cameras that zero in on whomever is speaking at that moment.

Flatscreen TVs are mounted along the walls, displaying up-to-the-minute data on key performance indicators. Staff can see at a glance how the company is performing in relation to its goals, across a variety of metrics including empty miles, loads delivered, order intake, etc.

The facility offers driver amenities including a lounge with big screen TV, showers, laundry facilities and driver mailboxes.

The driver's area also serves as a learning centre. If you're going



**NEW DIGS:** Kriska CEO Mark Seymour (far left) chats with guests during the company's recent open house at its Sophia St. head office.

to have a wreck, you might as well learn from it. Safety staff post photographs and diagrams of accidents, identifying root causes and contributing factors.

"We have an accident review committee that deems whether an accident is preventable or not," explained Scott Mackay, driver services manager. "Year to date, 80% of the accidents we've been involved in have been non-preventable."

The company is also a big proponent of sleep apnea education, screening and treatment.

"We're very safety-conscious and we care for our people," said Mackay.

To date, 125 drivers have gone through the testing process and of those, about 50% were diagnosed with obstructive sleep apnea. Kriska works with a clinic in Kingston to fast-track its drivers through the testing process. Between OHIP and the company's group insurance provider, there's very little cost to the driver, Mackay explained.

Drivers seem to appreciate the work environment. Turnover at Kriska is about 25%, well below industry norms, but Mackay noted most of the drivers that do depart, leave the industry altogether. Often, they've turned to trucking as a second career and found it just wasn't a fit for them.

About 75 employees work out of Kriska's new headquarters, with another 15 in Mississauga. The carrier also opened a new office in London, Ont. earlier this month. Kriska current operates about 360 power units. About half the fleet's drivers are based in and around Prescott, while the other half call the Greater Toronto Area and southwestern Ontario home.

Only about 60 of the carrier's drivers are owner/operators. Mackay attributes this to the fact the company focuses mostly on shorter runs. With an average length of haul of 405 miles, it's a great place to work for drivers who value home time, but may not be a fit for those who like to stay out for weeks at a time racking up the miles.

Staff at the open house seemed genuinely delighted with the new digs. But no one wore a bigger smile than Seymour.

"We're very proud of it," he said of the facility. "This has been a dream of mine for a number of years. We bought this building in 1995 and since then, I've had this vision of having our people together in one building in a very healthy and constructive environment. It has taken that long to do it. I'm not known for my patience, but I guess, upon reflection, I've had to be pretty patient about this." □

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**FLEET NEWS**

**Penske retrofits rental fleet with LED headlights**

**READING, Pa.** – Penske Truck Leasing is retrofitting 5,000 of its 2012 and 2013 semi-tractors currently within its commercial truck rental fleet with new LED headlights from Truck-Lite. Penske officials say the company is the first and only commercial truck rental operation to currently offer the headlamp option within its fleet. The retrofitting will take place over the next 12 months. Penske says it plans to make the LED lights part of its core standard specifications for all the semi-tractors in its commercial truck rental fleet.

“We’ve field-tested these new lights,” said Art Vallely, executive vice-president of operations for Penske Truck Leasing. “They provide greater nighttime visibility compared with traditional headlights, which enhances safety for commercial truck drivers operating our equipment. The high durability of these lights also provides a significant cost-savings from a maintenance standpoint.”

The new Truck-Lite LED headlamps were initially developed for military use and have been battle-field-tested by vehicles serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Our LED forward lighting capabilities and product line has continued to strengthen and grow,” said Beth English, vice-president of marketing for Truck-Lite. “The overwhelming response from the military and commercial vehicle markets has allowed us to push forward and move the technology toward the custom heavy-duty market and our fleet partners.”

Truck-Lite says the LED headlamps offer longer life than incandescent bulbs, saving time and expense long-term, while providing better visibility for drivers. □

**ATS moves into Alberta market**

**DEVON, Alta.** – St. Cloud, Minn.-based Anderson Trucking Service (ATS) moved into the Alberta trucking market last month with the acquisition of Waylon Transport.

ATS said it eyed Waylon Transport as a good fit because of its proximity to roadways, rail yards and the Edmonton International Airport. Waylon Transport has established itself as an international and domestic transport provider while also serving the needs of Alberta's oilfield. It runs 22 trucks and 40 trailers as well as a freight brokerage business.

“We are excited about the service possibilities for our customers that can be provided by the combined efforts of Waylon and ATS, and are pleased to welcome Waylon to the Anderson Family of Companies,” announced Brent Anderson, vice-president of heavy haul and wind energy services with ATS.

Dave Iwanicka, founder of Waylon Transport added: “It will be rewarding for me to see that Waylon Transport will continue to grow with the Anderson group.” □

**MAIL**

# What gender discrimination?

**Dear Editor:**

I was extremely irritated by the letter (from Liz Scott in your November 2012 issue), mostly because Liz accuses carriers of gender discrimination, but also because she refers to insurance considerations as "hogwash."

I have now been in the industry for seven years with four different carriers (the recession was hard on a couple of them and they did not make it). Although women are certainly a numerical minority, I have found gender discrimination in trucking to be the least of any industry in which I formerly worked, including health care, a traditionally female-dominated industry. In fact, I regularly receive praise and encouragement from customers, employers and border officers, something which I imagine is not as readily given to men. Claiming gender discrimination simply because a local carrier does not have the facilities or finances to separately bunk trainees is disingenuous.

I had been turned away from a couple of jobs before I had two years' experience due to insurance reasons, but in this industry the importance of insurance cannot be overstated and if a carrier's liability insurance prevents them from hiring new drivers, that is understandable. Dismissing this important issue as "hogwash" is evidence of a dangerous disregard for the enormous responsibility that drivers have for public safety.

The simple fact is, it seems Liz entered into her training with a negative attitude, which, as she states, is likely due to her husband's bad experiences. Furthermore, she is unwilling to drive through Toronto to jobs on the west side of the GTA at large carriers who offer comprehensive training programs, despite the fact that driving through Toronto is likely to be one of the main aspects

of her new driving job.

It seems to me that it is a good thing Liz has decided not to pursue a driving career, as she would reflect badly not only on other women drivers but in fact all drivers. I'm sorry that she is out of pocket \$7,500; perhaps the real lesson in this story is that we need better ways to identify people who have the appropriate personality type for a driving job prior to training.

And then before they spend the money, we need to be honest with them about what they will have to do to complete their training and gain experience before being able to pick and choose their ideal job. I believe this could save a lot of disappointment for both new drivers and carriers. □

**Patricia Fenwick  
Georgetown, Ont.  
Via e-mail**

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## Kudos to Walmart

**Dear Editor:**

*Re: Sixty feet of controversy, December Truck News*

It is nice to see a major corporation is taking on this project, as I have said before and say again the carriers and manufacturers need to utilize their equipment the best they can.

For Walmart to design and build these units shows the changing times, which I welcome.

The cost in fuel savings alone I would imagine will be awesome with the aerodynamics along with the fewer trucks on the road to move the same amount of freight. That is the name of the game.

People will complain, as always, but get used to it drivers. You, the drivers, and the industry reps, keep saying there is a driver shortage.

This is one way big business is taking care of this. Kudos to Walmart for this initiative. □

**Charlie Ellis  
Via e-mail**

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## HEALTH

# This holiday season, try sleeping in

Take advantage of your holidays this New Year's and sleep in. Getting enough sleep is vital for maintaining a healthy body and mind, according to the National Sleep Foundation (NSF). Even so, millions of people do not regularly get enough sleep. Recent surveys show that more than 40 million North Americans suffer from over 70 different sleep disorders. Sixty per cent of adults complain of sleep problems at least a few nights a week.

Since most of these problems go undiagnosed and untreated, over 40% of adults regularly experience daytime sleepiness that interferes with their daily activities at least a few days each month or even a few days a week. North Americans are typically sleeping less than six hours a night and 75% of all adults have trouble falling asleep at least twice a week.



## Preventive Maintenance

KAREN BOWEN

Occasional insomnia, caused by stress, job-related pressures, a family or marriage problem and/or health issues, is usually nothing to worry about. The resulting sleep issues disappear when the stressor disappears.

Identifying other causes and making subsequent changes may be your ticket to consistent, restful dreamland.

Drinking, eating and living habits can keep you awake. Drinking beverages containing caffeine or alcohol in the afternoon or evening, following an irregular morning and nighttime schedule, exercising

close to bedtime, and working and/or doing other mentally intense activities right before or after getting into bed can keep you awake. Give your mind and body time to wind down at the end of the day.

Being on call 24/7 can also disrupt regular sleep patterns. If you have your messaging device tucked under your pillow so you don't miss a dispatch, you are not going to fully relax. Certainly, a heavy workload can crowd your sleep schedule. Allow yourself downtime.

Your environment can also be at fault. A bedroom that's too hot, cold, noisy and/or bright can disturb your sleep. Noisy people in the motel hall can also interrupt your rest. Adjust the thermostat and the blinds. Use earplugs.

Some medications, like decongestants, steroids and some medicines for high blood pressure, asthma, or

depression, list sleeping difficulties as a possible side-effect. Check with your doctor for possible substitutes.

In fact, it is a good idea to talk to a physician about any sleeping problem that recurs or persists for longer than a few weeks because extended sleep loss can impact your memory, metabolism, safety, mood, cardiovascular system and immune system.

Sleep helps you remember by giving the brain the opportunity to commit new information to memory through a process called consolidation. Studies have shown that people who sleep after learning a new task are able to perform it better in the future than others who didn't sleep.

Sleep helps you maintain your weight because it stabilizes the way your body stores and processes carbohydrates while optimizing the hormone levels that affect appetite.

Sleep helps you drive safely because it ensures alertness during the day. Drowsiness during work can lead to errors in judgment and accidents.

Sleep decreases irritability, impatience, lack of concentration and moodiness.

Sleep helps your heart maintain a regular heartbeat by decreasing the amount stress hormone your body produces.

Sleep boosts your immune system and gives your body a chance to flush toxins from the liver, kidneys, lymph and colon.

So, how much sleep is enough? Most healthy adults function best with eight hours of sleep. However, you may stay awake and alert after only six hours of sleep while others need 10 hours just to make it through the day.

To be sure you're getting enough sleep, just pay attention to your body. As a truck driver, you're in the high-risk group for sleep deprivation. Truck drivers, night shift workers, physicians, parents and teenagers typically only average around six hours each day. According to the DoT, up to 4% of all highway crashes are related to sleepiness, particularly in the late night or early morning.

Guard the final, fifth stage of your sleep. It's when your muscles are fully relaxed, dreaming occurs and memories are consolidated. If this time is cut short, or interrupted, you will miss the rest your body and mind requires.

To fight sleep problems take these steps: Keep a regular sleep/wake schedule. Avoid drinking or eating caffeine four to six hours before bed and minimize daytime use. Avoid drinking alcohol and/or eating heavy meals before going to bed. Avoid smoking, especially near bedtime or if you wake up in the night. Get some regular exercise. Maintain appropriate noise, light and temperature levels in your sleep area. Try and wake up without an alarm clock – sleep as long as your body and mind require.

A new year is ahead of you. Review these tips. Then, so you can commit them to memory, sleep on it. Have a healthy New Year! □

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



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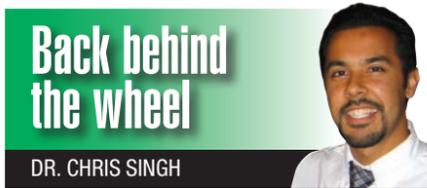
# Keep an eye out for this potential health problem

Professional truck drivers rely heavily on their eyes to perform their jobs safely and effectively. Therefore, eye conditions can be devastating or even career ending. This month I am going to discuss cataracts, which are a common eye condition that involves the clouding of the lens in the eye.

The main symptom of cataracts is cloudy or blurry vision. Many people with cataracts report that it is similar to looking through a fogged-up window. Most cataracts develop very slowly. As such, many people do not experience any significant symptoms until the cataract has grown in size. Often, cataracts only affect a small portion of the eye's lens at first, however, as it increases in size the symptoms tend to become more noticeable. Although blurring of vision is the most common symptom, other symptoms include decreased vision at night, seeing halos or rings around lights and double vision.

The symptoms associated with cataracts are due to the lens of the eye not being able to focus the light that passes through the eye. The cataract scatters or disperses the light, which prevents a sharply defined image.

The most common causes of cataracts are age and injury-related changes in the tissue that make up the lens of your eye. Other risk



factors include diabetes, alcohol abuse, high blood pressure and smoking.

If you suspect that you have a cataract, it is important to seek medical attention. In order to determine if you have a cataract, your doctor may perform a number of tests, which may include a visual acuity test as well as other, more sophisticated testing.

In most cases, the recommended treatment for cataracts is surgery. However, for most people, there is no rush to surgically remove the cataracts as they usually progress slowly and do not damage the eye.

Cataract surgery is relatively simple. Basically, the surgeon removes the clouded lens and then replaces it with a plastic lens implant. In general, this type of surgery does not require hospitalization and you should be able to go home after the surgery. Most patients remain awake during the surgery. The surgeon will use local anesthetic to numb the eye and surrounding area. Cataract surgery is fairly common and is generally considered to be safe

and effective.

The prevention of cataracts is difficult, as the exact cause is not clearly understood. However, having regular eye examinations and living a healthy lifestyle that includes a diet high in fruits and vegetables seems to reduce the risk. Also, wearing sunglasses that filter out Ultraviolet-B light may also decrease the risk of developing cataracts. This point is especially important for truck drivers, as you are more exposed to direct sunlight than the general popula-

tion. As you can see, cataracts are not considered a life-threatening medical condition. However, if left untreated, the associated symptoms can become debilitating.

Keep in mind these simple preventive tips and you will be well on your way to maintaining crystal clear vision.

Until next time, drive safely. □

– 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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**OPINION**

**Ready or not, here comes 2013**

**Voice of the O/O**



JOANNE RITCHIE

If you're reading this in the New Year, it means those who believed the Mayan calendar predicted the world would end on Dec. 21, 2012 were wrong. I've got to admit, as a history and archaeology buff, I thought the discovery of 1,300-year-old hieroglyphics in the jungles of Guatemala confirming the so-called "end date" of the Mayan calendar was very cool.

Most archaeologists poo-pooed the doomsday theorists and agreed it simply signified the end of a cycle on the Mayan calendar, the equivalent to, say, the turn of the millennium in our calendar.

And then there's the New Age interpretation that says the date marks the start of a time when Earth and its inhabitants will undergo a positive physical or spiritual transformation, and that 2013 will be the beginning of a new era.

In any case, pondering the Mayan calendar is way more fun – and probably just as helpful – as speculating on where the economy is heading and what that means for trucking in 2013.

That being said, there are a couple of new regulations on the horizon that could have a profound impact on our operations and possibly our livelihoods, and we have just about as much control over them as we have over preventing the apocalypse.

The US hours-of-service rules are set to change on July 1, if the outcome of a pending court challenge fails to reverse the rule.

American courts have been known to defy logic, so I'm not betting heavily that trucking's position will prevail this time around. At stake is the flexibility in the current (US) 36-hour reset.

The new US HoS rules would allow drivers to use the reset only once in a seven-day period, and the off-duty time would have to include two consecutive days where the driver is asleep between 1 a.m. and 5 a.m.

They also demand a period of at least 30 minutes off-duty at or before a driver reaches the eighth hour of driving.

The latter is no big deal in terms of productivity, but it'll penalize some forgetful drivers big time. Those caught in traffic or some other activity where a break is out of the question will find themselves in a difficult position also.

The changes to the reset provisions will cost some drivers who operate in the US dearly. Right now, if a reload doesn't work out, and you wind up sitting still for a day, it often makes sense to take another 12 hours off and reset the hours to zero. It'll be much harder

'The changes to the reset provisions will cost some drivers who operate in the US dearly,'

Joanne Ritchie, OBAC

to do that under the new rules, if they come to pass.

The other big change coming this year is new fuel economy, or GHG reduction, rules on both sides of the border.

The rules affect trucks beginning in model year 2014, which will start hitting the streets in late spring or early summer of calendar year 2013.

Reliable estimates suggest the fuel economy regulations will add about \$5,000 to the price of an average truck.

Those fleets and owner/operators who already drive at a reasonable speed, limit idling, and use aerodynamic equipment won't see much benefit at all. They are already doing what the regs will force everyone to do – burn less fuel.

The new rules apply to truck makers who have to meet an overall fuel economy target for the entire lineup of trucks they make and sell.

The rules don't really apply to individual trucks, but truck makers will earn credits for the "good" trucks they sell, which they can use to offset the "bad" trucks they sell. You can still buy a bad truck, but you'll pay a lot more for it.

The truck makers will use disincentive pricing to dissuade buyers from spec'ing their trucks certain ways, such as equipping them with big chrome external air cleaners.

The good trucks will come with hard-wired speed limiters (non-resettable), idle-time limiters, and other technologies that will, on paper, earn the truck makers credits. Some of you won't even notice the difference – for good or bad – but you'll still pay more.

And that brings us to a central question going into the New Year: will the economy improve to the point we can start ratcheting up rates?

The Mayans – or even Nostradamus – couldn't predict that one, but on the upside, trucking is doing a fairly good job of limiting capacity, which is making shippers a little nervous.

And that's good. Fewer trucks means carriers will be able to pick and choose: ignore low-paying freight and stick with the good stuff. That eventually forces lowballers to pay more to get their freight moved, which slowly pushes rates upward.

Trucking's cost structure is changing, and we need higher rates to support these new regulatory requirements.

The shortage of qualified drivers is helping in this regard. I've heard many fleets say they would buy more trucks if they could find people to drive them. Apparently they can't, so that helps restrict capacity.

Less flexible HoS regs, increasing costs, and a precarious economic environment that could

keep rates down might make you want to side with the doomsday crowd, even if the sun did come up on Dec. 22.

On the other hand, it might not hurt to let a bit of that New Age thinking rub off on you. Positive transformation, an opportunity for new beginnings, and all that jazz might not be so bad after all, especially if it means more sleep, higher pay, and cleaner air. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Apocalypse or new day dawning? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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## TIRES

# Let's talk tires

Some owner/operators have tire management programs that would rival the largest fleets. It all comes down to paying attention to detail.

**By James Menzies**

Frequently, when we talk about tire management programs, we focus on what the large fleets are doing. However, there are many owner/operators who are every bit as sophisticated about their tire programs as the major fleets are. They have to be. Tire prices have been surging, mostly due to rising raw materials costs, and it's a trend that doesn't appear to be on the brink of reversing itself any time soon.

When you operate one truck or just a few, it's easier to stay on top of problems and to closely monitor tire performance and wear characteristics.

We called upon several owner/operators with advanced tire management programs to find out what steps they're taking to maximize the value of their tire investment.

### Invest in good rubber

Angelo Diplacido, a former owner/operator who ran mostly punishing regional LTL routes, admits he once bought a set of offshore, non-brand name new tires, thinking they'd perform better than retreads.

"I did buy cheap tires one time," he admits. "I soon realized that it didn't matter where I put the pressure, it was like rolling on plastic."

The tread life was adequate, Diplacido said, but the performance was anything but. He was soon longing for a set of quality recaps. He saved less than \$400 on the purchase price of a set of four tires and soon regretted it.

"They did last," he recalls. "However, the compromise in rainy and snowy weather was just horrific."

Dale Holman, owner of Tadcor Holdings, which has nine trucks with FedEx, says he, too has tried offshore, non-brand name tires, but adds "I don't get the mileage out of them."

Greg Decker, an owner/operator with Mullen Group, puts it more bluntly.

"I've been trying cheaper brands but they're garbage," he asserts. He turns to a trustworthy truck tire fuel savings calculator to help determine which brand and model is best for his operation.

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**Manage tire pressures**

Kicking tires to determine their pressures is a joke, and whacking them with a hammer is marginally better. The best way to track and correct tire pressures is to measure them using a calibrated tire gauge.

Decker says he checks his tire pressures every three to four days. He uses Alligator double-seal flow-through valve stem caps on all tire stems to streamline what can be a cumbersome process.

“With the gator caps I can do all six axles in 10 minutes,” Decker says. “They’re only \$3-\$5 each, so it’s not a big expense, and because of the ease of operation and the possibility of saving a tire, they’re worth every penny.”

Holman said tire gauges don’t always tell the full story right off the shelf. He purchased three tire gauges a few weeks ago and found an 11 psi variation between them when measuring the same tire. Holman recommends buying brand name gauges and then calibrating them.

Diplacido adds that ambient temperatures can have a significant impact on tire pressures, which can vary as much as 15 psi between summer and winter weather. He adds tire pressures should be checked when they’re cold and then rechecked every time there’s a swing in ambient temperatures. This is especially important when running long-haul between warm and cold destinations.

All kinds of bad things can happen when tire pressures are ignored. For every 2 psi that a tire is underinflated, its temperature will rise by 10 degrees C, Diplacido explains. So a tire that’s down 20 psi is going to experience a temperature increase of 100 C, and “It’s just a matter of whether the adhesive holds up” before a blow-out occurs.

Managing tire pressures doesn’t necessarily mean ensuring they’re all equal. Holman employs a trick learned from Nascar, and staggers the air pressure on his steer axle to

compensate for the subtle drainage slope in the road from left to right.

“We run 105 psi on the right-hand side and 100 psi on the left-hand side, to get the pull out of the truck,” he explains. “There’s always a drainage grade on the road. By staggering the air pressure, we can bring the steering back to neutral.”

**Rotate tires as required**

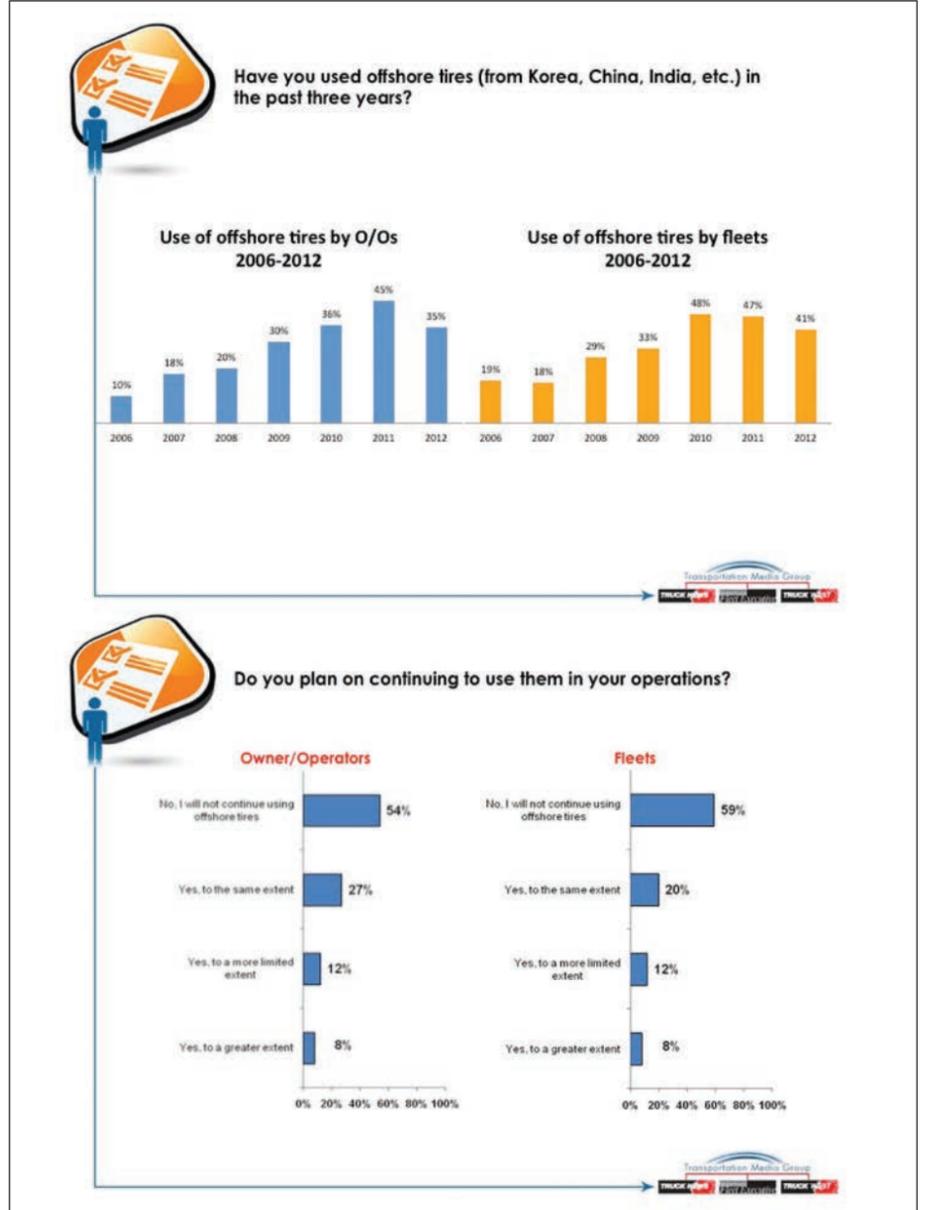
Assuming that tires will wear evenly across every position is a mistake, and one that could be costly. Even if identical new tires are placed at every position and then properly maintained, some will wear more rapidly than others, Holman explains.

“Typically, the right rear tire on a tandem would wear first, because the centrifugal force of the driveshaft goes to the back axle and then turns to the right,” he explains. “When you’re standing at the back of a truck, the driveshaft is turning clockwise. When you’re going down the road and you power up going over a hill, the back dual on the right-hand side will put out probably about 75% of the workload.”

To prove his point, Holman pointed to a set of first-run tires with matching casings that were put on a truck at the same time. “The difference between the front left dual and the right rear dual was 3/32nds of an inch,” he says. “So, we rotated the tires. I will do that, otherwise you have one set that’s worn out and another set that’s at 50%.”

Decker is also a believer in tire rotation. He says the key is to

**Continued on page 50**



**LESSONS LEARNED:** Our Transportation Buying Trends Survey shows fleets and owner/operators alike were more willing to try inexpensive off-shore tires over the past few years (top chart). That trend seems to be backing off, with many fleets and O/Os (lower chart) saying they wouldn’t return to non brand-name tires.

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**TIRES**

# When retreading, not all casings are created equal

**Continued from page 49**

closely monitor tread wear and to rotate as required to ensure the consistent wear of all tires.

**Keep an eye on things**

Decker says many owner/operators overlook telltale signs of tire problems because they're simply not sure what to look for. Others just aren't in the habit of conducting regular inspections.

He suggests doing a quick tire inspection every time the truck is parked. What's he looking for?

"You'll see feather wear on the edges, especially on air-ride trailers. If you start to see that, you've almost waited too long," he says. "When you walk around the truck, thump the tires, check for flats and look for visible wear spots. If you have one tire that you flat-spotted and didn't realize it, it will show itself. When walking back to your truck, look at the tires. Some-

times you won't see it when standing right there beside it, but you will see it when you're standing back. Sometimes you have to be back 20 feet before you notice something looks wrong. If you do this every time you walk up to the truck, you will see when something is wrong."

As an example, Decker spoke of a time he noticed a gap between the tread and the casing, which wasn't visible when standing right beside the tire but became apparent from a distance.

**Pay attention to your casings**

When retreading, keep in mind that not all retreads are created equal. Holman recommends matching recaps with the same casing rather than mixing and matching. Whenever possible, he prefers to have his own casings retreaded.

"When I do buy casings, I want



**CIRCLE CHECK:** Check for flat spots and visible wear during inspections.

matching casings," Holman explains, "because the casing is the model. I might get a tire that's the same size, but it has a different profile. Some are narrower and some are wider. They all look the same and they may have the same tread, but you forget they don't have the same foundation. So, you get one that's a little higher, one that's a little narrower and the first month you're going down the road and the one that's higher is going to wear fast and the one that's wider is going to carry a little more heat, so you end up having mismatched tires and you're going to wear them down. You might have 6/32nds of an inch of tread on the drive tire beside one that has 1/32nds and is worn out. Now, you have a tire that's worn below its limit right beside one that still has a full summer's mileage on it, what do you do? You put a brand new tire on to replace the bad one and now the one that was good isn't touching the road anymore."

It's a nasty cycle to get into.

**Keep the truck dialed in**

A truck that's out of alignment or running on worn shocks can be hell on tires.

Sometimes an inexpensive repair can save a lot of money. Take shocks, for example.

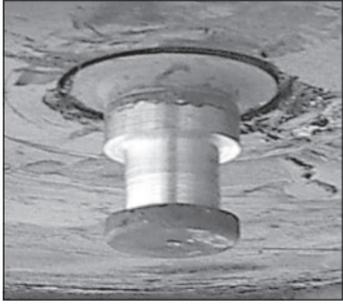
"I've had new trucks where two months in, the tires look like they've been through a war," Holman says. "I took the shock off and the shock was screwed. I changed the shock and the tire, in some cases, rights itself and tries to return to a proper wear pattern. You're not going to get the life out of it, but maybe you'll save it if you catch it early enough."

Shocks are only \$60-\$100 to replace and Holman says they can be swapped out on a steer axle in five minutes.

He suggests replacing shocks at least every three years, more frequently on the steer axle. □



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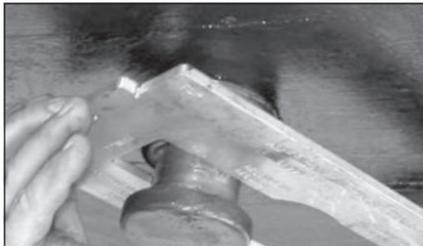



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The organization is looking to match retreaders with unwanted or discarded casings that are still in good condition.

"If you are a trucker or a trucking company and are sitting on excess retreadable tires, we can probably find a home for them," RTA said in a recent release. "You would have to have a minimum of about 25 casings to make it interesting and they would have to be in good shape meaning no junk. There is no cost to you for our service. We might be able find a home for your retreadable truck tire casings and if we do, everyone benefits. This is called a win-win."

If you have casings you're looking to get rid of, call RTA at 831-646-5269 or e-mail [info@retreadtire.org](mailto:info@retreadtire.org). □



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**COOLING THE TRUCKING AND TRANSIT INDUSTRY**

## EXECUTIVE VIEW

# In conversation with Mike McCarron

## Investment bankers may be expensive, but they can keep the negotiations from becoming *too* personal

Continued from page 1  
finalized).

The underlying theme throughout the entire interview was the challenges involved in getting a deal done while continuing to manage the business over a course of many months. We spoke at length on the subject. The following interview should be considered a must-read for anyone looking to exit the business within the next few years.

**TN:** Mike, at 52 years of age, you're a pretty young guy to be selling your business. You've still got some years ahead of you. Why'd you decide to sell this year? Should we be reading into the timing in any way? Are you down on the industry and where it's headed?

**McCarron:** There were a bunch of factors. With MSM, we got to the point where we realized we were too big to be small, but too small to be big, which is a very difficult position to be in. We felt that in order to get the business to the level where you get true economies of scale, we were going to have to invest a lot of money into the business; a lot of money that my partner (Bob Murray) and myself didn't feel like risking, frankly.

We decided a couple years ago to start getting ready to sell and if the right opportunity came along, we'd take it. We decided, let's learn the process, let's get our house ready to sell, let's get the corporate clean-up done and let's see what happens, because neither one of us were prepared to take the risk required to take the business to the next level. We thought maybe it was better to take our chips off the table and secure our families.

Then, as we started looking at things, we started recognizing the dynamics of the marketplace. We recognized that as much as we positioned ourselves as a hybrid transportation/third-party company, we really started positioning ourselves more as a broker, because we realized the multiplier would be higher.

Freight brokering was really a phenomenon that started when trucking deregulated. It was a bit of a gold rush in the late 70s and early 80s. They were started largely by sales guys who saw an opportunity to become self-employed in a business where normally they wouldn't have had that opportunity before. Third-party brokering became very mainstream and it spurred a whole new network of smaller trucking companies.

But if you look at who historically started these businesses, if they were 30 years old in 1980, they're 62 years old now. We were really concerned about what would happen 10 years down the road when all the other baby-boomers were trying to sell their businesses. We were concerned about the glut in the market and what that would do to our EBITDA and to our earnings and what the multipliers would be and who would buy all these third parties?

I think the other factor too, is we



**STRIKING A DEAL:** Despite a pre-existing friendship between Mike McCarron (left) and Wheels CEO Doug Tozer, the deal still took about nine months to conclude. It wasn't done over a cup of coffee. *Photo by Adam Ledlow*

were getting really tired. My partner Bob really ran the business on a day-to-day basis and he was the anchor who kept it all together. We were both getting really tired.

I know personally, I was extremely bored. And business was not as much fun as it used to be. It seems that in the trucking industry, when the bottom fell out, a lot of the fun went out, too. Everything was a day-to-day battle. Every time you turned your head there was some other factor that was out of your control that would affect your bottom line.

We also had a situation whereby it appeared the M&A market was pretty strong. We started to get some more calls. Certainly, I know the investment people we talked to were sitting on a lot of money. And say what you want about this industry, prospects for transportation and logistics over the next 15-20 years are actually very good.

If you put all those factors together, we felt it was the right time.

This time last year, we started trying to find out what would be the right fit. We wanted to really find a company that would be a fit, that would allow us to get our money off the table, that would take care of the people that worked for us – that was very important, that people would get taken care of – and that would allow both Bob and myself to leave, maybe not the industry, but leave MSM.

**TN:** So, you were quietly preparing the business for a sale and at the same time, you're getting more calls from interested parties. Are these cold calls from potential suitors?

**McCarron:** We always got calls, but when you talk about suitors, there are the investment suitors and the strategic suitors. We felt the problem with the pure investment suitors, the institutional investors, is that their game is very simple. The people with the money want to come in, rape and pillage your business, cut costs and get in and out within five years.

Take the situation MSM had; we had a lot of long-term employees. We had a very stable culture. Sometimes when you have long-term employ-

ees, you look at the balance sheet and the secretary who started making \$20,000 25 years ago and got a 3% raise every year, they're making money that looks on paper like you could get someone else to do their job for a lot cheaper.

We were really concerned, not only with the type of dollar we were going to get from just a money buyer, but concerned with what they were going to do with our people. So, we were looking for some strategic opportunities. I can't protect the staff forever, but we were looking for a situation that at least would give them a fighting chance to prove their worth and show that they can add value to the bottom line.

**TN:** How did you identify Wheels Group as a good fit?

**McCarron:** Wheels and MSM have a long history together. We were two of the first transportation companies to become one of the 50 Best Managed Companies about 17 years ago. We were both major customers of the same software company, so we worked a lot with them developing programs over the years.

We've done a lot of business over the years. And chairman and CEO Doug Tozer is not only a neighbour of mine, but we grew up in the same neighbourhood, so he's been a good community friend for over 30 years.

**TN:** Did having that pre-existing relationship make the process any easier, or perhaps even more difficult?

**McCarron:** How this all started was, I was having coffee – something I almost never do – with a friend at the local coffee shop and Doug happened to walk by at 10 on a Saturday morning. He said 'Mike, can you give me a call after your coffee?' I gave him a call as soon as I got in the car and spent the next two hours driving around, talking to him on the phone.

Because of my relationship with Doug, I didn't get actively involved in the negotiations until near the end, because I really felt it was best to stay out of it. It became evident pretty early on that there were a lot of cul-

tural similarities, a lot of synergies from the standpoint of, we had skills and expertise they didn't have and conversely, they had some we didn't have. They had just turned public in what was a third-party consolidation platform and it was just a really good fit.

It was almost like buying a house. Once you find an area you like, when you're looking at houses and the right one is there, you know it's the right one and you buy it. I knew early in the process that Wheels was a good fit and the challenge was to work out a deal that would work for Doug and the shareholders of the company and satisfy some of the requirements Bob and myself had. It was still a very long process. It took almost nine months.

**TN:** Does having a partner in the business complicate the sales process, or were your objectives always aligned?

**McCarron:** My partner and myself, about three years ago, had some disagreements on the way the business direction should go at MSM. But, it was a respectful disagreement.

When business went bad, it needed the type of leadership Bob could bring. He ran the ship on a daily basis. We didn't necessarily agree on the long-term direction of the company, but we were not foolish enough to do it in public or allow it to affect our ability to run the business. I was proud of the way we handled things. I think with a lot of partnerships, egos would've gotten involved.

James, we met each other 22 years ago and didn't know each other well at all, and due to circumstances we ended up becoming partners. A 22-year run was a good run. The fact we disagreed on a few things didn't make it a failure; it was a success.

When it came time to sell the business, Bob was in charge of that process. I had a lot of say, because we were both majority shareholders. We were both in tune with where we wanted to take this thing, we worked hard to get the business ready to sell and we both agreed a strategic partner was going to bring us the best return.

**TN:** So, once you identified Wheels as a strategic fit, what came next? Did you sit down in a boardroom like this one and hammer out a deal?

**McCarron:** The first thing we did was hired an investment banker, who helped us maximize the value. They can be very expensive, but I think of an investment banker almost as an agent for a hockey player. People say 'Why does a hockey player need an agent?'

The problem with negotiations is they can get difficult, and they can get personal. You have to be very careful because when it does get personal, if you are involved in the negotiations you can sometimes take it *too* personally and set the negotiations off. We felt that working with an investment banker, their experience was great, they helped us work through the legal jargon – in particular dealing with a public company – and they really helped us get to the finish line.

**TN:** Were you completely hands-off during the early stages of nego-

Continued on page 52

EXECUTIVE VIEW

# McCarron on keeping it quiet and announcing the deal

Continued from page 51

tiations, allowing your investment banker to represent you as a hockey agent would, or were you involved at every step along the way?

**McCarron:** There was a ton of direct contact because when you're talking to a public company, there is a fiduciary responsibility that no stone can go unturned. When no stone goes unturned, there are a lot of questions, questions we didn't always have the answers to, at least initially. It's a really complicated process.

What people don't understand is that the due diligence isn't only on the side of the acquirer. We did a lot of due diligence to determine if it was the right fit for us.

Part of the deal was stock, so we had to make sure the paper we're getting is good paper.

The part I think everyone forgets, James, is that while this is going on, you still have to protect your bottom line. As much as we began discussions in January of last year and closed in October, the closing is based on the numbers at that time. So, now you have your financial team and your administrative team doing reports, answering questions and going to meetings, but they still need to be managing the house. People tend to forget about that. The day someone knocks on your door is not the day you sell the business. It's based on your financial statements, so every time you have a bad month – or conversely, a good month – it's af-

fecting the numbers. The numbers are based on the snapshot that day, but they take a brand new snapshot the day they close the deal.

**TN:** What was the biggest surprise about the whole process?

**McCarron:** Just how complex and difficult it is to get a deal done. The amount of detail, the amount of tension, the amount of planning, the amount of costs incurred, given the complexity of the deal.

The other thing that surprised me was how difficult it is to have your management team focused on trying to get a deal done, while also focusing on trying to keep the numbers up on a day-to-day basis.

**TN:** Throughout this entire process, how important was it to keep things quiet and how did you accomplish that?

**McCarron:** It's very important. We heard almost no rumours on the street. We gave it a code name; we called it Project Mango.

The people who worked on it all signed confidentiality agreements. What I found is that, where you start getting rumours is when the meetings start happening. Once a week, someone from Wheels was at our offices and people start seeing lawyers and accountants come in. People start sensing something is going on.

When we started actually hearing rumours in the industry was when we had to involve outside people. For

example, when we went to someone to evaluate all the equipment. Once you start involving third parties, it's hard to keep a lid on it.

I wasn't massively concerned about rumours. We wanted to keep it confidential in case it didn't go down, but we weren't playing four or five parties against one another. We knew Wheels was the best strategic fit, it was just a question of getting the deal done.

**TN:** I didn't hear anything, if that means anything.

**McCarron:** And you would, too. Where you normally hear things is from the suppliers. If people say so-and-so is having trouble, and it's from a competing trucking company, I don't put any credence in that. But where rumours in this business are credible is when they're coming from the supplier side, for example, so-and-so is trying to renegotiate leases on their trailers.

**TN:** When the deal was completed, how did you communicate it?

**McCarron:** We had a lot of direction from Wheels on that. Because Wheels is a public company, we had to be very careful about how we announced it. Basically, at the same time, after markets closed in Toronto and in the US, we had staff meetings and a press release was issued by Wheels.

**TN:** I imagine this was a real shock for your employees. How do you soft-

en the blow?

**McCarron:** You don't. It's difficult. People are smart and they realize that jobs might get rationalized and things get condensed. So, rightly so, people are very nervous any time a business is sold. We did everything we could to protect everyone's job, but the reality is that Wheels Group has to do what's best for their business and their shareholders.

We can't control that. What I said to our employees is that the most important thing is that if a company is looking to rationalize positions, they're going to take the best employee, the person who works the hardest and the person who's producing. They're going to pick the best, so the key is to work hard like you have been, contribute, do your job and it'll work out no matter where you go. It's difficult, but I say this to people all the time: Unless your name is on the front of the building, you have no say.

**TN:** On a personal level, you started MSM at a young age and have spent most of your professional life owning your business. Now, you've cashed in, you've got money in the bank and you're going to work for someone else. How difficult do you expect this transition to be?

**McCarron:** I just started this week. I'm only 52 years old. Frankly, I'm the type of person that with all the free time and a little bit of cash in the bank, it can be a dangerous if you're not careful, because I'd get bored out of my mind.

I don't have to work anymore. I've

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been pretty frugal with my finances, money was never that important to me and nothing is going to change in my life. Five years from now, there won't be a Maserati in my driveway. This wasn't about becoming filthy rich and changing my lifestyle, the biggest thing for me was securing my family.

The advice I kept getting was the biggest mistake you could make would be to head to the hills for four or five years, get bored out of your mind, then come back and nobody remembers who you are.

*TN:* Is this a newly created position?

*McCarron:* Yes, it is with the Wheels M&A team.

*TN:* Should we read into that then, that Wheels is looking to acquire more companies and continuing to grow?

*McCarron:* Wheels went public with a plan that they would like to grow their business organically and through mergers and acquisitions. A big part of buying MSM was consolidating the third-party space. Like Doug and his management team, I think there will be a tremendous opportunity. What I believe is, when you look at the demographics of the third-party business, that all these freight brokerage entrepreneurs who were getting to be 55, 60-plus years old, are going to want to retire at the same time. The question is, who's going to buy them?

I want to investigate that market to take advantage of the demographics in the industry. Look at the freight brokerage business; there are no con-

tracts, it's all goodwill, it's all handshake deals and it's all transactional.

You don't pay for it and if you look at freight brokers, that's all they have.

Also, I think a lot of people are tired; they're worn out.

If you look at things historically, when business goes bad, the smaller, weaker third parties tend to get gobbled up because they get rationalized out of the supply chain.

My goal here at Wheels, working with the rest of the management team, is to build programs that

'If you want to get out in the next five years,  
you have to be in that process now,'

Mike McCarron, Wheels Group

allow us to consolidate a lot of these Canadian and American third parties when it comes time.

It's a pure probability model. I can tell you who's going to retire, why and how, I just can't tell you when. So part of this is creating some services for the owner/operator, single sales rep that's looking to get out and even for the larger freight brokerages. I think what they're going to find, like we found, is that as this industry continues to age, it's going to be far more difficult to get out, because there's going to be a glut in the market and there aren't going to be a lot of buyers.

*TN:* What can an owner that's looking to sell do to make their company more attractive to a buyer like

Wheels Group?

*McCarron:* First and foremost, if you want to get out in the next five years, you have to be in that process now. It's incredible, the things that have to get done that don't get done on a normal basis.

At MSM, we had a number of companies. Even cleaning up the minutes books and getting records up to date was difficult, and we were a very well run company.

At MSM, we were confident that we had no skeletons in the closet.

It was just the way we ran the business, with integrity and full disclosure. People that have skeletons in the closet: they're going to find them. You can't hide. The due diligence is so deep.

The first process is, you have to clean up past mistakes. Get the business ready, clean up the corporate minutes books, be ready for when that person comes to the door, so that you can begin the process, because if you have to do the clean-up then, the first perception the buyers will have of you is not a good one and they can walk at any time.

I really underestimated how much work goes into getting the business ready. We did all of this beforehand. By the time Doug Tozer banged on our door, most of this was already

done. We even put all our companies together and consolidated their statements ahead of time, knowing nobody was going to buy seven companies.

*TN:* Based on your observations of this industry, do you think most owners have developed an adequate exit strategy or do you think it will be a mad scramble to get out?

*McCarron:* I wouldn't say it will be a mad scramble. I don't know if this is a product of our industry, I think it's more a product of our age. But everyone is tired. It's been a tough go and it's going to be tough getting the business to where it used to be. A lot of the perks are gone and I just think people want to slow down. They're starting to think about an exit strategy and if they plan that properly, they'll be fine and their businesses will sell. But it's not going to be as easy as going to the local ReMax agency and putting a shingle on the door.

I definitely believe that the 50-plus generation is starting to think about slowing down. My best guess is that on the freight brokerage side, that businesses got badly beaten up in 08-09, the ones that survived realized their best play may be to roll on with a larger player, one that can compete more aggressively within the third-party market.

People start looking at the amount of work it's going to take to get it back to where it used to be. We look forward to taking what I learned about the M&A process implemented at Wheels and to start engaging the process. □



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**OEM/DEALER NEWS**

## Fort Garry Industries acquires Pinwood Truck Parts

**SARNIA, Ont.** – Fort Garry Industries has announced it has reached a binding agreement to acquire an equity share in Pinwood Truck Parts.

The deal was expected to conclude by Nov. 30. Pinwood operates locations in Chatham, Sarnia and Comber, Ont., providing full line parts distribution to the heavy-duty market in southwestern Ontario.

The company was established in 1986 by Kevin Broadwood and Norm Pinard.

Fort Garry Industries is based in Winnipeg, Man. and has 22 locations providing parts, service, equipment and trailer sales to the commercial vehicle market.

“Pinwood Truck Parts will continue to operate independently, but will share product and system synergies as part of the FGI group of companies,” Fort Garry Industries announced. “The combined resources will offer 25 locations across western Canada and Ontario. Fort Garry and its partner companies are committed to strategic growth in order to comprehensively serve our national and regional customers in the commercial vehicle market.” □

## Navistar produces first ProStar+ with Cummins ISX15 engine

**LISLE, Ill.** – The first International ProStar+ with Cummins ISX15 and selective catalytic reduction (SCR) has rolled off the assembly line at Navistar’s Escobedo, Mexico plant.

“This is a great accomplishment for Navistar and an important milestone as we bring our first SCR-based Class 8 trucks to the marketplace,” said Troy Clarke, Navistar president and COO. “The entire launch team and hundreds of others working behind the scenes are committed to a high-quality launch and this achievement is another proof point in our progress.”

The first International trucks to be produced with the ISX15 and SCR will be placed into Navistar’s test fleet. The company will now begin its final validation processes prior to deploying customer units in December.

Navistar says it has already received orders for more than 1,000 ProStar trucks with the ISX15 engine.

The ProStar+ with the Interna-



tional MaxxForce 13 using Cummins’ SCR technology will enter initial pilot production in March 2013, the company says. Regular production will begin in April 2013.

The remainder of International’s heavy-duty truck models will then transition to SCR in a phased launch throughout 2013, based on volume and customer demand.

Meanwhile, Navistar is continuing to build and ship trucks in all classes using a combination of earned emissions credits and/or paying non-conformance penalties. □

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## Shell honours musical road warriors

**NEW YORK, N.Y.** – Country artist Kenny Chesney and his tour group were honoured with the Shell Rotella Road Warrior Award during *Billboard* magazine’s Touring Awards held in New York City Nov 7-8. The awards, hosted this year by actress and comedian Sandra Bernhard, honour the concert industry’s top artists, venues and professionals for the year.

The Road Warrior Award, which was presented by global brand manager Chris Guerrero, celebrates uncommon work ethic, professionalism and integrity on the road.

“(The touring segment) is a hard-working segment of the industry but there is not much focus on it,” Guerrero told a small group of truck journalists attending the awards. “We want to celebrate these hard-working individuals. We think it’s important to recognize the professionalism and work ethic of drivers and road crews that put in thousands of miles on the road each year.”

At the Billboard event to help Shell celebrate, were the presidents of two of the companies that supply the tour industry with their buses and drivers.

“Touring drivers have to be top-notch,” said Trent Hemphill, president of Hemphill Brothers Coach Lines. When the band is sleeping, they have to be able to pull in, get fuel and get back on the highway without the band noticing.

With there still being a shortage of good drivers in North America, it is a challenge for the touring industry to find and recruit these top-notch drivers.

“We get many drivers from the gospel music industry,” said Doug Rountree, president of Pioneer Coach, which uses primarily Canadian-built Prevost buses. The drivers who drive the gospel band members around are some of the best.

The Road Warrior Award is just one way in which Shell has celebrated hard-working truckers this year. Its My Miles Matter program, which just went live in Canada, offers drivers numerous perks for purchasing Shell products.

Truckers are given special offers and rewards for their purchases and are sent a newsletter every couple of months. They also have exclusive access to member events and third-party targeted content on the My Miles Matter Web site.

The idea behind the program is not just to offer rewards for purchases, but to give truckers a sense of belonging.

“With My Miles Matter, we are building a community,” said Guerrero. “The idea is to drive conversation.”

To find out more about the program, visit [www.rotella.com](http://www.rotella.com)

To recognize the best of the best, Shell also recently launched the Million Mile Haul of Fame in Canada. The hall honours drivers who respect their rig, its engine and take pride in a job well done. Inductees must meet certain eligibility requirements, including proof they have driven their vehicle for at least one million miles using only Shell Rotella heavy-duty engine oil since at least the 250,000-mile mark. Additionally, their million-mile engine must retain its original pistons, liners and rings.

The Shell Million Mile Haul of Fame now has 10 members. □

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## AXLES

# The 6x2s are coming

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By James Menzies

**FLETCHER, N.C.** – Truck, engine and component manufacturers have exhausted almost all of the simplest ways to improve productivity for fleet owners and owner/operators. With the low-hanging fruit harvested, what will be the next big breakthrough to increase payload and improve fuel mileage?

The answer may lie in spec'ing 6x2 configuration tractors, an industry norm in many parts of Europe, where disc brakes, automated transmissions and other technologies that make life better for drivers and fleet managers have been deployed and perfected before finally arriving on these shores.

Axle manufacturer Meritor believes there is a place for 6x2 configurations here in North America – including Canada – and is bringing to market a new offering designed for this market. A 6x2 configuration, a mostly foreign concept to Canadian truckers, consists of a vehicle where only two of six wheel positions are powered. The second tandem drive axle is sometimes referred to as a “dead” axle, because it carries load but doesn't help propel the vehicle.

This concept may at first sound like a nice, but impractical idea in Canada, where slick conditions are hard to avoid for much of the year. However, when coupled with sophisticated electronics, 6x2 axles are surprisingly capable, even on the slickest of surfaces.

Meritor recently demonstrated its 6x2 axle capabilities at a press event at its Fletcher, N.C. axle plant. The company launched its SoloDrive series of 6x2 axles at this year's Mid-America Trucking Show with the

introduction of its FUELite tandem axle, based on its 160-Series drive axle. Its next offering in the 6x2 category, scheduled for launch in 2013, is the SMARTandem, which combines elements of the FUELite with other characteristics borrowed from Meritor's popular 14X tandem drive axle. The SMARTandem provides the fuel and weight savings offered by the FUELite, along with greater traction that rivals that of the 14X tandem.

The SMARTandem uses advanced electronics to prevent wheel slippage and offers an automatic differential lock, making it more operator-friendly than the FUELite, while also extending tire life. Since it essentially takes the driver out of the equation, this newest option will be well-suited for large truckload fleets with high driver turnover. The FUELite performs well, while in the hands of a trained, experienced and skilled driver, but isn't completely foolproof.

So, why the sudden interest in 6x2 axles? Matthew Stevenson, general manager of North American field operations and marketing with Meritor, said customers are beginning to ask more questions about Meritor's future plans for 6x2 offerings.

“We are hearing the demand out in the field and trying to get a handle on how large this market can grow,” Stevenson said.

To find out, the company surveyed 500 fleets to gauge their level of interest in, and knowledge of, 6x2 configurations. Of those responding fleets, about 60% had no, or little, knowledge of the benefits of 6x2 axles.

Respondents who were familiar with the concept cited loss of traction and poor resale value as their chief impediments to 6x2 adoption. Meritor's research also found that fleets would be interested in exploring the viability of 6x2 axles if they could gain fuel efficiency, reduce weight and decrease maintenance.

Still, only 10% of the fleets surveyed that run more than 100 trucks, and 13% of those running less than 100 trucks operate some portion of their fleets as 6x2s. Only 20% of fleets indicated they were “likely” or “very likely” to spec' 6x2 drive axles in the near future. However, Meritor figures with the price of diesel expected to remain high, and with increased education on the benefits of running a dead axle, that the market penetration of 6x2 axles could grow from 3% today to 18% within five years. That's a sizeable chunk of the market, and one that Meritor has decided is worth investing in.

As with any new technology, however, Meritor officials acknowledge there's a learning curve. They're beginning to educate customers on how to properly introduce 6x2 tractors into their fleets without making common mistakes that would be sure to sour them on the experience.

Stevenson stressed fleets can't simply spec' a 6x2 tractor without also considering the impact tires, axle ratios and other spec's will have on the performance of the vehicle.

“It has to be spec'd as a system,” Stevenson warned. “Otherwise, it will not work and you will not be happy as a customer with that configuration.”

For example, deep lug tires with aggressive tread patterns should be spec'd on the powered axle, while



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more fuel-efficient, low rolling resistance tires can go on the tag axle. A load transfer system, which shifts weight onto the powered axle upon acceleration in low traction scenarios to prevent the tires from spinning, is also highly recommended. Meritor Wabco's ECAS (electronically controlled air suspension) is one such offering, which is slated to hit the market in 2013.

"If you don't have ECAS, it's going to affect tire life," Stevenson admitted. With ECAS, he said, "You can get tire life that's darn close to what a fleet would see in a 6x4 application."

The weight savings provided by a 6x2 amount to about 400 lbs, which translates to additional payload in applications that maximize their gross vehicle weights.

Meritor promises fuel savings of 2-4% when spec'ing its FUELite or SMARTandem 6x2s. It's that fuel-saving potential that's garnering the most interest from fleets.

Even a 2% fuel savings can translate to up to \$1,120 per year in savings at today's fuel prices, which extrapolated over an entire fleet amounts to big bucks.

The SMARTandem has been used in Europe – where 6x2s are commonplace – for four years and has been in testing here in North America for the last two years. Charlie Allen, general manager, rear drive axles with Meritor, said there are 15 SMARTandems undergoing field-testing in North America, and they're performing well, even in wintery conditions.

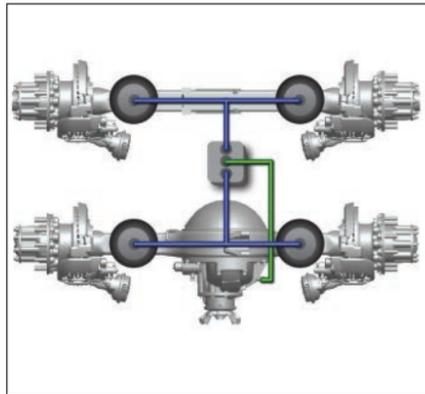


**SURPRISING PULL:** This 6x2 Freightliner Cascadia with SMARTandem axles had no trouble pulling up a slight grade on a plastic surface material with no grip, thanks to the advanced electronics. *Photo by James Menzies*

Stevenson said Canadian fleets that run north-south could benefit from the fuel and weight savings, but it wouldn't be recommended for operations that run predominantly in winter conditions; i.e. regional fleets in northern Manitoba. This is primarily a mainstream, linehaul specification.

While Canadian customers will be skeptical of a 6x2's practicality in the great white north, a demonstration by Meritor revealed a remarkably capable system.

A Freightliner Cascadia with 53-ft. trailer was parked on a subtle grade with its drive tires placed on a slippery surface (think hockey board material), which was then sprayed with a soapy substance to further reduce what little traction



there was.

The test truck was rigged so that the operator could switch between traditional 6x2 and SMARTandem performance. In traditional 6x2 mode, the powered axle's wheels spun hopelessly, but with SMART-

andem's electronics activated, the truck pulled forward with very little wheel spin at all. It's one of those demonstrations, like electronic stability, that has to be seen to be fully appreciated.

Meritor wouldn't comment on the price of the SMARTandem, due out sometime next year, because the OEMs will ultimately determine the price. However, it's expected to be in line with the cost of a conventional 14X tandem drive axle.

Resale value may initially be a concern, particularly in Canada. Meritor's research showed a \$5,000 penalty at resale time may be incurred, but in some fleets, owner/operators are actually willing to pay a premium for the 6x2s the fleet has put up for sale, because they have seen the benefits firsthand.

Some carriers that are among the early adopters are getting well over 8 mpg with their 6x2 tractors, officials claimed.

As for Canada, with the snowy, icy conditions we all know and love, don't discount the possibility of the 6x2 trend catching on with some progressive fleets with dedicated trucks running north-south lanes. It would seem improbable, but with advancements made on the electronics side of the equation, it just may happen.

Fuel savings aren't going to come easy anymore, with so much that's been accomplished in recent years, so 6x2 axles are something that at the very least, may merit some investigation. □

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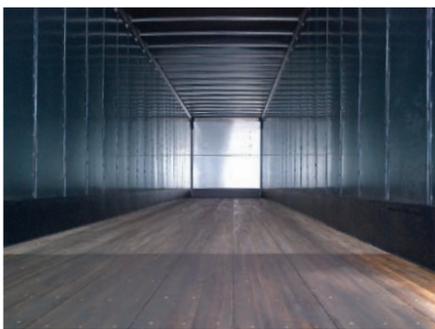
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**INDUSTRY**

# Better smile if driving in Quebec

Quebec's recent announcement that it will deploy photo radar in specific locations throughout the province is likely to raise as much ire among truckers who transgress speed laws as did the introduction of speed limiters a few years ago. The speed limiter hue and cry is still ongoing, as confirmed by the continuous stream of letters to the editors of the major industry publications.

As most readers of *Truck News* know by now, Law 57, which was passed in June of this year allows for photo radar to be used in targeted locations in the province such as those that experience high accident ratios, school zones, and roadwork areas. With this move, Quebec joins a handful of other Canadian jurisdictions that use photo radar in various modes.

While photo radar does not discriminate over the type of vehicle there will likely be those that feel it is yet another unnecessary intrusion on the poor commercial driver. If you are inclined



## Private Links

BRUCE RICHARDS

to think that way, consider the charges laid in Ontario recently against a truck driver for allegedly operating his tractor trailer at 136 km/h in an 80 km/h zone. Apparently it's not just kids in souped-up Civics that can't resist the urge to press on the pedal.

The decision by Transports Quebec to use photo radar is not much of a surprise to anyone who has driven the identified areas planned for deployment. Personal experience on a couple of these routes tells me that speeding is often the norm, mitigated only by rush hours when the traffic barely moves at all.

What I do find curious is that the Ministry has made public the locations

where it is using, or is planning to use photo radar. So, even if you didn't read the press release, a visit to the Transports Quebec Web site will point out many of the fixed locations.

Additionally, there will be roadside signs indicating where photo radar is in use. So, with all that information, if your only worry is getting caught, you need only be concerned with a few of the mobile units or regular radar traps.

Now, I do understand that having fixed locations made public could have the desired effect of getting drivers to more closely observe speed limits in those locations. However, it's possible that those same drivers are just as likely to feel they can speed with near impunity elsewhere.

Since any tickets issued as the result of an infraction captured by photo radar will go to the owner of the vehicle, Quebec has included an interesting twist in the law.

The twist is that if the owner was not the driver at the time, he or she has a specified length of time to get the actual driver to own up.

That's not a bad way to handle those situations where a vehicle has been lent to someone. It could lead to some interesting dinner table conversation if, say a son or daughter were the driver of the family car. But as Marc Cadioux of the Quebec Trucking Association points out, it could cause grief for carriers who have their trucks shared among a number of different drivers.

Affected carriers will have to be quick off the mark to identify the driver, get his or her admission, and file the paperwork if they don't want to be stuck with the penalties. And figuring out who the driver was, and then tracking that driver down to elicit a confession could be a time consuming process.

The use of photo radar could of course help offset the ineffectiveness of speed limiters (set at 105 km/h) in curbing speeds in reduced speed zones such as construction sites, school areas, and secondary roads (but please, let's not open that old sore up again). It could also help address the issue of a shortage of resources to otherwise enforce speed limits, a common complaint among enforcement groups.

It will be interesting to see how the Quebec populace reacts to the expanded use of photo radar. It didn't last long in Ontario but then again, perhaps Quebec's politicians, like those of the other jurisdictions using it have more resolve. □

- 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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11,794-14,968 kg. (26,001-33,000 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
8,846-11,793 kg. (19,501-26,000 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
4,536-8,845 kg. (10,000-19,500 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Under 4,536 kg. (10,000 lbs.).....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

4) This location operates, controls or administers:

Diesel powered vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Refrigerated vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Pickups or Utility Vans.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Propane powered vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

5) Do you operate maintenance facilities at this location? .....  YES  NO  
IF YES, do you employ mechanics?.....  YES  NO

6) Indicate your PRIMARY type of business by checking ONLY ONE of the following:

a) <input type="checkbox"/> For Hire/Contract Trucking (hauling for others)
b) <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/Rental
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d) <input type="checkbox"/> Farming
e) <input type="checkbox"/> Government (Fed., Prov., Local)
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h) <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum / Dry Bulk / Chemicals / Tank
i) <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing / Processing
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**SAFETY**

# Carrier report cards deserve some added attention

Fleets can learn a lot from the report cards that emerge through carrier safety rating systems. The underlying data can be used to track everything from how well a business complies with regulations, to trends in mechanical problems that are spotted during roadside inspections.

A focus on the grades may also be more important than ever before.

Everyone from government auditors to customers are basing decisions on the results from programs like the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) system and provincial profiles. Fleets with conditional safety ratings or shortcomings in one of CSA's seven measured categories have been blocked from selected bidding processes. Legal teams are certainly eager to use a poor score as "Exhibit A" in their lawsuits after a collision. Savvy drivers could even use the publicly available numbers to decide whether to apply for a job. After all, a poor rating could predict unwanted delays or an increase in targeted roadside inspections.

With a growing number of people digging into the data, fleets have a vested interest in ensuring the reports are as accurate as possible.

Fleets have adopted a number of different strategies to keep on top of their respective numbers, whether the information comes through a free CSA report or on a replacement profile. Staff members are of-



## Ask the Expert

KEVIN COLE

ten assigned the role of tracking the results on a regular basis, and cross-checking any supplied information with internal data such as reports from drivers and the results of fleet investigations. In general, the process involves reviewing reports of collisions, convictions against the driver or carrier, and mechanical inspections. But something as basic as a difference in the size of the fleet or the number of kilometres travelled can also affect overall violation rates.

Managers are also exploring ways to avoid any unwanted surprises. Drivers, for example, are often asked to report any interactions with police or Department of Transportation personnel as soon as they happen.

It is not just a matter of reporting the bad news. Every clean inspection can play a role in improving scores, affecting how quickly a business approaches an unwanted threshold. This is why some fleets are paying bonuses to their drivers who supply clean inspection reports, such as \$50 for a clean Level 1 inspection of a vehicle and driver, and \$25 for a clean Level 2 or 3.

These good news stories can help

to reduce violation rates, but they also encourage the thorough pre-trip inspections that can reduce the cost of roadside breakdowns.

There is value in sharing the wider safety ratings with staff as well. Improving scores validate safety programs, improve morale, and enforce a company's broader safety culture. Besides that, the data is already publicly available to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.

The emerging insight even predicts future threats better than tracking high-cost events on their own. One driver who is moving too fast for winter conditions may lose control, cross the ditch and remain upright. Another driver in the same situation may cross the ditch and hit an oncoming vehicle. The underlying challenge is the same. The only thing that changes is the severity of the collision.

Once a report's data is confirmed, fleets can use it in a proactive way to target any shortcomings, adopting a clear action plan, setting benchmarks, and monitoring the related results to see if strategies are making the expected difference.

But the action plans themselves will always be unique to each challenge. Climbing out-of-service rates may require a change in maintenance programs or service intervals; an increase in logbook violations might lead to hard-coded logbook sheets to eliminate form and manner vio-

lations, or even shifts in dispatching procedures. If a large share of collisions can be traced to drivers who are changing lanes, there may be a need to offer added training in defensive driving or adjusting mirrors.

The one thing effective action plans share in common is that everyone – from operations teams to safety departments, salespeople, drivers and mechanics – has a role to play in any lasting solutions. Issues with something like hours-of-service, for example, can require a combination of driver training, trip planning, and customer contracts that reflect more reasonable demands.

The process never actually ends. But those who keep a close eye on results, and set related goals every year, will be in the best position to identify the root cause of any challenges and track the related improvements.

That approach is bound to earn a good grade. □

*– This month's expert is Kevin Cole, risk services specialist. Kevin has served the trucking industry for more than 25 years providing loss control and risk management services to the trucking industry. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a long standing history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at [www.nbfc.com](http://www.nbfc.com).*



Handwritten signatures: Doug, Kimberly, Adam, Rob, Michael, Don, Kathy, Carolyn, Bentley, Jeff, Bradley, Lou

# Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator Collision Course

By Edo van Belkom

## THE STORY SO FAR...

Mark is driving along Steeles Avenue in Brampton with a clear road ahead of him. Suddenly a car pulls in front of him and slams on the brakes. Mark rear-ends the car and five people get out, all injured. Mark calls Bud for some advice about what to do.

Mark video records the damage to both vehicles and the injuries to the people involved. A bystander suggests a mechanic to Mark, but Mark has his own, thanks. The police and ambulance arrive, taking two passengers to hospital and issuing Mark a ticket...

Several days later, after Mark was finished with the job moving the warehouse from Toronto to Brampton, he was contacted by a claims adjuster from his insurance company.

When he realized who was calling, and that he'd be on the phone for a while, Mark pulled over and shut down his truck, giving all of his time and attention to the man on the phone.

"What do you need to contact me for?" he asked. "I didn't make a claim on my truck. You know as well as anyone that the deductible's too high to make it worth my while. It's cheaper for me if I get it fixed myself."

"I can appreciate that, Mr. Dalton, but I'd like to talk to you about the accident in general. You know...what happened. Your side. Their side. The damage and injuries to everyone involved."

"I wasn't injured."

"We're all grateful for that, believe me. But I understand that the people in the car suffered some serious injuries."

"Serious injuries?" Mark said. "Everyone got out of the car on their own and were walking around right after the accident."

"Well, that's not what their doctors are saying. A couple of people suffered broken bones, as well as significant back and neck injuries."

"Nobody broke a bone."

"Even though you're not a doctor, I appreciate your opinion and I'm making a note of it. In fact, it supports our belief that the accident might have been staged."

"Might have been staged?" Mark said, trying not to sound sarcastic but failing miserably. "No kidding."

"Yes. But in order to be certain we need proof, and that's where we were hoping you might be able to help."

"Well, I might be in luck."

"How's that?"

"After the accident I used my cell phone to take video of the driver and four passengers."

"Four passengers?"

"Yeah, there was a driver and four people in the car. Two up front and three in the back. Five altogether."

"That's a great start, Mr. Dalton, considering we have claims from the driver and five passengers." The tone of the man's voice seemed to brighten. "I'm even more anxious now to see this video of yours."

"I'll e-mail it to you," Mark said.

"That would be great. It would really be a big help."

"So, I get the feeling what happened to me is pretty common?"

"Very much so. In fact the type of accident you were involved in is so common it has its own name – the 'Swoop and Squat.' That's where a car will pull out in front of an unsuspecting driver and suddenly slam on its brakes...usually for no reason, but sometimes because a decoy car that's in on the scam pulls out in front of it, forcing it to make an abrupt stop."

"There was nothing in front of that car but clear road."

"Yeah, they're getting a lot more brazen, paying less and less attention to the details. It's an easy one to pull off, especially when the police always issue a ticket to the person who does the rear-ending, putting them at fault. That's one of the reasons why this kind of scam is so prevalent."

"There are others?"

"A few. Another one is the 'Drive Down' where a driver will wave you ahead, then cut in front of you so that you hit their car, usually on the front fender or driver's door."

Mark sighed.

"Then there's the sideswipe, where a driver will swerve into your lane on a double-lane left hand turn, then claim you drifted over into their lane."

"They've thought of everything, eh?"

"Finally there's the 'Shady Helper' scam where someone who's witnessed the accident steps forward and suggests a repair shop they know of that does good work for cheap prices. Then once the car's in the shop they gouge the insurance company for all kinds of bogus work."

Mark thought about that. "You know," he said, "someone did come to me right after the accident and suggest a mechanic they knew. I told him thanks, but I had my own mechanic."

"That's good for you. These repair shops really know how to work the system. They'll sometimes even charge the

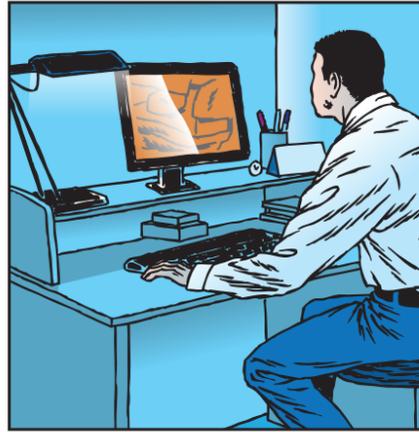


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

vehicle owners money for extra repairs they say are needed but aren't covered by a person's insurance. It ends up costing everyone a bundle in the end."

"This all sounds pretty organized."

"Believe me, it ends up costing the insurance industry billions each year. But it's not a victimless crime because the extra costs of all these settlements get passed down to the consumer who pays more for their insurance coverage."

"The little guy always pays in the end, doesn't he?"

"Unfortunately, yes."

"So my video will help you nail these guys?"

"Absolutely. In fact, you did just about everything you could after the accident to protect yourself...write down everyone's information, take pictures, count the number of people involved, and note how people act before and after the police and EMS arrive."

Mark smiled at that. Mark Dalton was nobody's fool.

"With the video," he continued, "at least we'll have the proof we need to deny most of their medical claims. Hopefully, once they know we have a video of the accident scene, they'll back off and we can close out the claim."

"Hopefully?"

He could hear the insurance man sighing over the phone.

"Unfortunately, it's just as hard to prove there is no soft-tissue damage, as it is to prove there is. We can provide all the proof in the world, but they can still claim to have injuries. At least with the video we can dismiss the claim of the person who wasn't at the accident outright...and that'll make it that much harder for the rest of them to prove their case."

"Then I'll e-mail the video to you

right away."

"That would be terrific. Thank you so much."

"Just do me one favour," Mark said.

"What's that?"

"Remember this when it comes time to raise my insurance rates."

A slight laugh. "That's a different department, but I'll try and pass along the information."

"I'd appreciate that."

Mark hung up the phone, clenching it in his fist for several seconds. Even though he'd done all he could to protect himself, he still couldn't shake the feeling that he'd been played...taken advantage off.

It was a strange feeling for Mark, and for a moment he wished that he had missed the brakes and plowed right through that car.

But the moment passed.

And he remembered the advice Bud had given to him just moments after the accident happened: Put it behind you, deliver your load, and get on with your life. Basically, keep on trucking.

Mark turned the ignition and Mother Load's Cummins roared to life. Then he shifted her into first, and got back to work. □

– Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Collision Course.

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](http://fleetsmart.gc.ca). Both are also available in audio book format.



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**MILTON, Ont.** – Walmart Canada has raised eyebrows with the introduction of its “supercube” trailer which increases capacity almost 30% and extends the length of a dry van from 53-ft. to 60.5-ft. Ontario’s Ministry of Transportation has issued special permits for four trailers and two tractors. Although the program is still in its pilot stage, this innovative design could change the nature of trucking in Ontario and beyond. *Truck News* went to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Milton to ask drivers their opinion of the new “supercube” design.



**Ron Cousins**



**Ron Cousins** drives for Bestway Cartage of Mississauga, Ont. He suggests that most drivers can’t handle 53-ft. trailers, let alone 60-footers.

“You watch some of these guys driving today running over curbs while going around corners and this is seven feet longer. There’s also more responsibility that goes with the extra length. I didn’t like 53s when they brought them in because they didn’t pay us any more, and the same thing will happen with these. What are they willing to pay, three cents more per mile?”

**Eric Bernard** is a newly-minted tractor-trailer driver with Bourassa Transport out of St-Jean-de-Riche-



**Eric Bernard**

lieu, Que. He’s excited by this new configuration and can’t wait to pull one.

“It looks very long to me. But the industry has to try something like this. I’m new to the job but I want to try driving all this stuff includ-

ing long trains (LCVs). I’ve only been driving five months but I don’t have a problem with a 53-ft. trailer. For sure I want to try this. And if Walmart is saving money shipping this way then they should also pay the drivers more.”



**George McGee**

**George McGee**, a veteran driver with Highland Transport out of Markham Ont., sees interesting possibilities with the supercube idea.

“This might be alright if we can keep it in Canada, I don’t know what they’re going to do south of the border and east of the Mississippi. But if they’re going in and out of Walmarts in these giant malls, and if they keep them on certain routes, I think it will work out alright. I’d pull them, probably for a nickel more a mile. This wouldn’t be bad, guys will get used to them. We all know aerodynamics is important and this kind of thing is the future.”



**Dan Trojan**

**Dan Trojan**, a driver for Canamex-Cabra Transport Services in Brampton, Ont., is cautiously optimistic about Walmart’s initiative. “It looks pretty,” he says, “but what they’re doing is making one guy do more work. My concern isn’t about the size of the truck, it’s about the driver is going to get compensated. The problem is that Walmart will probably want to pay carriers the same rate as for a 53-ft. trailer and as a result, the driver won’t be paid much more,” he says.

“Governmental agencies have to look at the situation and how these trailers operate and put in regulations to control them. I can see this working out for companies and drivers if everyone gets a fair share of the pie.”

**Ron Davis**, a company driver for Stewart’s Transfer of Perth, N.B., thinks that the highways aren’t ready for 60-ft. trailers. “About a year ago we heard rumours about 57-ft. trailers coming into the industry, but I don’t think we’re ready for 60 feet yet. It’s too much for the highway in my opinion,” he says.

“Where are you going to put something like that in a truck stop? The infrastructure isn’t ready for it and neither is the public. I’ve hauled B-trains and enjoyed the work, but it’s hard enough to get a 53-ft. trailer into some places. Even getting into some Walmarts can be difficult. I don’t know how you get something that long turned around without ripping everything to pieces.” □

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