

# TRUCK NEWS

August 2013 Volume 33, Issue 8

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

Our  
Charity  
Tournament  
Page 30-31

## Tired of waiting?

Long-awaited North American Fatigue Management Program goes live online.

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – The highly anticipated North American Fatigue Management Program (NAFMP), developed over nearly a decade, was rolled out to industry July 10.

The Web site is now available at [www.nafmp.com](http://www.nafmp.com) ([www.pnagf.com](http://www.pnagf.com) for the French version).

The program will help truck fleets and drivers better understand and manage fatigue. It will include 10 learning modules, with voice narration, graphics and a learning management system. The modules will cover: recognizing fatigue; health and wellness; medical screening for sleep disorders; scheduling; and fatigue detection technologies.

The modules can be used by fleet owners, safety managers, executives as well as drivers and their families.

The site will also include a business case and return on investment calculator, so fleets can determine how implementing the NAFMP will benefit their business.

An implementation manual will also be available, allowing carriers to easily deploy the program within their organization.

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**ALL LIT UP:** The small town of Tomah, Wisconsin was treated to a light show and fireworks display as part of the annual Shell Rotella SuperRigs show. The event attracted some of the most beautiful working trucks from the US and Canada.

## North America's finest working trucks put on a show at SuperRigs

**By James Menzies**  
**TOMAH, Wisc.** – The Shell Rotella SuperRigs show was held in Tomah, Wisconsin, June 20-22 bringing together some of the finest looking working trucks from the US and Canada.

About \$25,000 in prizes was up for grabs, as well as coveted spots in the annual SuperRigs calendar. Judging got underway Thursday,

June 20, and ran three hours past closing due to looming bad weather. Judges scored about 40 trucks on the first day of the show, and resumed the next morning after some heavy rains moved out. Mother Nature did its best to make truck owners work even harder to prepare their rigs for judging. Polishing them is difficult enough; keeping them shining through the judg-

ing process in a gravel parking lot amid heavy rains tested everyone's commitment. However, the passion these truckers brought to the event was not dampened by the spotty weather. This year's SuperRigs was held in conjunction with the Budweiser Super National Truck and Tractor Pull.

Nearly 100 trucks attended, and

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## Powering your other fleet

We test the towing capability of the new GMC Sierra.



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- **Yardwork:** The natural gas craze is spreading to include shunt trucks. We find out why, and explore other innovations in the world of yard tractors. Page 48
- **On the block:** Are you thinking about selling your business? Don't put it up for sale till you've read this advice from one of Canada's leading M&A negotiators. Page 52
- **Inside the Pickles' Pete:** We tour what could be Canada's largest, most luxurious road-legal sleeper cab. Page 54
- **The Blame Game:** Four-wheel traffic makes what should be a simple delivery, anything but. Page 60

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# Understanding driver fatigue

You may not yet realize it, but July 10 marked an important day in Canadian trucking history. The otherwise ordinary day marked the long-awaited launch of the North American Fatigue Management Program (NAFMP).

I remember hearing Roger Clarke – then of Alberta Transportation, but since retired, to give you an idea of how long this program was in the making – discuss this program 10 years ago at what was either an Alberta Trucking Association or Alberta Truck Safety Association event. Yes, this program even pre-dated the formation of the Alberta Motor Transport Association, which brought together the two organizations. Back then, very few people were talking about driver fatigue. Nobody had even heard of sleep apnea. A different set of hours-of-service rules governed our industry. Yet, even then, a small group of organizations and individuals were acutely aware of the effects fatigue has on commercial drivers and were working to develop a program that would increase awareness about fatigue, its causes and how to effectively manage it.

Over the past decade, I'd hear about this program on occasion, and wonder if it would ever see the light of day. Talk of the NAFMP picked up early this year and then, without a lot of fan-



fare, the program was finally released to the industry July 10, in the form of a Web site containing vast amounts of information about fatigue management. More specifically, you will find at [www.nafmp.com](http://www.nafmp.com) a series of 10 learning modules designed for fleet executives, safety managers, drivers and even their families. I want to address this latter point for just a minute.

Too often in this industry, we focus all our training initiatives on the driver, without considering the important role their families have to play. This is especially true when it comes to fatigue. Driving can be a grueling job and home time so limited, that often drivers are under as much pressure to be productive at home as they are while on the road.

Who hasn't returned home after a long trip, feeling run down, only to be greeted by a warm embrace and a kiss and then handed the dreaded honey-do list? What long-haul driver hasn't spent a full weekend catching up with family, only to head back out on the

road feeling more fatigued than when they arrived home?

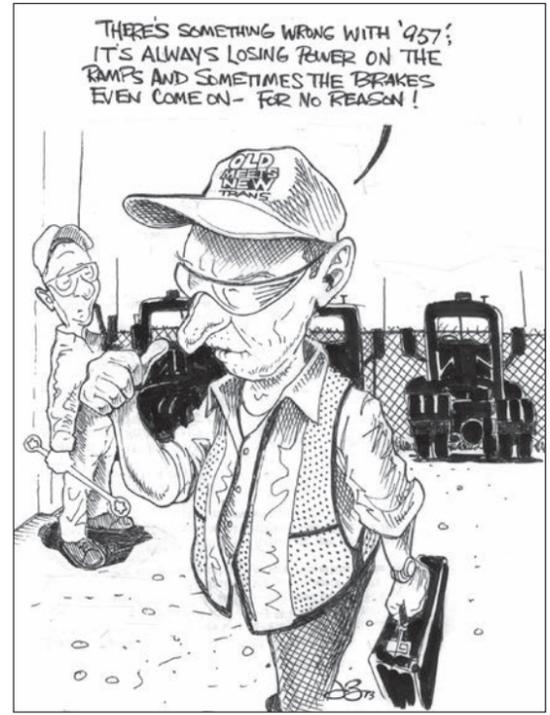
I once heard a heart-wrenching story of a young grandfather who would head out Sunday nights, and one weekend before doing so spent all day Sunday when he would normally be resting, playing with his grandchildren. He only made it a few hundred kilometres that Sunday night before falling asleep at the wheel and losing his life. It breaks my heart to think that in the back of his mind, this driver was likely acutely aware that he should be sleeping, but didn't want to disappoint his grandkids.

It is vitally important that drivers' families are educated on fatigue and come to understand the rest requirements of their loved ones. The new NAFMP includes an entire section just for driver spouses and families. You can make the argument that no fatigue management program is complete, unless it addresses home time. Fatigue is an incredibly complex subject. We have all, at one time or another, dealt with fatigue in our own, ineffective ways. Who hasn't rolled down the windows and cranked the stereo and driven on?

At the recent Private Motor Truck Council of Canada conference, I was struck by a comment from Transport Cana-

da researcher Pierre Thiffault, who said: "We try to defy fatigue with effort, and that's a very dangerous thing to do." Been there. Now, for the first time, there's a comprehensive learning centre on driver fatigue. Let's put it to good use. □

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# Playing a dangerous game

Quarterly turnover at large US truckload fleets rose to an annualized rate of 97% during the first quarter, according to the latest American Trucking Associations' Trucking Activity Report. Smaller truckload fleets were slightly "better off" with a turnover rate of 82%.

After more than 20 years of reading such numbers, it still never ceases to amaze me how so many in our industry have come to accept them as the norm; part of the cost of doing business in trucking.

Now I know that LTL turnover rates are much lower; Canadian turnover rates for either LTL or TL are not as high as those experienced in the US, and actually showed improvement just before the recession. But the reality is that drivers remain a precious commodity which the industry by and large has yet to figure out how to retain. More than two-



thirds of driver turnover is attributable to drivers quitting their jobs.

The many letters to the editor we receive from drivers usually point to low pay as a main reason for quitting. Before the recession, when fleets had several years of rising rates to bolster their finances, domestic and international long-haul drivers were earning between \$40,943 and \$69,640 annually with the average salary being \$55,797. Almost every major fleet executive I speak to these days, talks about the need to do boost driver pay. But with rate increases being as meager as they have been during this slow

recovery, how much flexibility do fleets really have to address driver pay in a meaningful way?

I don't have the solution myself and I've yet to hear a good answer from anyone else. But I do know the industry is running out of time to figure it out. That's because the driver pool has developed far too many leaks.

Consider that data from the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that the average truck driver age is now 46 years. Only 8.5% of drivers are in the 30-34 age group and only 8.8% are in the 20-29 age group. Meanwhile, drivers aged 55 and older make up more than a quarter of the driver pool and the number of drivers aged 65 and up is on the rise.

As Vijay Gill, principal research associate at the Conference Board of Canada points out: for the trucking industry, more than in others, 'new' sources of labour are delayed retirements. Which is nothing more

than a "bandage solution."

As an industry we can continue to recruit 40-year-olds rather than 25-year-olds. We can continue to live with high turnover rates as a cost to doing business. But sooner rather than later the numbers will catch up with this game and it won't be pretty. Every 40-year-old potentially has 25 years of driving left, whereas a 25-year-old potentially has 40 years. In the long run then, for every 25-year-old that the industry does not recruit, it will have to recruit close to two 40-year-olds. And retain them.

Forty-year-olds bring the advantage of experience and maturity to their driving careers. But they expect better pay and are less willing to put up with nonsense. □

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## Did you know?

### Motor carrier plans to invest in new trucks

A slow growing economy, meager rate increases, high equipment prices combined with concerns over engine technology issues and fears about a deepening driver shortage have kept many Canadian motor carriers from investing in new Class 8 trucks over the past couple of years. Our latest *Annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey* of the buying habits and preferences of motor carriers and O/Os across the country shows that a third of the fleet trucks on the road today over 10 years old. Another 40% are between six and nine years old. Less than a quarter of Canadian carriers are replacing vehicles on the four-

and five-year cycles the industry became accustomed to during the past decade.

Older vehicles, however, can cost significantly more to maintain past a certain point. (Data from the American Trucking Associations shows that on average maintenance costs triple once a truck goes past the 550,000 mile mark).

Our survey, completed at the end of June, found that two-thirds of Canadian carriers plan to replace at least a tenth of their fleet by the end of this year. The vast majority expect to replace a tenth of their fleet but almost 10% are planning for major purchase

investments with 30% or more of their trucks to be replaced. In comparison, slightly fewer (63%) of carriers had planned replacements for their fleet by the end of 2012. □

PLANNED CLASS 8 FLEET REPLACEMENTS

Portion of fleet to be replaced	% of respondents
10% of fleet	42% of respondents
20% of fleet	15% of respondents
30% of fleet	4% of respondents
40% of fleet or more	5% of respondents

AGE OF CANADIAN CLASS 8 FLEET

Number of years	% of respondents
10 years or more	33% of respondents
8-9 years	13% of respondents
7 years	14% of respondents
6 years	13% of respondents
5 years	17% of respondents
4 years	7% of respondents
3 years or less	4% of respondents

# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

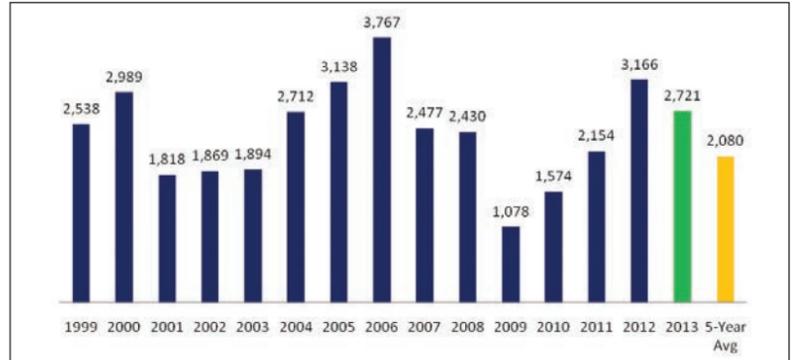
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April's strong performance, which outdistanced truck sales totals from the previous year – the first time in six months that had occurred – did not carry into May. Although May was a solid month with sales of 2,721 Class 8 trucks in the Canadian market and almost 700 above the five-year average, it still fell more than 400 below the previous year's total. This was the fourth best May sales posting since 1999. Every truck manufacturer, with the exception of Western Star and Volvo, posted a decline in their monthly sales totals compared to the previous year.

### Monthly Class 8 Sales – May 13

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	660	717
International	361	432
Kenworth	452	740
Mack	225	249
Peterbilt	394	422
Volvo	378	360
Western Star	251	246
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2721</b>	<b>3166</b>

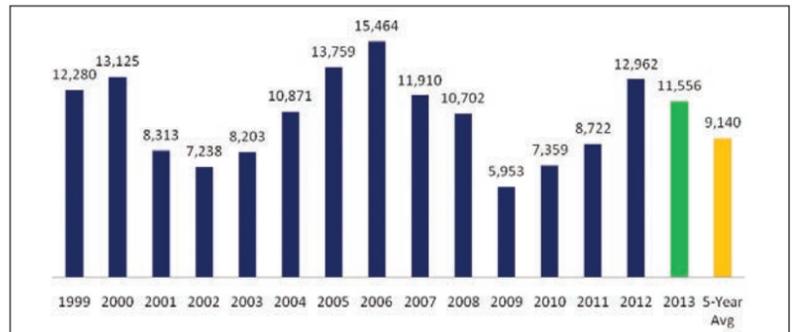
### Historical Comparison – May 13 Sales



### Class 8 Sales (YTD May 13) by Province and OEM

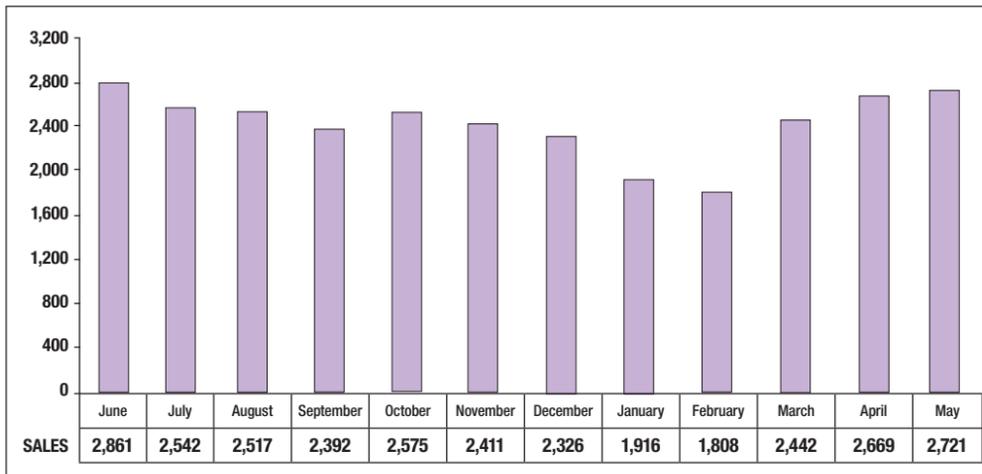
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	250	377	89	166	1,367	538	138	53	5	12	2,995
Kenworth	402	764	189	49	327	393	60	0	0	0	2,184
Mack	70	153	64	34	309	139	30	32	0	5	836
International	62	319	27	61	677	396	47	14	16	18	1,637
Peterbilt	234	554	122	112	209	293	59	34	0	0	1,617
Volvo	142	86	63	91	547	316	62	32	0	2	1,341
Western Star	150	317	32	20	158	182	23	47	4	13	946
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,310</b>	<b>2,570</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>3,594</b>	<b>2,257</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11,556</b>

### Historical Comparison – YTD May 13



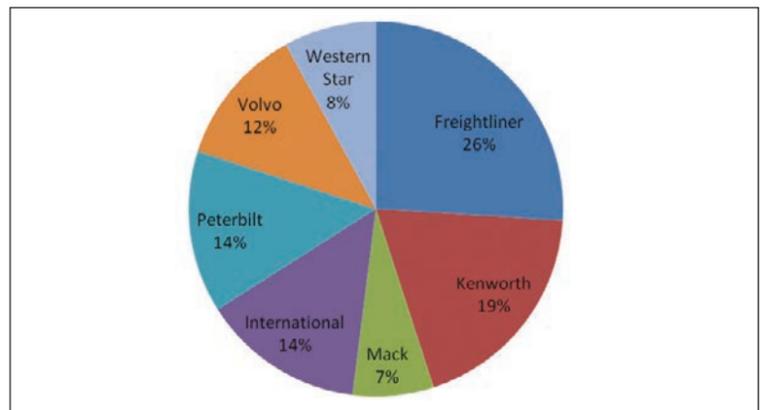
With sales YTD of 11,556 Class 8 trucks, 2013 is now about 1,400 units behind last year's pace but also about 2,400 units above the five-year average. Assuming an 8-year life cycle for Class 8 trucks (a truck could go through several owners during this period), there are more than 35,000 trucks due for renewal in 2013. But reaching such a sales milestone this year is only likely if we have a strong second half, as was the case in 2011. Our revised estimate is for Class 8 sales to come in around 28,500 vehicles in 2013.

### 12-Month Sales Trends



Class 8 sales have come in above 2,000, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007, for three straight months now. They have also increased from month to month for three straight months, following a weak start to the year. The big question remains how well they will hold up over the summer months and whether they will pick up more steam heading into the final quarter of the year.

### Market Share Class 8 – May 13 YTD



Five months into the year and Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, remains in firm command of the market share lead with more than a quarter of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Kenworth finished 2012 in the number two spot for market share, its wide western network tapping into the stronger western economy. The company still sits in second place with 19% market share. Navistar International finished the year with 15% market share and is now in a dead heat with Peterbilt with a 14% share of the Canadian Class 8 market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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# TRUCK NEWS

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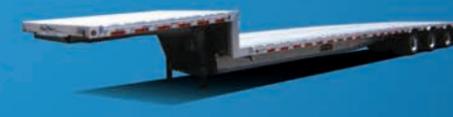
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**IN BRIEF**

**Drivers even older than we thought: Report**

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – In the wake of a recently released report which found the average age of truck drivers to be four years higher than that of the average worker, new data indicates that the average truckers' age is, in fact, even older. The former report, commissioned by the Conference Board of Canada (CBC) with analysis provided by the 2006 Census and the Labour Force Survey, found the average age of truck drivers to be 44 years versus 40 years for the average worker. New data from the 2011 National Household Survey indicates that the average truck driver age is actually 46 years, with the average workers' age also rising to 41.5 years.

In comparing the studies, in 2006,

the share of drivers in the 30 to 34 age range was 10%, the same as it was for the total labour force. In 2011, 8.5% of drivers found themselves in this age group. For the total labour force, there was a slight increase to 10.4%.

The number of drivers age 65 and up also increased, rising from 3% in 2006 to 4.4% in 2011.

For the total labour force, the share of this age cohort increased from 2.6% to 3.5%.

"This confirms that in the trucking industry, more than in others, 'new' sources of labour are delayed retirements – which is nothing more than a bandage solution," said Vijay Gill, principal research associate at the Conference Board of Canada. □

**Let's continue the conversation...**

Our Annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey, providing detailed information on the spec'ing habits and brand preferences for Canadian fleets and owner/operators is now completed and we thank all who participated for making it a success. Look for highlights in upcoming Inside the Numbers newsletters (available under Knowledge Centre at Trucknews.com). Editorial director Lou Smyrlis is also available to speak to the results at industry events.

Another major research project just completed is the Annual Shipper's Choice Awards Survey, produced by our sister publication *Canadian Transportation & Logistics*. The survey asks Canadian shippers to rate the performance of their top three transportation providers for each mode. The survey sets a "benchmark of service excellence" and identifies all carriers who score above it. Look for the results to be made public in September.

Editorial director Lou Smyrlis addressed the Bridgestone Annual Sales Conference in Toronto on industry trends. In September he travels to Halifax to moderate a key session at the Port of Halifax's annual Port Days conference. □

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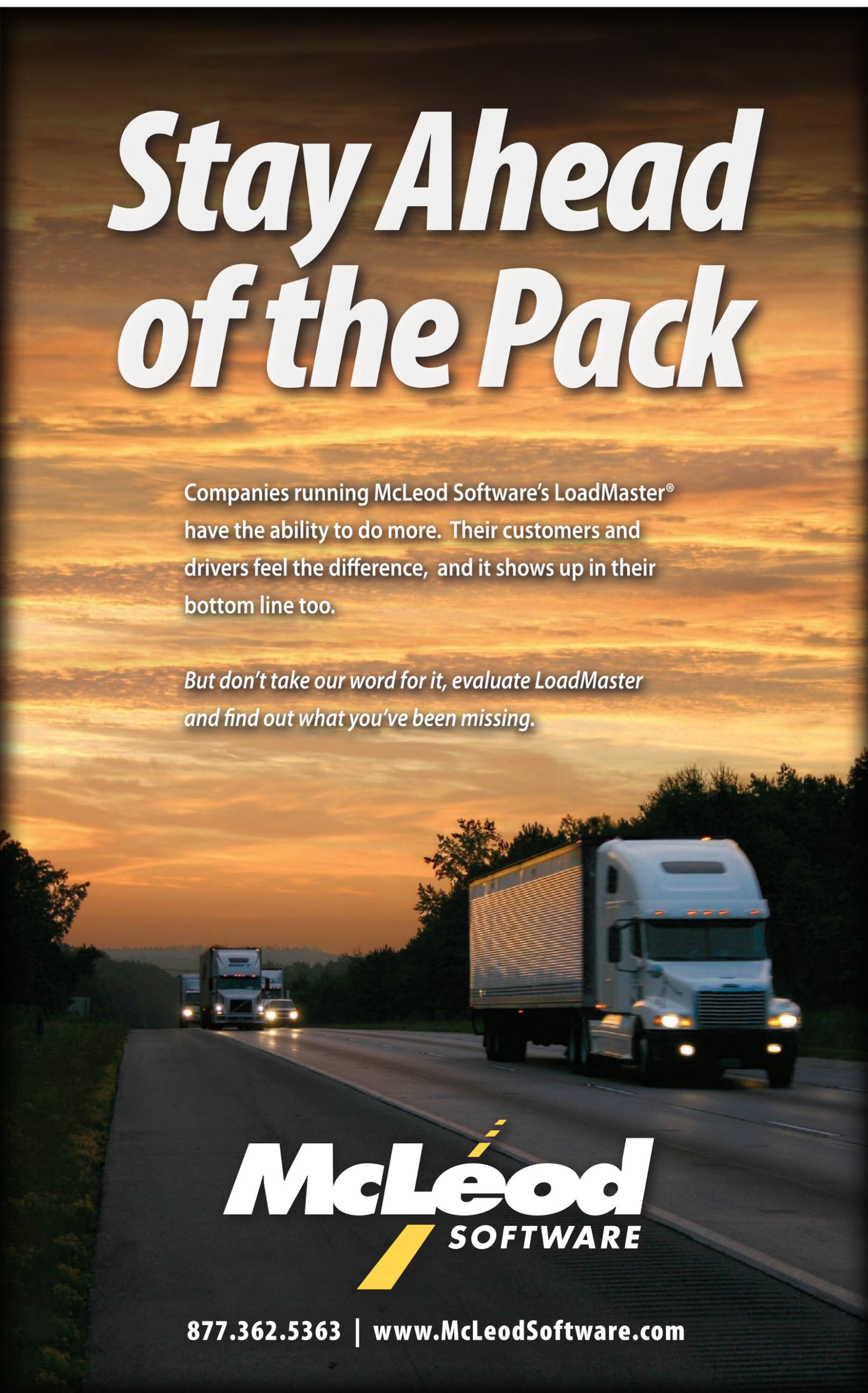


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## BORDER

# New US regulations could leave industry short a million drivers by 2016

By James Menzies

**BLOOMINGTON, Ind.** – An incoming regulatory tsunami could leave the American trucking industry in need of a million drivers by 2016, if all the new regulations currently being considered are implemented.

That startling assessment was made by Noel Perry, senior consultant with FTR Associates, during the industry forecaster's State of Freight webinar July 11.

The webinar focused predominantly on the impact of the new hours-of-service rules, which went into effect July 1. "The world is still spinning, that of course is the good news," Jonathan Starks, director of transportation analysis, said when kicking off the discussion. "But that doesn't mean things haven't changed."

He said weakening freight growth may have limited the impact of the new rules, which reduce the amount

of driving truckers can legally do. Specifically, the new rules require drivers to take a half-hour break within the first eight hours, include two overnight periods in their 34-hour reset, and use the reset provision only once in any seven-day period.

While much emphasis has centered on the time lost by drivers taking a mandatory, half-hour break, Perry said that provision's impact on productivity is debatable.

He said while the new rule reduces the maximum daily working time by 6%, or half an hour, "We think the effect will be very small. Very few people have a bladder big enough to drive 11 consecutive hours; they usually stop more than once. The only difference is, instead of stopping for a 15-minute break to go to the bathroom and get an ice cream cone, they'll have to stop for the full half-hour. In an 11-hour period, I think they would stop

to eat anyway, so this was a relatively small change."

The bigger hit to productivity will come in the form of the new 34-hour reset rules, Perry contended. He said they have the potential reduce industry productivity by up to 15% if all drivers were currently maxing out their weekly driving time, which isn't the case. Those facing the greatest loss of income will be fleets and drivers involved in long-haul transport where drivers are on the road for weeks at a time.

Still, the July 1 rule changes effectively created a need for 60,000 more drivers in the US, Perry estimated, prompting the question: "Can they hire enough people or are we going to have a shortage?"

Unlike in previous economic upturns, Perry said US trucking fleets have been more reticent to add capacity. Fleets are buying about half the

discretionary power units they were in 2004, he noted. This would suggest there could be some serious upward pressure on rates in the not-too-distant future.

Perry said the remainder of 2013 could bring pressure on capacity comparable to 2004, when rates spiked and remained high for more than a full year before abating.

"Once prices get that momentum, they tend to stay increased for a while even after the pressure goes away," Perry said. "If we have a major pricing event at the end of 2013 or in 2014, I expect it to last for two years."

The experts at FTR Associates had some tips for both carriers and shippers on how to deal with the coming labour crunch. For fleets, "This is the time to ramp up your recruiting efforts," said Perry. "And you want to be particularly solicitous of your drivers. If you're thinking about an increase in pay, this is probably the time. If you are thinking about the way you handle your drivers...this is the time to be particularly solicitous about time at home and other things that make for a happy workforce."

As for shippers, Perry said they should prepare for the possibility of higher rates and be working to drive waste out of the system.

"The first thing is, you've got to make sure you have the budget flexibility in case rates do go up. You would hate to be losing shipments because you don't have the right budget authorized. Two, be flexible about how you manage your docks to get truckers in and out quickly. This is not the time to send them away and ask them to come back in another four hours because they missed their appointment. They won't accept loads to shippers that hold them at the docks," Perry warned. "This is a great time to be thinking about cooperative programs with your core carriers to match, beforehand, the availability of equipment and loads."

As for any hope the industry had that the new rules would be overturned by the courts, Perry said it's looking like a pipe dream.

"In my opinion, if the court had intended to intervene in the case of hours-of-service, they most certainly would have done it before the rule was changed," he said. "That is underscored by the fact that during oral arguments of that case, the judges were uniformly negative to the people who were (challenging the new rules)."

Still, while all the attention lately has focused on the costs of the new HoS rules, Perry reminded FTR subscribers that there are many more changes to come, which could collectively prove to be a much heavier burden on productivity.

"Hours-of-service is a big change, but it's only one of many," he said. "We have to focus on what is happening in the marketplace immediately, but we can't lose track of the fact that there's a lot more to come from other regulatory changes."

He provided a list of more than 20 regulations that are at some point in the process of being introduced, and almost all would hamper the industry's productivity (increased sizes and weights being the only exception, if they ever come to be). □

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**QUEBEC**

# PIT celebrates the success of its fuel testing programs

**By Carroll McCormick**  
**BLAINVILLE, Que.** – As rigs zoomed around Transport Canada’s 6.4-km test track in Blainville, Que. this June 5, hundreds of people circulated inside a nearby test hangar, networking and soaking up details of fuel-saving technologies, electric vehicles, liquefied natural gas vehicles and, of course, the fifth birthday of the precocious testing group Performance Innovation Transport (PIT).

PIT is made up of scientists, technicians, trucking industry experts and administrators who run top-quality tests under tightly controlled conditions, to find out whether the promise of fuel-saving technologies translates into performance. It is a program of FPIInnovations, an independent Canadian forestry research institute.

The crucial achievement of PIT is the calibre of the science it does: Before PIT, trucking companies had a problem as they looked for ways to reduce fuel burn. They could take vendors at their word, or, for better or worse, take a swipe at testing the fuel-saving technologies themselves.

Truer words have never been spoken when Christopher Trajkovski, the vice-president of maintenance with Bison Transport, told the masses at the PIT party, “Having PIT do the testing frees us up to stick to our core competence, to make prudent capital decisions.”

FPIInnovations created PIT in 2008, but its story actually begins a year earlier. Two Quebec carriers, Robert and Cascades, wanted to test some aerodynamic accessories on the Blainville test track. Transport Canada granted their request, provided they let FPIInnovation, with its decades of expertise in testing technologies, design and run the trials.

Dubbed Energotest, the plan gained instant credibility because FPIInnovations chose to design and run the trials to conform to the SAE J1321 Joint TMC/SAE Fuel Consumption Test Procedure – Type II, Recommended Practice. A dozen equipment suppliers lined up and paid up to have their gear tested on Cascades and Robert rigs that October.

The participants at the trials quickly learned what it meant to play with real scientists: no cutting corners and no shrugging off any screw-ups. The SAE procedures were to be followed to the letter and suppliers were drawn to the rigour of the methodology.

“The trials give industry-wide validity to the tests,” said Andrew Smith, the CEO of Advanced Transit Dynamics in Solana Beach, Cal., which attended Energotest 2007 with its TrailerTail technology.

As part of the deal with Transport Canada, the Energotest 2007 results had to be made public. The industry learned, for example, that Michelin wide-base tires reduced fuel consumption by 7.2%, Laydon Composites side skirts improved fuel economy by 7.2% and ATDynamics’ TrailerTail reduced fuel burn by 5.1%. Transtex Composite brought in its BoatTail, which reaped fuel savings of 2.6%.

Other winners were Meca Form’s

truck fenders (1.4% improvement) and Passing Lane Distributors’ Liberator Exhaust System (1.1% improvement). Another test showed that leaving the back doors open on an empty, open-topped wood chip trailer improved mileage by 1.6%.

The tests were crazy successful and other fleets wanted in on the action. FPIInnovations created Project Innovation Transport (“Project” later became “Performance”) to bring trucking companies, suppliers, government agencies and later, municipalities together in an organized way to do technology testing, development and implementation. Their numbers have grown from just six fleet partners in 2008 to nearly 50 partners this year.

Since the partners largely underwrite the cost of each test campaign, PIT gradually adopted a “them who pays, gets the numbers” approach that eventually restricted Energotest results to the partners and suppliers who paid to have their wares tested.

From the early days PIT not only tested suppliers’ products, but also ideas proposed by its partners. In 2009, for instance, PIT tested transit buses. In 2010 PIT did stop-and-go urban duty driving cycles. In 2011 PIT tested a modified trailer to see if its reduced drag coefficient would translate into reduced fuel consumption. It also runs long-term tests; i.e., a year-and-a-half-long fuel use and capital cost comparison of hybrid trucks with conventional diesel trucks, the results of which were made public last year.

PIT has also been acquiring some high-end test equipment. A couple years ago it bought a portable emissions measuring system (PEMS) made by Horiba Ltd. This September, PIT will take delivery of a very rare, and very expensive towing dynamometer built by Taylor Dynamometer.

“This will let us simulate downhill, uphill, different weight loads, from zero to 200,000 lbs,” says Bernard Ouellet, leader of operations, PIT.

The Energotest trials occupy PIT for about two weeks a year, but it is a very busy year-round operation, says Ouellet.

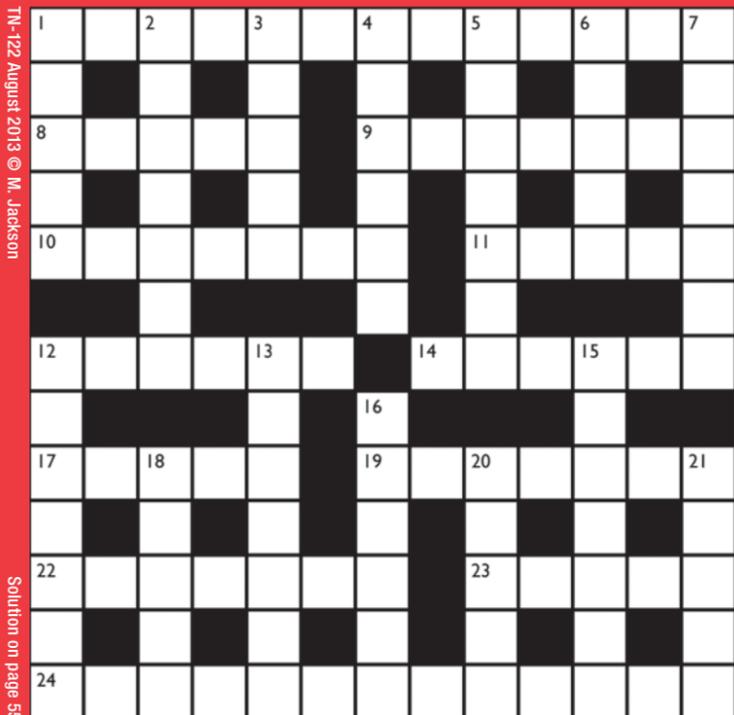
“If I talked to you about all the things we did in the other 48 weeks, it would fill all 12 of your editions.” Suffice to say that PIT’s partners deliver truckloads of project ideas to its doors. “Members decide what we do and base business decisions on our results,” Ouellet comments.

Since 2007 PIT has been gaining increasing respect from fleets, some of which are telling vendors they will only consider PIT-tested products, and agencies, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency.

On the flip side, test result letters from PIT also benefit vendors. At the PIT party, Guy Lemieux, an authorized Quebec distributor for Cerma Advanced Lubrication Technology, showed me a letter from PIT based on a 2011 Energotest, in which Cerma reduced fuel consumption by 2.1%. Considering the cost of a small bottle of this product, his letter is a key sales aid.

While the suits mingled at the PIT party, the PIT team wrapped up an-

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other Energotest. Over the course of nine days it compared the fuel consumption of two 2013 Volvo VNLs, one delivering power to both drive axles, the other delivering power to just one drive axle. It tested several power/axle configurations on three

2012 Kenworth T660s, and did traction tests. It tested trailer skirts, underbelly products and ran some in-house tests.

“We tested many things,” Ouellet says. PIT’s status and respect continues

to grow; it is telling that for this year’s Energotest the truck component manufacturer Hendrickson hired PIT to test some trailer configurations and Shell Canada hired PIT to run summer-long trials of a new fuel it wants to put on the North American mar-

ket. “To attract the OEMs is something very big to achieve,” says Ouellet. “To attract them to a third-party company that is just five years old is good. The OEMs are trusting us to do things. Imagine how much our members trust us.” □



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**QUEBEC**



**INVESTING IN THE SHOP:** Modifying a maintenance bay for LNG trucks may cost between \$25,000 and \$40,000. *Photo by Carroll McCormick*

**LNG trucks bring big savings, but costs too**

**By Carroll McCormick**  
**BOUCHERVILLE, Que.** – As questions arise and numbers swirl about the costs associated with owning and operating liquefied natural gas-powered (LNG) trucks, we are learning more from early adopters in Quebec about what to expect.

A Peterbilt equipped with the 15-litre Westport LNG engine will cost about \$100,000 more than the equivalent diesel truck. Twin 119-gallon cryogenic tanks will account for \$60,000 of this cost, according to Yves Maurais, technical director, asset management, purchasing and conformity, Robert Transport.

The upside is that LNG costs about 50 cents less per litre than diesel and Robert obviously expects to come out on top as it steams into the second half of its program to purchase 180 LNG rigs; it currently owns 125 LNG trucks.

Carriers will ask about the cost of installing LNG safety systems in their garages. Depending on the size and age of their garage it could cost \$25,000 to \$40,000 to modify one long truck bay, or as much as \$100,000 to modify a garage that holds 15-20 trucks, according to Maurais. The price range reflects different possibilities for modifications; i.e., some setups provide more frequent air exchanges.

Given its large and growing LNG fleet, Robert chose to modify its garages in Boucherville, Quebec City, Megantic, Rougemont and Mississauga. Touring one of its Boucherville bays, the modifications are subtle. There are two methane detectors, vents in the roof, exhaust lines for drawing off any natural gas escaping through the vent stacks, a control panel and big red panic button.

Not visible are the new non-sparking door motors and insulated, Code 2 lights, automatic emergency systems that whip open the bay doors or even shut down the lights and power, depending on the size of a gas leak, or the pilot lights for the natural gas heating system that have been relocated to outside the building.

A new LNG truck owner, however, need not hurry to slap down bucks for garage modifications. St-Romuald, Que.-based Transport Y.N.-Gonthier has two LNG trucks, but other than doing its own greasing and oil changes, it is leaving all the mechanical work to Transdiff Peterbilt de Quebec. "We have not modified our garage

for LNG work but we may do it later this year or next year," says Yvan Gonthier, co-owner, Y.N.-Gonthier.

Another dealership, Camions Excellence Peterbilt also has fa-  
**Continued on page 14**



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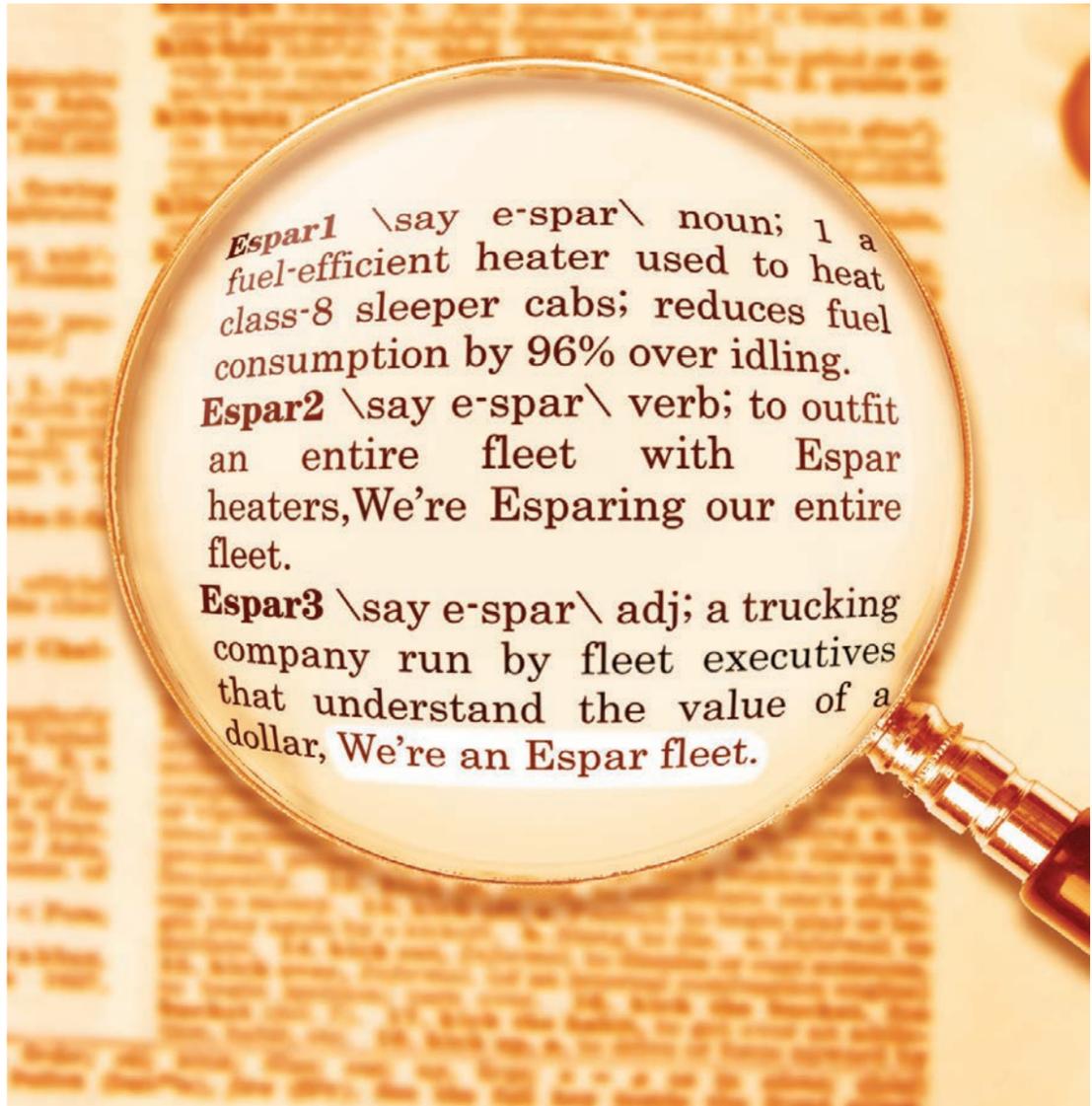
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**QUEBEC**

## Savings outweigh the costs, early LNG adopters find

**Continued from page 13**  
ilities modified to service LNG trucks; in fact, it does the warranty work on Robert's LNG fleet. It has 19 modified bays in Sainte-Julie, 16 more in Laval and will soon have bays ready in Drummondville. Excellence also has two certified mobile units, 20 mechanics between its Laval and Sainte-Julie shops and a parts inventory for the Westport LNG engines.

Speaking of parts inventory, it has been written that this is an expensive proposition. Not so, says Maurais. "We don't stock spares. Excellence does. There is no issue getting spares. While the trucks are under warranty we are only stocking maintenance and wear parts."

Maintenance costs have not been an issue for Robert either. "In our case we do the same maintenance as a standard diesel truck. After the first 50,000 kilometres we do a full inspection. After that we do an oil change every 40,000 to 50,000 kilometres. We change the fuel filter every 100,000 kilometres."

Robert will find out this summer whether it will be able to extend its oil change intervals. "We are looking at oil analyses of our first LNG trucks, which have logged 300,000 to 400,000 kilometres already," Maurais says.

The fairly low, 150-200 psi pressure of LNG tanks means that inspections are no big deal, Maurais says. "We will inspect the tanks every 500,000 kilometres. Basically we will do a leak inspection, inspect the hydraulic pump and test the insulation performance of the vacuum. For that you hook up a sensor to a port. It is not a time-consuming or difficult task. It may take a day."

As for any mechanical headaches associated with LNG technology, Maurais sums up the situation thusly: "We haven't had major issues with the engines or their components. We have had some issues on two or three trucks, but we are in a preventative campaign in which Westport is coming in and changing the (offending) parts in all the trucks."

Readers might ask, "What about the grumblings I've heard about weight penalties, fuelling times and special clothing?" Robert's drivers have been fuelling their trucks to beat the band and Maurais reports that no one is squawking.

"We ask drivers to wear visors, gloves, long pants and long sleeves. Fuelling takes about the same time as for diesel."

There is a weight limit issue. Specifically, the LNG system adds 1,200 lbs to the tractor, compared to diesel. "Most of that weight is on the front axle," Maurais explains. "The US front axle limit is 12,000 lbs, so we can't drive LNG trucks in the US, since the weight on the LNG truck steer axles is 12,300 lbs. But cargo weight has not been an issue so far. Usually these trucks are pulling three- to four-axle trailers and B-trains, so there is usually lots of room for weight." □



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## ONTARIO

# IHSA urges trucking industry to embrace health and safety through education

By Julia Kuzeljevich

**KING CITY, Ont.** – Every day in Ontario, someone wakes up for work and does not come home for dinner because he or she has sustained a critical injury or has succumbed to a fatal injury.

“The overwhelming majority of those injuries are preventable,” said Ken Rayner, vice-president, business development and labour relations, with the Ontario Infrastructure Health and Safety Association.

The IHSA is a not-for-profit organization marketing the concept of additional health and safety support in the workplace. Rayner spoke about the organization’s goals during the June annual general meeting of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada.

The IHSA was formed in January 2010 by amalgamating the Con-

struction Safety Association of Ontario (CSAO), the Electrical & Utilities Safety Association of Ontario (E&USA), and Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario (THSAO).

Rayner said IHSA’s safety goals align with the PMTC’s goals of providing adequate standards of training and quality for drivers and other operational personnel, ensuring workplace safety, vehicle safety, and better highway design.

One of the best ways to achieve workplace safety is through knowledge, said Rayner.

“It doesn’t need to cost anything – that’s not what we’re all about. We wait for something to react to most times, versus being proactive. And health and safety is no different,” he said.

Health and safety practices to-

day draw stark comparisons to the “non-existent practices” of the past, but there is always room for improvement.

Rayner noted that in Ontario, at the time the province was building out its hydro infrastructure in 1915, the mortality rate for linemen was 50%.

“Imagine that; if you were a mother or father of one of these workers it was probably in your better interest to send them out to fight WW1,” he said.

The year 1915 also marked the creation of the Workers’ Compensation Board in Ontario, which had two purposes – the insurance side and the education component – in terms of preventive action.

“The reason we exist is embedded in law: the Workplace Safety Insurance Act. We are recognized under



**SAFETY THROUGH EDUCATION:** IHSA’s Ken Rayner addresses PMTC delegates at their convention.

Photo by John G. Smith

law as a designated entity providing safety training and support,” said Rayner.

The IHSA regularly provides courses to Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Transportation.

The IHSA has a Centre for Health & Safety Innovation, a skills development centre near Toronto’s Pearson Airport, and a mobile classroom that takes its training-by-truck to areas of Ontario where classroom facilities may not be set up.

While some of the training programs are free to members, others carry a cost but on a “cost-neutral” basis.

Some of the money from Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums gets filtered to the Ministry of Labour and helps to pay for programs.

“We have to self-generate 20% of our income to be solvent, much of which comes from our programs,” said Rayner. “We have an evaluation framework for the courses to measure the participant reaction to the program, changes in knowledge and skills, how the skills are implemented and applied, and the resulting changes in business impact. The framework also compares the monetary benefits resulting from the impact of the program.”

Every course available has a pre-test and a post-test.

The trucking industry can take advantage of such offerings as defensive driving, pre-trip inspections, hours-of-service, lift truck operator training, and a comprehensive four-week course for fleet safety managers.

“We’re moving towards having a more e-commerce friendly site and making it as interactive as possible. Currently the site ([www.ihsa.ca](http://www.ihsa.ca)) shows the courses and locations where they are provided over the next six months,” he said.

If you or your business could benefit from a program or information on offer from the IHSA, you can either contact it directly through its customer service reps, or through the PMTC.

“Is there an opportunity perhaps to develop programs that more closely reflect what you do? We’d be happy to be a part of that conversation,” said Rayner, who added that the IHSA plans to hold four large open houses over the next year. □

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WEST

# Shell opens first commercial LNG fuelling station in Alberta

**By Jim Bray**  
**CALGARY, Alta.** – May 28 may have been a significant date in Canadian trucking history. That was when Shell fired a major shot in what many think is a fuel revolution, unveiling to the public the first of its commercial LNG refuelling stations.

The event came with the requisite amount of hoopla, as media, industry and government folk converged on the Calgary location – the Shell Flying J Travel Plaza at 11511 40 Street SE – for a unique ribbon-cutting and addresses by dignitaries on hand.

The gas bash was hosted by Jean-Marc Morin, Shell Canada’s general manager, commercial fuels, who said he believes the new facility, which will facilitate LNG-fuelled hauls along the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, anchors what will be the first of many such transport corridors in Canada.

Making LNG available to the public at a facility such as Calgary’s is not only a first for Shell in Canada, Morin said, but for the Canadian industry and Shell globally as well.

Among the advantages Morin cited that LNG provides customers is the opportunity to “reduce their fuel costs versus diesel, but it also provides transportation companies the opportunity to reduce their well-to-wheel CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from heavy-duty trucks by up to 20% compared to conventional diesel.” He noted that Shell believes LNG holds a great deal of promise as a transportation fuel and that the Calgary opening was the beginning of “a broader plan that we’re undertaking.”

Also on-hand for the kickoff was Westport Innovations, the Vancouver-based company that has been making a name for itself by building a variety of natural gas engines. Shell and Westport launched a co-marketing program in 2011 to provide customers with solutions on both the fuel supply and vehicle side. Westport is also working with Peterbilt to offer natural gas-burning engines for heavy trucks.

“We first started discussing this project well over a year ago,” said Brad Edgelow, Westport’s North American sales manager.

Virtues of LNG engines, Edgelow said, include that they’re environmentally friendly and offer the lowest fuel cost as compared to any alternative currently available. They also burn cleaner, are quieter, and “we hear nothing but good reports from drivers who say they like coming home smelling better than they do in a diesel truck.”

Bringing a new fuel such as LNG to market and building a facility such as Calgary’s can be more difficult than one might think, and Shell’s Morin admitted they faced a number of challenges, issues and risks from the get-go, including gaining government and public acceptance.

“The reality is we can’t (offer LNG) unless we’re able to convincingly articulate why it’s in the public interest for us to do so,” he said. “And as you can well imagine, cultivating productive, effective working relationships with government officials, elected representatives, is terribly important.”

Also at the kickoff was Trevor

Fridfinnson, vice-president, western operations for Bison Transport, whose company will be driving many of those LNG-powered trucks.

“We are very pleased to be working with Shell on this leading edge initiative that stands to transform the commercial freight and fuel industries in North America,” he said before the event. “Proving that this alternative fuel source can be economically and practically viable is our objective, aligning perfectly with our company values.”

Since there were no commercial outlets for the fuel before the Shell opening, Bison had been using an LNG fuelling station that Shell set up on its Calgary premises to fill up its LNG fleet. Fridfinnson told *Truck News* the facility it was using is Shell-owned and will be moved to another location.

The event was capped by the rib-



**OPEN FOR BUSINESS:** LNG is now commercially available, thanks to the first of several Shell LNG fuelling stations to open on the Calgary-Edmonton corridor.

bon cutting or, perhaps more accurately in this case, the ribbon ripping. This time, the ribbon was terminated in a manner more appropriate to the

venue and the event: a Bison truck driving through the filling bay, tearing the ribbon from its moorings, to officially open the facility. □



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# An effective retention program begins with the recruitment process

## Private fleets share their best practices for improving driver retention.

**By James Menzies**  
**KING CITY, Ont.** – Does your company have a driver retention problem, or is it actually a recruitment issue? Tamara Miller, director of programs and services with Trucking HR Canada said the two causes of turnover should not be lumped together. She noted an exodus of drivers within the first six months of employment generally points to a recruitment issue, while retention weaknesses may be to blame if drivers are leaving after six months on the job.

Three fleet managers speaking on a panel later that day entitled Driver Selection and Retention Programs

that Work, agreed that retaining drivers starts with the recruitment process. The panel, assembled at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual convention, included: Mike Millian, Hensall District Co-op; Mark Mostacci, TDL Group (Tim Horton's); and David Marvin of Praxair.

All three fleets boast an intensive on-boarding process, that in the case of TDL Group, includes an initial phone interview that may seem like it's designed to chase job applicants away.

"I try to talk them out of the job and tell them the worst it has to offer," Mostacci said. TDL Group

placed a renewed focus on driver retention in 2011, in part by tightening the hiring process and filtering out drivers who are unlikely to last. The company's turnover rate was 11.68% in 2006, had dropped to 6.9% by 2011 and then to 1.84% in 2012 as a result of the initiative. First-year turnover went from 1.89% in 2011 to 0.61% in 2012, and

"If you're a relief driver for the first six months, it's kind of hell," Mostacci admitted. "You could be shunting trailers one day and going up north the next day." Drivers are told to bring an overnight bag to work, with no indication of where they'll be headed.

To drive down turnover, TDL Group placed more emphasis on

'I try to talk them out of the job and tell them the worst it has to offer,'

Mark Mostacci, TDL Group

Mostacci said that first year at Tim Horton's is often the hardest, because drivers are required to put in time on the relief board and never know where they're heading.

the hiring process, beginning with a more detailed phone interview as well as a predictive index assessment that revealed a prospective hire's likelihood to succeed. A road test and assessment, criminal check, reference checks and a physical evaluation are all part of the hiring process.

Meanwhile, TDL Group also focused internally to ensure it had the people in place to create a positive workplace. This meant ensuring dispatchers and managers actually like working with drivers.

"If they don't like drivers, they aren't going to be sympathetic about what happens to a driver on the road," Mostacci said.

The company also ensures drivers have top-notch equipment to operate, including mostly Volvo tractors with the I-Shift automated transmission. Electronic on-board recorders are used at Timmies and Mostacci said "We have had a lot of drivers come to us and thank us for running EOBRs."

By driving down turnover, the company has also seen its safety record improve. Its CVOR violation rate is now 8.6%, said Mostacci, the lowest it's ever been. "Not long ago, we were in the high 20s," he added, indicating turnover and safety sometimes do go hand-in-hand.

For Praxair, driver turnover isn't a huge concern, according to Marvin. The company has 120 Canadian truck drivers and most stay with the company until retirement. However, the aging workforce and a shrinking labour pool have required Praxair to work harder to find qualified replacements for retiring drivers.

"Five to six years ago if we were hiring in a location like Oakville, we'd put it out (by word of mouth) that we were looking for a driver and we'd get 30-40 applications," Marvin said. "This is getting much more difficult for us. Demand is increasing, especially in provinces like Alberta. We've had to change our advertising methods. We're now starting to use the Internet, job fairs, newspaper ads and we're soliciting from outside the province at times."

Praxair has also loosened its hiring criteria. While it used to require five years of experience, including bulk tanker, it is now accepting drivers with three years' experience, and not necessarily with tankers.

That's not to say it's easy to get on with Praxair. The company still has a rigorous screening process that consists of two formal interviews with multiple staff, includ-

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**RETENTION TACTICS:** TDL Group's Mark Mostacci (left) chats with Praxair's David Marvin about driver retention. Photo by John G. Smith

ing, at times, other drivers. "What we're looking for and what is a key component to our success is the attitude the driver has right from the beginning," Marvin said. "We can teach anyone how to run a hydraulic system, but if he doesn't have a safe attitude right from the beginning, it's going to be much more difficult."

Once a driver is hired, Praxair drivers are put through an exhaustive on-boarding process that begins with a week of in-class training. This is followed by two to four weeks of field training, where they shadow an experienced driver. By the second week, the new hire begins operating the trailer equipment and by the third or fourth week may begin driving.

Another evaluation is conducted before the driver is turned loose on their own. And it doesn't end there. Marvin said drivers still have monthly safety meetings and undergo a further driving evaluation each year.

At Hensall Distric Co-op, Millian said the hiring process includes a 1.5-hour road test, which includes coupling/uncoupling, pre-trip inspection, backing, etc. New hires are put through online training and a two-day in-class orientation program. That's followed by a minimum of two days with a driver mentor.

Since the hiring processes at these three fleets are so rigorous, it only makes sense to put together a retention program that will keep the good drivers hanging around. At Hensall, that includes a quarterly bonus program (see related story, pg. 22), annual barbecues and Christmas parties for staff and their families, paid attendance at safety meetings, a family skating party, a pension plan and benefits, and a clothing and work boot allowance.

Praxair offers a benefits package, savings plan, safety awards and fuel incentives, years of service awards, uniforms, new equipment (its trade-in cycle is three to five years), opportunities for career advancement and even covers the cost of licence renewals.

"Small things like that mean a lot to the drivers," Marvin said.

However, perhaps the biggest incentive to stay on with these companies is a shared commitment to safety. Drivers, Marvin said, know they will have "safe working conditions through to retirement. They're going to retire here and they're not going to be injured. They're going to operate safely and go home every night." □

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CANADA

# Sharing the spoils

## How to implement an effective incentive program

By James Menzies

**KING CITY, Ont.** – Using technology to monitor driver behaviour can result in immediate improvements, but unless there's a benefit to drivers, those improvements may be short-lived.

That was what Mike Millian, fleet manager for Hensall District Co-op in southwestern Ontario, discovered when deploying electronic on-board recorders across its fleet of 74 highway trucks.

Speaking at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual convention, Millian said the company began installing the recording devices in October 2011 to measure idle-time, speed and harsh braking incidences. While the plan at the outset was to offer some meaningful incentives to the best-performing drivers, Millian said some fleet-wide benchmarking was first required.

"Our plan from the start was to provide a driver bonus program to those meeting or exceeding the standard," Millian said. "We wanted to share the savings with drivers."

Hensall District Co-op noticed an immediate improvement in driver behaviour upon installing the devices, but soon after the improvements "flat-lined," according to Millian, and shortly thereafter, incidents began to creep upwards. Millian attributed this to the

fact drivers didn't see what was in it for them.

However, Millian said it was important to build an incentive program around a realistic baseline and to deliver achievable – but not *too* easy – targets. It spent nine months analyzing the fleet's data before establishing a baseline.

"If you are going to do a bonus program, you have to make sure of two things," Millian said. "One, that the bar is not set so high that no one can achieve it; and don't set it so low that everybody can achieve it without putting any effort into it whatsoever."

The incentive program was rolled out in December 2012. To qualify, drivers had to average at least 800 kilometres per week for the quarter. The maximum bonus that could be achieved was \$25 per week, paid quarterly. Driver stats were tracked and shared regularly, so drivers could monitor their performance.

Any at-fault accident or CVOR infraction wiped out a driver's bonus for that quarter. Harsh-braking incidents resulted in a 20% reduction of that week's bonus, though Millian said drivers had the opportunity to call in right away if there were extenuating circumstances, and have that incident wiped from the record.

"If you tell me you had a harsh brake because a car cut you off or a kid ran out onto the road, obviously I want you to hit the brakes," Millian said. "Call me and explain it to me and we'll remove it. But if the same driver has 10 harsh brakes every week, we're going to start to not believe your stories."

Hensall also set a pre-determined idle-time limit for each division, based on routes, loads, etc. Exceeding that target costs a driver 40% of their weekly bonus. When measuring speed, Millian said the company provided a 10 km/h grace window, meaning a driver wouldn't trigger an alert unless they hit 91 km/h in an 80.

Drivers are given weekly, monthly and quarterly scorecards showing them how they performed against the fleet baselines. With the incentive program in place, the results Hensall saw from its drivers were more pronounced and sustained than when the devices were first installed, without bonuses.

Prior to the bonus program being put in place, Hensall's idle time was 13.9% and its kilometres travelled per speed notice was 329. From Jan. 5 to March 29, idle time decreased to 11.5% and the kilometres per speed notice climbed to 601 kms. From March to May, idle time once again declined to 9.6% (warmer weather helped, Millian acknowledged) and the kilometres per speed notice climbed further to 676 kms.

Improvements have continued since then, with idle time dropping to 8.6% since May and kilometres per speed notice up at more than 900 kms.

"It has had a good effect on our drivers," Millian said of the incentive program. "It targets those who wish to improve, where those who do not improve do not receive any, or as large a bonus." □

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CANADA

## Trucking HR Canada outlines projects

**By James Menzies**  
**KING CITY, Ont.** – When the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council lost the majority of its federal funding, it would've been easy to fold its tent and leave the trucking industry to deal with its own HR-related problems.

However, recognizing the vital need for support and the threat of an ongoing people shortage, the organization soldiered on, partnered with industry organizations and reinvented itself as Trucking HR Canada. And now, the organization, in its present incarnation, is more focused than before.

Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada, spoke at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual conference, to provide an update on the services the group provides. First, she explained the reasons behind the restructuring.

"In 2010, the federal government undertook a strategic review of all the (sector council) programs," she said. "They were looking at where they could make their budget cuts and funding changes. We were part of that."

Some funding remained in place for the organization, but the group had to become more self-sustaining, Splinter explained.

"We had to develop a business case around everything we have," she said. "We are still a not-for-profit organization, but we have more of a business approach."

The group re-evaluated its programs

and services, and relaunched as Trucking HR Canada in March, just as its previous funding expired. It is now overseen by a smaller board consisting of four members. So, what can be expected of the reborn Trucking HR Canada? Splinter said the group will continue with its labour market information studies, which explore industry demographics and trends.

"We want to continue doing this type of research," Splinter said. "It enables us to be more responsive with the types of programs, products and tools we then develop."

It helps also that the feds have identified labour market information projects as worthy of continued funding.

Tamara Miller, director of programs and services with Trucking HR Canada, also said work will continue on expanding the National Occupational Standards first developed by CTHRC. In fact, a new round of NOS were released the morning of her presentation.

The standards define the main roles and responsibilities within an area of work. The first NOS focused on the jobs of: entry-level driver; professional driver; specialty driver; and mentor/coach.

The new standards include: dispatcher; cargo worker; freight claims specialist; safety and loss prevention specialist; shunt driver; and supervisor/manager/foreman.

Fleets can reference the standards when hiring, training and evaluating staff. The NOS can be downloaded free of charge from Trucking HR Canada's online store.

The new group will also continue to offer its popular HR Guides. The three volumes focus on: recruitment and retention; hiring and retaining immigrant and temporary foreign workers; and building the business case for HR and managing generational differences.

Speaking of generational differences, Trucking HR Canada recently concluded a study on youths' impressions of careers in trucking. The study found young people and educators see a lot to like about careers in the industry, but have concerns about things such as: time away from home; safety; stress; sleep deprivation, etc.

Interestingly, Miller said most respondents – both among young people and their educators – thought of careers in trucking in the context of driving. Miller said the industry must do a better job of raising awareness of the breadth of careers available within the trucking industry.

"People are not promoting the variety of careers we have in the industry," she said. She also noted some of the concerns, such as safety, are perceived issues that may not even exist.

"We need to start dispelling some of these myths," she said, adding fleets should be promoting their safety records when recruiting employees.

Another recent project has been the compiling of various government funding opportunities. Splinter said a free guide can be accessed on the group's Web site, which outlines funding opportunities that currently exist.

"There are a lot of initiatives out there," she said. "We consolidated that into this short document that explains each of these programs."

Lastly, Splinter spoke of the HR





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cle Check program; an online tool that provides fleets with a way to self-assess their current HR policies to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The program has been well received, with 300 carriers taking the survey since April, about half of which were private fleets.

Participating carriers receive a customized self-assessment report that

compares their HR practices to industry benchmarks. It also provides links to modules developed by Trucking HR Canada that will help carriers improve in the areas where they fall short. The survey takes just 15 minutes, Splinter said.

The HR Circle Check can be taken at the Trucking HR Canada Web site: [www.TruckingHR.com](http://www.TruckingHR.com). □

## NAFMP available free-of-charge online now

Continued from page 1

The NAFMP was developed through nine years of research. The program was field-tested by fleets in Alberta, Quebec, California and Texas and proven to be feasible to implement and successful in reducing driver fatigue, according to the program's administrators.

Upon its release, the program was lauded by the American Trucking Associations (ATA).

"This program is a great example of industry organizations and regulators stepping forward to identify, provide and promote real solutions to improving the safety of our nation's highways," said ATA president and CEO Bill Graves. "ATA has long believed that looking holistically at alertness and fatigue management, rather than relying on a prescriptive Band-Aid approach provided by the current hours-of-service regulatory system, is the best way to address the complex issues of human alertness and fatigue."

The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) will manage the Web site.

"It is rewarding to see ATRI's 10-year involvement in the research and development of the NAFMP come to fruition," said ATRI president Rebecca Brewster. "The NAFMP Web site will be a one-stop shop for carriers of all sizes to address the important issue of driver fatigue."

The program was developed with the help of many organizations, including: Alberta Occupational Health and Safety; Alberta Transportation; Alberta Worker's Compensation Board; Commission de la sante et de la securite du travail de Quebec (CSST); Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration; Societe de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ); Transport Canada; and in-kind development support was provided by: the Alberta Motor Transport Association; and American Trucking Research Institute. □



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OVER THE ROAD

# Why we continue to do what we do

Ever had one of those weeks that makes you question your sanity for staying in the industry? Let me tell you about mine.

Despite being passionate about what you do and the enjoyment you may derive from your work, there are times when you ask yourself why it is you do what you do.

It's a question that usually arises after an unusually busy or challenging time. Sometimes I experience a week on the road like this. You would think that doing a dedicated route, week in and week out, life would be somewhat predictable. But when you choose truck driving as a means to earn a living 'predictable' is a word that you quickly learn to treat with a good deal of skepticism.

My workweek starts every Satur-



## Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

day morning at my home terminal in Ayr, Ont. The week before my vacation in July was like most weeks for me. A bit of a scramble to get out of the house, then an hour's trek to the yard, pack my gear in the truck, do a thorough pre-trip, and then hit road.

I typically find myself in Wawa, Ont. on Saturday nights with a thousand kilometres under my belt. But

on this trip, the trucking Gods had other plans. I hit fairly heavy rain showers as I headed through Toronto and the heavy weekend traffic was playing stop-and-go across Hwy. 401 and then north up Hwy. 400 to the Hwy. 89 interchange. By the time I got up to Sault Ste. Marie, I was a couple of hours behind my normal travel time and fighting fatigue. I ended up stopping short of Wawa and sleeping the night away parked in a snowplow turnaround.

Waking up refreshed on Sunday morning I was raring to go, but the day was going to be filled with fog and rain. The rain I don't mind but

the fog is another issue. This was patchy fog rolling in off Lake Superior. At times it was so thick you couldn't see much past the front of your hood then it would thin out to a mist for a few kilometres, teasing you with the expectation that you were driving out of it. That's the way it was for over 600 kilometres until I cleared Thunder Bay, then it was just misty rain that cleared up as I approached Dryden. The clouds parted just in time for me to drive into a blinding sunset.

The traffic and weather had added a couple of hours of drive time to my trip on this week. When I stepped out of my seat at the end of the day on Sunday I experienced that lightheaded mental fatigue unique to the world of driving. It's a feeling that comes with almost 13 hours of straining to see beyond and through the fog. I hate fog. I'd rather spend a week driving in blinding snow. I'd better be careful what I wish for.

Monday morning found me just east of Winnipeg with eight drops to do. The first was a simple drop in Arborg, Man., about 100 kilometres north of the Peg. After completing my drop in Arborg, I headed down into Winnipeg and banged off four drops then headed east to Portage La Prairie.

So far things had been pretty smooth. It was a beautiful sunny day and my drops were going well but that was about to change. I had some store fixtures to drop at a small retail outlet in Portage La Prairie.

It turned out that it was just one man and myself to unload these blanket-wrapped store counters. It was 28 C outside but in the nose of my black trailer with a fiberglass roof, the temperature was well into the 40s. A solid 90-minute workout. Time for a clean, dry shirt.

From Portage La Prairie it was off to MacGregor, Man. to drop off a single skid. This delivery was to a Hutterite colony off the beaten path south of MacGregor, so it took a little time to navigate the gravel farm access roads. That was drop number seven, just one more to go.

My last delivery of the day was a two-hour drive from MacGregor in Altona, Man. This was a delivery of home furnishings to a small retail store only accessible after hours due to its central location in town and lack of a truck level dock. Hand-bomb time again, and a sweaty end to the day.

I arrived at the truck stop in Morris, Man. with five minutes left to go before my 16-hour window closed. It was almost 10 p.m. With over 400 miles driving and eight deliveries completed, it was another exceptionally busy day.

I was just shy of 38 hours total on-duty time in three days. That's when I found myself asking the question, "Why do I do what I do"? The really scary thing is that after two weeks' of vacation I know I'll be itching to get back on the road. □

- 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](http://Twitter.com/Al_Goodhall).

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## OPINION

## Coming to terms with the death of the classic truck

The trucking industry is unique in the business world in that it hasn't really moved with the times. One of the most commonly uttered phrases is "That's how we've always done it." However, there are now far better ways to do things and the people within the industry are more accepting of change than at any time in the past. Not because they want to be, but because things are moving so fast that they have to be.

Things like satellite tracking and communication systems have shown that modern technology can have a positive effect on an operation and have paved the way for technology in trucks that can also bring benefits.

Electronic diesel control has revolutionized the diesel engine, automated manual transmissions are now widely accepted, disc brakes are starting to reappear in good numbers and buyers are starting to take notice of fuel consumption, now that fuel prices have risen to the point that they sometimes represent the largest operating cost. In competition with fuel costs are driver wages, as the impact of the driver shortage is being felt more and more, trucking companies are raising wages in the hope of retaining existing and recruiting new drivers.

So now is a great time to be buying new trucks, compared to an older truck; operating costs are lower, due to the increased productivity the newer technology brings. Yet so many people are concerned about the technology.

This is understandable to a degree; the added complications brought about by the ever-tightening emission controls on diesel engines have not been without problems. However they have mostly been addressed now. EGR has been with us for over 10 years, the DPF has been around for six years and the latest addition, SCR has been on North American engines for three years although the technology has been in use on European engines for eight years. The initial teething problems that these technologies experienced have been overcome. Sure there will be the odd problem, the truck that doesn't break down has yet to be invented and I doubt that it ever will be.

Some of the engines on the market have been designed with EGR, DPF and SCR in mind, so rather than being a bolt-on addition, it is all now an integral part of the engine. Manufacturing tolerances and the use of new materials have also helped overcome some of the issues and every day there are giant leaps being made in electronics. Engine manufacturers have had a Mount Everest to climb by trying to keep everybody happy. The vehicle operators want a reliable, economical truck, the government and mankind want to breathe air that doesn't kill them. In some respects it is like trying to make a three-pound bacon burger with extra cheese that makes you lose weight; quite a challenge when you think about it.

Not only have the engine manufacturers made huge advances in performance and reliability, the component suppliers have, too. There used to be a time, not so long ago when you bought a truck that the choices were endless: engines, transmissions, axles, suspensions could all be mixed and matched, but now there is more vertical integration and it makes total sense. Some man-

You say tomato,  
I say tomahto

MARK LEE



ufacturers build their own range of engines and transmissions, some go further and build axles and suspensions too.

All of this means that with modern electronics, each individual part can work in harmony with the others. It isn't just the vertically integrated manufacturers doing this either. Loose transmission suppliers work very closely with the engine manufacturers to ensure that everything works as efficiently as possible. Hundreds of messages are sent between the two every second to ensure optimum efficiency and it doesn't stop there. Intelligent

cruise control – some even linked to GPS and electronic braking systems – is helping to make driving truck a pleasure.

Compared with a turn-of-the-century truck, a new truck today has improved dramatically in every way. From a driver's perspective, they are roomier, quieter, offer greater visibility, far more comfortable, more luxurious and so much easier to drive. From an operator's point of view, they are far more fuel-efficient, have longer service intervals and even though the cost has increased, in real terms, when you take into consideration just how much more you get for your money now, they're almost giving them away. The fuel savings alone can take care of the payments in some cases.

I've run the numbers on all of this. As much as I love driving my old classic long-nose truck – it's been a life-

long dream of mine after all – it just wouldn't make sense to buy one. At present day fuel prices, the new, far more expensive truck would be cheaper to own and operate over a three-year period; after that the new truck pulls further ahead with each fill-up and if, or should that be *when*, fuel prices rise again, the point where the new truck passes the old classic gets closer and closer.

I'm kind of sad about that. It's the end of an era, an era that I've only recently become a part of. But I've been there now, the honeymoon is over, it's time I started looking to the future and not living in the past. For now I'll be looking at the future over a large hood, but that will surely change sometime soon and I'm ready for it. □

– Mark Lee uses his 25 years of trucking in Europe, Asia, North Africa and North America to provide an alternative view of life on the road.

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**HEALTH**

## Watching out for troublesome moles

Chances are, you will have one or more moles somewhere on your body. Moles are essentially small clusters of pigmented cells located in the skin. In most cases, moles are harmless, however it is important to monitor them for changes in appearance as they can become cancerous.

Moles develop when skin cells called melanocytes grow in clusters or clumps. These cells are responsible for giving the skin its colour. Normally, these cells are spread out evenly throughout the skin.

The typical appearance of a mole is a small, round, brown spot, however they can present in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and colours. Moles can be tan, red, bluish or pink. Their shape usually ranges from round to oval. Generally, moles are less than six millimeters in diameter.

The texture of moles varies widely as they may be smooth, flat or even raised. Over time the texture of a mole may change. Some moles start off flat but eventually become raised and others disappear.

Most moles will appear during childhood and adolescence but can continue to develop into mid-life.

It is important to seek medical attention if a mole becomes painful or is bleeding. Similarly, if a mole suddenly changes in size, shape or colour it is prudent to see your doctor.

Your doctor will perform a detailed history and physical examination. If your doctor is concerned



DR. CHRIS SINGH

about a mole, he or she may perform a biopsy by removing a sample of tissue from the mole for microscopic examination. In the event that a mole is determined to be cancerous, it must be removed surgically. There are several options for surgery and your doctor will discuss with you, which is the best option for you.

Although it is impossible to prevent the formation of moles, it is still important to protect your skin from the damaging effects of the sun. There is a significant amount of research that shows the use of sunscreen is very important in the protection of skin from the sun. Also, try to avoid long exposures to the sun during the mid-day when the ultraviolet rays are at their strongest.

In addition, check your skin regularly to look for changes. Most dermatologists suggest carefully inspecting your skin at least one per month. Remember to include locations such as your scalp, armpits and soles of the feet. Until next month, 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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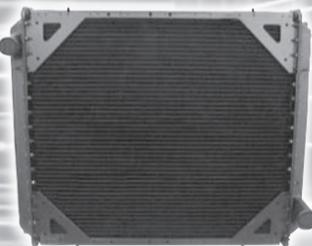
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# Going fishing? There are some types you should throw back.

What can you do this summer to boost your health? Go fishing in your grocery store. Fish, a low-fat, high-quality protein, is filled with vitamins such as A, D and B2 (riboflavin), is rich in calcium and phosphorus and is also a great source of iron, zinc, iodine, magnesium, potassium, selenium, and antioxidants.

Iodine helps the thyroid gland control growth and metabolism. Selenium helps make enzymes to protect cell walls from cancer-causing free radicals, and helps prevent DNA damage from radiation and some chemicals. Vitamin A builds healthy skin and eyes, and Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium for stronger teeth and bones.

Omega-3 fatty acids are another key nutritional element in fish. The best concentrations are found in fatty fish, but many types of seafood also contain small amounts. Most freshwater fish contain lower levels of omega-3 fatty acids than fatty salt-water fish; however, some varieties of freshwater trout are reasonable sources.

The American Heart Association, recognizing the value of omega-3 in fish, recommends an intake of one to two servings of fatty fish, such as salmon, herring and to a lesser extent tuna, each week for most adult men. Following these American Heart Association's guidelines can help maintain your good health, reducing your risk for a variety of conditions.

For example, getting the omega-3 fatty acids in fish on a weekly basis can reduce your risk of many types of cancers by 30-50%, in particular: cancers of the oral cavity, esophagus, prostate, colon, breast, and ovary.

It can also improve your cardiovascular system and reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by reducing blood clots and inflammation. Eating fish also improves blood vessel elasticity, lowers blood pressure, lowers blood fats and boosts your 'good' cholesterol.

By reducing inflammation, regular fish consumption may also relieve symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and auto-immune diseases. As a good, low-calorie source of protein, fish helps diabetics maintain a more stable blood sugar level.

In addition, fish feeds your brain and eyes. People who regularly eat fish have a lower incidence of depression, which is often a result of low levels of omega-3 fatty acids in the brain. In studies of the elderly, people who eat fish or seafood at least once a week appear to have a lower risk of developing dementia, including Alzheimer's disease. Omega-3 fatty acids protect your retina, the light-sensitive tissue lining the inner surface of the eye.

In spite of all these health benefits of eating fish, there is one 'catch': fish meat absorbs and stores whatever contaminants are present in the water in which they live. So, fish from particularly polluted water should be avoided. These types of fish often contain high levels of methyl mercury and PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), which are particularly dangerous when ingested: swordfish, king mackerel, marlin, shark, and tilefish.

Although farmed fish are usually



## Preventive Maintenance

KAREN BOWEN

free of mercury, be aware that they may contain low PCB levels if they were raised in plastic tanks.

To reduce your risk of ingesting contaminants through fish, limit your intake of the following types to just once a week: black sea bass, Chilean sea bass, croaker, halibut, lobster, mahi mahi, monkfish, rockfish, red snapper, sablefish, black cod, tuna, albacore, and Chinook salmon. Remember, the smaller the fish, the safer it is.

The following fish are generally very low in contaminants and can be eaten up to three times a week:

anchovies, butterfish, catfish, clams, cod crab (Blue, King, Snow), imitation crab, crayfish flounder, sole, herring, mackerel, oysters, Pollock, sardines, scallops, shrimp, prawns, squid, calamari, tilapia, trout, and these types of salmon: chum, Coho, pink and sockeye.

Even without contamination, some fish should be eaten less frequently, such as tilapia and catfish, because they naturally contain higher levels of unhealthy fatty acids. Certainly, any fish can be unhealthy when not prepared in a health-conscious way.

So, when cooking fish, it is best to avoid using oil; baked, grilled, poached or steamed fish is best. To eliminate unhealthy natural fat, remove the fish skin and visible fat before cooking. Then, let the fish's fat drip off while cooking and don't collect it for a gravy or sauce. Choose

your serving from the fillet and discard the other, fattier parts.

Regarding portion sizes, one serving should be about the size and thickness of your hand. Each person should eat about one ounce of fish for every 20 lbs he/she weighs. So, a 160-lb adult should eat an eight-ounce serving.

Recognizing that omega-3 fatty acids are so important to your health, you may want to consider adding these other good food sources to your diet: flaxseed, flaxseed oil, walnuts, canola oil, soybeans and soybean oil. This summer, get hooked on eating right, even if there's something fishy about it! □

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

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# Golfing fore WISHES



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**OPINION**

**Funding infrastructure must be priority**

Over the years, I've used this space a number of times to voice my displeasure with the ETR407 toll road north of Toronto.

Outlandish tolls, ghost charges (being billed for trips when the vehicle in question didn't leave the driveway or was out of the country), commercial vehicle bias - there have been a bucketful of issues with this highway and the way it's run. It reminds me of the troll living under a bridge - a modern day fairytale without the "fairy" - pay the fee or a big ugly monster will make you. To this day, I curse the Conservatives for putting us in this position.

I've tried my best to boycott this money making machine. At times, when a 30-minute drive across the top of the 401 has turned into a two-hour nightmare, I question my self-imposed boycott. Once I arrive at my destination, just knowing I made another trip without lining the pockets of the 407 makes it all worthwhile.

I do admit, it's getting harder and harder not to make the jog north to the land of open highway. Our city's infrastructure needs help, and fast. It's going to get a lot worse before it gets better.

Metrolinx, an agency of our provincial government, was formed to solve this mess. Needless to say, it has its hands full. It's going to take time and money (lots of it) to improve our transportation systems

**Publisher's Comment**



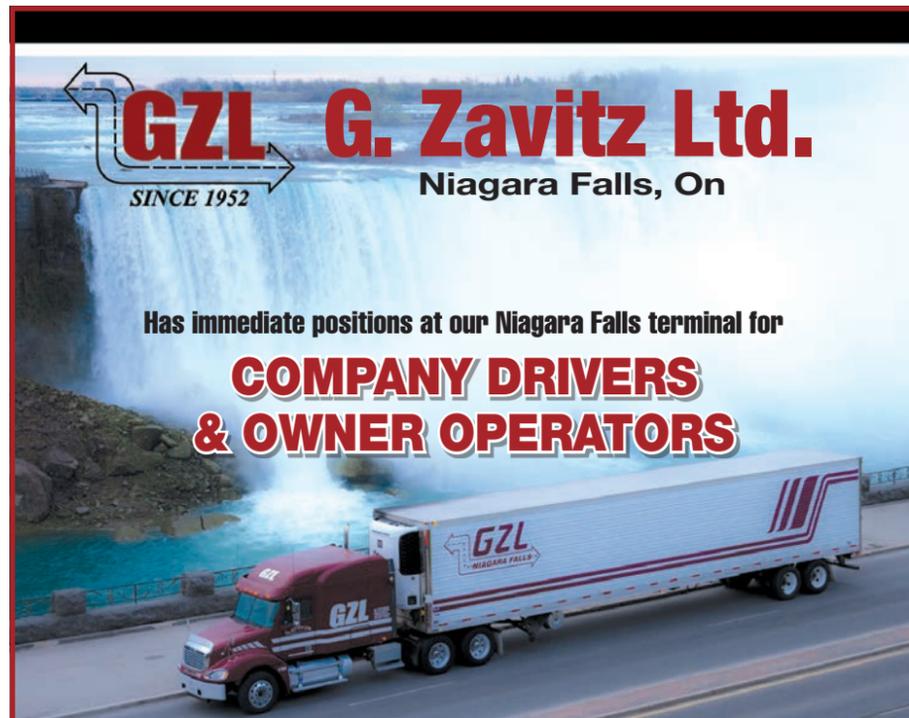
ROB WILKINS

and it won't happen without you and me paying for it. Some of the funding suggestions include an additional 1% HST tax, and yes, an increased fuel tax.

The 407 extension to the east will help, but use it only if you're prepared to pay the piper. This part of the toll road is in fact owned by the government (aka you and me) but apparently is not being funded by any of the Metro-linx recommendations.

We'll pay to use it until the cost to build the highway is paid, then we'll continue to pay just because that's how it works. No matter who is behind our provincial wheel at the time, they won't let such a hefty revenue generator slip through their fingers. Let's all do our best to make sure this revenue doesn't go into the general administration fund (can you say tire tax)? We are about to make some very important decisions concerning the future of transportation. Let's do our best to get it right, the first time. □

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



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# CITA-OTA Shipper-Carrier Forum to meet again in November

One of my favourite TV shows of all-time is Monty Python's Flying Circus (yes I do have a sense of humour). There is one sketch that always made me laugh. It was a play on those popular mechanics science shows where people get together and show you how simple it is to build things.

In this particular sketch, you learn how to build steel girder bridges and rid the world of all known disease. It ends with something like, "On next week's show we'll be over in Moscow reconciling the Chinese and the Russians." A similar sort of sketch on Saturday Night Live at the time had Jimmy Carter – after hosting a peace conference with the Arabs and Israelis – taking things up a notch by reconciling Lennon and McCartney.

What does any of this have to do with trucking? While the level of friction may not be on the same scale as Sino-Soviet or Arab-Israeli or even Lennon-McCartney proportions, relations between carriers and shippers have often been distant and in some cases a little frosty or adversarial. Some tension in a business relationship can be a good thing; it keeps everyone on their toes. But, tension – or a lack of communication, which is often how tension manifests itself – can impede the kind of understanding that is ultimately needed to effectively address issues of mutual concern. And there are lots of those shared between shippers and carriers. I guess I was always interested in the idea of bringing people together to try and solve problems even when the prospects of success might be dim.

With that in mind, the Canadian Industrial Transportation Association (CITA) and the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) got together late last year to explore the idea of establishing a forum made up of shippers and motor carriers with the goal of opening a mutually beneficial dialogue on working together to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies in the goods distribution system.

The result of that discussion culminated in the first CITA-OTA Shipper-Carrier Forum, held this past May. CITA selected 10 shippers to participate and OTA selected a like number of carriers. It was the hope of both associations that the event would be a forum for the two key players in the supply chain to have an informal and honest discussion about the opportunities for getting waste out of the transportation system; the positives and negatives of the bid/tender process for attaining long-term efficiency improvements; how changes in the psychology of supply chain management are impacting the relationship; and the challenges posed by a shortage of truck drivers.

Going in, no one was quite sure if much would be accomplished. We heard from those who said there would be no point in talking; nothing would change. But we soldiered on believing that, at the very least, no harm could come from communicating. Who



Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY

knows what it might lead to down the road? If nothing else, at least we tried.

What we got was a very open and respectful two-way discussion with each side gaining a better understanding of each other's realities. The message that this sort of dialogue was long overdue was oft-repeated during the course of the almost three-hour meeting.

Some good advice was shared by both sides on how best to deal with each other. In fact, this led to at least one tangible outcome – a joint document "advice piece" containing some best practices for

managing the shipper-carrier business relationship.

For example: On the issue of bids and tenders, "shippers advise carriers to take steps to analyze all the data provided in order to best quote prices and pay closer attention to corporate bid processing policies." In return carriers suggested "bids and tenders be put out as long as possible and contracts and payment terms be more fair and balanced."

The two sides also had positive discussions on issues such as the carrier evaluation-verification process, better communication strategies and the treatment of truck drivers at shipping facilities. To see the complete CITA-OTA Best Practices guide visit the OTA or the CITA Web sites.

As my colleague, Bob Ballantyne, president of CITA said at the time, "This is an important first

step in creating the basis for productive dialogue going forward." I agree. Everyone wants to be the shipper of choice or the carrier of choice, so to get advice from the very people you are trying to win over in that regard is not something to be ignored.

We are also excited to announce that at the participants' insistence the CITA-OTA Shipper-Carrier Forum Round II will take place in Toronto on Nov. 13, just prior to the commencement of the OTA annual convention and executive forum. I expect the interest generated so far will lead to similar efforts in other parts of the country – and that is a good thing. □

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

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## PEOPLE

Canadian Kenworth has named **Bryan Gerber** district sales manager for Western Canada.

“Bryan brings with him a strong understanding of the transportation industry with sales and management positions of increasing responsibility with Navistar and most recently Caterpillar,” said Barry Kroepflin, region manager for Canadian Kenworth Company.

Gerber graduated from Brock University with a B.A. in economic and urban studies. He will be based out of Kenworth’s Mississauga office.

Haldex has announced the retirement of **Brian Bowerman**, who served as president and general manager of its Canadian operations.

Bowerman was also director of aftermarket sales for all of North America and had spent 30 years with Haldex during his 44-year career in the industry.

He was well known for his involvement in industry associations, including: HDDC, CTEA, ATSSA, CFMS, and TMTC.

“Brian intends to maintain his involvement and presence in the industry,” Haldex said in a release.

**Mark Weber** is now serving as manager, Canadian sales and distribution and will manage Haldex’s Canadian operations. He has been in the industry since 1976 and started at Haldex as Ontario district sales manager in 2001. He moved into the technical services department in 2008.

Flo Components has named **Oliver Paiement** its territory sales manager for the Greater Toronto Area.

“We’re very excited to have Oliver joining our team,” said Steve Matheson, sales manager for Flo Components.

“Oliver’s education and knowledge make him a natural fit on our team of lubrication solutions specialists, and well suited for providing the kind of technical and sales support our customers have come to expect. His previous experience in reliability and operations optimization in the Lubrication industry will be a great asset.”

Paiement previously worked in various technical support, project management and business development positions within the lubrication industry, Flo announced.

“His primary responsibility will be to increase local availability of technical support to our customers and build Flo’s client base in the Greater Toronto Area,” said Matheson. “Oliver will work with our key partners in the industry developing lubrication solutions that address their equipment breakdown-related pain and increase machine uptime and profitability.”

Navistar has named **Walter G. Borst** its new executive vice-president and chief financial officer. Borst replaces **A.J. Cederoth**, whose departure was announced last month.

Borst joins Navistar from General Motors, where he was most recently chairman, CEO and president of GM Asset Management, where he managed about \$85 billion in assets, primarily for the GM benefits plans. Borst takes over his new position Aug. 1. □



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**FLEET NEWS**

## Armour Transportation buys Way's

**MONCTON, N.B.** – Armour Transportation Systems has completed the purchase of Newfoundland-based Way's Transport, according to a report in the *Canadian Press*.

Wesley Armour, president and CEO of Armour Transportation, says Way's Transport will become a division of Armour, but it will keep its original name. The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

The Way's fleet, based in Corner Brook and St. Anthony, includes more than 150 pieces of equipment.

Armour, based in Moncton, says the new division employs 50 people and will continue to be run by Marvin Way, son of company founder Clyde Way. Armour Transportation Systems currently operates about 4,000 pieces of equipment. □

## Prime rolls out the bikes for healthier drivers

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Prime Inc. has announced the winners of its May Bicycle Challenge. The month-long competition was designed by Prime's driver health and fitness coach Siphwe Baleka in an effort to further the culture of fitness among Prime's drivers, the company said.

Mario Almdarez, a lease operator at Prime, rode a total of 538.99 miles to win the competition.

Almdarez took the lead from Ange Mwiseneza during the last week of May by riding 204.59 miles. Mwiseneza finished the competition in second place with 488.5 miles, while Jeff Schmid finished in third with 155.34 miles.

As part of its award-winning Driver Health and Fitness program, drivers store bikes on their trucks and utilize smartphone apps to

track rides. Being able to accumulate miles is contingent on a number of factors.

According to Almdarez, "It all comes down to location and trips. I was lucky to be in the south last month with a lot of short trips and good weather. Up north, where I usually run, I probably wouldn't have done as well."

Last year, Prime and bicycle manufacturer Montague partnered to provide high-quality fold-up mountain bikes to the fleet.

"Twenty-eight drivers now carry a mountain bike inside their tractor cabs," Baleka said, "and more and more drivers are riding. Almdarez and Mwiseneza had an epic battle. They said it helped push each other in friendly competition. I am very impressed and inspired by their efforts." □

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## OPINION

## Why many small fleets tend to remain that way

Believe it or not, I occasionally get e-mails about this column that are not calling for my head on a platter. In one last year, a gentleman was in complete agreement with my criticism of the rates and driver pay practices of large carriers, as opposed to small carriers. He asked the rhetorical question "Why aren't smart guys like you and me CEOs of large companies?"

His question has nagged me ever since. We are all in the same industry; we just have vastly different operational ideas, yet we are all successful in our own right. After nearly a year's reflection, I think I have some answers.

The first reason is obvious: the economy. Nobody, regardless of business practices, is rapidly expanding a business in any sector. The optimism, consumer confidence, and available credit are all conspicuously absent. In our particular industry, add another issue at the top of the list, namely a severe lack of a willing and capable workforce, a problem that is critical even in a slow economy.

The resources of a small carrier tend to be much more restrictive than our large counterparts, so we are usually more selective in our hiring practices, making this an even bigger problem. Drum up all the business you like. If you can't hire sufficient capable staff, or have limited credit to capitalize on your new projects, that newly acquired business will actually pull you down, rather than help you grow. If you are already incredibly wealthy from other business ventures, looking for new investments, may I strongly recommend almost anything other than the trucking industry as your next challenge?

The second reason goes a little deeper. I spent the first 10 years of my adult life in a futile, hopeless attempt at being the next Richard Petty. Lacking only talent, finances and connections, I have no clue why this failed, but the experience of frittering away thousands of hours and dollars touring Southern Ontario's short tracks taught me an invaluable business lesson, one I unfortunately ignored. The best run, best attended, most profitable facilities were operated by people who had never strapped into a car. The ex-racers often were one rain date away from financial ruin, because they were thinking like racers, not businesspeople.

Same holds true in trucking, with some exceptions. There is a rather successful ex-driver in Cambridge, Ont. who would rightfully challenge this statement. He is one of the few people who were able to take the industry experience, then apply it as a businessman.

How many of you can honestly say the same about yourself? As humiliating as the admission is, I can't. To this day, I will act in such a way to make the job slightly more pleasant, likely at the cost of potential growth. For example, we will, if even remotely possible, avoid hauling steel, as will a lot of smaller carriers.

Even if the load pays \$100 more than a comparable load of building materials, we will avoid it, because I consider the extra time required to load and unload it unacceptable. The driver will like it, and the truck stays on schedule, but in the larger picture, deduct \$200 of weekly earnings from



each truck in a 500-truck fleet, and you start to see why saying no to these loads is not a good practice from a business standpoint.

Dry vans are another example. Due to their huge numbers, rates for dry vans are frustratingly low. They are, however, easier to find drivers for. It is as easy to get 10 van drivers as one flatbed driver. Using this math, you can still be profitable, and grow your truck numbers very quickly, yet we smaller carriers often avoid vans. This could be poor business on our part, or avoiding potential risks involving marginal profits; you decide. The business outlook of a small carrier

is usually vastly different than that of a large one. We just can't play the game with marginal profits relying on volume to stay afloat.

Next, we have the differences of opinion on equipment specifications. A lot of smaller carriers, since they have less equipment, will make sure it is nice equipment. I'm actually on board with the big guys on this one. Buy equipment that is properly spec'd, but forget the frills. A lot of extra lights does nothing to the functionality of a vehicle, but since they are there, they have to work. Your extra candlepower could get you parked at a scale if some quit working. I've happily driven a lot of older, drab equipment in my day, because at least some of the money saved on extras went into my paycheck. My Scottish lineage makes me one of those that views chrome and stainless goodies as shiny eye-catchers, but a completely

unnecessary expense.

Probably the biggest reason, at least in the past decade, that the small remain small can be displayed on your birth certificate. The workforce is getting older. I believe that most younger entrants to trucking have no intention of retiring here; it's just a job "for now." As such, the urge to make their place in the industry more than just that of a regular employee is missing. The risk involved to develop the next Challenger, Bison, etc., is tremendous, maybe immeasurable, and even more likely, impossible. If you are already in your fifties, it's a little late to start adding dozens of trucks to your headache list. At the age of most of us long-timers, are you prepared to risk everything you've worked for to be the next big entity? I'm not. □

—Bill Cameron and his wife Nancy currently own and operate Parks Transportation, a four-truck flatdeck trucking company. Bill can be reached at [williamcameron.bc@gmail.com](mailto:williamcameron.bc@gmail.com).

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**INDUSTRY**

# Private fleets meet to learn and honour

The 2013 annual conference of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada, which took place in June, once again proved to be the single best educational and networking forum for the private trucking community.

The agenda featured knowledgeable speakers on a host of important topics, the PMTC awards for individuals and fleets, a well-attended exhibitors' showcase, and, in a departure from the entertainment sessions of previous years, a dinner speaker that captured the attention of everyone.

PMTC members understand that one of the most important benefits derived from their membership is the opportunity to learn and to share information and ideas with other fleet operators. This conference provides those opportunities.

The exhibitors' showcase was just one example of information sharing in an informal setting.

Once again the exhibit space was filled with a wide variety of service providers with whom participants visited during specially arranged receptions.

The conference seminar program featured well informed speakers discussing important issues in the trucking community. A regular feature in the conference seminar program is the fleet operator panel, during which PMTC members discuss their approach to specific challenges, and take questions and comments from the assembly. This year's topic was Driver Selection and Retention Programs that work, and our panel described their in-house programs and the successes they have achieved (see story, pg 20).

Keynote speaker, Meg Soper, delivered a customized motivational message combined with humour. She has used the experiences of her former life as an operating room nurse – a very stressful environment – to build a very successful speaking career. Those experiences taught her that laughter can be the best way to deal with everyday stress and she is adept at delivering both the motivation and the humour.

In addition to all of the above, this conference allows us the opportunity to honour and celebrate with their families some real professionals in the world of private trucking. The induction into the PMTC Hall of Fame for Professional Drivers, sponsored by Huron Services Group, is one such opportunity. The number of inductees is limited to four individuals each year, so given the number of exceptional drivers in PMTC member fleets, those that are inducted are truly at the top of their game.

This year the committee selected four drivers for the Hall of Fame.

**Jeff Foell** is in his 26th year of accident-free driving for Patene Building Supplies in Guelph, Ontario. He has logged in excess of 2.5 million kilometres without any driving violations. His employers describe Jeff as an exceptional, dedicated, and safe driver and his record supports their view.

**Michael Demone** has been driving for Home Hardware Stores for 31 years and is based in Wetaskiwin, Alta. He began driving professionally in 1971 and has travelled coast to coast to coast, accumulating over



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6.5 million kilometres accident-free. His company sees him as a "great ambassador for Home Hardware Stores."

**James (Jimmy) Peters** began working for Huron Services Group over 30 years ago and has driven over five million kilometres accident-free. Jimmy began his career with Dupont's Quebec operations, and subsequently transferred to Ontario. He delivers bulk dangerous goods including hydrogen peroxide and corrosive acids.

**Richard (Rick) Packham** began driving for the John Deere fleet in

**Continued on page 42**

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## INDUSTRY

### Honouring the best private fleets and their drivers

Continued from page 41

1992, and has hauled a wide variety of equipment through most of the continental United States and Canada. Over that time he has driven over five million kilometres as part of the Huron Services Group team servicing John Deere.

These four professionals represent some of the very best in Canada's driving force, and are important contributors to the fleets for which they drive. PMTC is honoured to have inducted them into the PMTC Hall of Fame for Professional Drivers.

The Private Fleet Safety Awards, sponsored by Zurich, recognize excellent fleet performance over an extended period of time. Three PMTC fleets were recognized for their achievements in developing, implementing and maintaining stringent safety protocols.

The 2013 awards were presented to Praxair Canada, TDL Group, and Hensall District Cooperative.

Praxair has operated its private fleet for over 50 years, and it currently consists of over 100 power units and numerous specialty trailers running over nine million kilometres per year. The fleet distributes industrial, medical, and specialty gases in a variety of forms and containers, including cylinder, cryogenic tankers and bulk liquid.

The TDL Group has operated its private fleet for over 24 years. Currently there are 255 people attached to the fleet, which consists of 98 tractors and 192 trailers. Last year the fleet operated 13.5 million kilometres.

Hensall District Cooperative has operated a private fleet for 32 years. Although Hensall is an agricultural-based cooperative, the fleet is quite diverse, serving its 4,400 co-op members, a feed division and an energy division that delivers petroleum and propane-based products.

The Hensall fleet consists of 60 tractors, 141 trailers and 54 straight trucks and accumulated just under six million kilometres in the past year.

Each of these award-winning fleets incorporates extensive pre-screening, background checks, personal interviews, and road tests into their hiring process. They also include in-house training, and mentoring programs, along with regularly schedule safety meetings. Each has a written safety manual that is kept current.

The PMTC's first statement in its goals and objectives, written in 1977 and still applicable today, is to "Promote safety in private trucking," and both the Hall of Fame and the Private Fleet Safety awards exemplify our commitment to those goals.

At the PMTC we are proud of the efforts of our association and grateful to the award sponsors that support safety in private trucking. And we are as proud of the recipients of these awards as they must be themselves. Congratulations to all. □

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



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**SAFETY**

# Pre-trip inspection tips can ensure nothing is overlooked

Pre- and post-trip inspections play vital roles in fleet safety and maintenance programs alike, and there is little wonder why. These regular circle checks can uncover emerging mechanical defects long before the issues morph into costly breakdowns, unscheduled downtime, or out-of-service equipment at a roadside scale. Above all, they help to ensure that drivers have the tools to safely perform their jobs.

This hardly means that inspections are always going to be a pleasant experience. Pressures ranging from bad weather to tight schedules and cranky dispatchers all conspire against drivers who want to give every piece of equipment the focus it deserves.

But fleets that recognize the value of these equipment checks have adopted some clever techniques to ensure nothing is overlooked.

Video cameras mounted around a fleet yard, for example, can offer a clear view of drivers who are climbing around their trucks before leaving home base. Managers who simply listen for a few telling sounds will be able to monitor the process as well. Since a complete circle check will always include the blast of a horn, a silent yard is a clear sign that something has been missed.

They are not the only ways to ensure circle checks are being completed. Anyone who sees a dirty sight glass on a trailer's wheel hub should wonder when the fluid levels were last checked. Some managers also mark specific components with tags that attentive drivers can exchange for a reward like a free coffee. (I know of one fleet owner who even likes to remove an engine's dipstick and wait to see if the driver comes looking for a replacement. If the truck begins to roll toward the front gate, the driver is greeted and asked if they're missing anything).

But like every other fleet safety program, effective pre-trip inspections require ongoing training.

Drivers who understand a clearly defined company policy will know exactly how to respond to a minor or major defect as defined by National Safety Code (NSC) #13 – informing maintenance teams about lesser issues like a slow build-up of air pressure before the problem transforms into a failed low air warning system that will place a truck out of service.

Even the most experienced drivers need to be informed about evolving equipment if they are expected to identify related problems. This might mean discussing a new warning light that tells them when a diesel particulate filter needs to be actively regenerated, how the fleet's new disc brakes differ from traditional drum designs, or the different colour of coolant that has to be used when topping up a new engine model's reservoir.

Equipping drivers with a few spare parts also helps to address identified problems before they become expensive in-shop repairs. Bulbs and gladhand seals can be quickly replaced by those who know how to perform the tasks.



Some fleets even offer a cash reward to drivers who bring the failed bulbs back to the shop since their roadside repairs can be cheaper than a mobile service call.

But as simple as the tasks appear, they also require added training. Some of the industry's newest drivers may never have replaced a bulb on the family minivan let alone add oil to a trailer's hubs.

Fleets which package replacement parts with a related page from the truck's operating manual can ensure the parts are installed quickly and correctly every time.

A few well-chosen supplies can even make a difference in the inspection process itself.

Flashlights help to expose the darkened recesses under a truck and trailer, and tire gauges identify the difference between 100 and 70 psi better than a simple kick of the tire ever will. Visual brake stroke indicators certainly make it easier to check brake adjustment at a distance rather than requiring drivers to reach for the chalk and ruler, and let's not forget the value of a truck wash, which can expose damage like emerging cracks in a trailer's frame rail.

Drivers, meanwhile, can be better protected with gloves, hard hats, reflective vests and safety glasses. They are the tools that can protect against threats as varied as passing traffic, sharp edges, and the blast of

air from an exhausting brake which can turn a parking lot's gravel into flying projectiles.

These may seem like simple tips and techniques, but they will all enhance a valuable inspection process that delivers safety and savings alike. □

*—This month's expert is David Goruk. David is a risk services specialist and 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).*



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## OPINION

# Yanks, Canucks and Hours-of-Service

## Fatigue doesn't discriminate. So, why the difference in HoS rules?

Canadians must be biologically superior to Americans. Our respective governments know what's best for us, and Canuck regulators have deemed a 13-hour driving day within the limits of human endurance, while our pitiful American partners can tolerate only 11. On top of that, they have to take a wussy 30-minute rest break sometime during the first eight hours of their driving shift.

And they call themselves truckers. Sheesh.

I say all that, of course, with my tongue planted firmly in my cheek. There are no biological differences between us – only political differences. And I find it incredible how nothing more than

Voice of  
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JOANNE RITCHIE



sheer ideology on the part of a handful of people can manifest itself in such stark differences in a rule that really *does* speak to the matter of human endurance. I was reminded of this once again on July 1 when the latest round of more restrictive US hours-of-service rules came into effect.

For the record, I truly believe Canadian HoS rules are vastly superior to the US rules, not because I think humans thrive on

driving 13 hours straight every day, but because the people who drew them up paid more attention to physical reality than to political ideology.

Drivers in both countries have 14-hour limits to their workday. Whether you've driven for 11 or 13 hours prior to the 14th hour, there's a good chance you'll be behind the wheel when the clock strikes 14 – at the same point in your work shift whatever your nationality.

Are the 11-hour Americans any safer than the 13-hour Canadians?

Even though Canadian truck crash statistics indicate we have fewer fatigue-related crashes

(whatever those are) than they do, I doubt that HoS rules have anything to do with it. Maybe we don't count moose strikes as fatigue-related.

Maybe it's because we have more miles of highway with lower traffic density than some interstate highways.

I'm not aware of any research that has studied the difference with an aim to discovering why. I'm sure the US DoT won't be offering to pay for it – although the American Trucking Associations might.

Not that it would matter. ATA put forth some pretty solid arguments against the most recent rule changes, but ideology again trumped evidence.

Back to the physical reality. Have you ever wondered why our regulators chose 13 hours? Thirteen is an odd number, but it happens to be very close to the driving time between many key Canadian cities: Winnipeg to Calgary or Edmonton, for example; two driving shifts between Winnipeg and Toronto; a round trip between Toronto and Montreal. Had Canadians chosen 11 hours, it would take three days to get from Toronto to Winnipeg, and two days to get from Edmonton to Vancouver.

Would the extra day have improved safety? Not much, if our current record is anything to go by. But it certainly would have caused drivers and carriers severe heartburn and cost the industry billions of dollars over time.

Drivers in both countries are required to take the same amount of time off between shifts, though our drivers have the benefit of some flexibility in how they split up their 10 hours off. We can burn two hours a day in off-duty break time, and add that to the eight-hour interval for a total of 10 hours.

The Yanks must now stop for 30 minutes at some arbitrary time that may or may not be convenient or even possible in some cases. All because a handful of know-it-alls in the US feel that truck drivers are incapable of managing their own break time.

Which is why the US changed its formerly very sensible reset rule; where Canadian drivers still have choices, American drivers must sleep when the government tells them to – but only once a week, mind you.

Of the Canadian drivers I talk to, the vast majority are pretty happy with our HoS rules. Not too many drive the full 13 hours every day; most just like having the time available if it's needed. A few still complain that carriers push hard to squeeze every possible minute of driving out of them every day, but most agree they get enough opportunity for adequate rest.

It's hard to imagine the Americans ever de-politicizing HoS, and equally difficult to believe they will ever come around to our way of thinking on the subject.

But the funny (and sad) thing is, their rules are based entirely on perception rather than reality. They cite statistics on the num-

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ber of HoS violations as an indicator of the level of driver fatigue (hence safety), but nothing could be further from the truth. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance reports the highest percentage of "fatigue" violations are "form and manner" violations, or incorrectly completed log sheets. Bad paperwork, yes, but tired truckers? Not likely.

Take away some of the complexity, and most of the violations would disappear too. If it were up to me, here's how I'd regulate drivers' hours: drivers can work 14 hours out of every 24; they must be off-duty for 10 of

every 24; no more than 60 hours of driving in seven days; management of those requirements would be at the driver's discretion. And a better use of government and carriers' resources?

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– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Tired of being told you're tired? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll free 888-794-9990.



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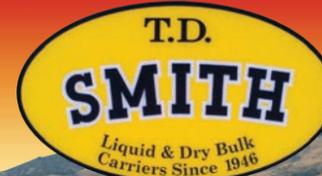
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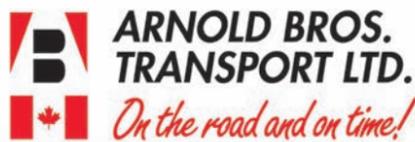
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# Road Test: The 2014 GMC Sierra and the art of towing

For work or pleasure, if you're serious about towing, this could be the pickup for you.

By James Menzies

**CALGARY, Alta.** – Southern Alberta is the ideal place to showcase the towing capabilities of the new 2014 GMC Sierra. Alberta represents an important market to GMC, accounting for a quarter of its Canadian truck sales. The southern reaches of the province provide a nice array of hills to challenge the new EcoTec3 engines. And Lundbreck, Alta. is home to the aptly named Sierra West Ranch, providing GMC with the perfect backdrop for the inaugural drives of its newest pickup.

The 2014 Sierra comes equipped with a new engine for quiet, efficient and capable towing as well as a full

suite of trailering technologies to make the job easier, safer and more efficient for operators. About 60% of pickup owners use their trucks for trailering, according to GM customer surveys, and the redesigned Sierra was built with that in mind.

For two days in early July, I was given a nicely appointed 2014 GMC Sierra SLT 1500 crew cab to drive from Calgary to Lundbreck, Alta. There, I'd hitch on to a 30-ft. Sport Trek travel trailer – after an evening by the campfire, followed by a night in the trailer – and then pull it back to Bucars RV in Balzac, just north of Calgary.

Pulling a travel trailer weighing

about 6,000 lbs behind a 2014 Sierra, I was close to the listed maximum towing capacity. However, I think GM was being modest when it set this limit, as there was ample power to maintain my speed at 95-100 km/h up even the steepest hills I encountered. And there are hills aplenty along Hwy. 22 in southern Alberta, some of them with grades of 7%.

To be sure, the engine had to work hard on some of those long uphill climbs. At times, the rpm climbed to about 3,500 and fuel economy nose-dived into the 28 litres per 100 km (L/100 km) range, but that's still impressive given the hilly terrain, not to mention the fact I wasn't being overly mindful of fuel economy; I was mashing the throttle up the hills to get a feel for the EcoTec3's power. The previous day, hauling noth-

ing but sailboat fuel, the Sierra averaged around 12 L/100 km on the drive south. (Published expectations are 13.3 L/100 km in the city and 9 L/100 km on-highway). Naturally, fuel economy while towing improved steadily as we reached the flatter sections of highway north of Longview.

The truck I was driving had the 5.3-litre V-8 engine under the hood, with 355 hp and 383 lb.-ft. of torque. If I was going to consistently be pulling a trailer this heavy, I'd likely have opted for the Max Trailering Package, which features a rear axle ratio of 3.73 and allows trailering of up to 12,000 lbs. That's the beauty of the Sierra; you can virtually double the towing capacity by choosing the right combination of engine and rear differential.

The EcoTec3 engines that power the new GMC Sierra – as well as the Chevy Silverado – combine three design elements that contribute to its towing capability: direct injection; variable valve timing; and active fuel management.

Direct injection increases the compression ratios, which translates into greater horsepower and torque for pulling loads; variable valve timing acts like a racing cam to deliver maximum fuel when needed; and active fuel management slips the engine from eight-cylinder mode to four when less power is required, saving fuel.

There are three EcoTec3 engines available: a 4.3L V-6; 5.3L V-8; and a soon-to-be released 6.2L V-8, each mated to a six-speed automatic transmission. The smaller 4.3L offers towing capability at a lower price point, while the 5.3L and 6.2L offer greater versatility for pulling heavier loads.

When released, the 6.2L will be available with a whopping 420 hp and 450 lb.-ft. of torque, which when combined with 3.73 rear axle ratios will give you the ability to pull trailers weighing up to 12,000 lbs. GMC claims this will be the highest rating in the segment, making the Sierra an attractive option for those who are serious about towing.

Whatever the engine ratings, the new Sierra is chock full of features designed to improve comfort and safety while towing. Highway 22 is known for its gale-force crosswinds, which can be unsettling when pulling a trailer of any type. The Sierra's StabiliTrak system offers trailer sway control that immediately dampens any sway resulting from crosswinds, abrupt steering inputs or oversized trailers. When the system senses trailer yaw, it intervenes by automatically applying the brakes and/or reducing engine power to bring the trailer back in line.

Before leaving the Sierra West Ranch, I activated Tow Mode via a switch on the shift lever. This modifies the transmission's shift mapping to get the most out of the truck's EcoTec3 engine, providing shift points that maximize power while initiating earlier downshifts to promote engine braking. When engaged, the system activates the Sierra's Trailer Grade Braking feature, which utilizes an engine brake on downhill stretches to prevent the overheating and subsequent prema-

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ture wear of the brakes. To engage the system, I just lightly tapped the brake pedal when cresting the hill and a message would soon pop up on the in-dash display, informing me the system was actively restraining the vehicle. This feature worked marvelously on my drive; I rarely had to touch the brakes on even the steepest downhill sections of road along my route. I was fully expecting to be pushed aggressively downhill by the heavy trailer, but this was not the case. Those of us who've pulled 53-ft. trailers know the importance of an effective engine brake, particularly in this part of the country. Novice drivers pulling too-big trailers over Rocky Mountain passes are as common as mosquitoes this time of year. I believe the towing features GMC has built into the Sierra have the potential to save lives.

Drivers who insist on using the brakes all the way down the hill will be afforded some additional forgiveness, thanks to GM's Duralife brake rotors, which the company claims last twice as long as conventional rotors while producing less vibration. They're less likely than some other rotors to overheat and cause a scare – or worse – on long downhill grades.

Also available on the 2014 Sierra is Hill Start Assist, which automatically engages when starting from a standstill on grades of 5% or more. The system applies the brakes for 1.5 seconds, giving the driver sufficient time to apply the gas without sliding backwards. This feature will be welcomed by drivers who plan to tow boats and have to contend with slippery launches, or those engaging in off-road hauling.

The new Sierra comes with a relocated integrated trailer brake control, which is now logically placed higher up on the instrument panel, to the left of the steering wheel.

"The integrated trailer brake controller used to be down at the bottom," said Craig Couch, engineering program manager with GMC. Its previous location was less than ideal when struggling to regain control of an ornery trailer. Now, the gain setting can be easily adjusted without bending over, as Couch said, "Like you're trying to find a quarter on the floor mat."

Aside from all the towing functionality, there's a lot to like about the Sierra from an operator's perspective, particularly for those who'll be using the truck for a combination of work and play. The new Sierra offers more features than have ever before been offered in a full-sized GMC pickup, and the truck I drove was equipped with most of them. Standard tie-downs in the bed help with hauling cargo and corner steps built into the bumper (deleted from the Sierra I drove) enable drivers to more easily climb up into the bed, even when the tailgate is up. The All-Terrain Package also provided some slick upgrades, including 18-inch chrome aluminum wheels, an off-road chassis package, full-feature front bucket seats and body-coloured grille surround and bumpers.

The interior of this truck is pure luxury. Leather seats, an in-dash infotainment system with satellite radio and navigation, Bose speakers, and an intuitive dash with backlit gauges make the truck a joy to drive.

Continued on page 59



DOWN ON THE RANCH: The new GMC Sierra incorporates some excellent towing features.

Photo by James Menzies

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## SHUNT TRUCKS

# Excitement over natural gas extends to shunt trucks

By James Menzies

When it comes to shunt trucks, you don't often get splashy new truck launches, complete with elaborate Formula 1-style curtain raisings. What you do get is continuous improvement of existing models.

Not a year goes by without some refinements to the functionality and comfort of today's yard tractors, though the changes are often subtle, and are incorporated with little fanfare. Here's a rundown of what shunt truck dealers are buzzing about this year.

## Natural gas

The excitement about natural gas as an alternative to pricey and unpredictable diesel fuel has spread to shunt truck applications – and why not? Yard tractors never stray far from home, and natural gas has be-

come more widely available in both compressed and liquefied form.

Autocar, Capacity and Ottawa each have natural gas-powered shunt trucks available, and have seen increased interest in the al-

tered Ottawa tractors.

Michael Kirby, vice-president, sales and operations with Ontario Capacity dealer Altruck International, said customers with CNG shunt trucks have reduced their fuel

recently ordered its first CNG yard tractor. The company arranged with its natural gas supplier to install a filling station on-site, by adapting the existing gas line used to heat the facility. The obvious benefit of natural gas is the lower cost of the fuel, but private fleets and retailers are also looking to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. And then there's the added benefit of eliminating troublesome emissions-related components – such as the diesel particulate filter and selective catalytic reduction systems – from on-road yard tractors.

“With a natural gas-powered truck, the fuel burns so clean, there's no requirement for any of these emissions systems on the truck,” Cobham said. “You have what at least appears to be a more reliable engine.”

We've all heard the complaints about the reliability of the exhaust aftertreatment systems on Class 8 highway tractors; they appear to be even more pronounced on shunt trucks, which spend a lot of time at idle.

“The fact is, shunt trucks idle a lot,” Cobham said. “Even a busy shunt tractor can idle 20-30% of its run time and modern diesel engines were never designed to idle that much. All these aftertreatment systems were never designed for this much idling, and that can cause up-time issues.”

Selling and servicing natural gas-powered yard tractors brings some new challenges. Dealers are struggling to determine what the residual values will be at the conclusion of a five- or seven-year lease period and whoever is responsible for servicing the truck will have to train staff and retrofit maintenance facilities.

“We are still in the discussion stages with some customers,” said John Uppington of Ottawa dealer Woodbine Truck Centre. “We have made the commitment that if they move forward with it, we will have the mechanics that are licensed to do repairs and we will have the tooling and parts on-hand.”

Spec'ing a CNG or LNG shunt truck may require some compromises. Capacity requires a slightly longer wheelbase to accommodate the tank, while Autocar maintains its current 122-inch wheelbase at the expense of the curbside steps. All providers are relying on the Cummins ISL G engine, which comes with about 15% greater horsepower and torque than conventional diesels. Cobham said Autocar's 30 DGE (diesel gallon equivalent) tank can be filled in seven to eight minutes and will provide 11-13 hours of operation.

“When you get to that 11 or 13 hours of run time, you will need to fill up again, so that can have an operational effect,” he said.

## Beyond gas

A heightened interest in natural gas is among the most notable trends, but there have been other enhancements to shunt trucks as well.

Aidan S. Bolger, president of Tico of Canada, says his trucks are the first to be offered with an available driver-trainer seat.

‘Even a busy shunt tractor can idle 20-30% of its run time and modern diesel engines were never designed to idle that much,’

George Cobham Jr., Glasvan Great Dane

ternative fuel. Capacity has about half a dozen CNG shunt trucks deployed in Canada, Autocar recently received its first order and Woodbine Truck Centre has customers in the process of running cost-benefit analyses involving natural gas-pow-

spend by up to \$35,000 per truck each year, running 16-18 hours a day. He said interest in natural gas is highest among private fleets.

George Cobham Jr. of Autocar dealer Glasvan Great Dane, said a large private fleet in Ontario has



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“It’s a huge feature that people are asking for,” Bolger said. He has seen many makeshift training seats, and has even witnessed trainers giving instructions as they hang off the back of the cab. “From a liability perspective, this is huge,” he said.

Tico has also begun to galvanize more of its components, in an effort to extend tractor life. The company galvanizes the frame, deck and now, for the first time, even the rims. Bolger said it eliminates the need to sandblast and repaint the vehicle after several years’ use. Galvanizing the body has allowed Tico to extend the useful life of the vehicles from seven years out to 10, Bolger claimed, adding “We expect to take it out to maybe even further.”

**Bright ideas**

At Woodbine Truck Centre, LED lighting is becoming a common spec’ on Ottawa yard tractors. In addition to providing improved visibility at nighttime, Uppington also said the feature reduces service calls on its rental fleet.

“Because with our rental fleet we are doing all our service on-site, every time we have to change a headlight, we have a service call involved,” he said. “It’s one thing if the truck is on our own property, but if you have to send a truck out, it doesn’t take long to eat up the few hundred dollars in upfront costs.”

Uppington said the longer-lasting LED headlights and floodlights are proving to reduce costs over time compared to traditional incandescent bulbs.

**High-tech cabs**

Ottawa also has been updating its cab to provide mounting systems for the ever-widening array of yard management systems in use. Uppington said sophisticated fleets and distribution centres are increasingly relying on yard management computers and software. A yard tractor can be a harsh environment for on-board computers.

“We’re trying to make integration into the cab as simple as possible,” Uppington said, noting a well-designed installation system reduces the likelihood of damage and unintended shutdowns. Also new to Ottawa is the 72-inch Sky-Cab, which allows a six-foot driver to stand upright, making entry and egress easier.

**Ergonomics**

Speaking of entry and egress, all the manufacturers have taken steps to improve operator ergonomics.

“The big trends we’re seeing are ergonomics,” said Altruck’s Kirby. “We’re proud to offer a Dura-Ride suspension and other safety measures have been put in place, including lower, wider steps.”

The importance of operator comfort should not be underestimated. Shunt truck drivers tend to be entry-level drivers working towards an over-the-road career, or seasoned pros looking for more home time after decades on the road. In either instance, those drivers are invaluable and well worth retaining. Nobody can rate a shunt truck for comfort and ergonomics any better than a driver can, so involving them in your purchasing decision seems like a no-brainer. □



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# Should you take a salary or dividend?

Last month I gave you a visual image to explain how an individual and corporation are separate legal entities. I always start by drawing two circles on my notepad: in one circle I write the person's name, and in the other I write "corp."

These circles illustrate the need to keep your business and personal finances separate. Think of all the business income going into the corporation's circle. When you need money for yourself, it then can move into your personal circle for you to spend.

It sounds simple, but determining the type of income to draw (and how it should show up on your books) is one of the biggest decisions an incorporated owner/operator will make.

## Salary or dividends?

There are two main ways to draw



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

money out of a corporation for personal use: salary and dividends. Both have advantages and disadvantages, so let's take a closer look at each one.

When the corporation pays you a salary (or a wage) for the work you do, it can deduct it as an expense and reduce the amount of income it's taxed on. So if the corporation earns \$50,000 a year, and you take a salary of \$50,000, the corporation's net income is zero. Having shifted that \$50,000 into your personal circle, you're obligated to report this

amount on your personal income tax return.

There are many good reasons to draw a salary or a wage. It will increase your RRSP contribution room (assuming you're under 71) and you'll be paying into the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Plus, you'll be able to take advantage of other personal tax credits you may have, such as medical expenses, donations, child-care tax credits, etc.

On the other hand, a salary or wage is considered "employment income" by CRA and is subject to personal income tax rates. You'll be taxed on the full amount of whatever money you draw from the corporation. In addition to the added tax, taking a salary from the corporation requires you to open a payroll account with CRA, make monthly

remittances, and prepare a T4 slip each year. While drawing a salary may be advantageous to you, personally, it also means more paperwork for your corporation.

You can also take compensation in the form of a dividend. A dividend is considered "investment income" by CRA, not employment income like a salary or wage. The corporation does not get to deduct dividends from its income. So if the corporation earns \$50,000 and you take out a dividend of \$50,000, it will still have to pay corporate tax on the full \$50,000. To compensate for this, CRA taxes dividends at a much lower rate on your personal tax return.

By taking only a dividend as compensation, you won't be paying into CPP, you won't be able to increase your RRSP contribution room, and you won't be able to deduct certain personal tax credits on your personal tax return.

In terms of accounting or paperwork, taking a dividend from the corporation is simpler than taking a salary as you'll only have to record it in the corporate minutes book and file a T5 slip each year. You're not required to open a payroll account or make monthly source remittances.

## Think strategically

Of course, you don't have to choose one type of income over the other. A combination of salary and dividends may be best. How do you know what mix of salary and dividends is right for you? Naturally, there is no "right" mix that will work for everyone, as each person's tax situation is unique. However, everyone can think strategically about compensation.

For example, wages are paid for work done. Whether you do a job, or hire your spouse or kids to do it, you can pay a wage to any or all of them for their efforts. By splitting wage income among several workers in your family, you may be able to reduce the collective tax obligation of your household.

Dividends, meanwhile, are paid to company shareholders. This type of compensation has nothing to do with work, it's a return on an investment. Does your spouse own shares? Do your kids? Again, you can use dividends as part of a tax-planning strategy.

Should you put your family to work and pay them a wage? Should they own shares? Those are great questions to talk to your accountant about. If you're income-splitting, your corporation will have certain legal obligations as an employer, and you'll have to decide whether you're cut out to be the boss of your spouse and kids. If your spouse and kids have shares, it's important to remember that a corporation is controlled by its shareholders. They'll have a say in who should run the business. That's when I get out another sheet of paper and draw a circle that says "family." And that, buddy, is a whole other conversation. □

— 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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**TRAINING**

# Don't blame non-registered schools for poor driver training

The July issue cover story 'Cutting Corners,' posed the question: "Why is it that poorly trained and ill-prepared A/Z licence-holders continue to show up at carriers?"

In the article Ms. Lagrois, president of the Truck Training School Association of Ontario (TTSAO) suggests that the reason there are so many poorly trained drivers is because the MTO now allows A/Z road tests with automatic trucks. Ms. Lagrois further states that this change in MTO policy now allows unscrupulous schools to offer entry-level training on automatic trucks for a mere \$500 for an A/Z licence. She also suggests that non-registered schools are the culprits responsible for all the entry-level training on automatic trucks. I certainly agree that training A/Z entry-level drivers on automatic trucks creates very poorly trained drivers but I take issue with putting the blame on non-registered schools.

This article gives the impression that there's a tsunami of graduates from non-registered schools. I've been looking really hard and I can't seem to find any non-registered schools anywhere in the province of Ontario. It's not surprising. The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) has done an excellent job in controlling the non-registered school problem. The MTCU has several effective tools for dealing with non-registered schools and are swift to respond to complaints about non-registered schools. The registered schools are very eager to report non-registered schools to the MTCU because the MTCU usually eliminates these potential competitive threats for the registered schools.

Ms. Lagrois claims that the DriveTest Centres are clogged with all the non-registered school graduates. I tried to confirm this statement but DriveTest doesn't give out too much information about who is going for a road test (I guess it's all those privacy issues). They did say that this time of year is busier with all the high school students going through the myriad of tests to complete their G licences. There was no mention or concern about any non-registered truck driving schools.

I figured that if I can't find any non-registered schools offering substandard training on automatic trucks, I should look at the registered schools.

From the MTCU Web site (www.riccpcc.serviceontario.ca) I found 72 schools registered in Ontario that deliver truck driver training. I called them all but I was only able to contact 70 of the 72 schools. Of those who were contacted, 22 told me over the phone that they use automatic trucks for A/Z training (that's 31% of all registered school). When I asked for a price for A/Z training on an automatic truck, some of the schools told me I would have to show up in person for that information. Of those registered schools that gave me a price over the phone, the prices ranged from \$500 to \$1,000 to get my A/Z licence with an automatic truck.

Your article mentioned the MTCU set a 200-hour standard for truck driver training. I under-



stand that registered schools delivering any other A/Z training beside the 200-hour standard is simply against the law and they are subject to severe enforcement action by the MTCU.

This might explain why some registered schools only wanted to meet in person to discuss pricing for an A/Z licence using an automatic truck. Unfortunately, the MTCU doesn't have the resources to catch all the unlawfully operating registered schools.

Ms. Lagrois is quick to blame the fictional non-registered schools. Ms. Lagrois uses this opportunity

to promote the TTSAO. She states: "Belonging to an organization like TTSAO or PTDI is usually an indicator that a training school adheres to an established curriculum."

According to their Web site, the TTSAO has 30 member schools. Of the 22 schools that told me they trained for A/Z licences using automatic trucks, 11 were TTSAO members. That's almost 40% of TTSAO member schools training entry-level A/Z drivers on automatic trucks.

Here is the TTSAO mission statement from their Web site: "The Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario is committed to providing the trucking industry with the highest quality driver training programs for entry-level individuals that earn and maintain public confidence, adhering to sound and ethical business practices. TTSAO

members will ensure that their conduct will provide sound judgment in pursuance of their professional educating duties by focusing on safety at all times."

Its statements like these that allow the TTSAO to gain blind support from some industry stakeholders. TTSAO member schools leverage this support to gain the consumer's trust and then turn around and train them for an A/Z licence on an automatic truck.

It's obvious that substandard training in Ontario is a huge problem, but the culprit is not the non-registered schools. The biggest problem is the TTSAO and those who blindly endorse them. □

*— John Beaudry is the president and founder of Transport Training Centres of Canada. With 21 locations, his company currently trains an estimated 70% of all the Ontario entry-level truck drivers that attend private career colleges.*



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# Want to sell your business? Clean it up a bit, first.

By James Menzies

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – You've spent your life building your business, why not invest a little time before selling it to maximize its value? That was the advice from Doug Nix, vice-chairman of Corporate Finance Associates, who addressed a crowd of potential buyers and sellers at a recent breakfast meeting.

## Preparing your business for sale

If you are looking to sell your business, Nix said there's plenty of work that should be done in advance to maximize your return. Many owners are caught off-guard by the amount of preparation and work that's involved, he admitted.

"It's surprising how many people sell their business, basically

without doing any preparation," he said. "I see that all the time. If you can be more proactive about it, there are things you can do to increase the value of your business."

When consulting a seller, Nix usually advises them to ramp up sales activity in advance of putting their company on the block.

"Whatever your sales effort is, double it," he suggested. "Long-term trends of increasing revenues are attractive to buyers."

It's equally important to sustain those heightened sales efforts right through the sales process, he added.

"If your revenue starts to drop off through the sales process, it's going to kill your pricing in the transaction. A rapid ramp-up of profitable revenues positions your company above the rest."

Next, Nix said companies should attempt to build some predictability into their revenue streams by signing customers to long-term contracts when possible. Nix also suggested locking in key management personnel and requiring them to sign non-compete agreements.

"If your business is portable, you don't want to be selling a business and have the buyer wonder if your key guys are going to go to the competition," Nix said. He also said it's vital to put in place a management team that can function effectively without the company owner.

"Often, the owner is the company and you need to get rid of that," Nix said. "Make sure the business is not about you."

Business owners should also bol-

ster their branding efforts, knowing a prospective buyer will first turn to the Internet to conduct research.

"You'd be amazed at how many companies have no Internet presence," Nix said. "How do you sell your business with no Web site? As soon as you tell the buyer the name of a company, what are they going to do? They're going to go on the Internet and say 'Let me take a look.' You need to develop a Web presence."

Sellers should also clean up their balance sheets, pay off debt and remove personal assets from the company books. Providing audited financial statements is also beneficial, Nix said.

Once all the preparation is complete, Nix said sellers opt for one of two methods of selling their business: buyer-initiated or seller-initiated.

Buyer-initiated transactions usually stems from a phone call from a party that's interested in purchasing your company, with the hope of closing a deal outside the normal competitive process. Seller-initiated transactions can be informal, involving discussions with one or two prospective buyers, or put up for a formal, competitive auction.

"What we have found is the formal process maximizes value and improves deal terms," Nix said. This process typically takes five to nine months.

With discussions underway, a virtual data room is set up, allowing approved parties from both sides to access shared documents online via a secure site. Usage activity can be tracked.

"It's not intrusive and a lot of due diligence can be done remotely, without (office) staff knowing people are going through agreements," Nix said.

Business owners who are interested in taking some money off the table while retaining an ownership stake in the company may want to consider leveraged recapitalization. In this scenario, the owner sells their stake to an equity sponsor, which forms the new corporation. The owner pockets a portion of the cash and then uses the remainder to purchase a stake in the new company. Done this way, the owner avoids having to personally guarantee a bank loan.

This technique allows the owner to reduce his exposure and continue to manage the company, all while growing it with funding from the equity sponsor.

"You need the right equity sponsor and the right attitude," Nix said, noting many business owners are uncomfortable being in a position where they're no longer the largest shareholder.

## The other side of the table

Company owners who are looking to grow their businesses should consider acquisition as "an essential part of the strategy," Nix said, noting it's difficult to grow revenue in a mature industry without steal-



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ing market share from competitors. One of the biggest mistakes buyers make is jumping on an opportunity because it seemed to be priced right, Nix warned.

“Just because the assets are cheap, doesn’t mean you should buy them,” he said. “A lot of guys get caught up on this. You are better off paying a higher price for something that’s going to be a good fit, than a low price for something that’s a piece of junk.”

Before shopping, Nix said companies should develop an acquisition strategy that clearly identifies their target acquisition.

“But you don’t want it to be so narrow that the company doesn’t exist,” he added.

Nix also said buyers should pay

close attention to the seller’s motivation. Are they getting out of the business for the right reasons? Are they serious about selling? Nix said sellers under 40 and over 70 often change their minds about selling; the younger ones because it’s in their nature to do so, and the older ones because they are suddenly fearful their life will lack purpose once they’ve sold their business.

Nix said buyers should be on good terms with their bankers before initiating discussions and be proactive about seeking out potential acquisitions rather than waiting for them to come along. Finally, Nix said, “Never bet your company on a single deal. It’s not worth it. Walk away from it.” □



**1) What are sources of funds for buyers of businesses today?**

Banks and credit unions are able to provide traditional funding based on your current business's operations. BDC and Roynat can provide more sizable amounts of subdebt for acquisitions. Private Equity Groups are sometimes willing to invest in minority equity positions on larger transactions.

**2) What issues are you seeing that affect closing (i.e. technology, leases, contracts)?**

Once a buyer and a seller have agreed that an acquisition makes good sense, we are seeing two main issues that affect closing. The first is the seller's pricing expectations. The second, and often related, issue is the recent financial performance of the seller's business. When a company's revenues or profits begin to slip during sale discussions, buyers become uncertain and the seller is often unwilling to reduce their value expectations to reflect the reduced profitability.

**3) What is the minimum size of a leverage recap transaction?**

A leveraged recap requires the financing of a significant amount of debt. To make this an appealing opportunity for investors, the business's financial performance must be consistent and able to support financing the debt. Typically investors will seek businesses with at least \$2 million of normalized earnings and revenues above \$10 million with a strong preference for revenues over \$20 million. □

**Where are the deals?: M&A activity slower than expected so far this year**

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – North American merger and acquisition activity levels have not yet met expectations in 2013, but conditions are ripe for an increase in Canada, particularly in the logistics sector.

Doug Nix, vice-chairman of Corporate Finance Associates in Oakville, Ont., told a group of clients June 25, “The first half of the year has been one of the slowest times I’ve seen for completed transactions, but not for interest.”

Nix said many buyers are nervous about economic conditions, citing an example of a transportation and logistics company that has seen its revenues plummet 30% since January.

“These revenue decreases have come out of the blue,” he said. “These surprises make buyers nervous.”

Even so, Nix said many companies are in the early stages of preparing their businesses for sale and there is no shortage of available money to be spent on acquisitions. Nix said in Ontario, private equity firms are sitting on half a trillion dollars that’s looking for a home, and must be invested. He also said corporate balance sheets are for the most part healthy and that lenders are willing to fund acquisitions. There’s also strong demand for quality companies.

“You would think all those factors would make this a strong seller’s market, where valuations are starting to go up, but we’re not seeing that,” Nix said.

In Canada, valuation multiples presently range from 3.5x to 6x EBITDA, with larger companies commanding the higher multiples. Nix said there continues to be strong demand for logistics companies, particularly those with a proprietary element.

“Logistics is an incredibly hot area today,” Nix said. “For freight management companies, I think this year or next year are the best years to sell, because of a number of market forces.” □



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FEATURE

# Inside the Pickles' Pete

By James Menzies

**TOMAH, Wisc.** – Hauling light, but time-sensitive loads for a customer base that's security-minded, husband-wife team Ron and Dawn Marie Pickles saw an opportunity to enhance their level of service while also boosting their own revenue, not to mention their comfort while on the road.

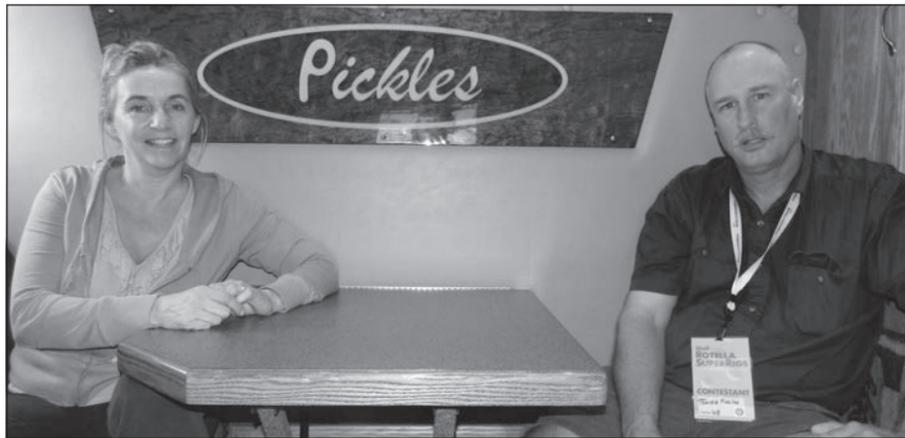
When it came time to replace their 2006 Pete 379 a couple years ago, they embarked upon a challenge to design the largest sleeper possible while complying with Canadian length and wheelbase restrictions, which would

include amenities such as a washroom with shower.

That truck, a Pete 384 complete with a 108-inch bunk, has been on the road for two years now, and *Truck News* caught up with it at the Shell Rotella SuperRigs show in Tomah, Wisc.

"After all our years on the road, we figured what we wanted to do was have the largest sleeper, to accommodate a bathroom, shower and kitchen and a table where you can sit down and relax," Ron Pickles said.

"We wanted a better quality of life



**TRAVELLING IN STYLE:** Dawn Marie (left) and Ron Pickles customized the largest sleeper available under Canadian law, to reduce stops and improve their quality of life while on the road.  
Photo by James Menzies

on the road," chimed in Dawn Marie. "We want to be able to enjoy it out here instead of being crammed into a small little sleeper and having to go inside (a truck stop) for everything."

The Pickles designed the sleeper themselves, and commissioned American Reliance Industries to build it. Some of its features include a bathroom with shower, a sink with running water, a large fridge, a sizeable dinner table and other amenities.

"It makes life on the road a little more acceptable and tolerable to stay out for weeks at a time," Ron said. And that's just what the Pickles do. They run hard from May to November, and then park the truck and spend their winters in Mexico.

The massive bunk added about 1,000 lbs to the weight of the truck, but they spec'd lightweight components to lessen the impact, including wide-base single tires and an aluminum fifth wheel.

"We tried to build it as light as possible," Ron said. "We tried to reduce weight at every turn, because we knew we had to overcome the larger sleeper."

There's also the extra weight of 40 gallons of water needed to supply the sink, shower and toilet.

Their fuel mileage is about 7.2 US miles per gallon, just a tick under what they got with their pre-emission 2006 Pete 379. While the fuel economy doesn't quite meet Ron's high standards, he said the unique spec' has offered other benefits, including increased productivity.

They no longer have to stop every time one of them needs to use the facilities and they don't waste time at truck stops waiting for showers to become available. Dawn Marie handles the nighttime driving while Ron drives during the day. They can easily rack up more than 1,000 miles in a day, stopping only to buy fuel or groceries and to swap spots behind the wheel.

"Overall, cost-wise, we can definitely manage our time much more efficiently," Ron said. "We can literal-

ly run 24 hours a day. You feel better. You're not waiting in line for showers and it's easier to do."

He said enjoying a hot shower in the truck each morning is a luxury not afforded to most professional drivers.

The inside of the Pickles' truck more closely resembles a motor home than a truck cab. The sleeper sits on its own independent suspension, providing a smooth ride. And it's quiet, too. The Pickles used a spray-on foam insulation that's used in reefer trailers to maintain temperatures and reduce road noise. Through two years, the sleeper hasn't presented any problems and Ron and Dawn Marie say they'd design it the same today, except for maybe applying some technologies that weren't available at the time. Ron said given the light loads they pull, he'd be interested in trying a 6x2 axle configuration to gain back some more of the weight lost to the increased sleeper size.

He'd also up the engine horsepower, from 485 hp/1,650 lb.-ft. to 500 hp/1,850 lb.-ft. Even with the light loads, Ron feels the extra horsepower and torque allow the engine to tackle the hills with less effort, saving fuel. The current engine is a Paccar MX, which he's been pleased with.

The Pickles' unique sleeper has received a lot of attention on the road, especially in Canada where drivers often question its legality. But they say it meets the 244-inch wheelbase limit and all other requirements.

"People look at it and they go 'How can you make that work?'," said Dawn Marie.

"This was the hardest truck we've ever built, to try to meet the Canadian requirements," added Ron. "And as well, to accommodate our goal to have a larger sleeper to meet our needs. We overcame all of that with this design."

The custom truck has motivated the couple to spend more time on the road, logging more miles while the sun shines so they can continue to spend their winters in Mexico when it doesn't. □



**RV-INSPIRED:** The Pickles' custom bunk is built on a Pete 384 chassis.

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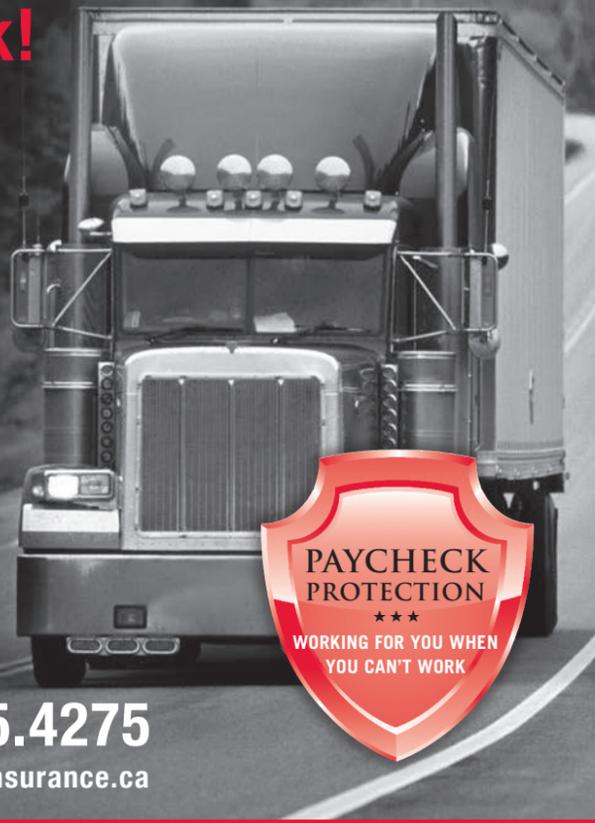
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## Volvo wins award for telematics

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – Volvo Trucks has won a telematics award for its Remote Diagnostics program.

The Best Telematics Service or Solution for Commercial Vehicles award was presented to Volvo, which edged out seven other companies for the honour.

“This award is a testament to Volvo’s commitment to helping improve the way motor carriers address vehicle service needs. It also validates what we have been hearing from our customers – that Remote Diagnostics provides a valuable, user-friendly service that helps maximize vehicle uptime,” said Conal Deedy, Volvo Trucks product manager, communications and electronics.

Volvo has delivered more than 12,000 trucks equipped with Remote Diagnostics, which monitors a set of critical fault codes and delivers detailed information about the severity of the issue in real-time to the customer, enabling them to make more informed decisions based on the urgency of a service issue. It has reduced the average diagnostic time at a service location by 71% and lowered the average time of repair by 25%, Volvo claims. □

## Chevron to give away bass boat

**SAN RAMON, Calif.** – Chevron is once again giving away a bass boat to the winner of its annual sweepstakes. The Delo Big Bass Boat sweepstakes will award a fully-equipped 2013 ZX190 Skeeter bass boat and other prizes to a contest entrant from the US or Canada. Last year’s winner was Laurel Keating of Lumby, B.C.

The contest runs through Oct. 31, and participants can enter by registering at ChevronDelo.com. Other prizes include an all-expenses paid trip to appear on the Honey Hole All Outdoors TV Show with host Bill Wilcox, and \$500 Visa gift cards. No purchase is required to enter. □

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  - No. of Truck-Tractors \_\_\_\_\_ No. of Off-Road Vehicles \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Does this location operate, control or administer one or more vehicles in any of the following Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) categories? Please check YES or NO:
  - 14,969 kg. & over (33,001 lbs. & over).....  YES  NO
  - 11,794-14,968 kg. (26,001-33,000 lbs.)...  YES  NO
  - 8,846-11,793 kg. (19,501-26,000 lbs.)...  YES  NO
  - 4,536-8,845 kg. (10,000-19,500 lbs.)....  YES  NO
  - Under 4,536 kg. (10,000 lbs.).....  YES  NO
- 4) This location operates, controls or administers:
  - Diesel powered vehicles.....  YES  NO
  - Refrigerated vehicles.....  YES  NO
  - Pickups or Utility Vans.....  YES  NO
  - Propane powered vehicles.....  YES  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)  For Hire/Contract Trucking (hauling for others)
  - b)  Lease/Rental
  - c)  Food Production / Distribution / Beverages
  - d)  Farming
  - e)  Government (Fed., Prov., Local)
  - f)  Public Utility (electric, gas, telephone)
  - g)  Construction / Mining / Sand & Gravel
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- 7) Are you involved in the purchase of equipment or replacement parts? .....  YES  NO
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## OPW enters into distribution deal with Traction

**VAUGHAN, Ont.** – The Original Parts Warehouse (OPW) has announced a partnership with Traction to distribute New Life body parts across Canada.

OPW is the exclusive Canadian distributor of New Life Transport Parts. Traction and its affiliated Truck Pro stores serve the majority of trailer operators in Canada, OPW announced, and were a perfect fit for expanding availability of Trailmobile, Hyundai Translead, Strick and Dorsey parts. UAP officials said bringing on the new parts line was a good fit.

“We analyzed a number of opportunities for trailer parts suppliers and OPW presented the most complete offer for our organization,” said Sylvie Leduc, executive vice-president of the UAP Heavy Vehicle Parts Division. “OPW is able to back up the parts with outstanding sales, training and logistical support. We can now focus our efforts on increasing our share of sales in the marketplace.”

Larry Burns, vice-president and general manager of OPW added: “We could not be more pleased that the Traction organization recognized the quality of New Life trailer parts and the service and support that OPW provides to its partners. We believe that this partnership will not only grow sales and market share but also provide the levels of service to the end-user that both of our companies are known for.” □

## Eastern truck dealers merge operations

**DARTMOUTH, N.S.** – Nova Enterprises and Lockhart Truck Center have merged their respective truck dealerships.

With the merger, James MacKay, president of Nova Enterprises, becomes chairman of the board and Peter Macgillivray, president of Lockhart Truck Centre, will become president and dealer principal of the combined operations.

Also joining the ownership group are John A. Mackay and Rod MacKay.

“James and Peter would like thank the hard work and dedication to the trucking industry of their respective partners, Jack Mackay and David Lockhart.

Jack will be retiring. David will be moving on to new opportunities,” said a joint release.

Lockhart Truck Center has locations in Dartmouth and Westville.

Nova Enterprises has three locations in Truro and one in Dartmouth.

The combined operations will employ more than 150 staff.

“The amalgamation of these two companies will allow us to focus on serving our customers in all locations,” the companies said in a release. “We will also continue to grow the Freightliner and Western Star brands in Nova Scotia.” □

## Brenntag adds dedicated DEF tanker, DEF rail terminal to Toronto location

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Brenntag has expanded its Toronto facility’s diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) capabilities by adding a dedicated DEF tanker to its existing fleet, and opening a DEF rail terminal.

The dedicated Brenntag tanker is equipped with a customized pump and a Canadian weights and measures-certified meter. Using dedicated tankers, both distributors and end users will receive DEF into bulk tanks or totes from Brenntag.

“Adding dedicated tankers to the DEF fleet offers increased efficiency and further enhances Brenntag’s already expansive distribution network,” Brenntag officials said in a release. “Brenntag continues to position additional resources at their more than 140 stocking locations to accommodate the DEF market’s rapid growth in both the US and Canada.” □



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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

# The Blame Game

By Edo van Belkom

## THE STORY SO FAR...

Mark takes a load of steel rebar from Hamilton to Sudbury. It's very heavy and he takes it slow, and that encourages drivers to take risks getting by him. After one particularly close call, he's forced onto the shoulder...

When Mark ran out of hours in his log, he stopped at a truck stop outside of Sudbury for the night. Once he was parked, he did another circle check, inspecting everything closely – more closely than he might normally – and everything appeared to be in order.

The load was still secure, but a few of the straps had loosened up slightly. That was to be expected, he thought. As the load shifted during transport, things settled and straps stretched, that's why it was a good idea to check the load often.

Mark made his way around the trailer, trying all the straps from back to front, first one side, then the other. He was able to give two of the straps a couple of clicks to tighten them up, but no other adjustments were required. With the straps all buttoned up tight, Mark was convinced everything was safe and secure.

In the morning, after yet another circle check, Mark had a decision to make. There were two routes between Sudbury and Winnipeg, each one different than the other. Highway 17 had a lot of twists and curves, while Highway 11 was straighter.

However, Highway 17 was the shorter of the two and there were fuel savings to consider. Initially Mark had liked Highway 11, but when he checked the weather forecast and saw it was going to be a perfect day, he figured he'd be okay taking Highway 17 so he could be in Winnipeg before the day was out.

While everything started out well, it wasn't long before he regretted his decision. As he glided through each curve and rounded each bend in the roadway, he could feel the trailer behind him wanting to swing left or right. Every once in a while he could

feel a slight shudder and wondered if there was something going on with the load that he hadn't noticed.

Mark kept his speed slow and even and hoped for a straight stretch of highway that had room enough on the shoulder for him to pull over and check his load. There was something wrong with his load, but what?

Despite his best intentions, despite having a plan, Mark was unable to execute it.

That's because the moment he came upon a straight stretch of highway he suddenly had his hands full trying to avoid another collision.

A car in the oncoming lane was passing a tractor-trailer. The car had no doubt been trailing the rig for kilometres and now that the road had opened up, there was no way the driver was going to pass up his chance to get around the truck.

But the Ministry of Transportation had decided that this particular stretch of highway – although straight – was *not* a good place for vehicles to pass one another. That's why they had put a solid yellow line down the center of the highway.

But the driver of the oncoming car, a late model minivan, didn't seem to care. He was hell-bent on getting by no matter how crazy the move might seem to everyone else on the road.

Yesterday, Mark had kept Mother Load's speed slow and steady, even when drivers risked their necks to pass him.

Today, he decided to ease up on the gas a bit to give this maniac a better chance. If he didn't, the guy probably wouldn't make it.

But the further the minivan got into the pass, the more Mark was convinced that he wasn't going to overtake the rig in front of him in time. Mark knew he should probably slow down further, but with the weight of his load he was sure something bad would happen if he hit the brakes too hard.

Several scenarios ran through Mark's mind, from shifting the load to losing it entirely. He could even envision several of the heavy steel bars breaking free and crashing through the trailer's steel protection plate and piercing the cab all the way to the engine block.

Not a pretty picture.

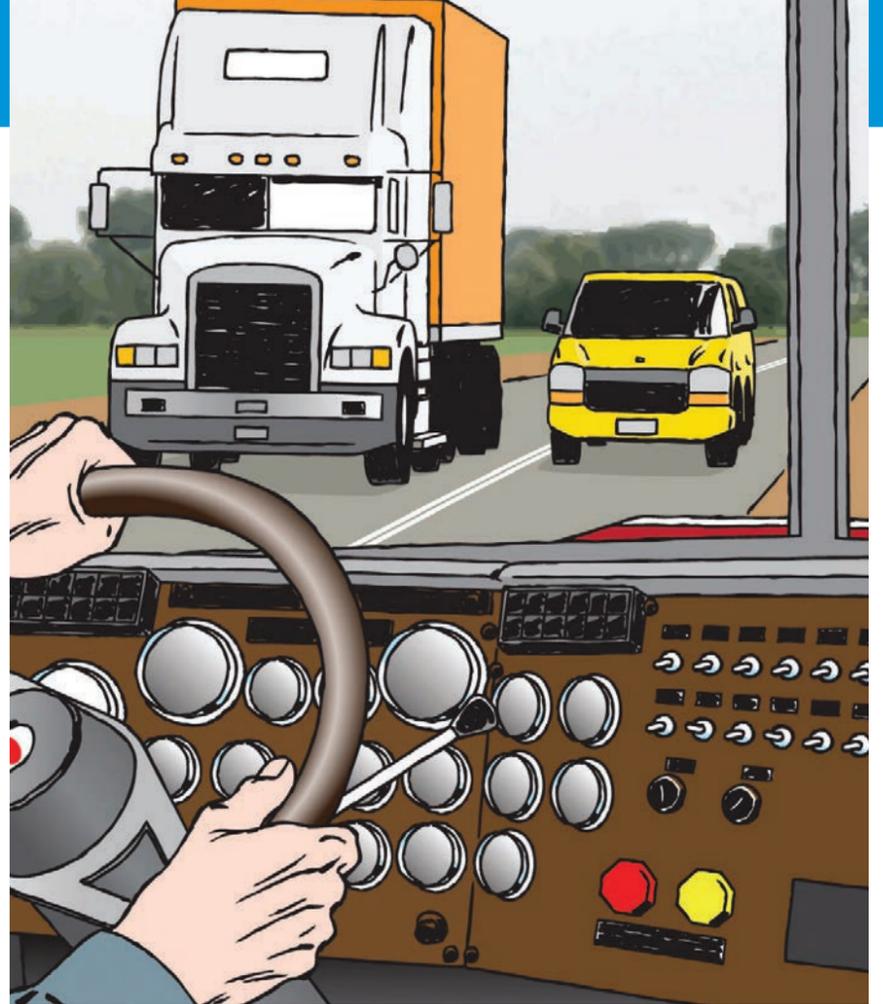


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

And the minivan kept coming, the vehicle short on the power needed for such a pass and the driver short on the common sense that would convince most others to abort the attempt and wait for a better time.

Mark got on the horn and let it blast.

But the minivan didn't slow down or change course.

It was committed to passing now because there was no longer any time to back off and slip back in behind the truck.

Mark touched the brakes and hardly felt any deceleration at all. He was so heavy, and so full of inertia that he'd need to hit the brakes hard to slow down even a little.

He pressed more firmly on the brake pedal and felt the trailer shudder slightly.

The car was upon him. No room. The minivan driver was going to die.

Mark slammed on the brakes and turned right to avoid a collision.

The minivan wooshed past him and cut back into the oncoming lane. The oncoming big rig swerved to its right. Mark's trailer fishtailed behind him.

Once.

Twice.

Then...

SNAP! PING! SHHHHHH!

It was a sound like none he'd ever heard before. It was as if it were raining down reams of sheet metal...as if a hundred heavy-duty springs were suddenly bouncing across the roadway...as if steel was shattering like glass all around him.

Mark kept on the brakes, fighting the wheel left and right until he'd managed to shudder to a stop.

He slumped over the wheel and took a few moments to collect his breath. His heart raced, his knuckles burned white and his body was soaked with sweat.

After the loud crash only the sound of Mother Load's Cummins remained, idling dutifully by the side of the road. It was a sound so familiar and comforting to Mark that it almost sounded like silence.

Mark checked the highway in front of him and behind.

The minivan that had forced him off the road was long gone. And so was the truck it had been passing. In fact, there was nothing on the road except for Mark and his load, half of which had broken free from the trailer and spilled into the ditch.

"At least no one was hurt," he said aloud.

But Mark knew that would only be true for a short while. Someone always got hurt when things like this happened. And this time that someone was going to be Mark. □

– Mark returns next month in Part 3 of *The Blame Game*.

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).



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**PLENTY OF POWER:** The EcoTec3 engine had no problem towing this trailer.

**Continued from page 47**

The truck drives as smooth and quiet as a luxury sedan, but it's also functional, with cleverly designed storage areas sized to accommodate commonly used business tools like smartphones, tablets and hanging folders. The Sierra offers no shortage of USB ports, power outlets, cup holders or storage areas.

It's not an inexpensive truck. Decked out with all the bells and whistles, the truck I drove retails

for north of \$56,000. But GMC isn't targeting penny-pinchers with this truck; it's designed for the successful business owner or customer who wants a truck that screams success. With the new Sierra, GMC is courting what Sharon Sikorski, marketing manager, trucks and utilities, referred to as the "measure twice, cut once" crowd; operators who've achieved some measure of success in their lives or businesses and want a truck that shows it. □



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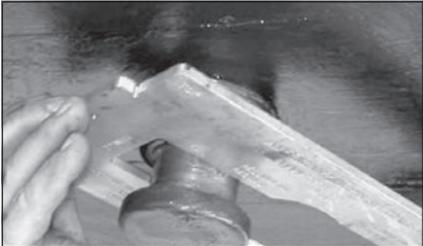
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**Preferred Trailer Type (check all that apply):**  
 Flatbed  Heavy Hauling/Specialized  Moving Van  Tanker  Straight Truck  Super B  Reefer  Van  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply):**  
 Flatbed  Heavy Hauling/Specialized  Moving Van  Tanker  Straight Truck  Super B  Reefer  Van  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**CURRENT DRIVERS LICENSE:** Do you have a Commercial License?  Yes  No  
 License# \_\_\_\_\_ Prov/State issued \_\_\_\_\_ Type \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Truck Driving Experience \_\_\_\_\_/yrs Has your license ever been suspended?  Yes  No  
 Last Employer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Company City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov/State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Start/End Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Job Description \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICATION / TRAINING:** Can you lift 50lbs?  Yes  No

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**TRUCK SHOWS**

# Canadian trucks show well at SuperRigs

Continued from page 1

locals were treated to a light show, parade and fireworks.

Among those in attendance were several Canadian trucks. Jade Transport, always a contender, was on-hand with three trucks from its

Manitoba-based tanker fleet. Andy Zary's 1959 Mack B-61 drew a crowd throughout the show and Ron and Dawn Marie Pickles brought their Pete 384 with 100-inch sleeper cab to the show, while under load with a delivery to New York City.

Chris Guerrero, global brand manager for Shell Rotella, said this year marks the 31st SuperRigs event.

"Rotella has been a part of the trucking community for over 40 years, so for us, it just makes sense," Guerrero said of Shell's involvement in the truck beauty contest. "When you talk about engine oil designed to protect hardworking trucks and you talk about beautiful trucks, what we came to understand is the two aren't mutually exclusive. You can look pretty and work hard and I think these trucks, year in and year out, prove that to people. For us, it's a natural match for the brand and our customer base."

Trucks selected to appear in the SuperRigs calendar are whisked off to nearby locales to be professionally photographed. Only actual working trucks qualify for placement in the popular calendar. The SuperRigs show is hosted in a different location each year, ensuring a steady supply of new entrants.

"Every year we make it a point to try to find a location in a slightly different spot in the US," Guerrero told *Truck News*. "We get contestants from all over the US to each one of these events; when we move it around, what we find is we draw in new contestants from around that area."

Indeed, many of the trucks at this year's show were plated from Wisconsin.

"It's a nice treat for some of our contestants to be able to come out when it's in their backyard," Guerrero said.

The level of competition at this year's event was what those familiar with the SuperRigs have come to expect.

"Every year we've done it, you think you've seen it all, then you have the next event and realize

something new is out there," Guerrero said. "The level of competition year in and year out gets tougher."

He credited the judges for making the tough decisions in scoring the rigs. It's a tough job, considering the high caliber of trucks being entered.

"Some of our judges have been doing this for 21 years," he said. "The level of detail that goes into judging these trucks is enormous. It's not just if they look good – they *all* look good! It is the intricacy of the design, the detail in which they're polished and shined. It's not just looking at the outside, but inside the wheel wells. It is amazing the amount of detail that goes into judging and the reason being, the competition level is super high at this event."

At the end of the show, Jonathan Eilen of Hamton, Minn. was the big winner, his 2007 Pete 379 named Best of Show. He won \$10,000 from Shell, which was bolstered by an additional \$5,000 gift from Mac Trailers. Eilen also won the Best Engine category.

Local William Rethwisch won First Runner-Up and Best Interior, taking home \$4,000 from Shell and \$3,000 from Mac Trailer, while Jeremy Hassevoort of Hamilton, Mich. won the Second Runner-Up prize of \$2,000 from Shell and \$2,000 from Mac, along with Best Chrome. All three trucks receiving Best in Show honours were Peterbilts.

Several of the Canadian entrants had hardware to declare at the border on their trip back home. Jade Transport's Jonathan and Alison Dyck of Saskatoon, Sask. won Best Theme for their 2007 Pete 379. Third place in the tractor division went to Jade's Martin Warner and his 2013 Pete 388, earning him \$750.

And Zary won fourth place in the classic division for that 1959 Mack B-61, earning him \$500. □



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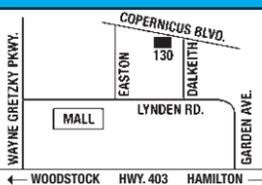
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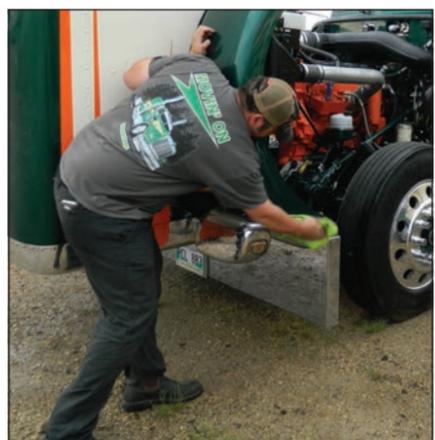
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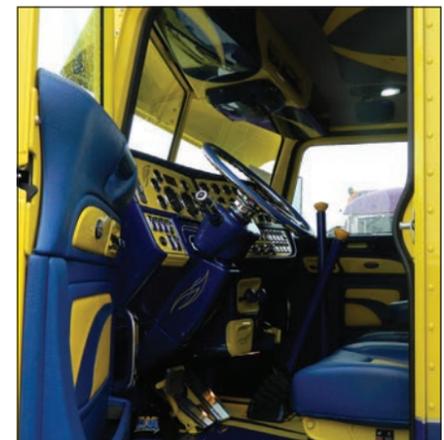




**CLASSIC MACK:** Andy Zary's 1959 Mack B-61.



**MAKE'ER SHINE:** Martin Warner of Jade Transport polishes a bumper.



**HAVE A PEEK:** One of the many spectacular interiors on display.

# Great Lakes Truck Club brings the classics back to Clifford



**COMMON INTERESTS:** Truck enthusiasts chat in front of a Diamond Reo at the Clifford Truck Show. Below, an International TranStar cabover (left) and a Peterbilt dubbed Dirty Dozen.

*Photos by James Menzies*



**By James Menzies**

**CLIFFORD, Ont.** – The Clifford Truck Show rolled into this small southwestern Ontario town June 28-30, bringing together over 160 trucks of various vintages.

As always, the Bulldog Coral was home to a vast collection of Mack trucks. There was also a rare Scania on-hand from Holland. The Clifford Truck Show, put on by the Great Lakes Truck Club, has become a hugely popular and rapidly growing grassroots truck show. There are no awards given out – and a very limited exhibitor area – ensuring the show is all about the trucks and their owners. Five bucks will get you in the gate, making it an affordable family activity for truck enthusiasts and locals, alike.

The show features classic trucks in their original state as well as those that have been painstakingly restored. Pictured are just a couple of the trucks that caught our eye at this year's show. □

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**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – The summer truck show circuit is in full swing and with it comes row after row of pristine trucks squaring off in show'n'shine competitions across North America (*For some of this year's truck show highlights, check out our cover story*).

But spend an afternoon mingling among both competitors and observers and you'll soon find that one man's dream rig is another man's junk heap.

Some love the sleek aerodynamics of new trucks, while others long for the long-nose classic. Some love the comfort and technological gadgetry found in more recent rigs, while others like the simple, dependable trucks from decades ago.

To each his own, we say, and with that in mind, we went to the Husky Truck Stop in Mississauga, Ont. to ask drivers if they prefer older or newer trucks.

•  
**Al Frost**, a driver with B.C.-based



**Truck Stop Question**

*Do you prefer older or newer trucks?*

ADAM LEDLOW



**Al Frost**

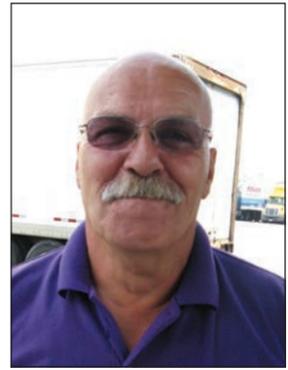
Don Zappone Contracting, who's been behind the wheel for roughly 45 years, says he still has a sweet spot for older trucks.

"These new trucks, to me, they're cookie cutter. They've got no personality, they've got

nothing. The last truck that they brought out that had any kind of pizzazz was that International LoneStar," he told *Truck News*.

Frost says his first truck was a '54 White gas engine single-axle tractor which he used to haul cattle in a 30-ft. tandem trailer from Thunder Bay down to Toronto. And while he yearns for the character of older trucks, he admits he likes the fuel efficiency that comes with the new ones.

•  
**Pierre Belletier**, a straight truck driver with a Quebec-based furniture company, says he could be swayed either way when choosing between an older or newer truck.



**Pierre Belletier**

The 40-year veteran says he liked learning "the hard way" on older trucks, but when he's presented with a new truck these days, "I think, 'Wow, I've got a nice gift.'"

"But I could go either way, because back when I started, they had new styles and new trucks and we used to love them, and now, because they've changed the style and then they change it a little bit more, we love them even more. They're even more presentable."

•  
**Suad Balic**, an owner/operator originally from Bosnia now based in Mississauga, Ont., says the look of a truck really isn't important – it's what's inside that counts.

"It's important how you feel inside the truck. Like those trucks with the long nose, they are so noisy, and that's no good, you can hear nothing else," he said. "Every new model is better than the older one."



**Cory Young**

Thunder Bay-based driver **Cory Young** is as new to the business as his name suggests. But he'd still love a throwback truck if he had his way.

"If I was running by myself, I would have a mid-'90s Peterbilt flatbed; big stacks, badass truck. For what we do, I'd say one of the Freightliners because they're so nice...there's so much more room and organization inside the trucks."



**Hommy Poppe**

**Hommy Poppe**, a driver with Paradise Moving out of Calgary, has been behind the wheel since May of 1963 when he started with a Ford with a 220 Cummins.

And while he's got a soft spot for the Peterbilt 379, now that he's nearing the end of his career, "I like the new stuff. I like the modern style, streamlined. I used to like the long-nosed but now I go for comfort." □

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