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Pay for performance

Is tenure-based driver pay coming to an end? One US fleet exec thinks so.

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A 15L letdown

Canadian carriers using natural gas will have to do without a 15L option for the foreseeable future.



Smoke rises from railway cars that were carrying crude oil after derailing in downtown Lac-Megantic, Que.

Photo by The Canadian Press/Paul Chaisson

The Lac-Megantic Effect

If you thought the Lac-Megantic tragedy was a rail issue, think again. The feds see it as a transportation issue and trucking won't escape their scrutiny.

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By James Menzies

When an unmanned 74-car freight train carrying crude oil careened into the small Quebec town of Lac-Megantic July 6, burning much of it to the ground and killing 47 people, it was easy to dismiss it as a rail issue. After all, though transport trucks are often used to carry crude, the conditions normally don't exist to create a Lac-Megantic-type disaster. Trucks are generally used to carry crude shorter distances and in much smaller volumes than freight trains.

Still, federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt has indicated she views the Lac-Megantic tragedy not as a rail issue, but a transportation issue. She has directed the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities to undertake a review of the current Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) regime for "all modes" and to make recommendations on further areas for improvement.

David Bradley, chief executive officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), says of the hearings scheduled for this month, at least two days will focus on truck transportation.

"It's not surprising that would be the case," Bradley said. "The situation is obviously quite different in rail than it is in trucking – particularly as it pertains to crude – but

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What does the Loonie's swan dive mean to truckers?

By James Menzies

The Loonie has been under attack in recent months, falling to a four-year low of 89.09 cents compared to the US dollar on Jan. 31 and bringing back memories – both good and bad – about how the Canadian trucking business is impacted by something completely out of its control: the value of our currency.

Canadian drivers who haul stateside and carriers who serve the US market both feel the impact of a rapidly rising or depreciating Loonie. We spoke to experts to find out how everyone – from

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Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES



So, you want to haul dangerous goods?

This month's cover story explores the transportation of dangerous goods by truck and changes that may be foisted upon that segment of the industry as a result of the terrible rail tragedy at Lac-Mégantic, Que. last summer.

Federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt has clearly stated she feels the Lac-Mégantic incident wasn't just a rail issue, but a transportation issue, and she has vowed to review TDG by all modes, including truck. In fact, at upcoming hearings to review the transportation of dangerous goods, two full days are expected to be spent discussing truck transportation.

The concerns, some of which were outlined in our cover story, include worries that the feds will impose further restrictions or tighter regulations upon trucking companies, even though dangerous goods truckers are already highly regulated - much more so than rail - and can boast a safety record that's really quite impeccable given the volumes of product being transported on a daily basis. It takes a special kind of driver to haul dangerous goods, and most carriers in this segment are cognizant of this. They seek out highly skilled drivers and then

diligently train them to become product-handling experts.

I spoke to Marcel Pouliot, vice-president of safety and industrial services with Trimac, to find out the screening process it puts new hires through before handing them the keys.

The company has produced product stewardship manuals for each of the commodities it hauls, and requires drivers to familiarize themselves with the material, so they're aware of the handling characteristics and unique challenges related to each and every product. This includes learning the intricacies of the equipment that's used to transport each of those commodities.

Once classroom and hands-on equipment training has been conducted, drivers are paired with a driver-instructor, who they will job-shadow to learn firsthand how to safely load, deliver and unload product. Once they demonstrate a proficiency in these areas, new hires are then turned over to a full-time driver trainer, whose job is to perform a job task observation of the new hire to determine whether or not they are ready to be sent out on their own.

The driver trainer conducts a road

test, a product-handling test and a knowledge test. Even at this point, some drivers are released from the company if they don't demonstrate the appropriate skill set. Others are finally allowed to begin making deliveries on their own. But the training doesn't end there. The driver trainers continue to perform job task observations on all existing drivers at least once per year. Pouliot told me that Trimac currently employs 1,150 drivers in Canada and last year performed 3,482 job task observations.

"That is how we train our drivers and how we verify the level of competency of our drivers," Pouliot said. "We coach them on an ongoing basis throughout their career."

Not only are dangerous goods drivers required to be professional drivers behind the wheel, they must also be product-handling and equipment experts. There's a shared sense of responsibility for safety from the top to the bottom, and Trimac is not unique within the trucking industry in this regard.

Following the Lac-Mégantic tragedy, Ed Burkhardt, chairman of the now-



bankrupt railway that caused the catastrophe, gallingly shifted the blame to his employees. "I wasn't the guy who didn't set the brakes on the train," he told media. To decide trucking needs rail-type changes imposed on it because of an isolated incident would be like assuming, from Burkhardt's egregious comments, that the entire rail industry shares a similarly cavalier attitude towards safety. These types of generalizations must be avoided unless clear supporting evidence is provided. ☀

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

The view with Lou

LOU SMYRLIS



Stop the stupid scorpion

Do you know the story about the scorpion and the frog? That's the one where a scorpion begs a frog to swim him across the river. 'No way,' says the frog, concerned that as soon as they're in the middle of the river, the scorpion would sting him.

'Why would I do that?' the scorpion replies. 'I'd drown with you.'

The frog can't argue with that logic so he lets the scorpion hop on his back and starts to swim across. Sure enough, right in the middle of the river, the scorpion stings the frog.

'Now we're both going to die,' screams the frog.

'I know,' replies the scorpion. 'I just couldn't help myself.'

To be honest, I never really got the

moral of that story. Why would the scorpion be that stupid?

Yet, when you think about it, we have been that stupid when it comes to solving the driver shortage the past 20 years. Can you really call it a driver shortage when driver turnover is so high?

I had to laugh when a few weeks ago the American Trucking Associations published a report indicating the annualized driver turnover rate for large truckload fleets improved in the third quarter of 2013 by two percentage points to 97%. That's a number we are supposed to feel positive about? The "improvement" still leaves large US truckload carriers three percentage points short of turning over their entire driving staff every year.

I realize Canadian TL fleet turnover levels are not that high but would anyone compare our turnover rate with other competing industries? At what point can we just admit the real problem is not so much a shortage of drivers but a problem with not treating and paying drivers well enough to keep them?

Well, whatever your opinion on the reality of the driver shortage, the industry does have a clear chance to take a positive step.

A new national advisory committee, Supporting Women in Freight Transportation, has been formed to help women find and develop careers in the trucking industry. Trucking HR Canada is the lead organization behind SWIFT, but a broad range of senior managers, direc-

tors, presidents and C-level executives are involved as committee members, including our own Transportation Media associate publisher Kathy Penner.

According to figures issued by SWIFT, only 3% of truck drivers, mechanics, transport trailer technicians, and cargo workers in Canada are women. So there is a lot to be gained by attracting women to the industry.

Yet, letters to the editor since we posted the SWIFT announcement a few weeks ago point out that one of the biggest obstacles for the few women already in trucking is the industry's own attitude towards women.

We have a clear opportunity here to engage a part of the labour pool that has primarily ignored us in the past. Can we stop acting the part of the stupid scorpion? ☀

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

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

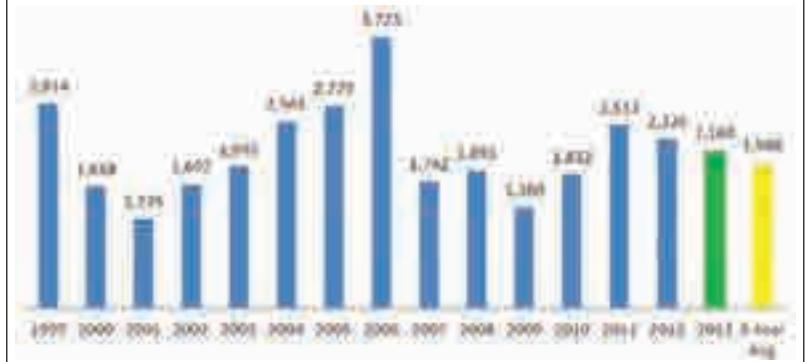
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Monthly Class 8 Sales – Dec 13

The year closed with Class 8 truck sales of 2,168, reflecting the trend Class 8 sales have experienced for most of 2013, coming in slightly behind last year's totals. It made for the seventh best December going back to 1999. Only International, Kenworth and Peterbilt posted slightly higher figures than the previous year. The sales total for the month is also less than 200 above the five-year average.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	503	575
International	235	224
Kenworth	309	276
Mack	209	314
Peterbilt	365	317
Volvo	312	357
Western Star	235	263
TOTALS	2168	2326

Historical Comparison – Dec 13 Sales

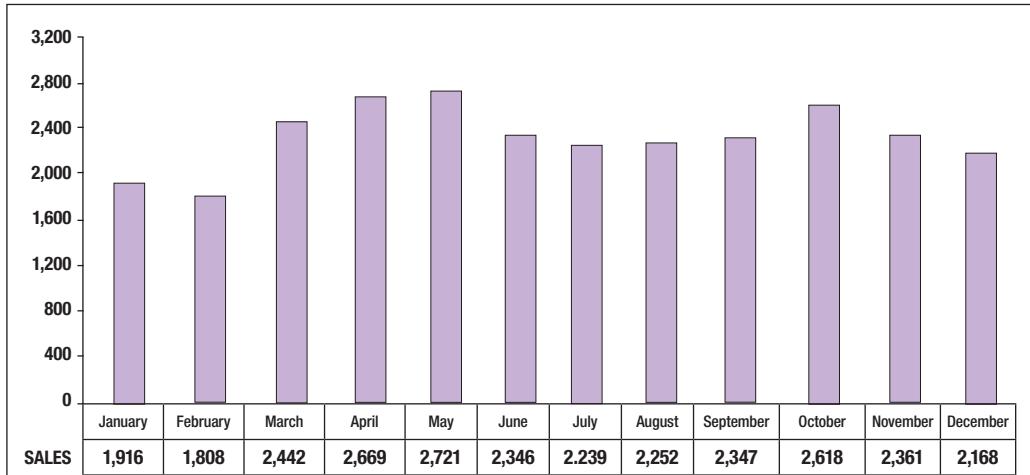


Class 8 Sales (YTD Dec 13) by Province and OEM

OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	571	832	215	378	2,987	1,235	407	124	25	51	6,825
Kenworth	744	1,790	503	104	801	834	110	0	0	0	4,886
Mack	157	360	200	62	817	378	92	75	0	14	2,155
International	151	718	79	204	1,842	759	133	48	35	34	4,003
Peterbilt	564	1,286	321	251	685	504	173	60	0	0	3,844
Volvo	368	310	127	222	1,604	800	138	70	0	13	3,652
Western Star	358	809	78	79	476	446	63	95	5	37	2,446
TOTALS	2,913	6,105	1,523	1,300	9,212	4,956	1,116	472	65	149	27,811

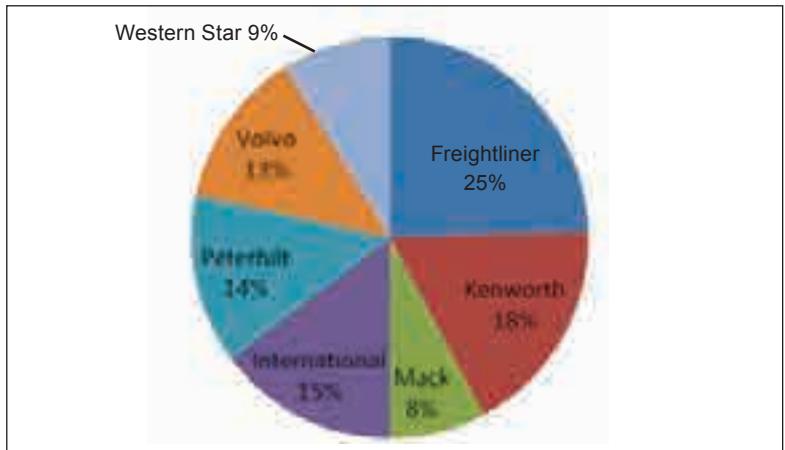
With the numbers from the final month of 2013 in, the year closed as the 7th best year for Class 8 sales since 1999, which is pretty much where it has tracked for most of the past 12 months. The slippage expected for the final quarter did not really surface till the final month, whose numbers were slightly disappointing although still above 2,000. As a result total Class 8 truck sales came in about 700 short of our revised estimate of around 28,500 vehicles for 2013. The year was also almost 5,000 trucks above the five-year average.

12-Month Sales Trends



Class 8 sales in 2013 may not be as strong as last year's but they have come in above 2,000, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007, for 10 straight months now. The big question was whether sales would hold up over the summer months and they did. The next question was how they would hold up for the final quarter of 2013 and October and November both showed positive results. December was a bit disappointing but still came in above 2,000.

Market Share Class 8 – Dec 13 YTD



There has been little change in market share over the past year. Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, was solidly in control of the market share lead all year long, and wrapped up 2013 with about a quarter of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Kenworth finished 2012 in the number two spot with an 18% market share and has repeated its performance in 2013. Navistar International finished the year with 15% market share followed by Peterbilt which has a 14% share of the Canadian Class 8 market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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 Circulation Manager: Mary Garufi
 V.P. Publishing: Alex Papanou
 President: Bruce Creighton

Advertising Sales

Inquiries: Kathy Penner (416) 510-6892



Lou Smyrlis
 PUBLISHER, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
 (416) 510-6881
 lou@TransportationMedia.ca



Kathy Penner
 ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
 (416) 510-6892
 kpenner@trucknews.com



Brenda Grant
 NATIONAL ACCOUNT SALES
 (416) 494-3333
 brendacgrant@bell.net



Don Besler
 NATIONAL ACCOUNT SALES MANAGER
 (416) 699-6966
 donbesleris@rogers.com



Doug Copeland
 REGIONAL ACCOUNT MANAGER
 (905) 715-9511
 dcopeland@trucknews.com



Laura Moffatt
 RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Editorial

Inquiries: James Menzies (416) 510-6896



James Menzies
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR
 (416) 510-6896
 jmenzies@trucknews.com



Carolyn Gruske
 CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
 (416) 510-6809
 cgruske@TransportationMedia.ca



Julia Kuzeljevich
 CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
 (416) 510-6880
 julia@TransportationMedia.ca



John G. Smith
 TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENT
 wordsmithmedia@rogers.com



Brad Ling
 VIDEO PRODUCTION MANAGER

Subscription inquiries

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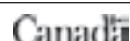
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US trucking conditions strengthen

Freight tonnage hits 15-year high, while equipment orders increase

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

If the trucking industry is still struggling, it's not for lack of freight to haul. The American Trucking Associations (ATA) Truck Tonnage Index just concluded its strongest year since 1998.

For-hire truck tonnage in the US rose 0.6% in December, on the heels of a 4.7% spike in November, the ATA reported. The increases pushed the index 6.2% higher for the full year of 2013, making it the strongest year for US tonnage in 15 years.

The November gain was sharply higher than the 2.7% increase that was first reported by ATA.

"Tonnage ended 2013 on a high note, which fits with many economic indicators as trucking is an excellent reflection of the tangible goods economy," said ATA chief economist Bob Costello. "The final quarter was the strongest we've seen in a couple of years, rising 2.2% from the third quarter and 9.1% from a year earlier."

Costello reiterated his statement from last month: the tonnage acceleration in the second half of the year is pointing to an economy that is likely stronger than some might believe.

"I'm seeing more broad-based gains now. The improvement is not limited to the tank truck and flatbed sectors like earlier in the year," he

said. "With manufacturing and consumer spending picking up, coupled with solid volumes from hydraulic fracturing, I look for tonnage to be good in 2014 as well."

Tonnage wasn't the only variable that had a strong showing in 2013; new truck orders were also up significantly.

Class 8 truck orders finished 2013 up 17% compared to 2012, while medium-duty orders were up 10%, according to ACT Research.

The year was closed out on a high note, with December Class 8 orders up 50%, representing the strongest month for orders since March 2006.

"The US and Canada did the heavy lifting for Class 8 orders in December, while Mexico and non-NAFTA orders moved sideways at low levels," said Kenny Vieth, president and senior analyst at ACT Research. "Strengthening domestic demand has been supported in the second half of the year by improving economic activity that has translated into improved profits for truckers. The softness in December's Classes 5-7 orders is viewed as a temporary pause following two very strong order months for medium-duty."

December saw medium-duty truck orders fall month-over-month, but for the full year Classes 6-7 truck orders

were up 20% compared to 2012 and Class 5 orders down 16%.

And 2014 started strong as well, with FTR reporting preliminary Class 8 net orders of 34,403 units, marking a 56% year-over-year improvement and the first time the industry has seen back-to-back months in excess of 30,000 units since 2006.

"Orders were way beyond expectations," said Don Ake, FTR's vice-president of commercial vehicles. "This is another great order month to kick-start 2014. Order strength was broad-based among manufacturers and countries. This is a very positive signal for the industry. The strong orders are consistent with the tightening of capacity in the marketplace. Fleets and dealers continue to display confidence in the freight market."

Trailer orders also closed 2013 on a high note, rising 14% in December, with six of 10 trailer categories posting positive results, according to ACT.

For the full year 2013, a total of 231,700 orders were booked, down 2% from 2012. It marked the third consecutive year of annual orders greater than 230,000, ACT reports.

"All trailer categories had single-digit cancellation rates, which is a positive for the industry," said Frank Maly, director, CV transportation analysis and research at ACT. "In ad-

dition to indicating that existing fleet commitments are solid, low cancellations also simplify material flow and order planning by the original equipment manufacturers."

FTR noted in its most recent Trucking Conditions Index, that conditions for trucking companies were still favourable, though they softened in November.

The November reading of 7.01 was 20% lower than the month before, but still reflects a positive environment for truckers. The regulatory drag from hours-of-service changes is reducing capacity, FTR noted, adding the upside economics have yet to translate into real market tightness, mitigating a rise in the index.

"While we did see a slight dip in the (Trucking Conditions) index, the absolute level is still suggesting a relatively healthy trucking environment," said Jonathan Starks, FTR's director of transportation analysis. "We have also seen several positive indicators being reported in the industry during December and January that are making us slightly more bullish about the direction in the market as we enter 2014. Some of the recent data suggests a significantly tightening capacity situation in trucking. While some of the tightening is due to the storms that have plagued the US, it appears that the recovery in the manufacturing market, coupled with the hours-of-service regulations changes, are finally impacting the truck market as we have been predicting for several months. If this tightening continues it would be a significant boon for truckers, as they will finally have the ability to raise shipping rates." ●

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TH-129 Mar 2014 © M. Jackson



Across

- 1 Transmission type
- 6 Trucker's workplace
- 8 Turbocharger ____ gauge
- 9 "Yours To Discover" plates' home
- 10 Shell engine-oil brand
- 11 Late-'70s Chevy conventional
- 12 Pneumatic-suspension component
- 14 Ontario GM-plant city
- 18 Truck pulling mobile home
- 20 Arkansas' "The ____ State" plates
- 22 Reefer or dry van
- 23 VIA's roadway
- 24 Less Than Truckload, briefly (1,1,1)
- 25 Home of "America's Dairyland" plates

Down

- 1 "Wild Rose Country" plates' home
- 2 With 3-Down, low-price stopover option (3,4)
- 3 See 2-Down clue
- 4 Typical traffic type (3,3)
- 5 Urban-transit vehicle (4,3)
- 6 Urban tire-sidewall scuffers
- 7 UPS truck color
- 13 Truck-aerodynamics focus
- 15 Semitrailer-and-pup rigs (1,6)
- 16 Truck-transmission brand
- 17 Traffic tie-ups, informally
- 18 Really write off a truck
- 19 Cabot ____, scenic Cape Breton route
- 21 Power-boosting engine add-on

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SEE OUR AD PAGE 56



Spend money to improve roads and drivers, TCA urges

Chris Burruss, president of the Truckload Carriers Association, says the industry is willing to pay its share for infrastructure improvements

By Carolyn Gruske

It's not too often you actually hear somebody come out in favour of a tax increase, but that's exactly what Chris Burruss did.

Speaking at the Driving for Profit conference in Mississauga, Ont., the president of the Truckload Carriers Association told the audience that the existing infrastructure is so bad in the US that something needs to be done about it.

"As we look forward over the next

couple of years, the key priority for us is going to be highway funding," said Burruss.

"We have a woefully underfunded infrastructure in America right now. It's almost an embarrassing situation. It was built as the model for the international community. It was a national defence network. It connected the United States and was able to move military equipment on a logistical basis. And it became a hell of a way to get goods from Point A to

Point B. Unfortunately, we have not kept up with the demand. It seems like we're always two lanes behind on the interstates. So by the time it gets to be a four-lane, it needs to be six. And by the time it's six, it needs to be eight. Plus the fact that over 80% of our bridges in the United States are structurally deficient. That doesn't give you a big warm fuzzy feeling as you're travelling over these things, particularly when you start talking about increasing truck sizes and weights.

"The problem in part is our own fault as an industry. For years we opposed everything – every single fee increase. We opposed any tax increases of any kind and we were pretty damn good at doing it. That started to change about five years ago when people started to say, 'Look we're going to have to do something. You either become part of the solution or we'll just move on without you.' Then we found ourselves in the situation in the United States that was rare: the lack of desire to raise taxes, even in Congress. Even the Democrats don't want to raise taxes, so we're the ones, ironically, out there saying 'We want a tax increase. We're willing to take a higher fuel tax.' But it just hasn't been on the table."

According to Burruss, there is a bill before the government about a 15 cent fuel tax increase, but he said "that's probably not near enough. It will have to be more than that. The problem we find ourselves in is as fuel economy comes up, tax revenues go down, so if you don't tie that fuel tax to something, you end up in the same position we find ourselves in now."

Burruss explained that the current highway funding legislation, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act) expires in September, but in November the US is having its mid-term congressional elections.

"If you think they are going to try to pass some tax increase to increase funding for highways before that election, you're kidding yourself. There is no way that is going to happen. I think they may have a shot of getting a framework bill in place before the elections, but it's not going to be voted on any time soon."

While he can see the need for a higher fuel tax, for the most part, Burruss doesn't believe in adding tolls to the highways, calling it an "ineffective way to fund infrastructure."

About the only place he can see tolls is on new highway construction, but even then the association would need to look at every single project individually.

Along with funding highway construction and maintenance, Burruss said the TCA's other key priorities are the driver shortage, the industry's image, equipment cost and fuel, and insurance requirements.

He also spoke at length about the need to change the job to better match the needs of drivers. He says driver pay will have to increase, that there needs to be ways of allowing drivers to spend more time at home, and working to improve drivers' health.

"Driver health is a big issue for us," he said, noting that not only is the industry losing drivers for age-related reasons, but that others are vanishing due to health-related causes. "They're simply not here anymore. Our industry is at the bottom when it

comes to comparing health numbers, and I'll just give you a few examples. Seventy per cent of our drivers are obese, compared to 31% of workers in other industries....Fifty-one per cent are smokers versus 19% of other workers in the States. Self-reported diabetes is twice what it is in other occupations at 14%. Fifteen percent show signs of sleep apnea – which I think is a highly subjective number. I think it's more than that...and the life expectancy in the mid-upper 50s is well below the national average."

He added that while "we talk about drivers being the most important part of our businesses as an industry, yet we're not willing to do the things we need to do to try to help them extend their lives."

Burruss thinks it doesn't matter where the health problem originated. He thinks if there is a tool, an option, or a solution that can help employees solve their issues, companies should use it.

"We find, it's not that the drivers don't know what their problems are," he said. "They have a fatalistic view of what can be done to improve their lives given their sedentary lifestyle. It's our responsibility to show them (what can be done)."

Burruss also said it's up to the industry to show itself in a better light. By having a better image, it makes it harder for the government to enact legislation deemed detrimental to the industry.

"It's easy to get things pushed through to an industry that doesn't have a very good image." ●

Obama's State of the Union speech comes up short: ATA

WASHINGTON, D.C.

American Trucking Associations (ATA) president and CEO Bill Graves said US President Barack Obama was short on details concerning infrastructure during his recent State of the Union address.

"While we appreciate President Obama making reference to the need for infrastructure investment, we remain disappointed in the continued lack of specificity when he discusses funding," Graves said. "While it is critically important to the nation that Congress and the administration come together on a multi-year highway bill this year, we believe that until the administration puts forward a serious, user-based funding proposal we will risk going over the Highway Trust Fund 'fiscal cliff' in the near-term and be woefully underfunded to meet the longer-term needs of the nation."

"It was an honour to attend the State of the Union, but the president's proposal was sorely lacking in details and comes up short of what the nation needs to maintain our economic competitiveness," added ATA chairman Phil Byrd, president and CEO of Bulldog Highway Express.

"Trucks use our roads and bridges to move more than 70% of the nation's freight and if do not address our infrastructure deficit the system will soon become a drag on our economic recovery and hinder our future growth." ●



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Changes to US regulations in a holding pattern

Gridlock in Washington means little is getting done to benefit the trucking industry

By Carolyn Gruske

When is an update not an update? When there is no new information to report, but a report must be made anyway.

That's the unenviable position Dave Heller found himself in at the Driving for Profit conference. Heller is director of safety and policy for the US-based Truckload Carriers Association (TCA), and he was in Mississauga to talk to attendees about the US regulatory environment.

As Heller explained, much of what he had to say was nearly identical to what was said last year – not because the industry isn't working to make improvements, but because of government delays.

"Everything is delayed," he said. "We've been waiting for regulations for years. It continues to be a waiting game. The federal government is not moving quickly at all."

According to Heller, that lack of movement means the issues the industry cares about fixing aren't being addressed. He cited data from an American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) survey, which identified the top 10 critical issues facing the industry.

"What changed (on the list) from last year?" he asked as he introduced the list. "Nothing changed from last year. It's the same list. Things have changed in order, but it's the same list."

Topping the list were HoS and CSA (see below for the full list) but just because they came one and two, doesn't mean much in real terms. Just because these issues are deemed critical by the industry, that doesn't make the government address them any quicker.

He said what was supposed to be a US federal government 10-year plan to rate drivers and remove the riskiest ones (known as the driver safety measurement system) from the highways has been delayed. An entry-level driver training mandate (ELDT) originally proposed by the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) was withdrawn.

The creation of a national drug and alcohol clearing house is also on hold, as are regulations to deal with coercion (such as drivers being pressured to operate in a way that breaks the law).

A notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) about speed limiters was originally expected in early 2014, but Heller says that will likely be delayed as well. The CSA crash weighting research plan, which was expected last summer, has also been delayed.

Even in areas where there seems to have been government action, Heller said progress isn't really being made. For example, new HoS regulations (the fifth revision since 1995) came

into place on July 1, 2013, but the government is still looking at HoS issues, including the 34-hour restart and the 168-hour count-back and conducting studies about the changes.

"Hours of service, where are we going from here? First and foremost we have the 34-hour restart study the agency is conducting. And of course, as luck would have it, there's a delay," he explained, adding the government "actually issued a rule before they knew the results of the 34-hour restart study – and before they could get the results of the 168-hour count-back, the rule that is actually causing issues for everybody in the industry, drivers and carriers alike."

"This was supposed to be out last summer, but here it is 2014 in January, and it's not out yet. So it's delays once again."

Heller said there are other studies

on the schedule, including one about the split sleeper berth ruling.

"FMCSA moving forward on split sleeper berth study. They are looking at greater flexibility in the sleeper berth. Is it going to go back to a five and five split? Who knows?"

Still, despite the lack of government speediness on a large number issues, the changes that have been made seem to be having a positive effect on the industry. Heller presented data that show significant safety improvements over the past few years.

Some of the figures he presented were a:

- Drop in violations per roadside inspection (down 6.3% in 2012 and down 8% in 2011);
- Drop in driver violation rates (down 7.6% in 2012 and 10.3% in 2011);
- Drop in vehicle violation rates

(down 7.7% in 2012 and 6.3% in 2011);

- Drop in accidents per million miles (0.51 in 2010, 0.47 in 2011, 0.45 in 2012 and 0.45 in 2013).

"CSA is working. It's doing its job and giving a roadmap for the agency to issue regulations," he said.

The ATRI Top 10 Critical Issues:

1. HoS
2. CSA
3. Driver Shortage
4. The Economy
5. Electronic Logging Mandate
6. Truck Parking
7. Driver Retention
8. Fuel Supply/Prices
9. Infrastructure/Congestion
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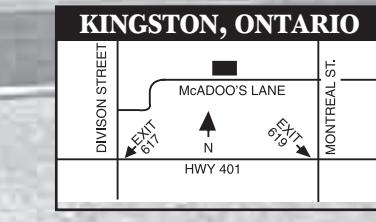
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Long combination vehicle corridor remains incomplete

Fleets get creative to take advantage of LCV efficiencies while dreaming of an unbroken link between the East Coast and Ontario.

By Carroll McCormick

RIVIERE DU LOUP, QUEBEC

Every year or so since 2002 another few kilometres of Route 185 between Rivière du Loup and the New Brunswick border are twinned and opened to traffic. But when the 94-kilometre project will be finished, completing an unbroken divided highway between Halifax, N.S. and Windsor, Ont., is still anyone's guess.

Twenty-one kilometres are twinned and another 33 kilometres will be twinned by 2015. The remaining 40 kilometres, the \$562-million Phase 3, is still in the "where's the funding?" stage, making the commonly believed completion date of 2018 approximately meaningless.

"As we speak, the Quebec government is speaking with the Canadian government regarding the funding of this project. Because of this it is too early to give an end date of Phase 3, because we don't know the beginning date," Transports Québec says.

Just how many long combination vehicle (LCV) operators, restricted to divided highways, are drooling over the prospect of roaring unimpeded over the 185 is unclear. The Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec granted 715 LCV permits in 2013.

"They are all dreaming about the completion of that road," says Marc Cadieux, director general, Quebec Trucking Association (QTA).

Groupe Guilbault, probably Québec's second-largest carrier, is keen. "We are doing the biggest mileage in LCV between Rivière du Loup and Montreal. We have the biggest number of permits for Ontario, too. As soon as the 185 is twinned, it is for sure that we will (run) LCVs four or five times a day," says Eric Gignac, president, Guilbault.

Some carriers are breaking up their LCVs at one end of the 185, moving the trailers to the other end and re-assembling them. Just how many are doing this is not clear. The QTA does not know.

"We have a lot of discussion internally whether we should or should not do LCV to the Maritimes. Because of the LTL freight we carry, we don't have a lot of time," Gig-

nac says. But the lure of 30 to 35% in savings may prove irresistible, even before the twinning is complete. "I will probably try it with one or two of our trucks. I (have been wanting) to try it for two or three years. Day & Ross and Armour are doing it a lot," Gignac notes.

At least 10 carriers from the Atlantic provinces are hop-scotching LCVs over the 185, according to Jean-Marc Picard, executive director of the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association (APTA). One of

"We have to have twice the number of converter dollies that we'd normally need."

Cody Jorgensen, Terra Nova

them, Salisbury, New Brunswick-based Terra Nova Transport, began doing it four years ago. It currently makes 15-20 trips in each direction a week.

"For us it is well worth it. We feel under the circumstances we have it mastered," says Cody Jorgensen, co-owner, Terra Nova.

Terra Nova pulls off its "now-you-see-the-LCV-now you-don't" routine using three different scenarios.

Each involves two permitted LCV stops: one off New Brunswick's Exit 8 just south of the 185, the other in St-Antonin, five kilometres south of Rivière du Loup.

Scenario 1: This is the most basic one. Take a westbound trip, for example. The driver takes Exit 8, parks the converter dolly and hooks back up with first trailer, a 20- to 30-minute job. He drives 105 kilometres to St-Antonin and drops the trailer.

He bobbails back to Exit 8 and runs the second trailer up to St-Antonin. He hooks the two trailers together with a converter dolly positioned there.

Rebuilding the LCV takes 20-30 minutes. Off he goes for Ontario. Total cost in time is 3.5 hours. "We have to have twice the number of converter dollies that we'd normally need," Jorgensen notes.

When Phase 2 of the twinning is completed in 2015, westbound LCVs will be able to push over 45 kilometres further north on the 185 before hitting two-lane road, slashing that 3.5-hour time. Asked whether he would move his staging area north too, Jorgensen says, "Oh yes. We'd be hunting for land instantly."

Scenario 2: Terra Nova uses this one the most often. (Try using two pennies to represent an eastbound LCV and two nickels for the westbound LCV). An LCV leaves Ontario. When it is five hours away from St-Antonin, Terra Nova dispatches an LCV from Salisbury. At Exit 8 it disassembles and hauls one trailer to St-Antonin.

The eastbound LCV, meanwhile, has disassembled in St-Antonin and is hauling one trailer to Exit 8. Each arrives at the other's drop yard, unhooks, grabs the remaining trailer and returns to Exit 8 and St-Antonin. Now the two eastbound trailers are at Exit 8 and the two westbound trailers are in St-Antonin. The driver at Exit 8 builds an LCV and heads east. The driver at St-Antonin builds an LCV and motors west.

"This is the perfect scenario, what we strive for. The end result is no empty mileage," Jorgensen says.

Scenario 3: This one involves getting help from a local carrier in St-Jacques to move the trailers between Exit 8 and St-Antonin, but the details will have to wait for the book. The exercise is worth it. An LCV means one less driver and tractor, less insurance and less fuel. On the cost side, fuel mileage drops three-quarters of a mile per gallon hauling an LCV, Terra Nova pays its specialist drivers 51.5% more, pays rent at the staging areas and has extra converter dollies.

Will Jorgensen be overjoyed to see the twinning completed? "My biggest fear is that when the 185 is twinned, it will be wide open...with more carrier involvement it could affect the rates. It could be a double-edged sword. It is the unknown. I would hate to be hauling LCVs at cheap rates."

Gignac comments, "I don't mind if there is an increase in competition. It will reduce my costs." However, he adds, "Shippers in Quebec are asking for LCV rates. I don't want to give customers LCV rates. I say, 'Mr. Customer, give me two loads with matching weights, the same destination, at the same time'." ●

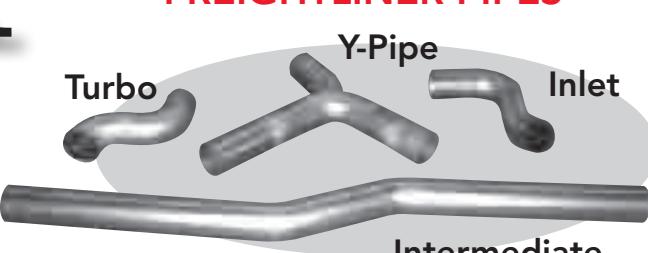
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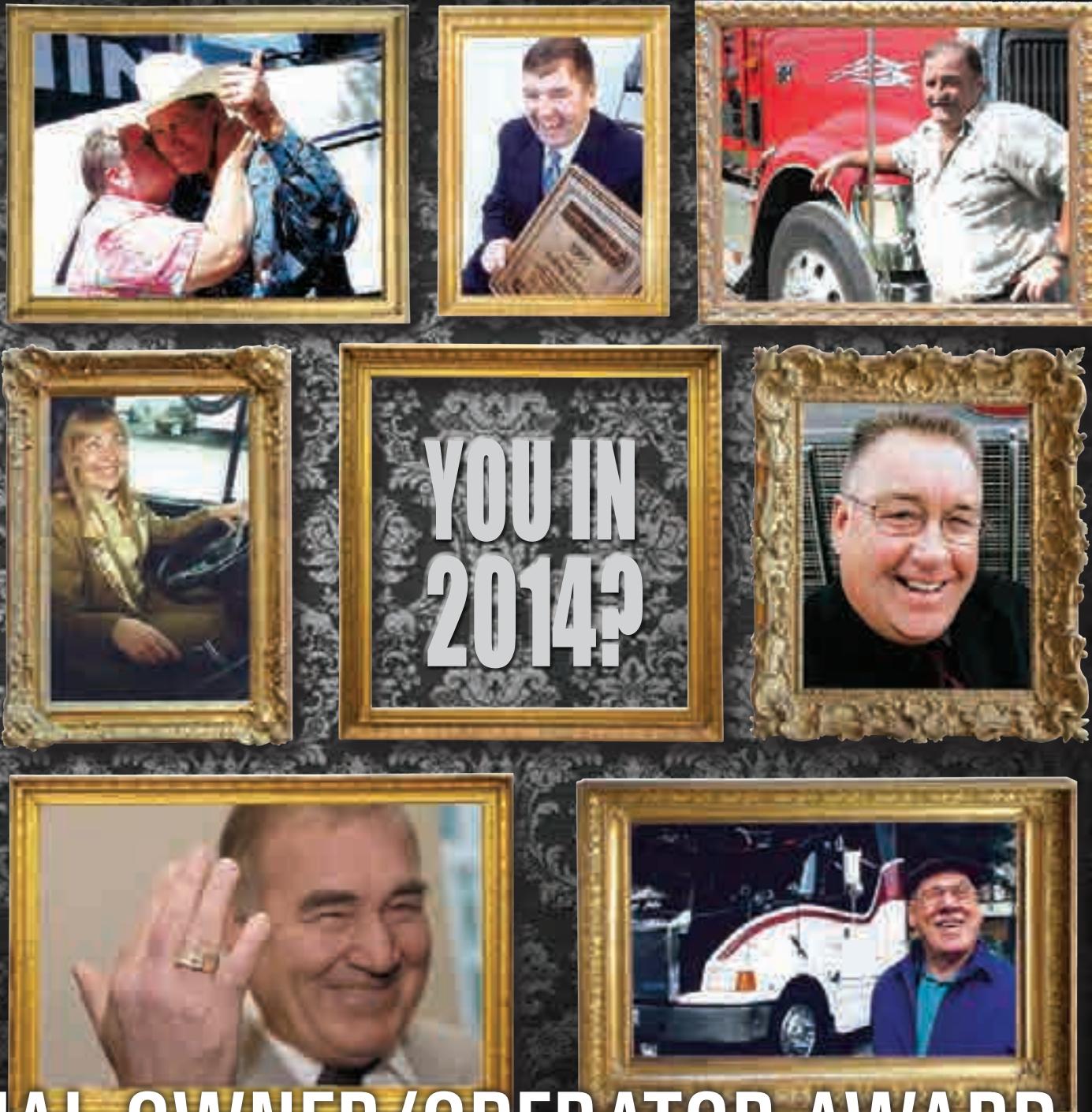




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Is tenure-based driver pay coming to an end?

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

T

he days of tenure-based pay increases for professional drivers could soon be over, as more carriers look to reward their most productive drivers instead of the ones who've simply been there the longest.

That was the assessment of Tom Kretsinger Jr., president of American Central Transport and guest of the popular How They Did It portion of the most recent Driving for Profit seminar. Kretsinger, who also serves as chair of the Truckload Carriers Association, said his company now uses driver scorecards and adjusts the pay of each of its drivers every six months based on their performance.

"Our costs are going up faster than our rates and we call that margin squeeze," Kretsinger said. "It's not sustainable. What is the answer to that? The only logical answer is, you have to get more productivity out of what you have. We noticed some of our worst drivers were our highest-paid because of tenure and some of our best guys were the lowest paid because they hadn't been with us for long. We went to pay-for-performance, where our company drivers' pay resets every six months based on how they perform. As an industry, we've always treated all drivers the same and they're not the same. Some work harder than others, some get better fuel (mileage) than others, some are safer and some are more professional and show up on time."

Drivers at ACT can earn between 36 and 45 cents a mile, depending on their performance. Kretsinger acknowledged drivers who've seen their pay rolled back for poor performance haven't been happy, but added "If a guy goes from 40 cents to 36 cents and leaves us, that's probably a good thing for us."

It may seem harsh, but Kretsinger said drivers should be paid for what they contribute.

"My 45 cent (per mile) drivers are more efficient and make me more money than my 36 (cent per mile drivers)," he reasoned.

The competition for good drivers has ramped up since the end of the recession. Kretsinger said the CSA enforcement regimen now means all carriers are being more selective in who they hire. ACT has found some success in rewarding its top performers but it has employed other solutions as well.

ACT used to require driving experience within the past year, but it now considers hiring drivers who've been out of the seat for a while. Through its ReACTivate program, ACT will assign professional drivers with experience – but none in the past year – to a mentor for a period of two weeks to determine if their driving skills are still adequate. It has found many of these former drivers have retained their skills and gone on to be "great" drivers for the company.

It also has focused recruitment efforts on military veterans, however Kretsinger said there's been little interest among returning soldiers.

"We can't seem to find an interest (among) those folks," he said, adding they may not be inclined to go out on the road just after returning to their families from a stint overseas.

Missouri-based ACT is a family-run company, built by a family of transportation lawyers. Kretsinger Jr. is a third-generation lawyer.

His father, Tom Sr., in 1972 purchased the trucking company his father founded some 46 years earlier, renaming it American Central Transport.

Truck News editorial director Lou Smyrlis, who moderated the discussion, pointed out the irony that traditionally risk-averse lawyers would start a risk-prone business such as a trucking firm. But Kretsinger said there are some lessons he learned in the legal field that translated well into trucking.

"Law teaches you to be forward thinking," he said, "to hear both

sides of an argument before you make a conclusion. It teaches you to go after facts. It teaches you sometimes to be able to take a position you may not personally agree with because it's the best position to take at that time."

But Kretsinger did admit the family of lawmen turned businessmen did endure some conflict.

"The minute my dad became a businessman, he hated lawyers," Kretsinger joked. "And I was a lawyer many years after he became a businessman, so he really didn't trust me the first few years."

The younger Kretsinger brought to the company organizational skills.

"We had no filing system," he recalled. "Things like that, lawyers worry about."

Today, Kretsinger still applies lessons learned as a transportation lawyer to the running of the business.

"I look at my business as a castle; I need to build moats around it. I see all these things that can attack it," he said. "Risk is getting different."

Today, Kretsinger said, legal risks are everywhere. In the US, this includes the growing attack on the owner/operator business model.

"In America, a lot of government people want to do away with owner/operators, they want to make them employees," Kretsinger said.

Risk also comes in the form of increased regulation and from special interest groups. Kretsinger cited as

an example an Equal Opportunity Employment Commission ruling that it was illegal for Old Dominion Freight Lines to dismiss an alcoholic truck driver.

"What would a defense lawyer tell you about putting alcoholics in trucks?" Kretsinger asked. "What would EOEC say? Let him go to rehab and be nice to him. It comes down to safety versus fairness."

The rapidly changing regulatory landscape means it's more important than ever for trucking company executives to network, Kretsinger said.

"Networking is becoming a survival skill," he said. "You can't sit in your office by yourself and have your people butter you up...if you're a leader of a company, you need to be out there gathering information."

Despite all the challenges the industry is facing, Kretsinger is optimistic the stars are aligning in trucking's favour, which will benefit carriers and drivers alike.

"The shipping community has been pretty good at playing us off each other through bids, and we have a lot of sport truckers in this business; they don't make money they're just playing for fun," Kretsinger said.

"When the going's good, you better get it. I think it may be coming and drivers need it. We are subject to supply and demand and so are they. If truckers don't make money when the times are good, they're probably not going to make it." ●

Fishy freight nets big fine

WINDSOR, ONTARIO

An Edmonton trucking firm and its Markham, Ont.-based driver have been fined a total of \$75,000 for trying to bring live Asian carp into Ontario.

Alltheway Trucking and Yong-Sheng Zhang were each found guilty under the federal Fisheries Act, of possessing live invasive fish, according to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. The bulk of the fine, \$70,000, was assessed to the trucking company.

On Jan. 25 2012, a truck from Alltheway Trucking was stopped at the Ambassador Bridge and found to be carrying grass and bighead carp from Arkansas. Some of the grass carp were still alive, leading to the seizure of all the fish.

On Feb. 28, the same driver and same trucking company were again stopped at the border as they attempted to bring a load of carp – some still alive – into Canada.

This time, the truck was also confiscated, and held until all the carp had died. The Ontario Court of Justice in Windsor handed down the fine Jan. 16.

"It has been illegal to possess live invasive fish, including bighead, grass, black and silver carp, in Ontario since 2005 because of the significant threat they pose to the province's lake systems," the Ministry of Natural Resources said in a release. "As part of the ongoing efforts to protect Ontario's environment from the importation of invasive species, the Ministry of Natural Resources will continue to work with its law enforcement partners to monitor compliance with the legislation." ●

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Dangerous goods haulers to face heightened scrutiny

Continued from page 1

notwithstanding that, we can't be complacent and I think we need to take a proactive approach."

To that end, the CTA in December issued a white paper that highlighted the trucking industry's safety record when transporting dangerous goods. Bradley said the paper was designed to serve as the CTA's "first word" on the issue.

The white paper painted a picture of an industry with a stellar track record at hauling dangerous goods. An analysis of incidents revealed an incident rate of just 1.64 per 10,000 truck shipments. Most incidents that involved product releases (56%) were minor, releasing less than 500 litres of product and causing no environmental damage. Major incidents accounted for just 6.4% of total incidents, the white paper reported.

Given its impressive safety record, it's not surprising that not all dangerous goods carriers are welcoming the heightened scrutiny that could be inevitable in the wake of the Lac-Mégantic train tragedy. Asked if he was worried there could be a knee-jerk reaction from Ottawa that would affect the trucking industry, John Erik Albrechtsen, operations manager at Winnipeg, Man.-based Paul's Hauling, said "That would be a safe statement."

He said trucking is already held to a higher standard than rail, and warned against foisting further restrictions upon an already heavily regulated industry.

"They don't hold rail to the same

standards they hold us to and they're going to take steps to correct issues on the rail side and I'm concerned they're going to piggyback those issues onto our industry, which I think is already heavily regulated," Albrechtsen told *Truck News*. "I don't think the safety issues with our sector of the transportation industry are exactly the same as rail's and they're not scrutinized to the same degree we are."

However, Marcel Pouliot, vice-president of safety and industrial services with Trimac, said it's inevitable that a tragedy such as what occurred in Lac-Mégantic would invite increased attention upon all manner of dangerous good transporters.

"Lac-Mégantic is a huge tragedy, absolutely, and you can't use any lesser word than that to describe it," Pouliot said. "And for the right reasons, it's bringing scrutiny to the segment. But trucking companies have been scrutinized by regulatory agencies for years and refocusing more scrutiny on dangerous goods is not something our industry should shy away from and if a carrier does shy away from it, they shouldn't be in this industry."

But while there's a widely held belief that dangerous goods carriers may face increased regulation in the wake of Lac-Mégantic, nobody seems to know what the changes will look like. Transport Canada already has introduced new requirements for rail carriers of crude oil, particularly related to the types of equipment that can be used to transport crude. Asked if trucking could face

similar equipment-related restrictions, the CTA's Bradley said it's unlikely.

"It has been explained to me that the trailers used for hauling crude in Canada are of a superior standard, even to what's used in the US," Bradley said. "We don't seem to have the same sorts of issues in terms of equipment as they have on the rail side."

Bob Kavanagh, co-founder of Tankmart International, told *Truck News* there's no need for increased oversight of the tanker trailers used by industry

Refocusing more scrutiny on dangerous goods is not something our industry should shy away from."

Marcel Pouliot, Trimac

to transport dangerous goods. He said regular inspections and roadside enforcement ensure those trailers are well maintained.

"The regulations that are in place to regulate tank trailers are usually much more stringent than what you see for rail cars," he said. "But I'm afraid that the ripple effect will see them crack

down even more on over-the-road tank trailers, which I think is unfair, when you look at the volume of product being hauled and the minimal number of accidents. The fact remains, all these trailers going up and down the road are always going over scales and every time you go on a scale, you run the risk of having an inspection. And if you don't conform, you're frozen right there and you don't budge. That doesn't happen to rail cars. The vast majority of truckers run well-maintained fleets."

This theory is supported not only by the CTA's white paper, but also by the Canadian Fuels Association (CFA), which under its former incarnation as the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute (CPPI), used to track very carefully the competence of the carriers serving its petroleum-producing members. John Skowronski, a director with CFA, oversaw CPPI's carrier awards, which were discontinued when CPPI was rolled into CFA two years ago.

Through the safety awards program, Skowronski said carriers were scored based on their incident rate per number of deliveries, product spills and mixes, as well as accidents and injuries.

"Looking at those metrics, there was a gradual improvement over that 15 years," Skowronski said. "The number of incidents on a frequency basis reduced almost in half over that 15 years."

Given its impressive – and improving – safety record, it may not be easy for the feds to implement meaningful change to a system that already seems to be working well. However, the pressure to do so, having already cracked

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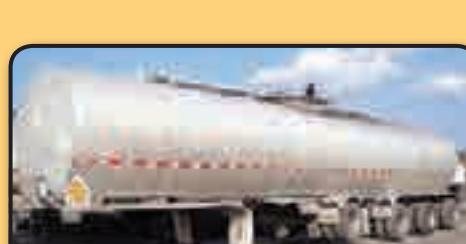
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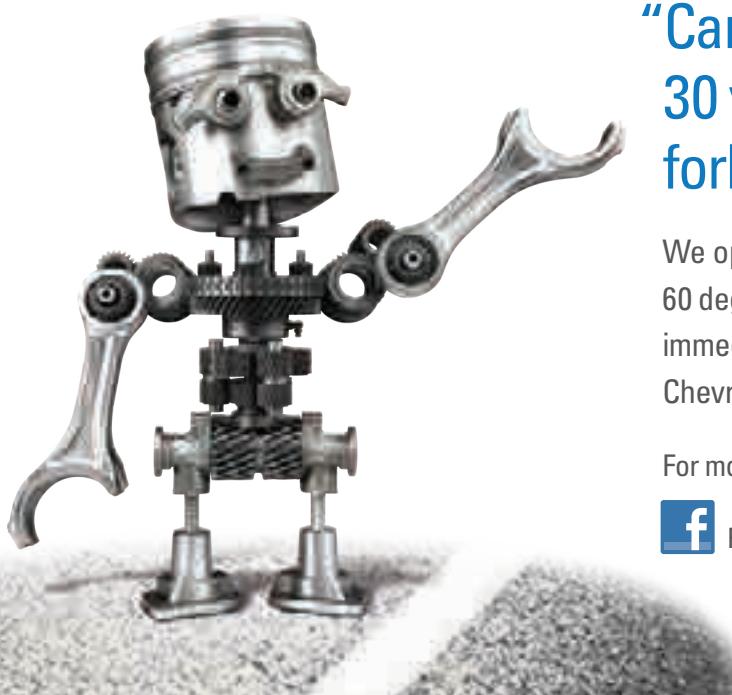
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Dangerous goods

Continued from page 16

down on the rail industry, will be immense. There are some concerns within industry that the government will introduce a broad-based dangerous goods certification program for drivers, above and beyond what already exists.

Trimac's Pouliot warns against this.

"Because there's so much diversity in the industry, for the government to say 'We're going to come out with a product handling standard,' it would be so general that it really wouldn't benefit the industry," Pouliot said.

The CTA's Bradley agreed. "There have been some suggestions made that maybe we should be looking at a mandated standard for dangerous goods training...but the practical reality is that there are so many different types of commodities that are dangerous goods - thousands of them - that to have some sort of a standard training program, you'd have to make things so generic that they'd be worthless," he added.

Knowing that the trucking industry will have to do more than just poo-poo the government's ideas, the industry says it's bringing suggestions of its own to the table. Pouliot said the most effective measure the feds can implement to improve the safety of dangerous goods truckers would be to mandate the use of electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs).

"We have been running them in our entire fleet and have been for years," Pouliot said. "As a carrier, you are able to continuously monitor the driving habits of a driver if they are speeding, as well as their fatigue level through hours-of-service compliance and proper rest periods. Relative to our segment, I would not hesitate to have a mandatory requirement to have on-board computers if hauling dangerous goods."

The CTA agreed in its white paper. It also recommended: mandating roll stability systems on all new heavy trucks; introducing a mandatory speed limiter law restricting trucks to 105 km/h; and introducing mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers, based on a national standard. In short, the Alliance is looking to advance its existing agenda, which it says will improve highway safety regardless of vehicle type or commodity hauled.

"We are using this as an opportunity one more time to say, 'If you want to reduce highway collisions, then there are measures we have long advocated,'" Bradley said. "The arguments in favour stand on their own. I think Lac-Mégantic brought home the problems associated with complacency and not taking action, particularly where you have the industry itself calling for change. Perhaps in a perverse sort of way, the benefit of this is that there may be some receptivity to taking actions to avoid calamities more so than in the past, but we'll have to see."

Another issue that the trucking industry will seek to examine in the upcoming hearings will be that of who's liable when a disaster occurs? Shippers in recent years have been slipping indemnity clauses into freight contracts that often shift complete liability onto the trucking company, even if shipper negligence is to blame for an accident.

The trucking industry would like to see government outlaw these indemnity clauses, as about 40 states have done south of the border.

"This issue of liability is one they need to take a really serious look at,"

Bradley said. "Some shippers are trying to use their muscle to make the carrier liable for any claims, regardless of whose fault it was, and that's not right."

Following the Lac-Mégantic catastrophe, it quickly became clear the railway involved didn't have the insurance coverage or resources to pay the cleanup costs or to compensate victims. The government was on the hook for much of this expense.

However, Bradley cautioned against simply requiring truckers to carry more insurance coverage.

"When it comes to trucking, there has been no suggestion yet, and I don't think a case can be made at this point, that the insurance truckers are carrying is not sufficient," he said.

Bradley also said it would be wrong to direct more enforcement towards carriers and drivers, who are already the most targeted members

of the supply chain.

"It seems it's the carrier and the driver that get dinged at roadside and we wouldn't want to see that added to," Bradley said, noting more emphasis should be placed on enforcing shippers to properly placard and document their products. Albrechtsen of Paul's Hauling said he supports the CTA's position and that of the Manitoba Trucking Association. He said trucking will be well represented at the public hearings.

He also would like to see more harmonization of regulations across the country - hours-of-service, in particular. However, it's difficult to imagine the trucking industry receiving greater flexibility as a result of all this.

CFA's Skowronski said any changes government visits upon industry must not be "disruptive to the competitiveness" of the industry. "If they're going to change a standard, it can't be tomorrow, it has to be phased in," he added.

Both Albrechtsen and Pouliot indicated it's important the government keeps in mind the valuable role trucking plays in transporting dangerous

goods, which are essential to everyday life, and avoids overreacting.

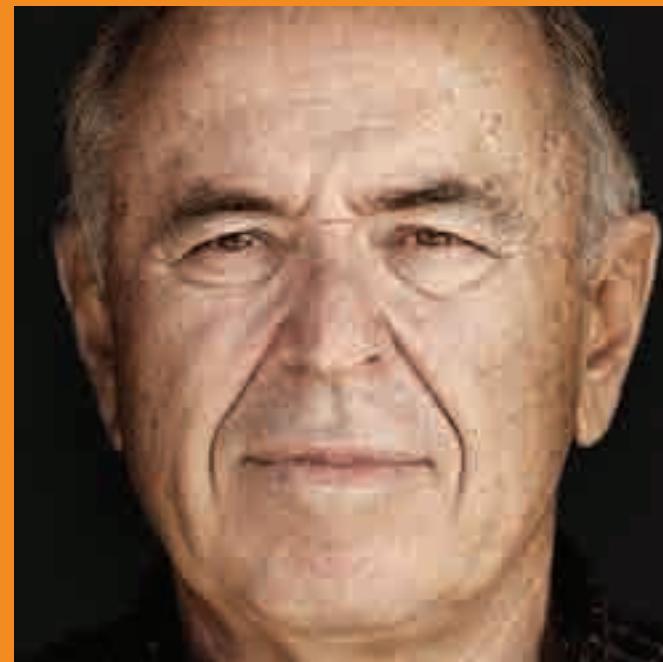
"I understand, and we as a company understand, the role that dangerous goods play in our lives. The obvious example of this is gasoline for your car or furnace oil or propane for heating your house, but chemistry is used in all sorts of consumer products from clothing and computers to cars, so they are a very important element of what I'll call modern life," said Pouliot. "So I have no qualms in trying to help educate the general public around this, and at the same time to help (explain) what are the true risks about this. Just about every Canadian has fuelled their car at a service station at some point and would think absolutely nothing about pumping 30, 40, 50 litres (of gas) at a service station into their vehicle. In the whole chain of custody process to get that gas to the service station to go into the car, the weakest point is the person putting it into their vehicle. So, these products can be and are handled safely and have been for a long time." ◉

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Loonie on the decline

Continued from page 1

drivers, to carriers, to manufacturers – will be impacted by a Canadian dollar

that of late has seemed to be in freefall.

Carrier Revenue

Canadian carriers with US customers

stand to benefit from a weaker Loonie. Bill Cameron, the owner of small cross-border flatdeck company Parks Transportation, noted American customers almost always pay in US dollars.

This means revenue on northbound loads is generally better when the Canadian dollar is weak and the oppo-

site is true when the Loonie is at par, or above, as has been the case in recent years.

"Several years ago, when the dollar gradually went from 64 cents to par, we had an awful time convincing US

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Loonie

Continued from page 20

customers that their rates had to increase, so that our revenue remained consistent after exchange," Cameron recalls. US-originated freight paid for by Canadian companies, however, is generally paid in Canadian dollars and won't be affected by a depreciating Loonie.

Cameron pointed out carriers could suffer because a weak Loonie means Canadian retailers are less likely to bring US product north. This could also affect northbound volumes.

"Any Canadians bringing product from the US to Canada are now at a disadvantage, therefore cutting down on the northbound freight," Cameron pointed out. "The difference in the dollar may help on one hand, then hurt on the other. Overall, it's a wash. If, in this slow economy, the dollar

drops into the 80 cents range, I think it'll mean trouble because the freight availability will be lopsided with more freight going south than north."

Canadian Manufacturing

Canadian manufacturers, for the most part, have adjusted to the reality of an erratic Loonie, according to Derek Lothian, national director, communications with the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters.

"I think a lot of manufacturers in Canada have been caught off-guard with sudden fluctuations in the market over the past decade; but most have learned their lesson and have implemented proactive strategies to hedge against risk and minimize exposure where they do business," he told *Truck News*. "Obviously, the US remains a primary export market for manufacturers – and much of what they sell into other parts of the world is sold in US dollars as well, so ultimately a weaker Loonie means Canadian products are much more

competitive globally."

Lothian added: "That also tends to balance out the negative impact a softer Loonie has on investment. Because a large portion of those global sales are in US dollars, that essentially means more cash is flowing onto the balance sheet that can be reinvested into new product mandates or ramping up production. I should add, however, that the longer the dollar remains weak, the more I'd expect companies to diversify their supply chains, and shift their sourcing away from American-made components to Canada or other lower cost jurisdictions."

Mergers & Acquisitions

We asked Mike McCarron, head of mergers and acquisitions with Wheels Group, how a lower-valued Canadian buck will affect mergers and acquisitions, as it relates to Canadian companies buying American firms, or vice-versa.

"It puts a premium on Canadian companies that Americans are look-

ing to buy and discounts American companies Canadians are looking to buy," McCarron said.

"What's not so obvious, however, is that Americans are already very skeptical of doing business in a 'foreign' country. They are far more benign and uninformed about Canada than we are about America. The sinking dollar provides another risk or uncertainty that I think will make American companies sitting on the fence think twice about buying a Canadian company. It's an additional element of risk that they don't understand and cannot control. What happens to your deal if the Canadian Loonie drops to 85 cents US? I think the sharp decline exasperates the situation. If the dollar had been at 93 cents for years there would be less uncertainty than one that is dropping rapidly with no end in sight and no real hard or fast explanation."

Driver expenses

Drivers who run the US will pay more for everyday expenses such as food, and O/Os will shell out more for fuel, but drivers we spoke to say it goes largely unnoticed since such things are still considerably more expensive in Canada. Angelo Diplacido no longer runs the US, but did so in the mid-90s when the Canadian buck was valued at 62 cents.

"Food prices were not the issue at all. It can cost \$15 for a meal in Canada, where you may get a similar meal for \$7.99 in the US," he said.

Alfy Meyer, who drives for Erb Group as a company driver but once worked as an owner/operator, said a weak Canadian dollar is a "double-edged sword" for O/Os.

"On one hand, our Canadian products become more attractive to US consumers, so demand for it rises thereby increasing loads to the US. More freight means more miles, means more revenue. A good carrier gives fair fuel surcharges so this helps compensate fluctuations in fuel costs," Meyer said. "The other edge to that proverbial sword is that US goods become too cost-prohibitive for the Canadian consumer, and return loads become more difficult to secure. As long as the Loonie remains within the 90-cent range, the disparities aren't as sharp or acute as to affect us too adversely."

Truck prices

Carriers and owner/operators looking to buy new trucks will be adversely affected by a weak Canadian dollar. With the strength of the Loonie in recent years, Canadian truck buyers have been somewhat insulated from the high cost of the latest generation engines. That's about to come to an end. If the Canadian dollar loses five cents compared to the US greenback, that could equate to a \$6,750 price increase on a \$135,000 truck.

Derek Varley, manager of fleet services with Mackie Moving Systems, says he's always looking ahead in an effort to project what the exchange rate will be.

"There's a lot of money to be saved with good planning," he said. "It behooves fleet managers or owners, whoever is doing purchasing, to understand what may take place with the dollar and what is happening with the dollar and to work those projections to your advantage. I'm looking three months ahead. There are some strong projections that by mid-summer it could be back to an 85-cent dollar and that's not going to be a fun time to be replacing equipment."

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24 USED TRUCKS

Used trucks a valuable commodity

**Used truck market
remains strong despite
scarcity of low-mileage
vehicles, dealers say**

By Harry Rudolfs

The used truck market

usually follows the peaks and valleys of new truck sales by the space of a few years, but since fewer Class 8 vehicles were made and sold during the recession years of 2008 to 2010, a bottleneck presently exists in the availability of low-mileage late-model vehicles.

"If we look at the trade cycle," says Joe Burns, used truck sales manager at Altruck International in Cambridge, Ont., "bigger fleets tend to turn over their equipment every 48 to 60 months. But production was down in 2008 and there was a pre-buy in 2007 and a lot of fleets took advantage of that. So right now there's a shortage of 2008 and 2009 models."

Burns thinks that shortage comes at a difficult time for many small fleets and multi-unit owner/operators looking to ramp up their operations as the economy improves.

"For a lot of our clients the outlook is good for 2014, but finding low-mileage used equipment is going to be hard to do," he says.

Conversely, if you're looking to sell or trade in a low-mileage tractor, you should be able to get a good buck for it. "I'd say the valuations on used trucks are pretty good right now," says Burns. "We're paying a strong dollar on low-mileage trucks."

Despite the fact that pre-2008 EPA trucks are either miled-out or almost impossible to get, used truck salespeople will tell you that a segment of their clients are still squeamish about getting involved with newer trucks because of the perceived problems with the emissions systems.

"There's some people that have the inaccurate perception that anything made between 2008 and 2010 is not necessarily a good product, though most buyers are aware that the OEMs have done a pretty good job with the upgrades," says Burns. "And the technology has improved with each stage."

Dennis Sheehan, owner of Sheehan Truck Centre of Burlington, Ont., has had the same experience with some customers.

"Honestly some of the trucks from the model years 2008-2010 are not running as bad as people have it in their heads. There was also a bit of a learning curve involved here. Keep in mind this was a new product, people didn't know how to work on them at first," Sheehan says.

Truck salespeople agree that there is a segment of used truck buyers that will never be accepting of the generation of trucks manufactured between 2008 and 2010. Those customers may be more

Top factors considered when selecting used trucks (scale of 1 to 5)



Late model, low-mileage trucks are getting harder to find. But mileage and the age of a truck are the most important considerations for used truck buyers, as indicated by this chart from Transportation Media's Equipment Buying Intentions Survey, 2013.

comfortable with the new-generation EPA trucks that add diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) to the afterburn, but some buyers may still not be familiar with how the emission system works. According to Burns of Altruck: "There is a misconception in our industry amongst some consumers that DEF has replaced DPFs (diesel particulate filters). Nothing could be further from the truth. With the advent of DEF, we now have both systems on-board trucks produced on or after Jan. 1, 2010 to comply with emission standards."

Owner/operators are constrained by the fact that carriers want them driving something less than five years old.

"Instead of going with an older truck, we try to get our customers into something more modern," says Vik Gupta, sales manager for Arrow Truck Sales of Mississauga, Ont. "Instead of going backwards, go forwards, and that way they can be ahead of the game. But I would say that overall confidence is returning to buyers when it comes to the DEF/SCR systems. There's not an engine made that doesn't occasionally have problems, but there are some really good products out there."

Gupta adds there's no such thing as a typical customer. Someone doing city work will want a different package than someone doing regional pulls and different yet again from a long-distance hauler who stays out for weeks at a time. Thirteen- and 10-speed transmissions remain popular among used buyers, and automated transmissions like the I-Shift are getting more popular.

"Someone looking for a highway tractor will usually want 425-450 horsepower, maybe more depending on what's being hauled," says Gupta. "And if you're going to be running the highway as a team, you're going to want a 60- or 70-inch bunk as well."

Highway trucks may get traded up every four or five years, but city drivers who own day cabs usually hold onto them a few more years. Martin Smith, centre manager for Select Trucks of Mississauga, Ont., acknowledges that day cabs comprise a large portion of his dealership's sales.

"A potential day cab purchaser might be looking for something between 2005 and 2009. Typically a day cab operator will want something around 400 hp, air ride suspension and 175-inch wheelbase. Those are the usual spec's," says Smith. "The biggest problem is trying to find inventory."

Used dump trucks are always in demand because of their paucity. "We can always use more dumps, tandems and tri-axles," says Altruck's Burns, "but it's a select market and they're

difficult to acquire. A lot of operators buy the truck and contract from someone they know and these trucks

Continued on page 26

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Used trucks

Continued from page 25

don't often make it to the market."

Niche equipment sales are an important segment of the used truck market, but specialization is not every dealer's cup of tea.

"There is some strength in niche truck sales," says Sheehan. "Once people know you have them, they will come back to you. I might buy a funny truck, say something with a crane on it, and it might sit on my lot for six months. But once you find the guy that needs that equipment, he will buy it."

Someone shopping for used big iron should keep in mind that a down payment of 10-15% is usually required by most lending institutions, and that they are reluctant to provide financing on rigs that are much older than five years. Warranty is another important consideration and a variety of different packages are available.

Sheehan advises caution when buying extended warranty packages.

"Everybody wants warranty but they're expensive and the money's got to come from somewhere," he says. "If you're going to spend \$5,000 on a warranty, why not put the \$5,000 aside

"If you're going to spend \$5,000 on a warranty, why not put the \$5,000 aside instead, and save it in case something goes wrong down the road?"

Dennis Sheehan

instead, and save it in case something goes wrong down the road?"

But Smith of SelecTrucks is in the unique position of being able to offer a factory-backed warranty to buyers of used Freightliners and Western Stars.

"Considering the money you save when buying a used truck as compared to a new one, why wouldn't you want a factory warranty?" he counters.

The falling Canadian dollar is a concern to everyone in trucking, and the volatility will eventually ripple into all aspects of truck sales. Sheehan thinks it's too early to tell how much the devaluation of the Loonie will affect the used market.

"Some dealers were going down to the US to get used trucks and I think that is coming to an end," he says. "But new truck pricing will eventually affect used truck prices, too."

Sheehan also expects exports and offshore sales of used truck to "probably pick up slightly because of our dollar being undervalued."

Gupta thinks that a weak Loonie will be a boon to used truck dealers. "We can see it already in the last few weeks - it just happened. New trucks are going to go up in the following months and it will be good for us. Why should (customers) pay \$10,000-\$15,000 more for a new truck? On the flip side, for truck (sales) out of Canada, we're going to see lots of activity on the export market." ●

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Brokers: The good, the bad and the ugly

Load brokers take a lot of criticism. Some richly deserve it, but others are actually a benefit to small carriers. Despite what some industry members may say, load brokers provide an important service to the trucking industry, whether you run a small or large trucking company.

No carrier can always find a compatible load on its own. This is especially

true of small carriers, who may never go to certain areas until a customer requests it with little warning. Travelling new lanes with little warning or no regularity, you can't always generate your own loads – both directions of travel – from your own customers.

The trick is to find out which brokers to work with. At times, you will have to balance your pride with your financial needs. Some of the biggest snakes in the industry will, at times,

be your only viable source of freight. Do you swallow your pride, and allow shoddy business practices to continue, or run empty? Only you can make that decision.

Some large shippers use load brokers, and it can actually be to your advantage. They can't efficiently ship all their product while dealing with all the individual trucking companies that would be required, so they turn dispatching duties over to one or several load brokers and let them absorb the headache of arranging shipments or pick-ups.

Live with it, because if load brokers were not utilized, the work would go to a short list of large trucking companies and you would never have access to the freight. Usually in these cases, rates are still acceptable. If the broker has the responsibility of moving large volumes of freight, they can't lowball the price. Ensuring they move everything on schedule and retaining the contract is too important to risk failure by cutting rates.

Watch for the rates to fluctuate, however, based on truck availability. A typical rookie mistake is to base your rates one direction on the assumption the brokered freight the other direction will always pay the same. It will change regularly, and it rarely increases.

Other load brokers will work for

smaller shippers, who have no regular shipment dates or locations. Their needs are constantly changing, and they may not be able to set up working relationships with a short list of carriers. Rather than keeping another shipping person on staff just to arrange this potential mess, it's cheaper to let a load broker charge accordingly and to deal with it on demand. Some of our best paying work that doesn't come from a regular customer is conducted in this fashion.

Many of our customers send out regular e-mails to their carriers detailing their needs. Within minutes, the online load boards light up with the same loads offered by umpteen load brokers, or in some cases, carriers who are wandering outside of their area of expertise.

These are the brokers who give the rest a bad name. Commonly referred to as vultures, bottom feeders, or other such names, they add no value to the industry; they usually just drive rates downward. They may never move one of these loads that have already been offered to regular carriers, but the surge of apparent interest typically drives rates lower.

Some are very hard to reason with, even difficult to insult. Many will phone carriers and try to give away a load the carrier was already aware of and turned down. I've told these brokers "This is also my customer; if I could do the load, it would be for the customer, not you." They still don't take the hint, and continue calling.

These types of broker relationships add no redeeming value to the situation. Avoid them. Often, the broker's offered rate will be far below acceptable. These types of brokers are also the type who have no knowledge of the commodity being hauled. Origin, destination, and rate are often the only details they can provide. Some get cranky when you ask for more information before you reject or accept the load. The good and the bad have been covered, now for the ugly.

Many huge, multi-national brokers have become a real problem since our latest recession. The CEO of one particular load brokerage took a lot of heat two years ago for bragging about his company's increasing success, claiming the recession was allowing it to increase its profits because of the desperation of some trucking companies. I doubt he gave any thought to the fact that all of us in the trucking industry would also read this quote, and avoid its freight, but in his urge to boast to shareholders, he exposed what is a cold, hard truth.

Our own company – and nearly every other carrier large or small – has, at some point, lost customers to this type of load broker. We were undercut, according to one ex-customer, by about 90 cents per mile. This often destroys, not just damages, relationships with your customers. Most don't understand our industry, and just assume you have been abusing them with higher rates. They eventually learn. As a side note, consider that these large load brokers are usually quite profitable, so even though they underbid you, someone obviously hauled the freight for them for even less. Despise the brokers all you want, but remember, one of your colleagues or competitors helped them succeed.

Bill Cameron and his wife Nancy own and operate Parks Transportation, a four-truck flatdeck trucking company. Bill can be reached at williamcameron.bc@gmail.com.

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**Industry
Issues**

DAVID BRADLEY



The big chill on driver supply

Who had ever heard the term "polar vortex" until this winter? Here in Canada, we're supposed to be used to cold, snowy weather. But, the winter blitz and higher than expected freight demand combined to reveal just how strained transportation networks are when you peel

back the cover. Freight stopped. And, you know it's bad when the trucks don't move.

Not only is it clear these flash capacity crunches are something shippers can expect whenever there's severe weather (or any type of emergency situation, for that matter), but it also served as a long-term warning of how fragile the supply chain is and brought to the surface all the demo-

graphic, operational, and lifestyle-related underpinnings of the growing driver shortage.

How the supply chain responds to the fallout from the polar vortex and how it prepares for the next emergency will determine the degree to which freight movement is impaired in the future. Shippers, carriers and drivers all have a stake in this.

For example, it is not enough for shippers to say it's the carrier's problem; to not give a thought to the poor driver who is out there delivering their goods.

The same goes for the driver shortage. The CTA Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage identified a lack of respect and poor treatment of drivers by shippers as one of the factors contributing to the supply/demand gap for drivers.

Here again, the experience of what some drivers encountered as the first polar vortex hammered North America provides examples of behaviour that only serves to make things worse. The following really happened:

After a white-knuckle trip through the severest of weather, a truck driver arrived at his destination to drop off his load; cold, hungry and tired. Because delivery schedules had been thrown into chaos, the driver was told he'd have to wait several hours to be unloaded. (Some drivers reportedly waited 10 hours or more in the US at the height of the storm).

That's frustrating, but perhaps understandable.

However, he was also told he could not idle the truck on the property because it's against company 'policy' and if he exited the yard gates, he'd lose his place in the queue. Worse, the driver was not permitted to use the washroom or any other facilities while he waited - in adherence, once again, to company 'policy.'

The driver's carrier had two choices in this case: Begrudgingly succumb to the customer-is-always-right (even when he's not) mantra and allow the driver to freeze until the shipper is ready for him; or pull the driver and the load out of there and deal with whatever consequences the customer dishes out (likely knowing full well it wouldn't be nearly as bad as having to replace a perfectly good driver when, upon his return, he tosses back the keys and walks out).

In this case, the company instructed the driver to pull the load and leave.

While this is one of the most egregious examples of indifference towards a driver's well-being that I've heard, sadly it's not the first.

How do you prepare or ever get used to being disrespected like that? It's experiences like this that drivers don't forget. And those are the stories that vibrate across truck stops and dinner tables. That sort of behaviour is even more audacious considering just how vulnerable the system was during the snowstorm and freezing weather.

Companies that throw fuel on the fire by treating drivers in such a manner or refuse to improve efficiencies to turn drivers around quicker are the prime reason why the US government

is now setting its sights on detention time.

There's serious talk of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulating shipper behaviour by fining companies for detaining drivers and affecting their per-mile pay. FMCSA also views detention and other actions that eat into available hours-of-service as issues that affect safety.

"We need a real change in our transportation culture to recognize that safety means more than complying with safety rules. It means changing work-rest schedules that contribute to fatigue," FMCSA director Anne Ferro said recently when asked about driver detention.

Although I can understand the government's impulse, surely this is something shippers and carriers can work out.

However, the message is clear, if the most impacted parties don't improve things on their own, if shippers don't engage in meaningful consultation with their service providers, or if their only response to working together to find efficiencies is "will it reduce my rate?" there'll always be regulators somewhere who think they can step in and force a solution.

I don't think it needs to come to that and, frankly, nothing sends a message clearer than freight sitting

(A driver) was told he could not idle the truck on the property because it's against company 'policy' and if he exited the gates, he'd lose his place in the queue. Worse, the driver was not permitted to use the washroom or any other facilities while he waited.

on a dock, which is not something that's in anyone's interest.

Not too long from now, mandatory e-logs will help carriers and owner/operators of all sizes quantify the costs of detention as well as qualify the impact on hours-of-service and available capacity.

In the meantime, there's nothing stopping companies from treating our hard-working drivers with the respect they deserve.

Drivers will always vote with their feet - it's happening right now - but with some better communication between customer and supplier and operational improvements at the ground level, companies can avoid being left out in the cold when the eye of the capacity storm blows in.

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

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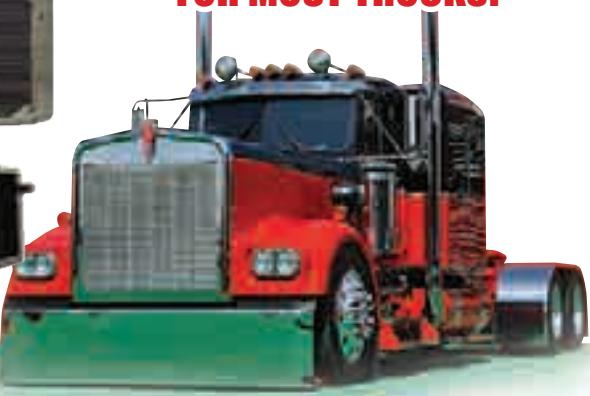
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Head injuries

Over the past few years, concussions have become a hot topic in professional sports. As a result of this interest, the amount of scientific research and knowledge has recently grown substantially. We now understand concussions in much more detail and thus are able to better treat patients.

It is important to recognize that it is not only athletes that sustain concussions. Everyone is at risk. I recently had a professional truck driver come into my clinic complaining of headaches and dizziness. During the medical history it was revealed that he had fallen off his trailer two days prior and hit his head on the asphalt. After performing a physical examination, I was certain that he was exhibiting symptoms that are common with a concussion. Other recent cases that come to mind include a five-year-old child who fell off a trampoline and a junior hockey player who was hit from behind. As you can see, anyone can sustain a concussion injury, however people who participate in contact sports such as football are at a higher risk.

In order to understand concussions, you must first understand the anatomy of the brain. Basically, your brain is a mass of gelatin-like substances that floats in fluid within your skull. This structure allows the brain to be cushioned from everyday forces or trauma that it may encounter. However, violent blows to your skull or neck may cause the brain to strike the inside of your skull, causing injury.

In simple terms, a concussion is a traumatic brain injury that changes the way your brain functions. In most cases, these changes in brain function are temporary and usually resolve on their own. There are many different possible symptoms associated with concussions. However, headaches, dizziness, amnesia and confusion are the most commonly experienced.

Other possible symptoms include confusion, nausea, fatigue, slurred speech and personality changes. Symptoms may occur immediately or have a delayed onset.

Although most concussion injuries do not require medical treatment, it is important to consult with a health-care professional to be on the safe side. You should seek emergency care if you experience a head injury as well as a loss of consciousness lasting more than one minute, seizures, repeated vomiting and/or your symptoms worsen over time.

After completing a detailed history and physical examination, if your doctor suspects that you have sustained a concussion, they may recommend further imaging tests such as CT and MRI in order to better evaluate the injury.

In most cases, no significant medical intervention is required. By far, the best treatment for a concussion is rest - both physical and mental. This means avoiding strenuous physical activities as well as mentally taxing activities such as reading, watching TV and playing video games. Your doctor may recommend acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help reduce pain and headaches.

Although it is impossible to completely prevent the occurrence of concussions, using common sense will help to minimize your risk. General safety guidelines such as wearing proper protective equipment during sports, recreational activities and work is probably the best prevention strategy you can employ. A good example of this is wearing non-slip shoes or work boots to prevent slips and falls. To add to this, protective head gear such as helmets significantly reduces the risk of injury.

Keep these simple tips in mind and you will be well on your way to preventing concussion injuries. 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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Power brokers

Some of Canada's most successful freight brokers recently came together to candidly discuss their industry's future. We sat in and compiled this exclusive report.

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

After selling MSM Transportation to Wheels Group last year, Mike McCarron joined Wheels to oversee mergers and acquisitions in a bid to consolidate the Canadian 3PL space.

To gain a greater understanding of where the freight brokering segment is headed, McCarron called together several leading brokers for a roundtable, hosted at Wheels Group's headquarters. Also on-hand was Level5 Strategy Group, which will be compiling a white paper on the subject. *Truck News* was invited to report on the discussion. The participants included: Manny Speranza, FBI-Freight; John Tittel, Hot Freight International; John Flaherty, HTS Freight Logistics; Ian MacDonald, ShipNorthAmerica Transportation; Larry Cox, Polaris Transport Group; and Eric Carusi, Transpro Freight Systems.

On the outlook for freight brokers

Each of the brokers who participated in the discussion agreed on one thing: That it's a great time to be a freight broker.

"These are exciting times. The business has never been better," said Speranza. However, he noted many freight brokers will fail if they don't keep their fingers on the pulse of the industry. But companies that adapt to the changing needs of their customers will thrive, he added.

Transpro's Carusi agreed. "The growth is definitely there," he said. "There is tons of opportunity there, but you need to understand (your customers') problems and be proactive with solutions."

"I think the market and the future looks good for brokers of all sizes," added Flaherty. "I think being as proactive as you can be is always going to be important."

MacDonald noted there are many carriers relying on freight brokers to fill

trucks. "Without those carriers, we'd obviously be nowhere," he acknowledged.

"There are always going to be opportunities for brokers in our industry," Tittel said. With so much consolidation in the trucking industry, Tittel said freight brokers can act "almost like a guide" for shippers, familiarizing them with new entrants and keeping them apprised of the changing landscape.

However, Speranza was quick to point out freight brokers can't rest on their laurels.

"If people don't change, they're going to be out of business in the next five years," he warned. He said freight brokers should not focus on transactional selling, and instead offer a specialized service focused on adding value.

"Our business is transitioning to A-list customers looking for more of a boutique 3PL sell," he said. "Selling freight on the phone every day and bidding on skids is not going to last here. It's not going to work. Yes, there's a market for that, but if you're not growing, you're falling behind."

He said freight brokers that aren't putting an action plan in place to reinvent themselves will not last.

"There's a lot of business out there, but brokerages need to look at the value they're actually providing to the client," he said. "It needs to be more than 'I can move those skids, here's my price'."

On building and maintaining relationships

Strong relationships will continue to be the foundation for success in the freight brokerage industry, experts agreed, but how those relationships are initiated and maintained is evolving. Face-to-face contact is being replaced with phone and e-mail communication, and monthly maintenance calls with customers are being done more like twice a year, MacDonald said.

Still, the freight brokers taking part in the discussion all agreed human relationships can't be replaced with technology and that every freight broker should know who they're dealing with.

Speranza suggested brokers meet with their top 20 carriers and build relationships with them. "You get better service that way," he said. "Your customer is not just your client."

Flaherty agreed with the need to develop strong relationships with carriers. "As brokers, we're only as good as the service we get from the carriers," he said.

Freight brokers participating in the discussion agreed technology is a useful tool to do away with nuisance calls (ie. "Did you get that fax I sent?") but that a human connection is still required.

"If it's machine talking to machine, the business dies," said Carusi.

MacDonald agreed. "If relationships and service from a personal standpoint weren't important, then the whole business would be automated."

"There are services like that and they haven't done well," Tittel added.

"Technology is a tool," Flaherty said. "It's an excellent tool that helps build relationships. We still need to talk with our customers and talk with our carriers."

Successful freight brokers must also find a way to effectively communicate and build relationships with people of various ethnic backgrounds. It's not just a middle-aged white guy's world anymore, they acknowledged.

"You have to deal with people (from different cultures) on a different level," Speranza said. "In the past we'd go to a hockey game or a ball game. Not everyone wants to do that, but that doesn't

mean they don't have other things they'd like to do. Repeet has got to be number one. You show them respect, they'll show you respect."

On the sales evolution

How relationships are established has changed drastically in the freight-brokering world. Most of the brokers in the room got started in the business by parking their car and going door to door, which usually provided an unobstructed path to decision makers. That all has changed.

"It's very difficult to door-knock like we did 25 years ago," Speranza said. "We tried hiring some people on salary and it didn't work out. Today, the guy who controls that freight may be in Los Angeles."

The days of assigning outside sales reps a territory have passed.

"I see companies investing less in outside sales," Speranza said. "It's too costly to make a sales call. You still have to have that relationship, but it may be at a different level."

Added Flaherty: "The territory has expanded. It's North America now."

Freight brokers are seeing more success in drawing in customers through dynamic, optimized Web sites, MacDonald said.

"Everybody today is using the Web," he said. "It's not something that's new, but it hasn't been utilized very well in this business."

MacDonald said the closing percentage is much higher when a customer comes to you.

Even social media has a place, added Polaris' Cox.

"The way I see the world doesn't matter," he said. "The world is going to do what it does. I've never used Twitter or Facebook, but it doesn't matter what I think. That's who's going to be buying our service at some point."

Your Twitter followers will one day be freight buyers, Cox added, noting he keeps an eye on where his site comes up in Internet searches compared to those of competitors.

On the importance of technology

Freight brokers that are able to provide their customers with real-time information about their loads and can integrate carrier systems with those used by shippers will be at an advantage going forward, according to Carusi.

"Being proactive with information and not being afraid to give bad information is what will (retain) your customers," Carusi said. "The customers want to see (information) right away so they can act on it if they're forwarding the freight. Proactivity with information is going to hold onto your relationships."

This type of service is no longer only available when dealing with large carriers, added Tittel.

"Any carrier can get their hands on good software that can notify customers of shipment statuses," he said. "That's a big development. In years gone by, you had to create your own software or buy expensive software. Now a carrier with five to 10 trucks can get a dispatch system right off the Internet."

But freight brokers today are looking to take it to another level, and to integrate their carriers' software programs with those their customers are using.

"The number one question in this industry is 'Where's my freight?'" Cox pointed out.

MacDonald said "We spend an inordinate amount of time on phone calls with smaller carriers. It is frustrating."

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Tittel said Hot Freight International allows its trusted carriers to tap into its software system to provide status updates, which are sent directly to the customer.

"Investment in technology is key going forward," said Speranza. "You have to be willing to make that (investment)."

Technology allows customers to input their load requirements early, enabling freight brokers to identify opportunities to consolidate shipments and reduce costs.

Cox said this is the way of the future and that these sophisticated software platforms will eventually become as prevalent as e-mail is today.

"You better leave enough (profit) to invest in the business or you won't be in business," he said. "Ten years from now if you don't do all of this, you'll be gone."

On consolidation

Consolidation - both in the carrier and freight broker spaces - was a popular topic during the discussion. Freight brokers who took part said they haven't yet felt the impact of consolidation in the carrier community, but they do worry about how they'll be affected by a shrinking pool of small carriers.

"If there is a reduction in the number of carriers, that could be construed as good or bad, but the most important thing for our industry is, we need good, quality carriers; without that, we're out of business," said Flaherty.

Tittel said there will always be a place in the market for small carriers, who can often provide greater attention to detail than the conglomerates.

"It concerns me, the threat of small and medium-sized companies disappearing," Flaherty added. "I don't want my only choice of carriers to be the TransForces and Contrans'. As a broker, I need to be able to draw on lots of different choices for my customers. Sometimes my choice is the large carrier and a lot of times it's not. It's easier to build good relationships with small to medium-sized carriers."

However, Cox pointed out the increasingly stringent regulatory environment will force many small carriers out of the business.

"Re-regulation is designed to drive the little guys out, because they can't afford it," he said of ever-stricter border crossing and hours-of-service rules. "(Smaller) carriers are being winnowed out."

Polaris runs its own trucks and as such, Cox said he's often approached by small and mid-sized trucking companies looking to sell. Usually, he said, "the business is worth nothing...a trucking company is worth the firesale value of its equipment."

A transaction-based freight brokerage, without the assets, could be worth even less, added Speranza.

"We're going to see broker consolidation happening too," he said. However, he said brokers who don't have their customers under contract won't be salable. "We started contracts about three years ago," he noted.

Another barrier to selling your freight brokerage is being too involved as an owner, Flaherty added. He said customers must have strong relationships with the company itself - not just the owner. He suggested freight brokers looking to sell should slowly step back from the business so a prospective buyer knows it can function without the owner.

table discussion all agreed opportunities exist for further growth. But where exactly are those opportunities? Looking to the US market is one underutilized strategy, according to Speranza,

portunity, but you can sometimes forget your neighbour next door."

Flaherty advised brokers to be in tune with what their customers are doing. He tells salespeople to take notice

The most important thing for our industry is, we need good, quality carriers; without that, we're out of business."

John Flaherty, HTS Freight Logistics

who urged brokers to look beyond their backyards when looking to grow.

However, most of the brokers present also indicated their domestic business is booming.

"There's a lot of manufacturing movement to the US, but we're seeing our percentage of revenue locally increase," Carusi said. "We're doing more business here. You want to focus on the US market because it's such a big op-

if a customer is doing construction in its backyard, which may indicate an expansion that could lead to future opportunities. The key, he said, is to know what your customers' demands will be before even they do.

"Plant a seed in their head ahead of time that if they are going to see growth, we're in a position to handle it for you," he said.

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what your capabilities include. For example, a printing company that usually ships dense printed material will eventually need to bring in a new printing press. Are they aware your business can provide heavy-haul transportation? MacDonald said versatility is key, including having access to specialized equipment such as heated trailers or trucks with liftgates.

"There's money to be made in those markets," he said.

And lastly, don't be afraid to stray from your comfort zone. Speranza spoke of a time his company designed a specialty trailer for a carrier that was hauling mining equipment. Another company found out about the trailers and asked FBI-Freight to build similar trailers for it.

"We said 'Absolutely we can do that,'" Speranza recalled. "We never dreamt of this as being a part of our strategy, but we gained other customers...When I hear people say it's flat out there, I don't buy it. There are tons of opportunities out there." ●

Keys to future growth

Freight brokers included in the round-



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Voice
of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE



A SWIFT solution to the S-word?

One thing trucking is good at is making lists of issues; but I wonder at times if we're not better at cataloguing the issues than we are at actually doing something about them. I mean, most of the top 10 issues have been on the top 10 list as long as we've been trucking.

Highways and infrastructure, fuel prices, and "the driver shortage" have topped the list of trucking concerns for close to – are you ready for this? – *one hundred years*. As far back as the 1920s there were concerns about the lack of competent, quality truck drivers.

It was problematic enough that *Western Truck Owner* magazine ran a three-part series in 1928 called "What About Your Driver?" cautioning carriers that drivers are a "vital factor in the success or failure of your business."

Nothing can throw anyone even remotely connected to trucking into a tizzy faster than the dreaded S-word. From dire warnings that the dwindling number of drivers has put the country on a road to ruin, to pegging the so-called shortage as the biggest myth in the industry – everyone has an opinion.

There's no winning side in this debate – because just about every argument has some merit. Some carriers will tell you it's not so much a shortage of drivers coming through the door, as a shortage of drivers that they're prepared to hire. Or those in specialized operations requiring drivers with a specific skill set will grumble about the shrinking supply of drivers who meet their particular needs.

Still others claim that the real problem is not too few drivers, rather too many trucks. And exasperated drivers will argue that the real shortage is not qualified drivers, but a shortage of carriers who understand that it's really a retention problem because of industry working conditions, such as poor pay or diminished quality of life.

Whatever your take on human resources issues in trucking, there is one undeniable fact. Every sector of the economy is facing an alarming shortage of workers, from unskilled labour to highly paid professionals, as the population of the industrialized world grows older and peoples' attitudes and expectations toward jobs and work change.

In Canada, we have the largest baby boom population in the Western hemisphere. There are now more Canadians over the age of 60 than under the age of five, and the percentage of the labour force that falls into the traditional working age group – 15 to 49 years – is shrinking.

But trucking has been slow to understand the role demographics plays in recruiting and retaining drivers, and many carriers are just now becoming aware of the challenges. They're competing with every other industry for workers from a shrinking labour pool, and the inability of trucking to attract younger workers means they're turning to non-traditional sources, including women, to fill the empty seats.

Trucking is well below the national average when it comes to the participation rate of women. While we represent close to half the Canadian labour force, women represent a mere 3% of Canada's truck drivers, mechanics, transport trailer technicians, and cargo workers, and a piddling percentage of managers, parts technicians and other industry specialists.

This presents a huge economic opportunity for half the Canadian population, which is why women managers and executives from across Canada's

Continued on page 39

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Supporting women in Canadian trucking

Continued from page 37

truckers industry are joining together to help more women pursue traditionally male-dominated career opportunities in trucking.

Supporting Women in Freight Transportation (SWIFT), spearheaded by Trucking HR Canada, will get down to work at its inaugural meeting at Truck World 2014 in Toronto, and begin developing an employment action plan for women in the trucking industry, including a national employment strategy, identification of best practices, and promotion of trucking as an industry of choice for women.

I'm in heady company on the National Advisory Committee, which includes a cross-section of managers, directors, presidents and executives, who share a common commitment to educating other women about careers in trucking, identifying challenges and barriers to their career paths, and promoting recruiting and retention practices which support women in the workforce.

But make no mistake. If trucking is serious about recruiting women, it has miles to go to make trucking an appealing career choice. Luckily, there's a short list of carriers who recognize this too, as evidenced by the eye-opening report of the CTA's Blue Ribbon Task Force (which did not, by the way, include any women), the first sign of any shift in industry thinking about whose problem the driver shortage is and what can be done about it. That 2012 report was followed by a Conference Board of Canada study, also commissioned by CTA, which cited work-life balance as a key change for recruiters as they replace the retiring generation of truckers.

Among other things critical to bridging the supply and demand gap for drivers, the report cites "significant improvement in industry working conditions and wages...and a reorganization of trucking activity and supply chains in order to reduce pressures on long-haul drivers and make better use of their time."

Women are agents of change. We simply won't put up with a lot of things that men think they have to live with, and one of the things SWIFT will be doing is raising awareness among employers of recruitment and retention practices that can better support the integration of women into the workforce. Holding industry's feet to the fire, so to speak, until they put their money where their mouth is.

A safe workplace, a decent wage, a healthy lifestyle, and good life/work balance: these are reasonable employment expectations, and the kind of things that are going to attract women - and men - to a trucking career. One hundred years is way too long for any topic to hog the top 10 list. ☺

Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Is SWIFT a solution to the driver S-word? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll-free 888-794-9990.

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Controlling drivers vs empowering them

As long-haul truck drivers, we spend the majority of our time observing what is happening around us. Most of us are very good at it. It is a set of skills that extends far beyond the ability it gives us to be safe, professional drivers.

In fact, as drivers we are uniquely positioned to provide feedback that is valuable when it comes to streamlining operations and improving productivity. Despite this, the industry has developed a culture aimed at controlling its drivers rather than enabling them. No doubt this approach stems from compliance with the rule of law, but this approach need not be so.

Look at the hours-of-service legislation and how it is applied to drivers. Sleep research recognizes the differences between individual drivers that contribute to fatigue. Differences such as: a driver's schedule; their age and the effects of any existing health condition the driver may have; and the time of day he/she may be driving. Sleep research has also shown that the average adult requires seven to nine hours of sleep per night, yet the National Sleep Foundation's 2008 Sleep in America poll showed that 44% of working adults get an average of six hours and 40 minutes sleep on a workday and the average workweek was reported at 45 hours. So based on that, is it reasonable to expect that you can force individual drivers to sleep seven to nine hours in a row while at the same time work well in excess of 45 hours per week?

We still require our rest but we require the flexibility to obtain that rest within the confines of the job we are performing and dependent on our own individual needs. The answer here is education and training on a regular basis as well as laws that enforce the required amount of rest in each 24-hour period but still leave a wide margin of flexibility to the individual driver as to how they manage their time.

This is where the control culture butts up against the culture of empowerment. Has the trucking industry as a whole lost sight of the big picture and the true purpose of legislation that reinforces the safety of drivers and the travelling public? It's easy to lay the blame for this situation on government regulation (or over-regulation if you prefer) and enforcement agencies. But I think that is a bit of a cop-out on the trucking industry's part and we all own a slice of that pie.

Why is it a cop-out? Because we are living in a golden age of communication. There is this little thing called the Internet ripe with social media that is still very much in its infancy. These tools empower drivers by providing an infrastructure capable of gathering their collective experience. Yet for the most part social media has been seen as a business-to-business tool by carriers and I believe they have missed the boat, or at least underestimated the value of social media. Drivers are developing loosely organized social circles on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. With the ability to link all of these platforms together, drivers have a much louder voice, but is it being heard?

Then there is the rapidly developing "industrial Internet," a term origi-

nally coined by General Electric. It's all about linking together machine-learning, big data, the Internet of things, and machine-to-machine communications. Think about advanced braking sys-

world around them in more meaningful ways at an exponential rate over the next several years, or at least as much as government regulators will allow.

So again, as drivers observe from the

"For the most part, social media has been seen as a B2B tool by carriers and I believe they have missed the boat."

tems, stability control systems, the virtual technician that remotely reports engine fault codes, cars that will park themselves and of course the Google driverless car. The vehicles we drive – whether personal or commercial – will continue to communicate with the

driver's seat, is this technology being used to empower the individual driver or is it being used to control the individual drivers' actions? I often think of the signs posted on the side of Ontario's highways that state, "Safety through enforcement." I don't disagree with

that statement when it comes to enforcing the black-and-white rules of the Highway Traffic Act but it doesn't cut the mustard when it comes to applying a set of one-size-fits-all regulations to issues like driver fatigue. This is why electronic on-board recorders are reviled by many drivers.

An EOBR cannot empower a driver and advance a driver's safety and quality of life. The EOBR enforces a set of one-size-fits-all rules for the average driver, but an average driver doesn't exist. Although we all share the same characteristics we are uniquely different.

There is a lot that drivers observe from driver's seat. In today's environment I think it's fair to ask if we are to become cogs in a machine. I would hope to hear a resounding NO! ☺

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

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**Tax
Talk**

SCOTT TAYLOR



The challenge of digital tax docs

In last month's column, I wrote about the various types of tax deductions that may apply to you and encouraged you to gather up all your receipts and other paperwork.

That gathering up of receipts is what this month's column is about.

Because it sure has changed, hasn't it? In the old days, all of your tax documents and other paperwork were printed on paper.

You had a copy you could hold in your hands and file away.

Today, virtually everything is online or "e"-something accessible.

In many ways, electronic documents and online access have made it easier to manage the statements, transaction records, and tax slips you need to produce an accurate return and properly support your claims.

The many benefits to electronic documents include lower mailing costs, to less paper, to reducing the space required to store printed copies.

Given the savings for banks, businesses, and government agencies, it's virtually certain that virtual documents are here to stay.

Electronic logs as tax docs

But electronic documents have created a new set of challenges and conflicts, especially in trucking.

Electronic logbooks or electronic onboard recorders (EOBRs) are a prime example. Last month, as everyone started gathering up their tax documents, the light bulb went off: where are my logbooks?

By law, a logbook is required in order to show the hours you work and rest – it's a safety record. If you claim meals as a deduction on your tax return, your logbook is also a tax document.

Here's where the first purpose conflicts with the second.

Canadian and US laws require truck drivers to keep their logbooks for six

If you claim meals as a deduction on your tax return, your logbook is also a tax document.

months. It's standard practice in the industry that on the first day of the seventh month, all logbooks are destroyed.

If you don't have a copy of it, your logbook for the month is gone forever.

I have spoken to two of the major EOBR suppliers and they both assure me that drivers and owner/operators can indeed download their logbook data (you'll need to talk to your carrier about accessing the records).

But the six-month rule is an issue. If you haven't been downloading or printing your logs over the past 12-plus months, your data may be gone.

The best you can do is to download as much of your logbook as you can right away, and then set up reminders to start yet another routine and download your logbook each month on a go-forward basis.

Get bank statements

Another important tax document that's easily accessible online is your bank statement. Most banks provide Internet access to statements and other records related to your business and personal accounts. But make sure you're getting the right information. There is a big difference between a bank statement and a transaction printout.

Bank statements are guaranteed to be accurate and, most importantly, any cheques you have used will be included as a scanned item. How else are you going to prove that payments out of your account went to truck service or other costs rather than to you? Cancelled cheques and your bank statements are absolutely required for

bookkeeping and CRA.

A transaction printout is also flawed in that it usually does not show any identification details. This may sound silly, but how can a printout of transactions be identified as yours? How can it be confirmed that it was not created or falsified? Your bank statement will show your name, address, and account numbers plus your bank's name and address.

Visit your bank's Web site (or call a human being in customer service) and find out where it posts bank statements for your account.

You should print out this statement each month.

Downloading it and storing it somewhere on your computer isn't

a bad idea, either.

Be prepared

Whether it's an "e" document or printed on good old-fashioned paper, you need to be able to back up any deductions claimed on your tax return or your business income statement.

If the idea of electronic records makes your head spin – and I know a lot of people who are in this boat – talk to your accountant about how to make it easier to manage. If you need a reason, here's a good one: The Government of Canada announced in December that it will stop sending paper cheques by April 2016. That means direct deposit for everyone for everything related to CRA, CPP, OAS, EI, Child Benefits, etc.

If you want your money, you need to be prepared to go electronic. ☀

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 or call 800-461-5970.

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BRUCE RICHARDS



When common sense is absent

Here I sit most days, in what some refer to as Southern Ontario, some as mid-Ontario, and

some simply with scorn, we are going through what seems to be the longest, coldest, winter in living memory.

And, according to The Weather Channel, we're sharing this experience with most of Canada – it's flat out frigid and miserable just about everywhere. One more thing Canadians have in common though is that we don't whine about it for long. After arriving at work and going through the obligatory weather-related commentary with fellow sufferers, we usually just get down to whatever is on the to-do list for the day.

However, after watching the evening news and even visiting some YouTube sites over the past few weeks, I have come to believe that some people need to have winter driving decisions taken out of their hands.

Did you see the traffic videos of the scenes in and around Atlanta, Ga. in late January when, along with a bit of snow, the temperature dropped to near record lows? Chaos doesn't begin to describe it. In Eastern Ontario, down around Kingston, where drivers should know better, we had similar scenes that necessitated highway closures.

There is a YouTube video of a scene on US-41 in Wisconsin taken in December of last year that demonstrates some of the worst possible driving in icy conditions. And yet this is another part of North America where people ought to know something about winter driving. Follow this link (or just Google US-41 traffic) and see if it doesn't cause you some head scratching moments: www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXejFMxDoE8

We all know that we need to slow down in winter (or in any poor weather conditions for that matter), so what exactly propels some drivers to ignore the obvious and carry on as though it's mid-July, the sun is shining, and they've got the road to themselves?

It seems that even in the best of weather, too-fast + too-close is the te- net for some drivers.

Adding any of ice, snow, fog, rain or other vehicles to the equation inevi- bly leads to the results I've described above.

There are obviously drivers who are not deterred by penalties in the way of fines and suspensions so what alternative measures might there be to actually get people to drive appro-

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priately in bad conditions?

I am becoming ever more convinced that in some conditions we need to take decisions out of the hands (and feet) of the driver and look to technology to ensure everyone's safety.

I know, I know – I'm about to trample on the rights of the individual. Just the way the mandatory use of seatbelts still does in the minds of some. But that argument just doesn't wash. Where driving and public safety is concerned, we have already yielded individual rights to technological controls, and in most cases done so willingly.

For example, the trucking industry utilizes anti-rollover technology, speed limiters, and EOBRs to name a few. Automobiles have anti-lock braking systems, anti-skid systems, and where required by law, ignition interlock devices.

Technology in these cases does not represent an infringement on individual rights. It represents an effort to make the roads safer and most people willingly trade individual choice for the overall benefits of public safety.

Back to the collisions that I referred to above: I recently sat in on a presentation by Mr. John Woodroffe of the University of Michigan. The presentation took place at the meeting of the Task Force on Weights and Dimensions Policy in Montreal and dealt with a study of the merits of Forward Collision Avoidance and Mitigation Systems (F-CAM). That's a mouthful at best, but in a nutshell it's using technology to prevent a vehicle from running into the back of another one.

Woodroffe's presentation dealt with the merits of utilizing such technology in commercial vehicles and it provided statistics that could support its adoption by the trucking community.

He described testing under different scenarios: lead vehicle in a collision being stopped; lead vehicle moving at a steady speed but slower than the trailing vehicle; lead vehicle decelerating; and the lead vehicle cutting-in.

The study suggested that F-CAM systems could reliably detect moving and stationary vehicles and apply braking in time to avoid or mitigate most collisions.

The study concluded that the current generation technology could provide a significant reduction in both the frequency and severity of truck rear-end collisions. This annual reduction in fatalities and injuries from collisions involving tractor-trailers could be as much as 25% with the current generation of technology up to something in excess of 50% by its third generation.

The effect of reducing collisions involving tractor-trailers by 25-50% could amount to anywhere from a billion dollars with the current technology to upwards of \$2 billion a year with third-generation technology.

This is an over-simplification on my part but allow me to deal in concepts and ask if, apart from cost, there are any practical reasons why we shouldn't explore having future generations of all cars and trucks so equipped? If we can't teach common sense to avoid collisions, why not use technology? •

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KAREN BOWEN



Caffeine can give you a boost

Are you reaching for another cup of steaming coffee, hoping for a hot, caffeine-induced energy boost in the middle of this dreary, cold winter weather? You're not the only one. Caffeine is the most widely used psycho-active substance in the world.

Globally, 76 mgs of caffeine/person is consumed each day. In North America our intake is much higher – averaging 238 mgs/person every day.

The line at your local coffee shop will show that North Americans love their coffee, making the coffee “bean” the world’s primary source of caffeine. Although most 8-oz. servings of traditional coffee contain around 100 mgs

of caffeine and most 2-oz. servings of espresso contain 100 mgs, the actual caffeine amounts vary according to the coffee bean used for the brew. Caffeine density depends on the species of the coffee bean plant; the way the beans were roasted and the way the coffee was prepared. In general, the darker the roast of the bean, the less caffeine in the coffee since the roasting process reduces caffeine content.

If you don't prefer coffee, try tea for your caffeine boost.

Tea comes in hundreds of tasty varieties: black, white, green, oolong, and yerba mate; each variety's caffeine levels vary, depending on the amount of oxidation that occurs in the leaf after it is picked – more oxidation creates higher caffeine levels. Black tea has

the most oxidation and white tea has the least. Accordingly, an 8-oz. cup of black tea can deliver 40-72 mgs of caffeine, while white tea offers between 25-55 mgs, depending on the region in which it was grown.

Alternatively, you may drink pop, which often contains a significant amount of caffeine. Kola nuts, a natural source of caffeine with up to 25 mgs/gram, were initially Coca-Cola's only source of caffeine. Currently, most soft drinks with caffeine use purified caffeine as the sole source instead. Sports/energy drinks are loaded with caffeine: Red Bull – 80 mgs/8.5-oz.; Coca-Cola – 23 mgs/8-oz.; Pepsi One – 36 mgs/8-oz.; and Mountain Dew – 36 mgs/8-oz.

Or, perhaps, you'd rather eat your

caffeine in chocolate. Chocolate's caffeine comes from the seeds of the cacao plant.

However, one bar may not give you the boost you want, since cacao seeds only offer a small amount – just 2.5 mgs/g. A typical, 28-gram milk chocolate bar only has about 20 mgs of caffeine – a good excuse for eating two.

No matter the source, your body quickly absorbs any caffeine you ingest. Within 15-120 minutes you feel caffeine's effects; these effects wear off within five hours.

By stimulating your nervous system, caffeine can help fight off fatigue and to improve alertness, concentration and focus. Most healthy adults can enjoy moderate doses of caffeine, 200 to 300 mgs/day, without any bad effects. Regular, moderate coffee consumption may actually improve your health, according to the findings of an 18-year study conducted by Harvard University.

The study found that people who drink one to three cups of coffee each day significantly reduced their risk of developing: Parkinson's disease – by 80%; cirrhosis of the liver – by 80%; gallstones – by 50%; colon cancer – by 20%; and diabetes – by at least 9%.

So, two to four cups of brewed coffee a day should be fine for your health unless you have sensitivity to caffeine or you have sleep pattern problems due to other factors, such as: travel, stress, work, etc.

In contrast, higher caffeine intake – 500 to 600 mgs/day, can affect your health quite negatively, causing insomnia, nervousness, dizziness, restlessness, irritability, upset stomach, dehydration, rapid heartbeat and/or muscle tremors. Caution: extremely high intake can be fatal.

Also, be aware that medications and/or herbal supplements, particularly antibiotics can impact the way your body processes caffeine. Cipro (ciprofloxacin) and Noroxin (norfloxacin) prolong caffeine's effects by increasing the length of time caffeine remains in your system. Since theophylline (Theo-24, Elixophyllin), a drug used to open up the bronchial airways, mimics caffeine's effects, it exacerbates caffeine's effect on your system. Theophylline, if taken with caffeine, may cause nausea, vomiting, and/or heart palpitations. Echinacea, an herbal supplement used to prevent infections, may also increase the concentration of caffeine in your blood.

Considering all these factors, you may want to examine your caffeine consumption. If you feel you should cut back, reduce your intake slowly to avoid the caffeine withdrawal symptoms of headaches, fatigue, irritability and nervousness.

Start by consciously monitoring your actual caffeine intake. Reduce your intake by ordering fewer caffeine drinks, choosing smaller portion sizes, or switching to a decaffeinated alternative.

Shorten your brewing time for regular tea, or try a caffeine-free herbal tea. Read all labels. Over-the-counter pain relievers often contain as much of 130 mgs of caffeine per dose.

Caffeine is best when used in moderation. Certainly, caffeine can deliver an occasional boost to jump-start your day and/or recharge your batteries, but healthy foods deliver your body's best fuel. ☺

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



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**Ask the
Expert**

HEATHER BLACKWELL DECKER

Few phrases will sound more familiar to a collision investigator than, "I only looked away for a second." It has been uttered by some of the trucking industry's most experienced drivers as they recalled the final moments before a crash.

And there's no shortage of things to distract a professional driver.

Dangerous distractions can come in the form of physical tasks as simple as holding a cell phone, changing a radio station or opening the lid on a cup of coffee, while something like a text message from a dispatcher can easily pull eyes away from the road ahead.

It doesn't matter what form the challenge takes.

Anything that draws attention away from the surrounding highway can slow responses involving a steering wheel or brake pedal.

The regulations banning drivers from using handheld devices have introduced an important part of the solution.

There is plenty of research to support the approach. *Understanding the Distracted Brain*, a 2012 paper by the National Safety Council, found that drivers making a phone call will fail to "see" about 50% of what they look at. Put another way, they are far less likely to identify potential hazards. The rules have made a difference, too.

Before B.C. enacted its ban on handheld devices, researchers at the University of Victoria concluded 4.4% of drivers had phones to their ears at any given time.

The share dropped to 1% after the law was passed.

But a ban on handheld devices solves only part of the problem. Even hands-free calls can be distracting. A study completed at Dalhousie University found that talking on a phone of any type will reduce a driver's ability to detect and identify events.

Results published in the *Journal of Safety Research* went a step further, suggesting that drivers using a hands-free device are less likely to compensate for the distractions of a call than those who are using a handheld phone.

The calls cannot be compared to a conversation with someone else in the truck cab, either.

Unlike the disembodied voice coming through a speaker, a passenger will contribute to observations about the surrounding traffic, observes *Passenger and Cell Phone Conversations in Simulated Driving*, published by the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*.

These remaining threats to safety are often tackled through a combination of fleet policies and technology. Dispatchers, for example, might withhold many messages or discussions until trucks reach their destinations. Software is available to disable company-owned electronic devices when a truck is on the move.

For that matter, drivers can also be encouraged to turn off personal phones and send callers directly to voicemail.

Cell phones are not the only potential distractions in a truck cab. Every

In-cab distractions cause threats on road

time a driver views a computer tablet's display, glances at some paperwork or looks at something lying in the passenger seat, they can miss an emerging threat.

It might only take a second, but a truck travelling at highway speeds will cover about 28 metres in that period of time.

The best option is to keep objects like these out of sight whenever possible. A tablet computer stored in a briefcase, for example, is less distracting than a powered version in plain view.

Drivers who smoke will also be less tempted to light a cigarette if the package and lighter are stored in a sleeper's cabinet.

Of course, some of the biggest chal-

lenges of all may be more difficult to spot. Drivers can also struggle with cognitive distractions, causing their minds to wander to issues like a sick child or financial struggle.

Challenges like these are hardly unique to truckers. They are a fact of every life.

It is simply more difficult to put the issues to rest when travelling for weeks at a time, or when a job takes you thousands of kilometres away from home.

Formal employee assistance programs often make a difference here, particularly when matched to an open workplace where drivers feel comfortable discussing their problems with supervisors like safety managers.

Relationships like these are not formed overnight, but they will make a lasting difference.

For their part, drivers can be coached in the value of talking to themselves during their journeys. Simply speaking aloud about oncoming threats like vehicles and traffic signals can help to refocus on tasks behind the wheel.

It shows that no matter what form a distraction might take, an open discussion will be part of the solution to make everyone a little safer. ●

This month's expert is Heather Blackwell Decker, risk services solutions analyst. Heather has seven years' experience in trucking safety and compliance and now works within the Northbridge Insurance Risk Services team. 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.nbins.com.



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King Radiator opens new facility

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

King Radiator has moved into a new home, boasting four times the space of its previous location. The company says its new facility covers 10,000 sq.-ft. and allows it to carry more than 1,000 radiators in stock. This is King Radiator's third location in 15 years. It's located at 1775 Shawson Dr., east of Dixie Rd. in Mississauga.

John Konig is president. The company offers: on-site service of trucks and other vehicles, fuel tanks, new and rebuilt radiators, air charge coolers, A/C condensers, drive-in service and pick-up and delivery.

Shipping is available across Canada, Konig says. King Rad's new facility is open six days a week from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. For more information, call 905-795-9009. ●

Tallman teams with Humberview to sell medium-duty Internationals

ETOBICOKE, ONTARIO

Tallman Truck Centre has announced an agreement with Humberview Trucks, that will see Humberview sell and service new International medium-duty trucks out of its Fieldway Drive location in Etobicoke.

"This partnership with Humberview Trucks allows us to continue to expand our sales, parts and service reach, throughout the Greater Toronto Area," Tallman Truck Centre said in a release.

"We have a great partner in Humberview. They have been in the commercial truck business for 20 years, and were General Motors' largest volume medium-duty truck dealer in Canada for many consecutive years.

They have extensive experience selling and servicing medium-duty trucks, and have an excellent reputation for providing quality service. We share the same core values and a passion for providing industry-leading customer service. This agreement will provide customers with another great International dealership, in an important geographic location in the Greater Toronto Area."

Rick Howitt, Humberview Trucks' general manager, added: "We are very excited about our partnership with Tallman Group. We look forward to supporting the growth of International's presence in the GTA and being able to serve our customers better each and every day with this great product line." ●

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Ingersoll Machine and Tool acquires Standen's

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO

Ingersoll Machine and Tool (IMT) has announced the acquisition of spring and suspension manufacturer Standen's.

Calgary-based Standen's produces leaf springs, tillage tools, light trailer suspensions and suspension hardware. It has more than 500 employees, three manufacturing facilities and five distribution centres and has been in business since the 1920s, IMT announced. It serves the transportation, defense and agricultural industries.

"The synergies between IMT and

Standen's are staggering," IMT said in a release. "Both companies have strong connections to the transportation industry, IMT through Ingersoll Axles and their line of air suspensions and heavy-duty trailer axles, and Standen's through their light-duty axles and spring suspensions. Together the two companies are able to offer their customers a complete solution for all of their transportation needs."

Standen's will operate under the transportation group of IMT and will be run by Dean Davenport, group president. ◦

Great Dane opens Montreal dealership

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Great Dane has expanded its dealer network with the addition of a new facility in Quebec. Great Dane of Montreal is the trailer sales division of trailer repair company Remorques St-Henri Inc. The new facility has 26 regular service bays and two drive-through bays.

An 18,000 sq.-ft. parts department featuring over \$800,000 worth of products is also part of the 65,000 sq.-ft. dealership. The company will employ 70 service technicians, operate 24 service trucks, and will offer full maintenance service, including welding, modifications, bodywork and air systems repair.

"We're excited about entering the new year with this opportunity to join the Great Dane network as a step forward for us and our customers," said Michel Larocque, president of Great Dane of Montreal. Great Dane of Montreal is located at 8000 St-Patrick Street, Montreal. ◦

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Cummins to pause development of 15L nat-gas engine

Canadian fleets will be most affected by the absence of a 15L natural gas engine. Some are now reconsidering how natural gas fits into their operations.

By James Menzies

Cummins has confirmed it will be putting development of its 15-litre natural gas engine on hold, leaving the market devoid of a 15-litre product after Westport announced last year it was discontinuing production of its own 15L GX engine.

In a conference call last fall, Westport said it was shifting strategies, and would focus on being a technology partner to OEMs rather than building its own loose natural gas engines.

It took the final orders for its 15L GX engine in mid-November, meaning customers currently have no 15L natural gas engine available for order. The Cummins ISX15 G was scheduled to enter full production next year.

But Christy Nycz House, on-highway marketing communications director with Cummins, confirmed to *Truck News*: "As a result of market timing uncertainty, Cummins has paused the development of the Cummins ISX15 G natural gas engine. While we believe natural gas power will continue to grow in the North American truck market, the

timing of the adoption of natural gas in long-haul fleets preferring 15 litre engines is uncertain. We believe the adoption of natural gas in long-haul fleets will be paced by a variety of factors beyond the engine and include fuel tank technology and public fuelling infrastructure."

She added "We will re-evaluate the market demand and readiness for the ISX15 G later in 2014."

Canada's heavy-duty natural gas pioneers, Groupe Robert, Vedder Transport and Bison Transport, expressed mixed reaction at the setback. Robert Penner, executive vice-president and chief operating officer for Bison Transport, said if a 15-litre remains unavailable for an extended time, the company will have to re-evaluate its natural gas trucking program.

"This essentially takes natural gas completely out of the heavy-haul appli-

cation," Penner told *Truck News*. "Our initial strategy was to deploy LNG in applications where our fuel cost per mile was highest, which is our LCV division. Since that is no longer possible, we must re-evaluate to determine what, if any, go-forward plan exists for us."

Bison has been running 15 LNG-fuelled Peterbilt trucks between Calgary and Edmonton pulling double 53-ft. trailers grossing 63,500 kgs. The company entered into a fuel supply agreement with Shell, which has already opened one LNG fuelling station in Calgary with plans for others in Edmonton and Red Deer, creating an LNG fuelling corridor linking Alberta's two largest cities.

Trevor Fridfinnson, Bison's senior vice-president, who oversees the company's natural gas trucking program, added "The tack taken by the OEMs and support suppliers does limit us from potential expansion in the LCV application. The majority of our fleet, however, operates in the lesser hp applications (as does most of the industry) and they remain eligible for consideration pending all the other development in the space."

Further west, Fred Zweep, president of Vedder Transportation Group, said a 13-litre engine will fit many of Vedder's current needs, and that he's confident the company can extend the life of its 50 existing Westport GX 15L engines until a suitable replacement becomes available.

"Currently we measure the utility of our 50 15-litre HPDI GX engines in two fashions: hourly for the tractors assigned to hourly-measured work and kilometres for equipment operated over the highway," Zweep said. "As we push over 175,000 hours on the hourly tractors and just over six million kilometres on the over-the-highway tractors, we remain very pleased with the performance of the tractors and look forward to an extended life on these natural gas engines above and beyond what we currently anticipate a diesel engine in the same weight classification to do. Once we run the life of the engines, we have the option to rebuild and keep the truck chassis rolling up and down the highways. Westport continues to support our HPDI GX engines and we are confident Westport will be there to assist us if and when we might run into unforeseen challenges."

Vedder uses some of its LNG tractors to haul heavy loads of trash from the Lower Mainland of Vancouver to a landfill site in the B.C. Interior and others for regional agricultural work closer to home. For the latter application, a smaller displacement engine may suffice, Zweep said.

"At the time our fleet adopted the natural gas 15L HPDI GX engine, the 13L was not available," Zweep pointed out. "Had it been, 50% of our HPDI order would have been in the 13L category."

He added: "At this time we don't foresee any impact on the fleet, nor are we planning to make any adjustments to our operating processes... natural gas is here to stay, the technology is visionary, the technology is durable as our fleet is a testament to the fact it works and once you wrap your head around the reality that the price for natural gas is economically more viable than diesel it shouldn't be difficult for OEMs to recognize the time is right for them to partner with Westport to develop the next evolution of a

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natural gas engine."

Groupe Robert, for its part, plans to try smaller displacement natural gas engines until a 15L becomes available.

Yves Maurais, technical director, asset management, purchase and conformity with Robert, told *Truck News*, "I guess we have no choice to go to a smaller 13L or 12L engine if we want to keep improving our fleet and continue our conversion to LNG."

He said he's encouraged by some of the product that's coming online over the next year or two.

"The Volvo 13L engine will be powerful enough for LCVs, but not the (Cummins ISX12 G) 12L which is limited to 400 hp," Maurais said. "We are anxiously waiting the new Volvo design as we think this will be the next step for us. Meanwhile, we will keep running the GX 15L from Westport in our 125 trucks currently on the road. The new Volvo LNG trucks should be available in 2015, so we're not too far out. We may look at some 12L Cummins engines for short-haul and local LTL operations but nothing is in the works right now."

A priority for Groupe Robert involves convincing the federal government to consider lifting some of the emissions requirements on LNG-fuelled trucks so that they no longer require SCR and DPF systems.

"We know that LNG trucks produce less GHGs than an equivalent diesel truck; is there really a need to carry all of those systems (DPF, EGR and SCR) when you are using LNG?" Maurais pointed out. "We know it's an uphill battle, but we will keep fighting to promote and facilitate the use of LNG in Canada." ●

Mack offering disc brakes on vocational truck models

Mack Trucks announced it is now offering disc brakes on its vocational trucks.

The Meritor EX+ air disc brakes will be available on Mack Granite, TerraPro and Titan models.

"Mack's air disc brakes are built to our standards and tuned specifically for the needs of vocational customers to help boost uptime and lower overall life-cycle costs," said Stu Russoli, Mack vocational marketing product manager. "Vehicle operators and workers on the job site can also enjoy the added safety benefits of the air disc brakes' exceptional stopping performance."

Air disc brakes have been proven to provide better stopping capabilities with less maintenance required than S-cam designs.

Mack's disc brakes will utilize a flat rotor concept to prevent heat distortion in heavy-duty service, rather than "hat-shaped" rotors, which are prone to distortion and shorter life, the company announced.

The brake pads have been engineered by Mack to deliver top performance and minimize brake fade during extreme braking cycles and frequent use, Mack says. ●

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**LED headlights
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International ProStar**

LISLE, ILLINOIS

Navistar International has announced Truck-Lite's LED headlights are now standard on its International ProStar Class 8 on-highway trucks.

"LED headlamps offer significantly longer life over traditional halogen lamps while also emitting a more natural light that improves visibility for the driver," said Steve Gilligan, vice-president, product planning and information, Navistar. "LED lights have been an option on the International ProStar for several months and we are excited about making the solution standard equipment on our ProStar model."

LED headlights emit a light colour that more closely resembles daylight, reducing driver fatigue and eye strain. The lights also provide a more powerful beam, which better illuminates the road and roadsides. A custom coating will be applied to the lens on the ProStar to decrease the haze and dimming common with traditional headlights, International announced.

LEDs also draw less power than halogen lamps, extending the life of the lights and lowering maintenance costs. •

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**Trailer Wizards
expands in
Cornwall**

CORNWALL, ONTARIO

Trailer Wizards announced it has expanded its current location in Cornwall to provide a better link between Toronto and Montreal.

The company leased a four-acre yard at 18001 Glenn Road in October 2012, which sits across the street from its new location. The new space includes a five-acre, full-service location that features a three-bay shop, parts department and office for administration and operations, the company announced.

"Cornwall has been growing for a number of years now," Arthur Christakos, vice-president of Trailer Wizards' Ontario Region explained. "Many of our current customers have already established distribution centres or will be expanding in Cornwall in the near future. We want to be where they need us with full rentals, sales, service and parts capabilities in order to continue to make it easier to work with Trailer Wizards."

The new location can be accessed off Hwy. 401 and Boundary Road, at 18060 Glenn Road. It opened for business Feb. 1. An open house will be held there June 11 from 11 a.m. till 2 p.m., Trailer Wizards announced. •

Seven Canadian fleets among TCA's Best Fleets to Drive For

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Seven of 20 companies named among the Best Fleets to Drive For are Canadian. The Truck-load Carriers Association (TCA) and CarriersEdge announced the Top 20 Best Fleets, with the grand prize winners to be named at the TCA convention in March.

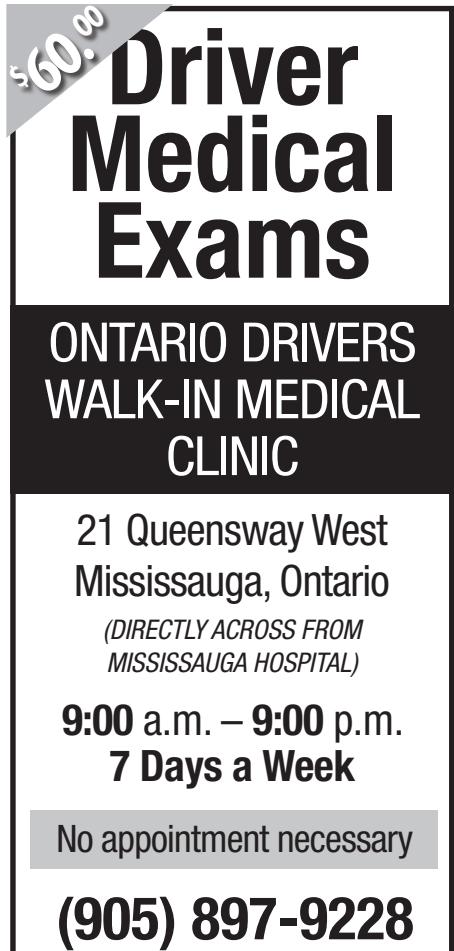
Top 20 fleets from Canada include: Bison Transport, Winnipeg, Man.; Brian Kurtz Trucking, Breslau, Ont.; DJ Knoll Transport, Emerald Park, Sask.; Kriska Holdings, Prescott, Ont.; Time-Line Logistic International, Saskatoon, Sask.; Transpro Freight Systems, Milton, Ont.; and Trimac Transportation, Calgary, Alta.

Best Fleets to Watch included Drive

Logistics, Windsor, Ont. and Erb
Group of Companies, New Hamburg,
Ont.

The contest, which recognizes the best working environments for company drivers and owner/operators, is open to for-hire fleets in the US and Canada. Fleets recognized among the Top 20 range from 25 trucks to 8,500. The contest also identifies emerging trends.

"The biggest trend we saw this year was a shift to mobile technology. Most companies are using smartphones and tablets to deliver information to their drivers, and some are even developing their own custom mobile apps," said Mark Murrell, president of CarriersEdge, which administers the program.



Kriska Group turns 35

Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion among the guests at company's anniversary celebration

By Carolyn Gruske

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

It was party time in Mississauga Jan. 10, as Kriska Group of Companies celebrated a double anniversary. The over-the-road for-hire carrier celebrated both its 35th year in business and its 25th year operating out of the City of Mississauga. To mark the occasion, the Prescott, Ont.-based company invited another anniversary celebrant to its party: Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion. In December, 92-year-old McCallion marked her 35th anniversary as mayor of the city.

Canadian Trucking Alliance president and CEO David Bradley also took part in the ceremony.

Kriska was founded by Ken Seymour, father of current company president Mark Seymour.

Today, it employs approximately 450 people, with about 200 working out of the 20,000 sq.-ft. Mississauga office. The company operates 350 trucks and 1,100 trailers with the fleet being mainly split between Prescott and Mississauga, in addition to a small presence in London, Ont.

While the company is still headquartered in Eastern Ontario, Seymour says the province's economy has dictated where Kriska operates.

"(The Mississauga office) was started 25 years ago as a way to support our activity in and out of the Greater Toronto Area, which is the industrial hotbed of Canada. We just needed a presence here. It has really grown," he said.

"Eastern Ontario has suffered a lot of hardship in recent years with plants closing, and we had to move much of our operation to Toronto. Our head office continues to be in Prescott, but we have a lot of our activity in and out of Toronto because of the industrial importance of Toronto."

Kriska's current Mississauga facility sits on 10 acres, situated north of Hwy. 401. It is the company's second location in the city. Originally, Kriska started with a much smaller location and three employees. According to Seymour, the city makes trucking companies feel welcomed.

"We are very proud to be here," he said.

"It's an industry where we're very appreciative of the support of the mayor. Mississauga would be considered the trucking capital of Canada. It's the mayor's efforts to make it welcoming and to make the opportunity for us to be here. Many other cities are not as welcoming to truckers and we thank you for that a great deal."

McCallion said she actively courts

truckers companies to relocate to Mississauga.

"We have to recognize the contributions the trucking industry makes to the economy of Canada, and not just the province of Ontario or the City of Mississauga. The movement of goods is so important," she said.

"Many politicians only deal with the citizens' concerns and one thing I've tried to do as mayor of Mississauga is to make sure the business world is dealt with adequately. Their concerns are just as important as the citizens'."

McCallion noted that sometimes the trucking industry faces challenges being part of a community. For example, she said it's common to hear cries to ban trucks from the roads - requests that she fights.

"When it comes to banning trucks on roads, I'm right in there to say, 'Hold it, hold it.' It's nice to ban trucks but the people who want trucks banned are the very people that benefit from the products delivered from them."

She also said she believes in promoting the role skilled workers play in building and supporting the Canadian economy.

"Today we have to upgrade the opinion in the public perception of skilled workers - which you folks are, in the transportation industry. Skilled workers who build our office buildings, skilled workers who are plumbers, carpenters and other workers are so essential to the success of our communities. Professional people are needed, but skilled workers are the basis of our economy. I'm just delighted to be with you today, and say congratulations on 35 years."



Kriska president Mark Seymour (left) was joined by guests including Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion (centre) and OTA president David Bradley.

Bradley also offered his congratulations to Seymour, while also singing McCallion's praises.

"There are a lot of similarities between trucking and your job, mayor. Politics and trucking are both very tough businesses. And you're often in the public eye, particularly when things go wrong. But both of you do a great job and both of you are leaders in your own right," he said.

"You both started out in your younger days as hockey players. And you've both been extremely successful in your chosen careers. You both tell it like it is, therefore you are both leaders. I don't think there is a more popular or respected politician than yourself. And Mark, your precedent in moving the industry in the right direction in terms of safety, environment and ways of dealing with people is really something I value. Congratulations." ●

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Canadian Freightways restructures

By Carolyn Gruske

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

In a move that came as a surprise to employees, Canadian Freightways shut down four of its British Columbia terminals. Operations were halted at the company's Prince George, Smithers, Terrace and Prince Rupert locations on Jan. 17. Prince Rupert had been operated by an independent owner/operator on behalf of Canadian Freightways.

According to Heather Lee, vice-president, combined units for the Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE) Local 378, which had members employed at the Prince George terminal, the closures came swiftly.

"On Friday afternoon the union business rep that provides services to members at that company got a call from HR and was told that a notice of closure was coming. Within half an hour, they were served with the notice of closure for Prince George," she said. She added that receiving the closure notice left her "quite disappointed."

According to Ken Enns, senior vice-president at Canadian Freightways, there was one key reason behind the decision to close the terminals. He told *Truck News* that it was "strictly a financial decision to change the operating structure."

Enns added that Canadian Freightways' customers in those areas would continue to receive service due to a new business partnership with Richmond, B.C.-based Bands-tra Transportation Systems.

"(There will be) no changes in the service matrix. In fact, this will improve the service, providing overnight service to

Smithers from Edmonton and Vancouver."

In total, 30 employees were affected by the closure. The vast majority worked in the Prince George terminal.

According to Enns, at its now-closed locations, Canadian Freightways employed workers who were part of two unions, COPE and the Teamsters and "the company opted to pay working notice to the employees as per the collective agreement."

He added that the company had a four-year agreement in place with the Teamsters (originally signed in 2013), and was entering contract negotiations with COPE.

Lee explained that transportation workers fall under the auspices of federal labour laws and not the province's labour code, and because of that, "provisions for workers are quite minimal...We're doing what we can. We're having conversations with the members to find out what the impacts are for them and to examine what we can do to help them," she said.

While Enns couldn't say whether there were more closures on the table, he did say "we will continue to review the market and our operating structure to ensure we remain competitive and profitable. We have made some positive changes to address our operating costs and improve service. Canadian Freightways will continue to aggressively sell our North American coverage and technological advancements to our customers."

There has also been change at the executive level. Former president Ralph Wettstein retired in December. Enns is currently in charge of operations. ●



Kim-Tam Truck Leasing is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

Kim-Tam celebrates 50th

BURLINGTON, ONTARIO

It's golden anniversary time for a southern Ontario trucking company. Kim-Tam Truck Leasing, an independent affiliate of Samuel, Son & Co., has turned 50.

The company, which was named after the daughters of president Ernie Samuel - Kimberly and Tammy - began as an in-house operation to transport Samuel & Son's metal-processing orders.

Kim-Tam was founded in Mississauga, Ont. with 10 trucks doing mill pickups and customer deliveries. Today, Kim-Tam is based in Burlington, Ont. and operates more than 180 power units and 275 trailers.

The rigs carry metal products and industrial goods throughout Central

Canada and the US. In 2004, the company launched Kim-Tam USA, and now runs a dedicated fleet south of the border.

Ernie's son, Mark Samuel, current chair of Samuel, Son & Co., is happy to see the company achieve this business milestone.

"Each time I see one of (our trucks on the road) I am filled with esteem for our drivers and pride for the way that they represent our company and our people. Samuel has a long and proud history and our trucking fleet is a great reminder of how integrated we have become into the economy of our country and our continent. Many thanks to our entire Kim Tam team for what you have achieved over your first 50 years. It is exciting to consider what the next 50 years might hold for us."●

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2009 STERLING ACTERRA c/w 16,000L four comp't aluminum tank, dual pumping/metering, B/L, V/R, Midcom, DOT safety, CSA-B620. Stock #9015



1997 VOLVO c/w 20,000L five comp't aluminum tank, dual pumping/metering, B/L, V/R, Midcom, DOT safety, CSA-B620. Stock #5527



2005 PETERBILT c/w 3499 USWG Propane Bobtail.



2000 VOLVO c/w 20,000L five comp't aluminum tank, dual pumping/metering, B/L, V/R, Midcom, DOT safety, CSA-B620.. Stock #8032



2010 FREIGHTLINER c/w 7250 USWG QT propane tank, automatic, 330 hp, only 260,000 km, Stock #7022



2012 STAINLESS STEEL 2000 gallon Tank w/manhole cover, sump sills w/plastic isolator. Stock #T0014



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Manitoulin opens new Saskatchewan terminal

CORMAN PARK, SASKATCHEWAN

Manitoulin Transport has added to its Western Canadian shipping capacity by opening a new terminal in Saskatchewan.

The facility sits on 8.4 acres of property located in Corman Park, Sask. It has 16 dock-level doors, and is equipped to support oil and gas, forestry, mining and agricultural businesses. It is designed to replace the company's existing terminal operations in Saskatoon. Employees at that

location will be transferred to the new building.

The terminal was officially opened during a ceremony attended by local politicians, including Judy Harwood, reeve of the Rural Municipality of Corman Park.

"Getting shipments from A to B quickly and reliably is an essential part of doing business. As such, we are thrilled to welcome a company of the calibre of Manitoulin into our community. We believe the services Manitoulin provides will help take our businesses to the next level of com-

petitiveness that they so deserve," she said.

Manitoulin's president, Don Goodwill, said the terminal should help provide local customers with improved service.

"This terminal benefits local businesses by providing easier access to distant markets they may not otherwise be able to reach," he said.

"Now they have a reliable full-service transportation partner right on their doorstep that can help them drive success at home, and on a global scale."

Gord Smith, chief executive officer of the Manitoulin Group of Companies said offering clients better customer service is a key business driver.

"This is the latest of several significant investments we've made recently to benefit our customers," he said.

"We are constantly investing in infrastructure and developing new supply chain services to meet the ever-evolving requirements of our customers. Now local businesses can rely on a single-source provider for ground transportation, freight forwarding, customs brokerage, warehousing, global time critical delivery, crating, heavy-haul, oilfield services, logistics and supply chain management." ●

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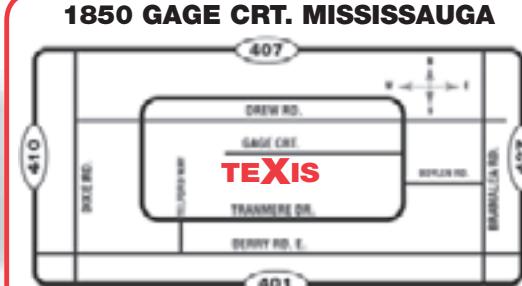
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Verspeeten Cartage buys Moe's Transport

INGERSOLL, ONTARIO

Automotive trucking company Verspeeten Cartage has purchased Moe's Transport. The deal was first reported on *Trucknews.com* Jan. 24. Even before the deal, Verspeeten ranked as one of Canada's biggest automotive specialists. According to the *Top Tier* report published by *Motortruck Fleet Executive*, Verspeeten runs 280 tractors and 518 trailers. Moe's operates 350 tractors and 690 trailers.

"The purchase of Moe's fits well into our existing business segment, sharing many of the same customers which should strengthen and increase current capacities," said Ron Verspeeten, president of Verspeeten Cartage. "We are very excited to work with Moe's management and staff, continuing to provide quality truckload service to all customers."

Moe's operates terminals in Windsor, Ont., Whitby, Ont. and Romulus, Mich. Just last year Verspeeten celebrated its 60th year in business.

Mark Borkowski, president of Mercantile Mergers & Acquisitions Corp., said Verspeeten's ability to take on such a major acquisition speaks to its strong management.

"They bought (Moe's) because they wanted the customers," Borkowski said. "They wanted the organization. (It's a) well managed company. Well structured. Even as smaller guys they were able to go to their bank and say, 'Look at how well this company is managed. We want to take on a giant.' Yes, the smaller guy did prevail in this particular case. You will see those types of transactions on occasion but not as often as we used to." ●

Six Canadian fleets awarded by TCA for safety excellence

Six Canadian fleets were honoured for safety excellence by the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) through its National Fleet Safety Awards.

The awards honour trucking companies that demonstrate a superior commitment to safety and accident reduction. There were 18 winners announced in January, including the six Canadian carriers. Two will be awarded grand prizes at the TCA convention in March.

The Canadian winners included: Brian Kurtz Trucking and MacKinnon Transport (Division II 5-14.99 million miles); N. Yanke Transfer and Erb International (Division IV 25-49.99 million miles); Groupe Robert (Division V 50-99.99 million miles); and Bison Transport (Division VI 100+ million miles).

"In addition to focusing the spotlight on companies that work hard to achieve stellar safety records, these awards give us a glimpse of how well the industry is performing as a whole,"

said Jerry Waddell, CDS, chairman of TCA's Safety & Security Division and the safety director for Cargo Transporters of Claremont, N.C. "With the continued decrease in the total contest fleet vehicle accident ratio, it demonstrates the forward safety thinking that our carrier members exhibit on a daily basis when it comes to their day-to-day operations."

Winners were selected based on their accident frequency per million miles driven coupled with an independent audit.

Grand prizes will be awarded in two categories: Less than 25 million miles; and 25 million or more annual miles.

To win the grand prize, companies will also have to demonstrate their overall safety programs, both on- and off-highway, including driver/independent contractor selection procedures, training, supervision, accident investigation, equipment maintenance and other activities related to highway safety. ●

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58 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Canada Cartage lands new safety guy; Fleet Brake finds business development manager; Trailer Wizards adds staff; and Accuride restructures its organization.

Marc Moncion has been named national director of safety and compliance for Canada Cartage.

He brings to the position more than 25 years of experience in the transportation sector. Most recently, he served as director of transportation compliance for a North American provider of environmental, energy industrial and transportation services.

He also has worked for Markel Insurance as its national director of safety and training services.

"Moncion's substantial background and leadership in environmental, health, safety and transportation compliance will further strengthen a team that's already considered the best in the country," announced Jeff Lindsay, president and CEO of Canada Cartage System.

Moncion has been previously nominated for the Ontario Amethyst Award, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in client service, innovation, and professional achievement in the public service field.

"As a recognized and widely-respected industry leader and an approachable family man, Moncion is an exceptional addition to the Canada Cartage System LP team," said Lindsay.

Fleet Brake has announced **Greg Jordan** has been hired as its new senior business development manager, work-

ing out of the distributor's Mississauga office. Jordan most recently worked for Truck-Lite and has held positions in the industry including national sales director, aftermarket sales North America, director of business development and others.

"Expanding our sales leadership provides Fleet Brake with the ability to capitalize on the growth and momentum we see in the marketplace," said John Bzeta, president of Fleet Brake. "Greg has the strategic and team-building skills to help develop new opportunities and facilitate key relationships."

Jordan can be reached at 905-670-2784 or at gjordan@fleetbrake.com.

Doug Riddell has joined Trailer Wizards. Riddell, who has worked in the transportation industry for 15 years, began working at the company's Calgary office in January as its new rental sales leasing representative. He will be responsible for growing existing business, developing new accounts, and increasing utilization.

"Doug's got a lot of experience in the transportation industry," said Gary Myroniuk, vice-president of Trailer Wizards' Prairie region. "He brings the kind of skills and knowledge we know our customers value when working with us."

Trailer Wizards also announced the hiring of **Ainsley McWhirter** as sales rep in its Winnipeg office.

McWhirter will be responsible for helping customers with trailer rentals, leasing and sales in Manitoba, the company says. She began her new role Jan. 13 and brings to the position seven years' experience in the transportation industry.

"What drew me to Trailer Wizards is their great reputation in the industry and ability to deliver a very positive experience to their customers," McWhirter said. "I would know - I used to be one. I'm really looking forward meeting with customers and delivering the same level of service I received as a previous Trailer Wizards customer." McWhirter can be reached at 204-999-1346.

Accuride announced a realignment of its sales and marketing organization in an effort to streamline its management and cost structure. The realignment creates greater P&L accountability for Accuride Wheels and Gunite business units, the company announced.

As part of the restructuring, **Drew Hofley** and **Chad Monroe** have been appointed to new leadership roles in sales and marketing.

Hofley has been named vice-president, regional sales. He'll report to Scott Hazlett, senior vice-president of operations.

Hofley will lead the regional sales team (including the Canadian region) as it grows its business with regional OEMs, national and regional fleets and warehouse-distributor aftermarket accounts.

Tony Pape, director, aftermarket strategy and sales will also report directly to Hazlett. Pape will continue to direct Accuride's Canadian aftermarket strategy, the company announced.

Meanwhile, Monroe has been promoted to vice-president, OEM sales, marketing and business development.

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Daimler's Lampert to retire

Canadian customers who came to know him during a stint in Canada, say he'll be missed

PORLAND, OREGON

Mark Lampert, Daimler Trucks North America's popular senior vice-president of sales and marketing and former vice-president of Freightliner Canada, announced he will retire in April.

Lampert joined Daimler in 1993, serving as the vice-president of sales for Freightliner Canada. Since then, he has steadily climbed the ranks through the organization. In recent years, he was responsible for the development of sales and marketing for Freightliner Trucks, the Detroit brand of on-highway engines, axles and transmissions and the company's proprietary components sales. He also oversaw the company's used truck operations and its export sales.

Lampert announced he's stepping down Apr. 1, to spend more time with his family. He'll be replaced by Richard Howard, who is a member of the Board of Management for Daimler Financial Services, responsible for Africa and the Asia/Pacific region.

"I am extremely grateful to have spent over 20 years with this great company, and I am deeply honoured to have had the opportunity to lead Freightliner to its present position as undisputed market leader across each and every commercial vehicle segment," said Lampert. "Working for Daimler Trucks North America has been a blessing and a privilege; however, I am resolute that 2014 is the right time for me to retire for a variety of reasons. First, the company's future sales success is assured through a robust product pipeline, as well as the Freightliner Cascadia Evolution - the industry's flagship in terms of total cost of ownership. Second, I look forward to spending more time with my wife, children and grandchildren. And lastly, the company has identified an excellent successor, Richard Howard, who is capable of executing the company's sales and marketing vision well into the future."

Martin Daum, president and CEO of DTNA, had this to say about Lampert's retirement: "Daimler Trucks North America owes a huge debt of gratitude for Mark's unwavering commitment to sales and marketing excellence. His goal of achieving undisputed market leadership is unquestioned as he leaves the company's sales and marketing team positioned for continued prosperity. Mark's retirement is well-earned and his career will be unmatched in our industry. We will always consider him a valued member of the Daimler Trucks North America family and wish him the best for his retirement."

Lampert, because of his time spent in Canada, was extremely popular here. Dan Einwechter, president of Challenger Motor Freight, said Lampert will definitely be missed.

"When I first met him, I thought he was a great guy but I thought here was just another American coming into Canada to do his stint as part of his corporate journey," Einwechter told *Truck News*. "But he surprised many of us, because he really became involved in the industry and got to know the Canadian marketplace extremely well.



Mark Lampert, DTNA's senior vice-president of sales and marketing and former v.p. of Freightliner Canada, announced he's retiring.

He had a commitment to making sure the Canadian customers were well taken care of and he became friends to many of us."

Einwechter added Lampert "had an uncanny ability to match (DTNA's) corporate needs with the clients' needs. He was a true gentleman all the time. He was very direct and to the point, but he truly cared about his customers tremendously and I think every one of his customers will miss him dearly."

Rob Penner, executive vice-president and COO of Bison Transport, is among those call Lampert a personal friend.

"Mark is a highly respected member of the trucking industry," he said, when reached for comment. "He has always been a strong and loyal promoter of the Daimler/Freightliner family of products and services and he has always represented them with class and professionalism. Mark is a man of his word and in our dealings with him he always backed up his word with actions. He has helped to develop and instill confidence in Freightliner as a product as well as in his team and we appreciate all that he has brought to our business partnership."

Penner also lauded Lampert's involvement in the industry, referring to him as "a huge supporter of our industry" and "very active at our association level."

"We will definitely miss what he has brought in terms of leadership and support at these functions, not to mention just having him around to share a laugh or a good golf story," Penner said, adding simply "Big shoes to fill."

Brad Thiessen, vice-president and general manager of Freightliner Canada, also weighed in.

"Mark Lampert is the epitome of what truck sales should be about," Thiessen said. "He loves selling trucks, he is fiercely competitive as well as proud of the products we represent and he believes our customer relationships and their success are vital to who we are as a company. Mark always led by example and he will truly be missed by his team, our dealers and this industry."

DTNA's Daum said he's confident Howard will prove to be a worthy successor.

"Richard's oversight of Daimler Truck Financial USA through the last economic downturn forged strong ties with Daimler Trucks North America's customers and dealer network," said Daum. "His decisive leadership, his personal style, and his depth of experience across the entire Daimler organization exemplify the skills and values required for exceptional leadership." ■

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By Edo Van Belkom

He'd felt the first tickle in his throat back in Saskatoon. He'd thought nothing of it then, just coughed a couple of times, sucked on a Halls and stopped for a tea at the first Timmies he saw. But the tickle had grown into a scratchy, irritating sore spot deep in his throat and now there was a chill aching its way through his body.

He slipped on his jacket and cranked the heater controls to the maximum, but it wasn't doing any good.

His whole body was shivering and he found it harder and harder to guide Mother Load down the highway.

All he wanted was to pull over, climb into the bunk and wrap himself up in every sweater and blanket he had.

"This c-can't be happening," Mark said aloud, his teeth chattering as he spoke. "I'm Mark Dalton. I don't get sick. I c-can't get sick." But the more he said it the more he knew he was wasting his breath.

Back in Lethbridge he'd picked up a load of used farm machinery headed for Winnipeg. The shipper had covered the equipment with a tarp, but had done a poor job securing the thing and by the time he got to the Alberta border the tarp was flapping in the breeze like a flag in a hurricane and its grommets were putting dents and scratches into the machinery metal.

Sure, it was used stuff but that didn't mean it didn't deserve to be shipped properly and with care.

He'd stopped by the side of the Trans-Canada to tie down the tarp and thinking the tarp would be an easy fix, he left his hat and jacket in the cab. But what should have taken a couple of minutes took 20 and by the time he was done he was chilled to the bone.

Now, whatever virus had invaded his body was taking over and despite the gallant fight he was putting up against it, it was a battle he was ultimately going to lose.

Mark reached over to the center console and picked up his cell phone. Two touches of his thumb against the screen and he was being connected to his dispatcher, Bud.

"Hello?"

"Bud, it's Mark."

"Mark?" Bud said like he didn't have a clue.

"Mark...Mark McLaren?"

"No," Mark sighed. "Mark McDalton."

"Hey, Dalton. How are you doing?"

"Lousy. Terrible. Awful."

"You don't sound so good."

"I don't feel so good, either."

"You sick?"

"Yes."



Mark gets well soon

"How sick?"

"I need you to find a driver for me."

"You mean to drive your truck for you."

"Yes."

"And what are you going to do while he's driving your truck?"

"Be sick in the bunk."

A pause. "Wow, you must really be sick."

"What part of sick didn't you get?"

"Okay, I'll see what I can do. How close to Winnipeg are you?"

"Bout an hour."

"I'll see if I can get someone to meet you in the yard."

•
Somehow Mark reached Winnipeg in time and was able to get the trailer placed just right in a very tight yard.

But when he was done, he set the parking brake and climbed into the bunk, not even bothering to set the trailer down and disconnect the fifth wheel.

The new guy could do that when he got there, Mark thought as he crawled under the blankets and curled up in a fetal position.

Later - Mark didn't know how long - there was a knock on the driver's door.

"It's open!" Mark said.

"Hey, how you doin'? You Mark?"

"Yes, and terrible," Mark said, especially now that he saw who Bud has sent. The kid couldn't be more than 18 with a newly minted CDL in his pocket.

"My name's Garth and don't you worry about a thing. I'll get the load ASAP and we'll be on our way in no time."

"Load? What load?"

"When Bud called me, he told me about a load headed for Toronto."

Mark nodded. Okay, so at least he was headed in the right direction.

The kid had the trailer down without a problem and they were on their way in minutes.

Mark tried to stay awake, but it only caused him to cringe at every hard shift the kid made.

Despite his concern over the way the kid was driving, the bouncing of the clutch and the rocking of the truck ultimately had Mark falling into a fast and deep sleep.

And before he was even aware of it, they were approaching the outskirts of the GTA.

"Anywhere specific you want me to drop you off in the city?" the kid asked when he saw Mark was awake.

"Drop me off?"

"Bud said I would be driving this rig for at least a week. I wouldn't have taken the job otherwise."

Mark wasn't happy about Bud taking liberties with his truck, especially allowing a stranger to drive it for a whole week. But Mark had to believe Bud wouldn't hire just any driver, and he was really in no position to argue... especially now. "You'll take good care of her?"

"Yes."

"Treat her like your own?"

"Of course."

Mark nodded, then gave him the address of his parent's home in Oakville. It wasn't the best situation, but he needed a place to be sick and that was the only place he could go.

But even as sick as he was, he wasn't worried about himself as much as he was about his truck.

He couldn't remember the last time someone drove Mother Load when he wasn't around to watch them do it.

And as he drifted back to sleep, he wondered if this was how fathers felt when their teenage daughters went on their first ever date with a boy. •

Mark Dalton returns next month in Mark Gets Well Soon, Part 2.

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

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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For the love of retreads

Dear Editor:

The article *How fleets & O/Os plan to optimize tire costs* in the *Did you know?* section in a recent issue was interesting because tires happen to be the third highest cost of operating any fleet, whether it is a fleet of one truck or 1,000 trucks. The top two costs are the driver and fuel, followed closely by tires.

We can't do anything about the cost of the driver, and the same goes for the cost of fuel, but when it comes to tires, by using retreads – whether you have your own tires retreaded or if you trade your retreadable tires in for those already retreaded – you can cut your tire costs in half and sometimes even more than half. We are talking about serious money and this saving can be made without sacrificing safety, performance or handling.

For those readers who still have concerns about retreads, it is important to know that today's retreads produced in top quality retread plants (the only kind you should deal with) have a failure rate actually lower than the best comparable new tires. Thanks to new technology in non-destructive testing methods and advances in rubber chemistry, a top quality retreaded tire will perform as well as the best new tire at a far lower cost.

Unless you are trucking for a hobby, the time has come to have a serious look at retreads the next time you need tires. If

you do you will save a ton of money and you will never go back to using new tires.

Don't take my word for any of the above. Let us send you a packet of good information along with a DVD titled *Reputable Retreading*, with our compliments. We can also arrange for you to visit a modern retread plant in your area and we promise you will come away amazed at how advanced the retread process is. We have members throughout Canada and they will welcome your visit. We guarantee you will come away as a believer if you take the tour, and if you don't just let us know and we will send a donation to your favourite charity. No questions asked!

If you want to have us send our packet and/or if you want to have us arrange for a tour contact us by telephone to 831-646-5269 or send an e-mail to info@retreadtire.org. Finally, if you just want to ask questions about retreads just call me anytime at the above number or on my cell phone 831-917-6449.

I love to talk to truckers. I also drive the talk and even though I don't drive a big truck I do drive on retreads on all wheel positions in my personal car and have been doing so for nearly 40 years. ☺

Harvey Brodsky
Managing director
Retread Tire Association
www.retreadtire.org

35 to 50 are leaving due to perceived poor financial conditions, meaning rate of pay, number of miles or combination of both? One question that I have not seen is what value do drivers put on home time? Value can mean more than money but what is it? Just to say we need home time without a definition that is understood by the carrier and the driver does a disservice to both parties. It is nice to see words like respect, honesty and integrity used in trying to reach a common ground, but is it being practiced?

My belief is we need to make transportation a more human environment again. ☺

Rob Martin
Via e-mail

How many drivers between the ages of

It's about respect

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the topic of the driver shortage, which seems to be an ongoing concern on both sides of the border. As a driver who was out of the industry for five years and having to come back to make a living, I am surprised how little some things have changed in some areas and how much in others. I have been back driving almost 10 months now and have seen a lot written on how to attract new drivers and have seen very little written on why existing drivers are leaving.

How many drivers between the ages of

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BEST WAY TO CONTACT ME: Home Tel Cell E-Mail Other _____

WORK PREFERENCES: Owner Operator Local Hwy Team Hwy Single/Company Driver
 Lease Purchase Moving Driver Trainer Other _____

OWNER OPERATOR? Manufacturer _____ Year/Model _____ Engine/Size _____

Preferred Trailer Type (check all that apply): Other _____

Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van Tanker Straight Truck Super B Reefer Van _____

Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply): Other _____

Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van Tanker Straight Truck Super B Reefer Van _____

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

Name of School _____

Name of Course Completed _____

Prov/State _____ Start/End Date _____

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TRUCK NEWS CAREERS

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In this edition of our Last Word monthly profile of interesting people from the trucking industry, James Menzies catches up with Edgar Murdoch, a retired professional driver and owner/operator who also performed around the world as an opera singer. Murdoch, who recently wrote a book about his career, now lives in B.C.

For Edgar Murdoch, a retired professional driver, school-teacher and opera singer – yes, you read that right – there was no such thing as an ordinary load. Murdoch, who has held a commercial driver's licence for 63 years, having acquired one on his 16th birthday, has put in a complete career behind the wheel while also singing at some of the most revered venues around the world.

Asked recently if he thinks of himself as a truck driver who sings or an opera singer who drove truck, he quips simply "Yes." The two careers were so intertwined; it seems pointless to delineate one from the other.

"I would take a rig to a rehearsal, run in and do the rehearsal, leave and drive to Pittsburgh, unload and come back to Toronto, park outside the venue, rush in and do a concert and then go deliver my load. This was not uncommon," Murdoch recalls.

Even when he taught music at northern Ontario schools, a set of truck keys was never far away. Murdoch said he'd find owner/operators to fill in for on weekends, and take on a long-haul job during the summers.

"Truck driving was always a part of my life," he says, as was music.

Murdoch traces his trucking career back to his teens, when he worked for Eaton's driving anything they'd allow him to. When the over-the-road drivers would come into the warehouse yard to make a delivery, Murdoch would beg them to let him climb behind the wheel and learn to maneuver the tractor-trailers around the yard.

"Eventually they would let me maneuver them around the yard and back them into the docks," Murdoch recalls. "My first time (backing) was a spectacle to behold; I managed to get it twisted all out of shape but I backed it in and I walked with my head held high that



Edgar Murdoch

day. I don't think my feet touched the ground the rest of the day."

By the time he was 21, Murdoch was running long-haul for Eaton's, delivering from southern Ontario to Manitoba through the US. At the same time, he was singing in various orchestras and playing the trombone.

Murdoch once performed to an audience of 12,000 people at Ontario Place while at the same time juggling these performances with a successful truck driving career.

"The music industry has a fixed schedule, the trucking industry does not," Murdoch says. "I would give my music schedule to my buddies who

were owner/operators or company owners. I'd pass around my music schedule and they'd pencil me in when they wanted to take time off or when other drivers had an appointment."

Murdoch was anything but a part-time hobby trucker, however. He delivered loads from coast-to-coast, and to all four corners of North America, including a year spent running Alaska. Through the years, he found himself putting more miles under his wheels when the Conservatives were in power, and performing more frequently when the Liberals formed the sitting government.

"The Conservatives were never particularly friendly to the classical music genre," says Murdoch. "Cultural groups that toured depended on government funding for support."

Former Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, on the other hand, was a big supporter of the arts, and during his time as leader, Murdoch found himself busy performing around the world. He twice toured Europe, played all the Baltic States and spent two weeks in 1977 singing in the Soviet Union. He also performed for two US presidents: Richard Nixon and Lyndon Johnson.

The performance for Nixon was particularly memorable. Murdoch and the other singers performed without instruments and at a reception following

the event, Nixon was so impressed he sought out the singers and asked for a demonstration.

"Wherever we were in the room, he had us singing," Murdoch recalls. "It blew Richard Nixon right out of the reception hall – it was amazing."

But after rubbing shoulders with Nixon, it was back in the truck, back out on the road. For a time, Murdoch ran Montreal-Victoria hauling mail with a partner.

"We had 72 hours to get from Montreal to Victoria, including the ferry ride. We were never late except when they closed the roads in the winter," he says. He still chuckles at the memory of truckers heading into the mountains during storms while Murdoch would park the truck knowing the roads would be shut down.

"The roads would be closed for two days and later we'd pass the trucks that went ahead," he says.

Unfortunately, Murdoch's trucking career was cut short in 2001 due to health issues. He was an owner/operator at that time, leased to Monarch Transport in Edmonton. Murdoch experienced chest pains when delivering a load to Chicago. Chalking it up to indigestion, he drove back to Regina in considerable pain, popping Rolaids all the way. Back in Canada, Murdoch went to the hospital and underwent a bunch of tests that indicated his heart was okay. He headed out on another run but cut it short when the pain worsened.

Murdoch suffered a massive heart attack and spent three weeks in intensive care and another week in the general ward before he was released. After selling his truck and recovering, Murdoch spent some time working in safety and compliance for a B.C. fleet. He has since written a book on his interesting career. *Driving Through My Memories* can be ordered from Shuswap Press at: <http://shuswappress.wordpress.com/ed-murdoch/>.

You can also watch him performing a Glenn Gould fugue piece on CBC from 1967 on YouTube here: <http://bit.ly/NstAb8>. Murdoch is the singer closest to the camera.

Even today, Murdoch continues to stay connected to the trucking industry, serving as a mentor to young owner/operators. ☀



Pictured is the last truck Edgar Murdoch drove as an owner/operator before retiring due to health problems.

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