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Putting it all on the table

Panel addresses the **seven** elephants in the driver shortage room

By Jason Rhyno

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. • A panel discussion in late October on the driver shortage took a refreshingly honest tone when discussing the role of Indo-Canadians and women in trucking.

The event, hosted and organized by Delta Nu Alpha, brought in Mark Seymour, president of Kriska Transport and chair of the CTA Driver Shortage Blue Ribbon Task Force; Manan Gupta, editor of *Road Today* magazine; Angela Splinter, executive director of Trucking HR Canada; and Guy Broderick, driver-trainer with Apps Transport.

Moderated by Mike McCarron, founder of MSM Transportation, the panel took a "macro approach" to the driver shortage, discussing the usual suspects: the image of trucking, EO-BRs, mandatory training, recruitment and retention. But it was the time taken during the 90-minute discussion to dig into the various, as McCarron said, "elephants in the room," that set the panel apart from others on the same topic.

Elephant #1: Is the driver shortage a friend or foe for carriers?

"How motivated are the owners in finding drivers?" McCarron asked. Trucks are full, rates are going up and capacity is good. "Is that demotivating transportation companies from solving this problem?"

"The situation is preventing people from growing organically, thus the rea-

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George Sutherland, a city driver with Bison Transport in the Greater Toronto Area, has been named the 2014 Owner/Operator of the Year.

The truck comes first

Owner/Operator of the Year George Sutherland built his business by running it like a business.

By James Menzies

TORONTO, ONTARIO

That George Sutherland even bothered to show up for work on the second day of his new career, given the disastrous nature of his first day on the job, is a surprise. That was 20 years ago. He's been showing up every day since then and piling up the safety awards and accolades along the way.

He has a new one to his name. Sutherland has been named the 2014 *Truck News* Owner/Operator of the Year, for his industry advocacy, safe driving, willingness to help others and his business acumen. Sutherland had an interest in big trucks since childhood and decided in 1994 to obtain his A/Z licence. He went to a driving school and after about 40 hours behind the wheel, passed his driving test and was ready to embark on his new career. He applied for a job and the owner handed Sutherland the keys to a tractor hooked to a tridem trailer.

Sutherland asked which driver would be accompanying him and the owner said, "You're on your own," he recalled. "They said 'If you can make it back by the end of the day, no accidents, you've got the job.' So off I go in this single-axle truck, no idea how heavy the load was because, you know, it didn't really mean anything to me."

Sutherland got onto the 401 and the trailer began swaying like crazy. He was driving just 35 mph and trying to maintain control. When he arrived at his destination another driver noticed the trailer's lift axle had 105 psi when it should have held 55 psi, causing the poor handling. "He says 'How did you even get here? That thing must have been snaking all over the highway! You were running on one axle!'"

Sutherland unloaded and went back to the office, having spent eight hours to make one delivery.

"I thought there's no way I'm going to have a job," Sutherland recalled. But to his surprise, the owner hired him on the spot.

A lot has happened to Sutherland since that first trip. He worked as a company driver for about five years, but always with an eye towards buying a truck of his own. Those early years he operated the company truck as though it were his and carefully tracked his numbers to determine whether he could make it as an owner/operator.

"To try to jump in with no knowledge of what you're doing, I don't think you can make it," Sutherland said. "The prob-

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A full report from the sold-out Surface Transportation Summit. Four pages of coverage.

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We test drive a new powertrain from Eaton and Cummins in the International ProStar, which seems a good fit for Canada.

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The new Sprinter cargo van is loaded with features and options.

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What you need to know about remanufactured brake shoes and why simply relining may not be the best option.

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

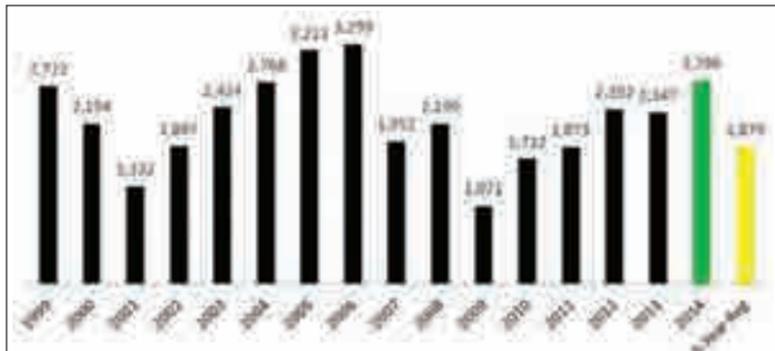
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Monthly Class 8 Sales – Sept 14

After a disappointing August, Class 8 sales rebounded strongly in September. The 2,796 Class 8 trucks sold into the Canadian market during the month made for the third best September since 1999 and were about 900 trucks above the five-year average. Only the heyday years of 2005 and 2006 were better. All truck manufacturers, with the exception of Western Star, enjoyed gains over the previous year. Market leader Freightliner had a particularly strong month.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	861	617
International	370	343
Kenworth	493	417
Mack	172	170
Peterbilt	330	278
Volvo	348	281
Western Star	222	241
TOTALS	2796	2347

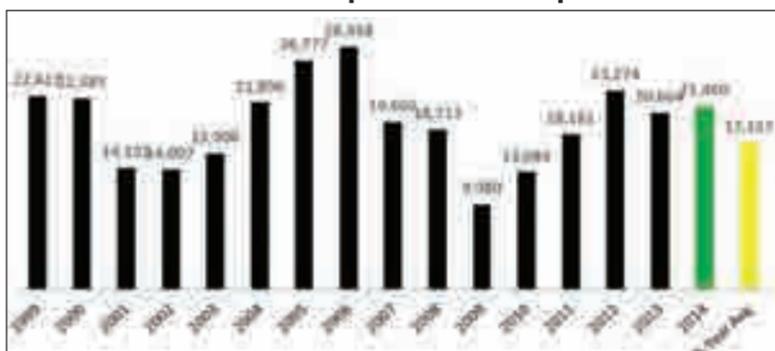
Historical Comparison – Sept 14 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Sept 14) by Province and OEM

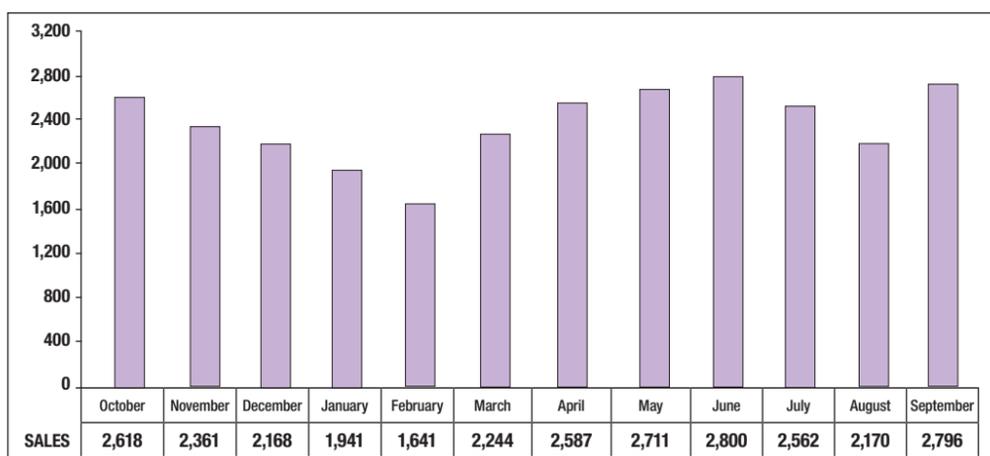
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	456	833	196	256	2,319	846	240	95	8	33	5,282
Kenworth	493	1,445	317	1	648	617	64	0	0	0	3,585
Mack	116	286	130	83	860	198	28	49	5	18	1,773
International	122	443	59	121	1,436	476	136	43	9	32	2,877
Peterbilt	355	1,114	252	156	508	361	114	13	0	0	2,873
Volvo	398	440	104	217	1,460	504	131	60	0	6	3,320
Western Star	250	630	57	93	344	272	40	50	3	11	1,750
TOTALS	2,190	5,191	1,115	927	7,575	3,274	753	310	25	100	21,460

Historical Comparison – YTD Sept 14



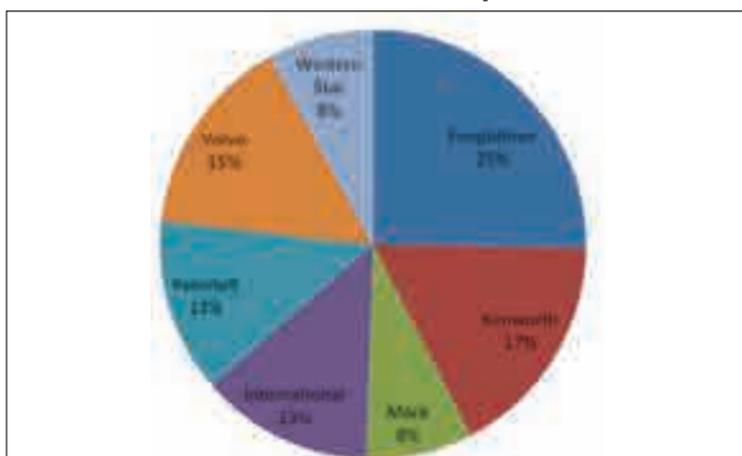
As mentioned last month, despite a weaker than hoped for August, optimism for an improvement in Class 8 truck sales this year has not lost steam and the September numbers quickly proved the optimism is not misplaced. Our research shows small carriers are more willing to purchase new trucks than they have been in years and both carriers and truck manufacturers are feeling more optimistic about the industry outlook. So far 2014 is shaping up to be the seventh best year in Class 8 truck sales since 1999.

12-Month Sales Trends



Truck sales enjoyed a welcomed upward spike in September after three successive monthly drops from the year's high point of 2,800 set back in June. To place sales performance in further perspective, the Canadian market has now enjoyed 7 straight months of sales above 2,000 after suffering through two months of sales below that figure to start the year. Prior to that the market had posted 10 straight months of sales coming in above the 2,000 mark, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years.

Market Share Class 8 – Sept 14 YTD



Freightliner's strong month has bumped up its leading marketshare to 25% while Kenworth's market share stands at 17%. Volvo, which has shown the most growth this year after leapfrogging past Peterbilt, is holding on to a 15% market share. Peterbilt's share continues to drop and is now tied with International at 13%. Mack and Western Star are also neck and neck at 8% market share of the Canadian Class 8 truck market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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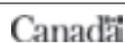
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Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES



What a difference a year can make. Last year when I attended the Natural Gas Vehicles Canada Conference, the list of delegates served as a who's who of Canadian trucking executives. It seemed every notable fleet was there to investigate whether or not natural gas was a viable fit for their operation.

Don't get me wrong, this year's conference was well attended and the list of speakers was as strong as last year. The advocates were still advocating and their enthusiasm for natural gas was as strong as it has ever been.

However, what I found lacking was the contingent of curious observers who were there to investigate, to do their homework and to decide whether or not natural gas will be in their fleet's future. For the most part, it seemed, speakers were preaching to the already converted, which was the most notable difference between this year's conference and last year's.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, diesel prices have provid-

Has natural gas lost its luster?

ed fleets with some relief of late. Also, business for many transportation providers is currently brisk. Freight volumes are up and rate increases are taking hold. For many carriers, the biggest challenge remains finding qualified drivers to seat their trucks.

Then there's been the notable pull-back of the higher horsepower natural gas engine offerings. Westport killed its 15-litre GX engine last year, Cummins put "on hold" its ISX15 G and most recently, Volvo suspended development of its 13-litre LNG engine.

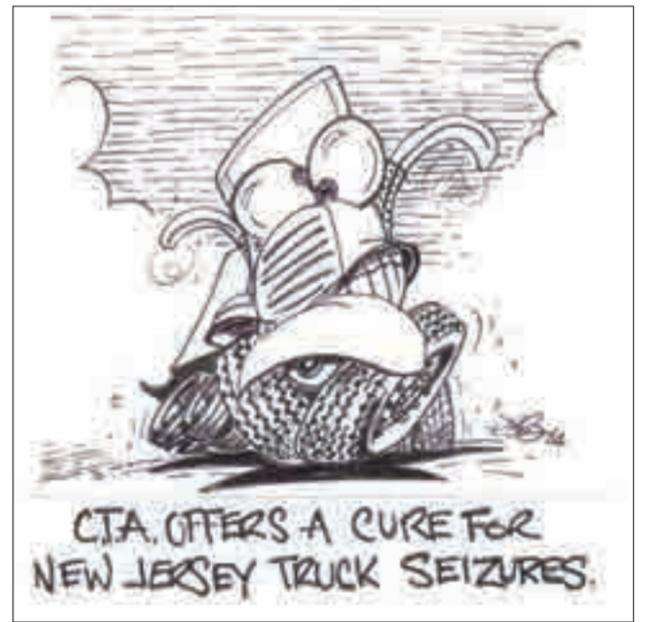
The lack of a high-horsepower natural gas engine was the talk of the conference this year. Some fleets invited to speak did little to support the movement, by sharing their conclusions that natural gas won't work for them until a 15-litre once again becomes available. But other fleets raved about the ISX12 G, which by all accounts performs wonderfully in applications limited to 80,000 lbs.

For the most part, even those fleets relying entirely on the now-discon-

tinued Westport 15L GX engine seem confident something will come along to take its place before those engines must be retired from service.

I'm not so sure. The cost of developing such an engine is enormous, especially considering the meager volumes the Canadian market can support. Let's face it, the ISX12 G serves the vast majority of US demand perfectly adequately. I wouldn't declare natural gas dead. There's still a place for it and in the right application it can save the right fleet big bucks.

Just ask Cold Star Freight, which has slashed its fuel costs by 30%, or C.A.T., which is confident enough to have just announced it will deploy 100 CNG-fuelled trucks out of Montreal. No, it's not dead by a long shot. However, the alternative fuel that



just a year ago seemed poised to break into the mainstream will remain a niche fuel for the foreseeable future. At least until a higher displacement natural gas engine comes along - and it could be a long time coming. ●

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The view with Lou

LOU SMYRLIS



The unfortunate road reality

As voters, we sure can be a funny lot. The American Trucking Associations certainly found that out when it recently attempted to take the pulse of the American public on the critical issue of spending on their nation's transportation infrastructure.

The ATA's poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and comprising 800 respondents, found a surprising amount of support among the American public for spending more on infrastructure. Participants were asked whether the US should spend more or spend less on several priorities, including K-12 public schools; transportation infrastructure; anti-terrorism and national defense; health care; and environmental protection.

While K-12 public schools came out on top, spending on infrastructure came out second with 48% supporting

an increase in spending and only 10% wanting to spend less. Seventy one per cent of respondents felt their nation's roadways were only in fair to poor condition. Almost half of Americans (49%) believe traffic congestion impacts the quality of their life.

So it would seem US truckers' long-term plea to improve the nation's infrastructure is in line with the American public. And that can only be good news for fleet executives hoping for the same kind of support here.

Well, not exactly.

When survey respondents were told that "it is estimated that in order to repair, update and modernize their nation's roads, highways and bridges, it would cost \$4 trillion over the next 25 years" and then given several different ways that this money could be raised, their enthusiasm for infrastructure im-

provements quickly fizzled. Not one of the funding proposals received a better than 36% approval rating.

Crazy Yanks, eh? They want good roads; they just don't want to pay for them.

Well, I'm not sure Canucks are much different. Everyone I know complains about the state of the roadways; everyone I know also complains about the size of their tax bill.

Add to that our demographic dilemma - significant labour shortages are expected for the multi-billion dollar projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Alberta, raising costs. Also, as was pointed out a couple of years ago by the Van Horne Institute in a white paper on reforming Canada's transportation policies, our "antiquated constitutional system" continues to toss wrenches into government deci-

sion making. Cities are the engines of economic growth and (much as I hate to admit it, since I've been living in the country the last 20 years) from that point of view deserve the majority of the funding available for infrastructure renewal.

But can rural and small town politicians, egged on by their constituents, ever accept a smaller share of infrastructure money? Likely not.

Perhaps, the time has come to get politics out of infrastructure renewal. Perhaps it's time to consider, as the Van Horne Institute suggests, a new paradigm for building infrastructure. Devolving the ownership of roads to a new network institution entrusted with the responsibility to maintain and improve the network and charge users appropriately, is the Institute's suggestion.

It may seem a radical move. It may also be worth considering. ●

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Dr. Izzy Brasher: A one-woman wonder

Blind chiropractor to truckers, she also performs in a blues band.

By Sonia Straface

COMMERCE CITY, COLORADO

Dr. Izzy Brasher is a woman who truly marches to the beat of her own drum. She is a doctor and a cancer survivor who began to lose her vision when she was just nine years old. To top it off she also fronts a popular blues band, called The Dr. Izzy Band as its lead singer.

Most notably, Brasher, 57, is also a licensed and practicing chiropractor who works at the Sapp Brothers Travel Center, a popular truck stop just north of Denver, Col. in Commerce City. She helps truck drivers from all over the country as they come in to grab a bite to eat and get their medical needs met while on the road.

"What we offer there is chiropractic care, but 80% of our business is DoT physicals," said Brasher. "I am a certified medical examiner and getting DoTs done is really what we focus on. We really like helping our drivers out and getting them set up with all their needs that have to do with driving."

Though Brasher has been practicing for 22 years, only 11 of those years

have been spent at the truck stop. She opened up her own practice after she graduated chiropractic college and got into helping truck drivers after her friend made a off-hand suggestion after watching a television program.

"Eleven years ago a very good friend was watching a travel show and they were showing a chiropractor in a truck stop and she called up and asked if I had thought about that and of course I hadn't," she said. "Truck stops weren't something I thought about ever."

After researching various truck stops across America, Brasher and her husband, Robert Morrison (who works as the clinic's office manager and is a member of the Dr. Izzy Band as well) settled on Sapp Brothers because of their open arms and way they interacted with drivers who came into the facility.

"They're still a family-owned business," said Morrison. "And we really like their approach to customer service."

Though she never thought about the possibility of working at a clinic at a truck stop, Brasher says she loves the

trucking industry and has made some amazing friendships with drivers over the last decade.

"I have run into some amazing people," she said. "I love (working with truck drivers) because it opened up my eyes to their lifestyle. It's not that you can't love the lifestyle, but it's different."

"I have a real appreciation for what they do now. I mean the chair I'm sitting on, the phone I'm talking on, everything comes off a truck. And (drivers) are away from home a lot in order for us to have everything we have and I'm in awe and am grateful of that."

Both Brasher and Morrison said their number one concern when dealing with drivers is to ease their nerves when they visit the clinic.

"We try to provide an atmosphere of relaxation, especially for those who are coming in for a DoT," said Morrison.

"With the exams it can be very stressful," added Brasher. "Some drivers have DoTs that are almost expiring, so their jobs are on the line and we understand that is stressful so we really try to provide a relaxed atmosphere."

Brasher said this approach has been proven to work by simply help lowering a driver's blood pressure while they are in the waiting room.

Clinics especially can be a stressful place to be for most truck drivers because often times they know they are not in good health because of the lifestyle they live (fast food, smoking, lack of exercise) and some can get agitated because of traffic or the general stress that comes with being away from home (and on the job) for an extended

period of time.

"As well, we're the only doctors sometimes that they see in a couple years' time," Brasher added. "Our main goal is to keep them healthy and working."

"We tell them at least one time a day, instead of having an unhealthy snack, try picking up an apple and take a walk around the truck - it's the first baby step to take to get healthier."

Brasher is now completely blind and though most would think being a chiropractor would be difficult without having the sense of sight, she says her blindness does not affect her job in the slightest.

"I get around my office pretty well," she said. "Sometimes I'll see a patient two or three times before they even realize I'm blind."

As far as the band goes, Brasher and Morrison are still heavily involved in the music industry.

They actually met through music in 2002 and married two years later. The Sapp Brothers even sell her CD in the travel centre.

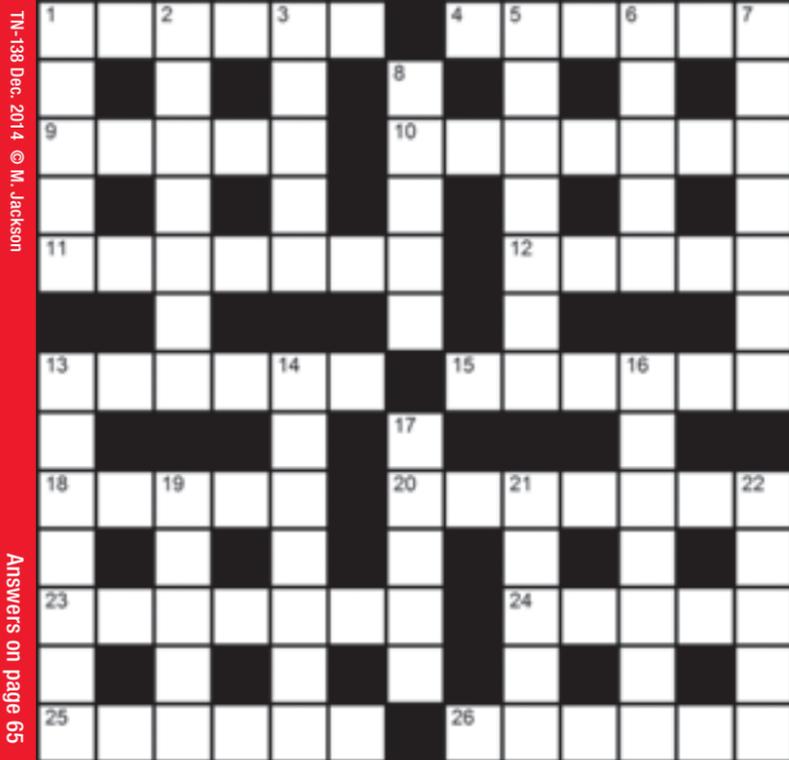
Patients can literally see Dr. Izzy and Morrison for their aching back and then listen to her soothing voice on their drive if they pick up a CD in the shop.

The band has been successful and its debut album, "Blind & Blues Bound" features bass player Kenny Passarali (who has worked with Elton John, Hall & Oates and blues harp player, James Cotton.)

For more information on the band and to hear samples of the music, visit drizzyband.com.

If you want to know more about the clinic, go to: <http://bit.do/drizzy>

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



TM-138 Dec. 2014 © M. Jackson

Answers on page 65

Across

- 1 With 2-Across, Christmas cargo carrier
- 4 See 1-Across clue
- 9 Cambridge, ON based Challenger _____ Freight
- 10 Castrol diesel oil
- 11 Suspension components
- 12 Diesel pumps' unit of measure
- 13 Truck-insurance document
- 15 Some big-rig pilots
- 18 CB-radio brand
- 20 Engine-incontinence inhibitor (3,4)
- 23 Flexible driveshaft couplings (1,6)
- 24 Windshield trim accessory
- 25 Super _____ tire type
- 26 Rider atop "Beverly Hillbillies" truck

Down

- 1 Convoy constituents
- 2 Arkansas' "The _____ State"
- 3 Ohio's "Rubber City"
- 5 Puslinch, ON based van carrier
- 6 Dash-gauge alternative, _____ light
- 7 Airplane garages
- 8 New-truck document, perhaps
- 13 Perennially popular ranchers' rides
- 14 CB-radio setting
- 16 Manitoba border town
- 17 Supersized road-hazard beast
- 19 UPS truck colour
- 21 Harley clutch or brake control
- 22 UK big-rig term

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ATA truck tonnage index goes unchanged in September

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

The American Trucking Associations' Truck Tonnage Index went unchanged

in September after a gain of 1.6% in August (a record high).

Year-over-year the index went up 3.7%. Year-to-date, compared to last

year truck tonnage is up 3.2%.

"September data was a mixed bag, with retail sales falling while factory output increased nicely," said ATA chief

economist Bob Costello. "As a result, I'm not too surprised that truck tonnage split both of those readings and remained unchanged. During the third quarter, truck tonnage jumped 2.4% from the second quarter and surged 4% from the same period last year." ●



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APTA conference brings together trucking association leaders

Canadian and American association heads expect an electronic logging device mandate to soon become reality in both countries

By Sonia Straface

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

The first day of the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association's Transportation Summit kicked off with an industry update from big names in trucking.

The focus and buzzword of this year's summit is leadership so it was no surprise the first couple of speakers for the day were major leaders in Canadian and American trucking. President of the Canadian Trucking Alliance, David Bradley and Prasad Sharma, senior v.p. and general counsel of the American Trucking Associations, gave attendees an updated look into the industry and hinted at what's to come in terms of legislation.

Bradley began by saying the CTA would soon be meeting with the standing committee in Ottawa, which has been conducting (for the last 18 months) a review of safe transportation of dangerous goods in the post Lac-Megantic period.

"Trucking has been able to fly under the radar and focus has been where it should be with the railways," he said. "But now it's our turn. I don't anticipate anything particularly negative to arise out of this. When you look at how more dangerous goods are hauled by truck than any other modes, our rate of incidents is extremely low. It's also extremely low where we share our workplace with the public on the highway. A very small proportion of the dangerous goods incidents involve highway crashes. But where those do occur, and while they are not frequent that's where the major leaks, incidents come from, therefore we have to be prepared for that."

In terms of dangerous goods, Bradley said he would like to see some changes, like the Canadian government taking a more active role in enforcement of the shipper's responsibilities under the regulations.

"The enforcement generally comes at roadside, and falls on you (carriers) and your drivers if there are documentation errors," he said. "Really that should be where the shipper is responsible."

In addition, he also suggested that an electronic logging device (ELD) mandate would be coming soon.

"We're going to be repeating our call for ELD mandate," he said. "In Canada I think we are inching closer in an announcement in that regard. I am not privy to the details or whether and how that would come about. But I think we're getting close and obviously we want to be compatible with the United States. But at the same token I think we need to make sure the enforcement policies and the like work in the Canadian environment."

He also spoke briefly about mandating entry-level training across the country.

"Another thing we are calling for, will be for the provinces to work with CTA and the provincial associations to adopt a regime of mandatory entry-level training," he said. "It's Canada,

these things take time and not necessarily everyone will be on-board at the same time or to the same extent, but I think we're moving things in that direction."

Next up, Sharma discussed what's going on in the States.

"Canada has taken the lead and US is following," he said. "I think that's been true on speed limiters, on ELDs and we're not following with great speed but we are following."

He began talking about hours-of-service, which he said "have a long and tortured history in the United States."

Changes to HoS regulations came

into effect in 2013 and Sharma says the ATA has gone to Congress again to make more changes since their opponents have taken the position that drivers use the restart to maximize their hours on the road. The issue, according to Sharma, might be going to the "graveyard that is congressional

administration and we made that clear to Congress."

Now, the Obama Administration has put forth a proposal for mandatory ELDs in all trucks (not just the worst 10% of violators).

"The proposal would be to put in place mandatory ELDs and its like-

"It's not on the fastest track, but it is moving and we do anticipate (an ELD mandate) happening early to mid-next year."

Prasad Sharma, American Trucking Associations

legislation."

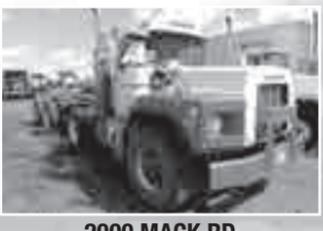
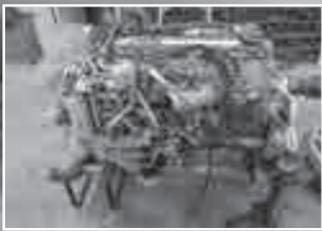
Turning towards ELDs, Sharma said: "(The ATA was) admittedly a little slow to coming around to support ELDs. We as an industry do support ELDs and we made it clear to the Ad-

ly that it will be finalized in 2015," he said. "There will be a two-year phasing period for compliance. It's not on the fastest track, but it is moving and we do anticipate something happening early to mid-next year." ●

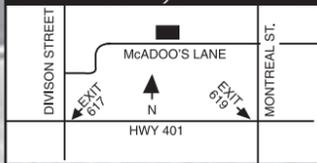


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2013 IH 5900i Maxxforce 13 450 hp, 18 spd., 20/46 axles, branded irreparable.	1998 MACK RD 400 Mack, 8LL trans., 20 F.A./20 Pusher/46 R.A.	2007 FREIGHTLINER M2-112 M-B engine, 18 spd., 14.6 F.A./ 46 R.A., engine needs rebuild.	2013 IH 7600 Maxxforce 13, auto trans., 20/46 axles, no brand.
			
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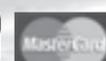
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There's the beef

A Quebec company specializes in aftermarket suspension systems

By Carroll McCormick

BAIE-SAINT-PAUL, QUEBEC

Take one off-the-shelf truck chassis. Stretch the wheelbase. Move the cab. Double or triple the number of front steer axles. Add a steerable axle or perhaps more steer axles in the rear. Add a hydraulic drive. Tie everything together with a rugged new suspension system and for good measure stir in a remote-controlled electronic steering kit. Now that's a truck!

For Simard Suspensions, tucked away in Baie-Saint-Paul, just east of Quebec City, these types of modifications are its bread and butter for chassis destined to become wreckers, crane trucks, drilling rigs, concrete pump, mixers, dump bodies, etc.

Founded by Emmanuel Simard in 1935, the company employs around 125 in three facilities.

There is the 54,000 sq.-ft. main installation facility, with 22 work bays, where mechanics may modify as many as 1,000 trucks a year. In a nearby second facility, Simard designs and manufactures its suspension components.

Simard also runs an installation facility in Stony Plain, Alta.

One of the more common tasks Simard does is converting chassis to twin steer suspension in the front. "(This is) a niche market. Of the hundreds of thousands of trucks manufactured a year, only a couple of thousand twin steers are made. They are well-known and very popular in Canada and the demand continues to grow in the US market," says Georges Cloutier, assistant general manager for Simard.

Simard also does tri-steer axle suspensions.

Simard can customize chassis in many ways.

"The needs of the customers are not (all) the same. The spread between the two front axles will be different, depending on the application and the weight laws in place in the region where the truck will be used," explains J. Alain Bourbeau, sales and service senior manager, Simard.

In Ontario for example, with the SPIF laws (safe, productive, infrastructure-friendly) in place, Simard has the expertise to help customers meet load-equalization standard requirements while increasing productivity and vehicles comfort.



A standard Simard chassis modification: twin steerable axles.

"We've honed down to roughly a hundred main configurations, but we have, over the years, done several hundred different configurations," Cloutier says. "OEMs do not offer the suspensions for all the complex market requirements."

Customers come to Simard for these modifications primarily so they can put more weight, as much as 25-35% more, on their chassis.

"The market is asking for bigger cranes and mixers and bigger oilfield rigs. They need suspension and chassis that can stand this weight," Cloutier explains.

Simard has several patented sus-

pension systems, such as its front tandem suspension system and tridem suspension system. Cloutier speaks to their purpose.

"We connect the axles together so they steer together and share the payload. The steering geometry factor makes all the difference between ours suspensions and OEM trucks. There is more comfort, less tire wear and (the new systems) provide the same or shorter steering turn radius."

Simard suspensions have an equalizer that distributes the weight equally between the two axles and across the chassis.

"The equalizer is a main factor...It distributes the load much more evenly on the chassis than the usual 6x4," Cloutier says.

There are a number of trucks with twin or tri-steers and with multiple rear axle configurations, including rear steer axles and all-wheel drives, in the company's Web site photo album. Simard also engineers and designs more goodies, such as electronic steer systems.

For example, Simard added four rear steer axles and designed an electronic steer system to Manac's spec's for a trailer that is extendable to 100 feet. The system allows a person to remotely steer it.

A typical customer will purchase an OEM vehicle and send it to Baie-Saint-Paul for makeover.

Once the work is completed the vehicle is returned to its owner or sent to another company, which adds the topside equipment.

"Take cranes, for example. We modify the suspension and if necessary, we extend the chassis and reinforce it to make sure it can support the crane," Bourbeau says.

Cloutier adds, "We make such modifications regularly and we do them within the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards."

International customers, such as from Australia and Chile, will buy their trucks in the US for Simard to customize.

Afterward, the trucks will be exported to the customers.

A few years ago Simard began installing three types of equipment on chassis: dump boxes built by Groupe Bibeau in St-Félix-de-Valois; snow removal products by Everest Equipment Co. in Ayer's Cliff; and cement mixers from London Machinery Inc., in London, Ontario.

However, says Cloutier, "Primarily, we are suspensions and steering geometry people." ●

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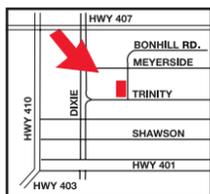
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Mandatory entry-level driver training coming to Ontario

An investigative series by the *Toronto Star* has shamed the province into finally taking action and promising to require entry-level training

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Ontario is set to introduce mandatory training for entry-level drivers after a *Toronto Star* series of articles highlighted just how easy it is to obtain an A/Z licence in the province.

The articles impressed upon the public that shoddy training schools continue to operate and because they charge less than \$1,000, they fly unregulated below the radar. Kim Richardson, president of KRTS Transportation Specialists, was among the critics quoted in the series.

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA), which has been lobbying for mandatory training for entry-level drivers for quite some time, lauded the announcement, referring to it as a “watershed moment for the trucking industry.”

David Bradley, president of the OTA, said: “The mere fact that someone holds a Class A licence does not ensure that person has the skills to be a safe and productive transport driver. Even an improved test will never fully determine a new driver’s skill level. Mandatory entry level training will at least assure trucking companies that when they hire a new driver, he or she has some basic level of skill that with additional training and experience can eventually lead to that person becoming a fully qualified professional driver.”

Transport Minister Steven Del Duca told the *Star*, “We are going to go forward (with mandatory entry-level training). We’re going to move as quickly as we can but we want to make sure that we get it right.”

He added he believes “it should take place as quickly as possible, but in a manner that actually produces the end result that we all want, which is the safest roads in North America, which is part of my responsibility.”

Bradley said OTA would like to see drivers complete training to an industry-developed standard before they can take the licensing test.

The Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario (TTSAO) announced it supports the province’s plans to introduce mandatory entry-level driver training in principle and would like a seat at the table as the standards are developed.

The association says it represents training schools that provide a quality of training that surpasses all provincial requirements.

“Membered schools of TTSAO are not the problem,” said Yvette Lagrois, TTSAO president. “Our TTSAO schools produce solid, entry-level graduates. All TTSAO schools offer a 200-hour registered program and have been delivering quality education for decades.”

The TTSAO wrote a letter of support when the Ontario Trucking Association called on the province to introduce mandatory entry-level driver training standards.

“We were very clear in that letter that

we supported mandatory entry-level driver training in principle and we were also very clear that we need to be involved in all communications regarding how mandatory training will roll out,” Lagrois said. “To date, we have had numerous meetings with the government regarding training issues, and recently we have been promised to be at the table for any further discussions with (OTA) Blue Ribbon Task Force as the process moves forward.” See pgs. 66-67 for industry reaction to this news. ●

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Canada Labour Code sees changes to work refusal process

By **Sonia Straface**

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

Changes to the Canada Labour Code have come into effect and at the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association's Transportation Summit, two employees from the Federal Labour Program spoke to attendees about what they can expect from the program going forward. The labour code has been amended to add a clearer definition of "danger" and change the process of how a work refusal is dealt with, confirmed Nathalie Lemay and Lorna MacMillan of the Labour Program. As of Oct. 31, "danger" is now defined by the Labour Program as "when employees are facing an imminent or serious threat to their life or health." Lemay says danger in the workplace will no longer be a question of perception.

"Starting (Oct. 31) when my officers are going to be doing inspections, when they look at a danger in the workplace they will be looking at if the danger is imminent," she said.

Under the old approach, explained MacMillan, if an employee felt they were in danger at the workplace, they would go to their manager/supervisor and tell them they were refusing to work because of this danger. The employer would then have to do an assessment of that perceived danger and inform the Health and Safety Committee and an investigation would then take place with the employer and committee member present.

At the end of the investigation, the employee would then be notified if either: 1) a danger was found and would soon be rectified, or; 2) the employer holds the opinion that there is no danger and the employee would be told to return to work. If the employee was told to return to work but still felt they were in danger, they would launch a continued work refusal. At that point, the Labour Program would be contacted by the employer and would step in to investigate using the Canada Labour Code. At the end of that investigation, a Health and Safety Officer would determine if there was a danger or not and then measure to address the situation would occur - either the employer has to fix the danger or the employee has to return to work. This decision could be appealed by either party.

The new process was explained by Lemay. She said that employers now launch their own investigation once an employee refuses to work because of a danger in the workplace. The investigation needs to be documented by a written report.

If the employee is not satisfied with the result of the written report, the matter is handed over to the Health and Safety Committee. An investigation will be launched by the committee and a report is written. The decision on whether or not the danger is imminent is decided upon and either the employer has to make a change or the employee has to return to work. If the employee is unsatisfied with the decision, they must go to the Labour Program and say they have a continued refusal.

The Labour Program is going to have more flexibility with the changes, said Lemay. Starting Oct. 31, the Labour Program has the right to decide whether or not they investigate once a continued refusal comes to their attention.

"If we find that (the dispute) should be resolved by another piece of legis-

lation or (the refusal was made) trivial or in bad faith, we might decide not to investigate," said Lemay. "In the past we had to investigate everything, now we might not investigate at all."

In addition, officers no longer

"In the past we had to investigate everything, now we might not investigate at all."

Nathalie Lemay

have to go on site for investigations because of the plentiful information provided in a detailed written report from the employer and/or if a previous deci-

sion on a similar refusal can be looked at as a sort of precedent.

If the refusal to work escalates to the Labour Program and they decide to investigate the matter on or off site, one of three conclusions would be reached: 1) There is a danger and the employer is given direction on how to fix this danger (Employers can appeal); 2) There is a danger but it's part of the normal condition of employment (such as truck drivers driving on winter roads); 3) There is no danger and the employee had to go back to work. Lemay said the changes were made to both speed up the investigation process for employers as well as to promote internal resolution between the employer and the employee.

"One of the major focuses of the code now is the internal resolution system," said Lemay. "That means before we get involved the employers and employees work it out together. They get to resolve the issue before we step in." ●

Spot market rebounds

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Canadian spot market freight volumes rebounded in September, capping a strong third quarter, according to the latest figures from TransCore Link Logistics' Canadian Freight Index.

September ended two consecutive months of declining freight volumes, with increases across the board. Month-over-month volumes were up 5% in September while year-over-year volumes surged 28%.

TransCore says September's volumes were the strongest of any September seen to date, surpassing previous records set in 2005 and 2001 by 6%. It also marked the strongest third quarter seen since TransCore began tracking data. Q3 volumes were 23% stronger than in 2013. ●

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Fleets could be getting help from new NRCan program

By Carolyn Gruske

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

The National Research Council wants to help fleet owners improve fuel efficiency, reduce repair and maintenance costs, decrease engine idle times, and minimize environmental footprint. To that end, the agency has created Fleet Forward 2020, a seven-year multi-faceted technology development initiative for trucking and mining fleets, the defence equipment sector and the transit industry. NRC promises fleet managers in these sectors “customized technical services” and offers to “collaborate with you on mutually-defined projects,” assuming the projects fall into one of four specified areas:

- Operational effectiveness: NRC offers services from “engineering design to modeling, simulation, prototyping, testing, evaluation and product integration” with the goal of checking equipment and trucks for “dynamics, mobility, durability, functionality, maintainability, and operability in harsh climate as well as the performance of on-board mechanical, electrical and electronic systems.”

- Vehicle diagnostics and prognostics: NRC will take a company’s fleet data and use that as a basis to transition companies away from “time-based maintenance to asset condition-based maintenance.”

- Power management: Fleet Forward 2020 promises to develop power management systems that focus on fuel conservation, alternative fuels and intelligent fuel use.

- Enhanced aerodynamic performance: NRC will use road testing, computational fluid dynamics (CFD), and wind tunnel testing to assist fleets in developing tailored aerodynamic solutions.

Fleet Forward 2020 program leader Cristian Tabra said the initiative has set concrete goals to meet.

“If you look at the trucking industry, you have 120,000 tractors, give or take, and 200,000 trailers. There are a lot of variables, but overall, in terms of cumulative benefits, we’re looking at about \$450 million in total savings. That includes fuel consumption savings. That includes savings in repairs and maintenance as a result of applying various technologies – we’re talking about vehicle diagnostics and prognostics that, in our mind, will help reduce maintenance costs. Aerodynamic drag reduction devices will generate savings in fuel consumption, and so on.”

Additionally, Tabra expects Fleet Forward 2020 to have a positive benefit on employment figures.

“In terms of jobs created, we’ve said that if we develop all the technologies we want to, which somebody will then have to produce, we anticipate the creation of about 1,200 jobs.”

In order for Fleet Forward 2020 to achieve its goals, it will need co-operation from OEMs that produce fleet equipment as well as the companies that purchase that equipment for their trucks. Tabra expects organizations will be attracted to what NRC has to offer.

“There are many large OEMs that regularly come to NRC because of our world class expertise and facilities. Also, the fact that we are very competitive in terms of price when it comes to some other facilities, especially the

ones in Europe and the US. That’s a clear advantage for us,” he said. In order to familiarize trucking companies and private carrier fleets with what NRC has to offer, Tabra said there are outreach efforts happening.

“I can tell you that we are doing everything we can to engage as many fleets as possible by going to trade shows and organizing workshops and so on.”

When asked if he thinks NRC will attract fleet partners, Tabra answered affirmatively.

“My personal opinion is the big fleets will engage and work with us. I’m thinking of Groupe Robert, Wal-Mart, Sobey’s, FedEx, Canada Post, those types of fleets. that’s what I believe will happen.”

He added that NRC is doing everything it can to make it easy for fleets to get involved in the program.

“All we need to do is make contact (with the fleet) either by e-mail or phone and then what happens is we sit down with that company and have a discussion. We ask what they want to accomplish, the requirements, and so on. One of the first things we do, especially if we’re talking about proprietary technology, we sign an NDA so everybody is protected, especially the fleet. What follows next is we put together a proposal for the client in which we outline the scope of the work, the schedule, the cost, the deliverables, everything. That becomes a contract that is eventually accepted by both parties. Then the work gets

done. That’s the flow.”

While there is no cost for organizations to join Fleet Forward 2020, they will be expected to pay for all or a portion of the financial costs of any project that is undertaken on their behalf.

As for why NRC developed this program, Tabra said it makes sense to focus on transportation due to its role in the Canadian economy.

“Transportation is a critical indus-

try to Canada. At NRC we said ‘let’s put the best people and research facilities we have to support the transportation industry.’ It took us some time to connect with the industry and understand its needs, but we put together a strong business case and business plan and said, ‘we can make a difference. We can help the transportation industry because we have world class expertise and facilities at NRC.’”

Hino celebrates 40 years in Canada

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Hino had more than one reason to celebrate Oct. 22 when it celebrated its 40th year in Canada. It was also recognizing new milestones achieved by the company within the past year. “Last year we achieved number one market share in the Classes 4-7 market, which is the first time in the history of Hino business in Canada,” announced Shuichi Kaneko, president of Hino Motors Canada, to an audience of more than 200 guests from across Canada and around the world. He said 2014 is looking even stronger, with the company on pace to sell 1,900 units.

“With keeping this momentum, we are going to target 2,000 units in 2015,” Kaneko added. “With an increase of revenue at our dealerships, we will be able to provide our Hino customers with more comprehensive service coverage and contribute to our customers’ business with our products more than before... Hino business in Canada is moving forward to the future.”

Visiting from Japan was Masakazu Ichikawa, chairman of the board for Hino Motors.

“Canada is one of the most important markets for Hino and its importance is growing more and more,” he said. “I have watched with great interest as many new sales records have been established recently. Market share has been growing steadily for many years and now Hino Motors Canada is number one!”

Ichikawa thanked customers for sticking with the company as it worked through recent obstacles such as the global financial crisis and the supply shortages that occurred in the wake of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. “But you prevailed, even excelled in the face of this adversity,” he told dealers and customers in attendance.

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Elephants in the room

Continued from page 1

son I recently did what I did," Seymour said, referring to the recent Kriska/Mullen venture.

According to Seymour, the challenge for most carriers is to seat their unseated trucks and maintaining discipline when it comes to adding capacity.

"The reality is if you can't seat the unseated trucks you have, why in the hell would you buy more when they'll just join that unseated group?"

In fact, it all comes down to discipline for Seymour. "We can use this as an opportunity to do some much needed repair on rates and balance sheets, but at the same time I think we need to leverage the positions we have with our customers to be kinder and gentler and more compassionate to our drivers. We had three driver pay increases at Kriska this year alone – three in 12 months – that's unprecedented. What we have said is we're going to get more money from the market and we're going to share it with our drivers."

Elephant #2: The broken pay problem

Asked if given the opportunity to rethink his decision to become a driver, would he do it again, Broderick responded "in a heartbeat." But the three-million-mile accident-free driver said pay needs to be increased across the board.

Seymour agreed with Broderick on the pay issue, but added that people don't leave Kriska because of pay.

"I don't think money is the reason people come to us or leave us, but we are increasing pay to compete. What we don't do traditionally, and I hope it happens in my lifetime, is that we move to an hourly-based pay where people get paid for every hour they work and if there time is wasted on the road in an accident or in traffic, they are still getting compensated. We don't have that system right now, which I think is a flaw that exists."

Still, Seymour said most people leave around issues of lifestyle. "A regular, over-the-road driver is gone for a long time and that presents many lifestyle issues – family issues."

It brought up the issue of "total compensation," something that Splinter said is starting to emerge.

"So it's not just hourly wage, but looking at everything you offer your drivers – your benefit plans, vacation time, employee assistant program, RRSPs, pensions – putting that all to-

gether and presenting it to your drivers. That's a trend we're seeing. In trucking in particular, there are so many variables so it's hard to determine what you are paying them, but we are seeing that trend to towards total compensation," she reiterated.

The other problem, said Seymour, is the fact that "it takes a couple of days of training in the city to get your licence and you are no less accredited than somebody like Guy with three million kilometres of accident-free driving under his belt. That's what's broken about driving a truck. You need to work your way to the point you have designation," he suggested. "Whether it's Gold Seal or Super-elite or whatever it is – Guy deserves to be viewed and paid and respected more than somebody who got their licence yesterday."

Elephants #3, 4, 5 and 6: Indo-Canadians, stereotypes, racism and speaking English

"We booked this event thinking we would get a lot of Indian participation," McCarron explained, "but we didn't realize it was Diwali." Diwali is an ancient Hindu festival celebrated over a five-day period. "Today is like Christmas for Indo-Canadians," said Gupta.

"That's one of the big challenges we face: lack of recognition of things like statutory holidays or even just greeting them when they walk in the door in the morning," commented McCarron.

"There is a missing link," Gupta said. "I don't know how many of the fleets that have Indo-Canadian employees extended Diwali greetings today – I didn't see any major tweets or Facebook updates."

Seymour said that this was the first year Kriska sent out a fleet-wide message in both English and Punjabi.

"We had samosas at all of our terminals today. Little things make a huge difference. We've never done it before but we have a very large population of Indo-Canadians. We celebrate Christmas and have Christmas parties and all sorts of things; we need to be equally respectful of the Indo-Canadians."

"We've hired 10 people this year," explained Douglas Kimmerly, president and CEO of DSN Chemical Transportation, Mississauga, Ont., after the presentation. "Seven or eight of them are new Canadians. We're not targeting a specific group; these just happened to be the best people to hire."

Asked how his company has been weathering the cultural differences in

light of his new hires, Kimmerly said that earlier in the day they had a meeting where people stood up and explained Diwali. However, "it's not really a cultural challenge – it's a chance for us to enrich our own culture."

Stereotypes

"I hear things like 'low rates, don't follow the rules, bad equipment'. A lot of Canadian truckers would put a lot of blame for low rates on the Indian trucking community. Is there basis for that," McCarron asked Gupta.

"There's no basis for that," Gupta responded. "You will find people of all backgrounds lowering their rates, running unsafe trucks on the road – it's not only Indo-Canadians. Every community has some bad apples. Indo-Canadians are so large in numbers you will see more examples of those things – es-

"I think women are teaching us a lot about respect that we didn't figure out on our own."

Mark Seymour, Kriska Group

pecially in the GTA and Peel Region – but it is not only them."

Gupta added that culturally, Indo-Canadians are "very entrepreneurial and that is why they are making their mark in much more visible numbers. In the next five years, you will see most of them in decision making positions."

Racism

"How much is racism involved in this," asked McCarron, adding that he was "blown away" by a recent meeting with Sikh truckers who explained what they face on the road.

"It's definitely a big obstacle," Gupta acknowledged. "I believe the industry should be welcoming to everybody, but it's also how the individual conducts themselves as well. Respect is a two-way street – you give respect, you get respect – and many times I've seen newcomers that don't earn that respect. They feel that they are the kings of the road."

The language barrier

As a driver-trainer, Broderick said that potential new hires have said to him "I don't know how to describe that part in your language."

That's a big problem if they get stopped at inspection stations, he stressed.

"They can't explain, 'Yes, I did check my brakes, my fifth wheel, my landing gear, here is my dangerous goods paperwork, everything is all up to par.' That is probably the biggest thing – the

language barrier."

Splinter said research shows that language is the number one barrier for foreign workers. "If they are coming into fleets, maybe take that initiative to give them that training," she suggested.

Elephant #7: Women in trucking and learning about respect

Trucking HR Canada has been working with employers on recruitment and retention of women, explained Splinter. "We surveyed women working in the industry on barriers to entry. We have some rich data."

The key data points? At the driver level, Splinter said women are concerned about safety issues: "danger on the road, not wanting to be alone in their truck at night at truck stops, bathroom and shower facilities that weren't female-friendly," Splinter listed off.

"From other women at other levels, issues around compensation – that's not new and probably keeping with what we're seeing in other industries."

Trucking HR is developing an "action plan," Splinter said. One of the initiatives that is set to come out of the action plan is a national leadership summit "that will bring together not just women but men as well and look at some practical approaches."

In the meantime, there are lessons to be learned. In what he apologized for being a "bold and uncensored example," Seymour told the audience about a female employee that was denied the use of a customer's washroom.

"We took the initiative to demark the customer and said if you aren't going to let our drivers, men and women, use the facilities, we're never coming back."

As more women enter the industry, an evolution is taking place, Seymour explained. He pointed to how Kriska now changes the mattress in a truck every time a new driver takes it over.

"I think most guys wouldn't have a problem sleeping in other guys' mattresses. Women have a higher standard and higher expectations – and so they should. Every time we issue a truck to a new driver, we put a new mattress in it because that's what our women drivers expect and deserve. But we're not going to do it gender specific, we're going to do it by and large. I think women are teaching us a lot about respect that we didn't figure out on our own." ●

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Continued from page 1

lem with a lot of guys is that they see that first big paycheck and they end up buying fancy cars, motorbikes, holidays. That money has got to be saved for the truck. The truck comes first. You've got to be able to maintain it. You blow a tire on the road - we blew a tire outside Dryden, Ont. on a Sunday morning. The guy wanted \$1,463 for one drive tire. That's a lot of money when it should only be \$500. So you better have some money behind you."

Sutherland tracked his figures carefully and when the truck was in the shop, he'd ask the mechanics what it cost to do certain maintenance and repairs.

"I kept track of my miles, my hours, my drops, my picks, the fuel," Sutherland explained. "I kept a running tab of the cost of the fuel and the repairs on the truck, even though it was a

company truck. It was a great experience to learn that way."

With nearly five years as a company driver in the books, Sutherland decided to take the plunge and buy his own truck.

"We started with an older truck, something we could put down a good chunk of money on," he said. "I kept the dollar value down so I could make sure I made some money so that I could pay repair bills if they came along and to be able to put money on the table for the family and kids at home."

Those early years on the road running long-haul across North America were invigorating, yet being away from home was also difficult. Sutherland was married to his wife Cindy and they had two children, Matthew and Cheryl.

"I'd be gone for three weeks at a time," Sutherland recalled. "Back then, we didn't have the use of a cell



Sponsors Ryan Weary, Castrol (L-R), Danijela Franco, Mack Trucks and Brad Houle, Goodyear, congratulate Sutherland.

phone so it was running into a phone booth and contact was pretty limited sometimes."

Sutherland leased on with Bison

Transport in 2006, and around that time was looking to improve the quality of time spent with his family. Bison allowed him to train his wife Cindy to drive and the two drove team for a while. A short while.

"It was interesting," Sutherland said of driving with his wife. "She went to driving school and got her licence and then she came into the truck for about three months and told me everything I did wrong, so I learned a lot from her. Then she got behind the wheel and I got to explain a few things to her. It was a great two years, but it's over. I don't think she wants to come back again and I really enjoy my quiet time now."

While both George and Cindy joke about their time together on the road as being trying at times, they're very much committed to each other, their family and their business. The Sutherlands are a close-knit family despite George's time on the road and away from home. When he received his award, son Matt gave a heartfelt speech that attested to his admiration for his father, who he claims instilled in him his values and work ethic.

Still, the time on the road had taken its toll. Sutherland longed for a more consistent schedule and he found it recently in a local job with Bison, delivering freight to customers within the Greater Toronto Area. The new job pays him an hourly rate for all his work and he enjoys the ability to get out of the truck more frequently throughout the day and to interact more with customers.

"I wanted to have more of a schedule," Sutherland said of the change. "I wanted to know when I was going to work and when I was coming home at the end of the week. I also like getting out of the truck and meeting people. I was finding with the long-haul that you're stuck behind that wheel every day of the week; you're not getting out as much as you should."

Running local also allows Sutherland to be more productive throughout his driving shifts, taking advantage of dock delays to do paperwork or maintenance.

"I do a lot of my business planning when I'm sitting at a customer's dock," he said. "You might as well use valuable time. I've been known to throw on a set of coveralls and go underneath the truck and do a grease job at a dock."

The local gig also allows him to get in a little more exercise, which has become important to Sutherland in recent years. He recognized years ago that his health was failing and he needed to make some changes. He was on three blood pressure medications and extremely overweight. Bison



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signed on for the first Truckload Carriers Association Weight Loss Show-down and when Sutherland saw the notice on a bulletin board he decided to join Bison's team in the competition. He dropped 170 lbs in six months and was able to discontinue all his blood pressure medication. The results came from eating healthier and doing laps around his tractor-trailer.

"That was at the time when my wife was in the truck, so it was much easier when she was with me," he said. "We quit eating in restaurants. We made wise choices. We had a coach that would call us once a week and try to keep us in line - immeasurable help. Bison, as a company, was supporting us. Every time you get out of the truck you do your circle check around the truck. I would usually do 11-15 laps. One tire this trip, second tire the next trip and just keep going."

Sutherland admits he has since regained about 70 lbs of the weight he lost but he has joined the NAL Insurance Healthy Trucker program through Bison and lost another 10 lbs and is back on track. He said he's encouraged and motivated by the attention driver health and wellness has received in recent months.

"These companies are starting to care," Sutherland said. "They're starting to figure out that drivers are not just numbers - we're human beings - and they're worried about our welfare."

While driving locally affords Sutherland the opportunity to get more exercise, dealing with Toronto traffic can't be good for the blood pressure, can it?

"You have to have a different mindset," Sutherland acknowledged. "You

don't try and push yourself through the traffic, you just kind of go with the flow of traffic or a little slower. A slow and steady pace will get you farther down the road than trying to be fast and pushy."

He also finds the local job is easier on his truck. He's now putting on about 1,000 miles a week compared to the 3,000-3,200 he was racking up when running linehaul. Sutherland's 2009 Kenworth is getting a little long in the tooth but he hopes to baby it for a few more years.

"We're meticulous on oil changes and grease jobs," he said. "I don't go over 20,000 kms between oil changes and grease jobs usually once a week now. Anything, even the smallest air leak, you have to be on top of it."

New tractors are more expensive than ever, largely due to the emissions-reducing systems that have been put in place over the past decade. Asked if it's even viable for an owner/operator to buy a new tractor today,

Remember that the truck comes first. Without the truck, you're not going to have a paycheck."

George Sutherland, 2014 Owner/Operator of the Year

Sutherland said yes, but it has to be earned.

"As a beginning driver, you have to look at the used market first," he said. "Then pay off that first truck and then get into your second truck, which is probably a little bit newer, and get it



Sutherland ran a company truck as though it was his own to get started.

paid off. Then put some money aside, so you've got your truck to trade in plus you've got some money. I think you can still as an owner/operator get into a new truck but you're not going to do it on your first or second or third go-round. My first new one was my fifth truck. Get some money put away.

the trucking industry and careers within it. It's a role he relishes.

"Schools are the greatest things," he said. "It's amazing how many kids want to get inside the trailer. They don't realize how big this thing is. We get schoolteachers up there, vice-principals and principals. It opens their eyes."

Asked what would attract more drivers to the industry, Sutherland doesn't hesitate. "More money," he said. "I think that's one of the key issues. Flexibility of home time and having a company that's honest."

As for himself, Sutherland hopes to continue driving for about five more years before calling it a career. As Owner/Operator of the Year, Sutherland won \$6,000 cash, a diamond ring, an evening in Toronto with his family and several prizes from the award's sponsors, Castrol, Goodyear and Mack Trucks. Visit Trucknews.com to watch video interviews with Sutherland in the upcoming weeks. ●

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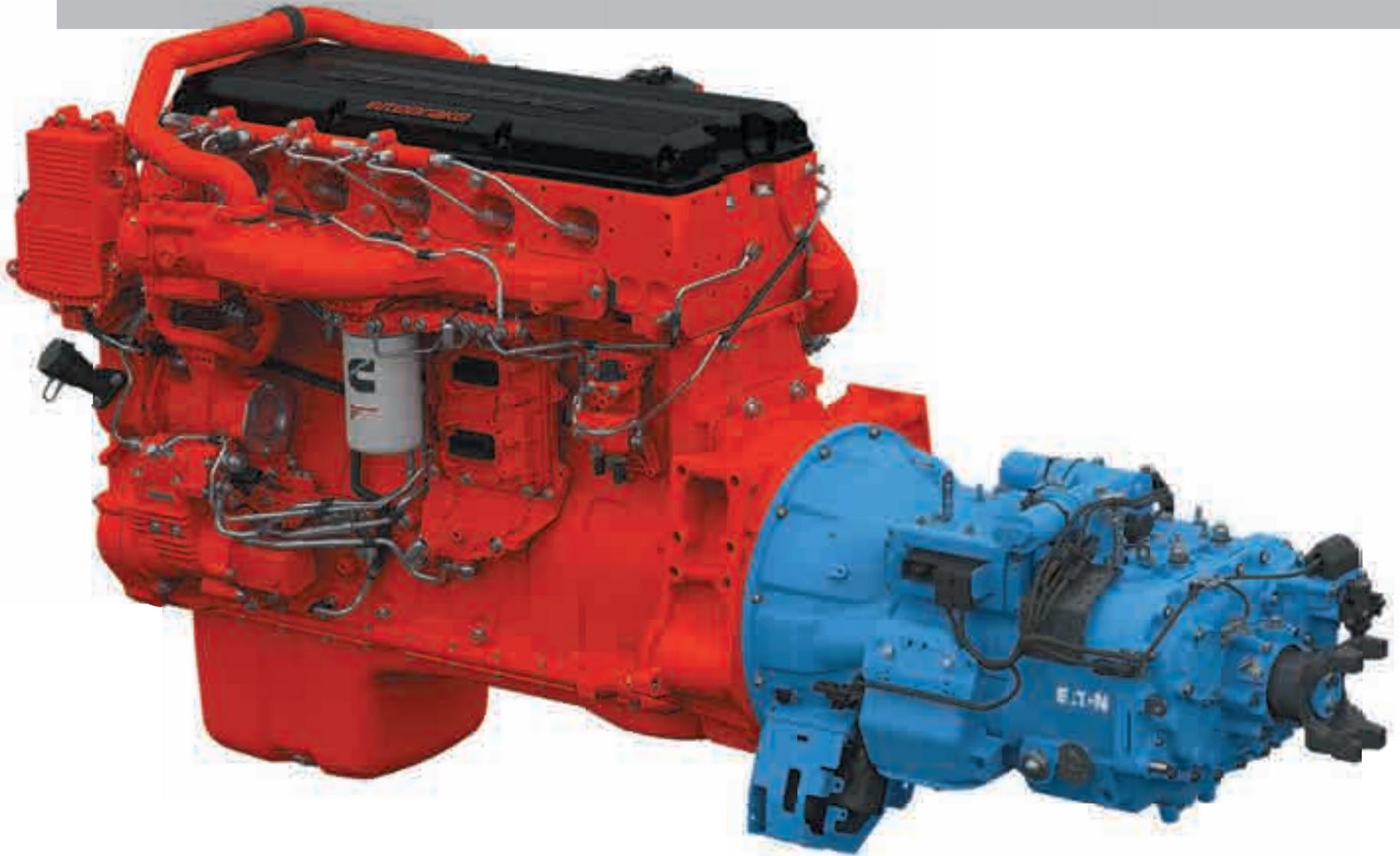
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Over the Road

AL GOODHALL



In praise of good mentorship programs

The dry swirling snow had packed itself under my rig. The steady growl of the truck's diesel engine, muffled by the snow, was now a low hum. The road in front of me was a ribbon of unbroken snow. The world had taken on a dream-like quality in the falling snow. The trees on the mountainside were completely wrapped in blankets of white. Solitary, peaceful, and surreal.

It was a perfect night as I cut through almost a foot of fresh snow climbing the last few kilometres to Rogers Pass.

This is when it dawned on me that I had not seen any cars, plows, or trucks since I had pulled out of Revelstoke. I was alone. Was I supposed to be out here? Had I missed a road closure sign in the snow? At this point I didn't care. I had the perfect heavy load for the conditions. It was a beautiful night and I drank up the experience.

When I'm asked what it is about the trucking life that keeps me coming back week after week, the memory of that drive from Revelstoke to Golden is the memory I am quick to share.

I've accumulated many more memories just like it over the years and there are many more yet to be experienced. This is the siren call of the trucking life and the weapon of choice in a recruiter's bag of tricks. Come drive a truck

and experience the open road. See the world.

Of course there are a good number of people, probably a majority, that ask me if I'm perhaps a little bit nuts to be enjoying an experience that they can only see as stressful.

It's the challenges we face as drivers and the joy we find in those experiences that define this trucking life. As I look back at the start of my career I can't help but be thankful for the mentorship I received.

Without a good mentorship program the recruiter's promise of the freedom

mentor after graduating from a driving school and obtaining their licence? Probably not very many.

It makes me wonder how many new drivers are building their experience on a foundation of fear of the unknown instead of that foundation of confidence I described above.

I've always held the opinion that the smaller family-run trucking businesses do it best when it comes to training and mentorship. It's a natural extension of the family dynamic, to take someone new under your wing and share your experience with them. There is as

Without a good mentorship program the recruiter's promise of the freedom of the open road is an empty one.

of the open road is an empty one.

The joy of this work is rooted in the confidence you have in your ability to deal with the unexpected. A good trucking mentor instills you with a confidence in your own skills, a solid foundation on which to build your experience.

I spent nine months with my mentor and I view that time as an apprenticeship. How many first-year drivers will be spending nine months with a

much in the experience for the trainer as for the trainee. It simply feels good to teach and to see someone benefit from that mentoring. Has this transfer of skills been lost in the now big business, big data world of trucking? I think it has to a large part.

Having spent three years of my career in a mentorship position I feel well qualified to tout its benefits. The drivers I spent time with were grateful for three to four months of intensive finishing.

Not one of the drivers I spent time with would say they would have been better off if they were left to learn the ropes in the throes of a northern Ontario winter, in the canyons of the Fraser valley, or on the slopes of the Coquihalla.

Intensive training immediately after drivers obtain their licence should be required for everyone entering this profession not just a lucky few. It only makes sense.

Finding well qualified drivers in this business is difficult. Finding well qualified teachers and mentors is even more difficult. Where do they come from? Who trains the trainers? Isn't this the root of the driver shortage problem? Many people in the industry feel there are plenty of licensed drivers but they leave the industry after a very short period.

Aren't many of those people simply disenchanted with their initial experience? Would not many of them still be here if there was a greater investment in people at the outset?

Big trucking invests heavily in equipment and technology these days. This is still very much a people based business and big trucking needs to get on that track.

My Christmas wish for our industry is to see training and mentoring become the top priority on our agenda. I wish. I wish. Merry Christmas, everyone! 🎄

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 @Al_Goodhall.

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26 HEALTH

**Back behind
the wheel**

DR. CHRIS SINGH



All about stress fractures

Recently, a patient came into my clinic complaining of foot pain. The patient reported that he first noticed the pain about two months ago and the pain had slowly worsened.

During the history portion of the examination, it was revealed that the patient works for a courier service. As part of his daily job, he is required to climb in and out of his delivery truck roughly 50 times per day. After examining his foot, I decided to send him for x-rays. As it turns out, the x-rays showed that the patient had a stress fracture in one of the bones in his foot.

Stress fractures are simply small cracks in a bone. In most cases they are caused by repetitive force or overuse. In the case of my patient, it was the repeated force of jumping in and out of his truck that caused the stress fracture to occur.

Due to the high amounts of force, the weight-bearing bones of the lower leg or foot are generally the most susceptible to stress fractures. Endurance and track-and-field athletes are most at risk, however anyone can experience a stress fracture. Also, conditions such as osteoporosis can weaken bones and make it easier for a stress fracture to occur.

In addition, if bones are subjected to high forces that they are not accustomed to and not given enough recovery time, the bone may become fatigued. If this pattern is maintained for a long period of time, a stress fracture may form. A good example is starting a vigorous exercise routine when you have been previously living a sedentary lifestyle. Increasing the intensity and/or frequency of physical activity too quickly increases the risk of stress fractures.

In most cases, the pain associated with a stress fracture is mild at first. However, over time the pain will worsen and can become very intense. The pain is usually localized but can also radiate to other areas around the fracture site. Swelling and inflammation is usually present. It is important to seek medical attention if the pain becomes severe or persists even at rest.

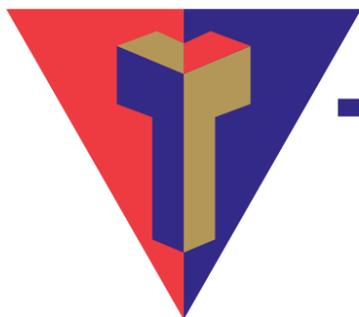
In order to confirm the presence of a stress fracture, your doctor may order an x-ray. In many instances, stress fractures will not show up on an x-ray for several weeks. As a result, your doctor may recommend more sophisticated diagnostic testing such as a bone scan or MRI.

Once a stress fracture has been diagnosed, treatment can begin immediately. Generally, the most important component of treatment is giving the bone enough rest to heal. This may take several months. In order to reduce the load on the bone, crutches, braces or walking boots may be utilized. In rare cases, surgery is required to ensure complete healing. Anti-inflammatory and pain medications may be prescribed to help control pain and discomfort.

It is important to listen to your doctor and follow his or her instructions about resuming activity. It is vital to slowly progress from non-weight bearing or low impact activities such as swimming to your normal activities. If high-impact activities are introduced too early, it may cause a re-injury of the stress fracture.

Although it is impossible to completely prevent a stress fracture from occurring, there are a few simple things to keep in mind that can help reduce the risk. Firstly, make changes to your physical activity slowly and gradually. Next, try to vary the type and intensity of physical activity in order to reduce repetitive loads or stress on the bones. Finally, maintain a proper and balanced diet to make sure your bones get all of the nutrients they need to stay healthy and strong. Until next time, drive safely. 🚗

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



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Plan for happy, healthy holidays

We will soon be enjoying the Christmas season with all its parties and holiday treats. Now is a good time to plan to control your eating habits for the holidays and to reduce your risk of ever developing diabetes mellitus.

Diabetes mellitus is a group of diseases that interferes with how the body uses glucose (blood sugar). Blood sugar is not bad in itself. An appropriate amount of blood sugar is essential to good health, since it supplies energy to muscle, tissue and brain cells.

A healthy body can maintain appropriate blood sugar levels. When you eat, the pancreas secretes the appropriate amount of a hormone, insulin, into your bloodstream, which helps the glucose from your food enter cells to be used as fuel. Later, when bloodstream sugar levels drop, the pancreas adjusts and secretes less insulin.

Any unused, extra blood sugar gets stored in the liver as glycogen for future use. Later, if no more food has been eaten and blood sugar levels drop, the liver breaks down the stored glycogen into glucose, which is then released into the bloodstream, helping maintain a consistent glucose level. Unfortunately, people with diabetes mellitus have difficulty maintaining a consistent, ap-

propriate blood sugar level.

Diabetes mellitus is divided into three categories: pre-diabetes, which occurs when blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough to be considered diabetes, and Type 1 and Type 2 chronic diabetes.

The more common type, Type 2 diabetes, can develop at any age, but is more often seen in people over 40. The exact cause of pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes is unknown, but genetic and environmental factors affect your risk, and so does excessive body weight. Having a parent or sibling with Type 2 diabetes increases your risk. Obesity does too, since fatty tissue causes cells to become more resistant to insulin. Some other risk factors include: aging, high blood pressure, gestational diabetes, polycystic ovary syndrome, and abnormal cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Since the cells of people with pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes resist the action of insulin, even though the pancreas does produce insulin, it cannot produce enough extra insulin to overcome this resistance. As a result, excessive sugar accumulates in the bloodstream.

However, with close attention to diet and activity, people with pre-diabetes and Type 2 diabetes can often manage their condition through diet, exercise and/or oral medications. Becoming

more active helps control weight and improves blood sugar levels because increased physical activity makes cells more responsive to insulin.

On the other hand, Type 1 diabetes requires more carefully supervised medical treatment. Even though Type 1 diabetes can develop at any age, it typically appears during childhood or adolescence. The exact cause of Type 1 diabetes is not known either – a combination of genetics and environment. A damaged immune system cells (auto-antibodies), or a sibling with Type 1 diabetes, or low vitamin D intake or exposure to a viral illness increases the risk.

With Type 1 diabetes, auto-antibodies attack and destroy the pancreatic cells responsible for producing insulin. Because these damaged cells secrete little or no insulin, the body cannot break down glucose as fuel for cells, causing sugar to build up in the bloodstream and energy levels to fall.

You may have pre-diabetes or diabetes, if you answer 'yes' regarding the following signs and symptoms. Do you feel unusually thirsty; feel extremely hungry; need to urinate frequently; lose weight unexplainably; feel tired; become irritable; have blurred vision; heal slowly; and/or experience recurring infections?

If you do, consult your doctor and follow medical recommendations. If

pre-diabetic, control your blood sugar; reduce your alcohol intake and maintain a healthy blood pressure, a healthy weight, and a healthy cholesterol level. If you have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes, monitor your sugar levels, count carbohydrates and take diabetes medications and/or insulin as prescribed.

Controlling your blood sugar levels will help you avoid diabetes' many serious circulatory complications, including: cardiovascular disease, such as angina, heart attack, atherosclerosis, and stroke.

You could also avoid diabetic nerve damage. Diabetic nerve damage to the extremities can lead to numbness in the fingers and toes. Resultant, unnoticed and untreated cuts and blisters on the feet can even lead to amputations. Nerve damage to the digestive system can lead to nausea, vomiting, constipation and/or diarrhea.

Diabetes also interferes with blood flow. By impairing blood flow to the eye, diabetes may cause cataracts, glaucoma and even blindness. By affecting the tiny blood vessels in the kidney that filter the blood, diabetes may lead to kidney disease, dialysis and/or a kidney transplant.

The impaired health of diabetics even makes them more susceptible to bacterial and fungal skin infections, hearing impairment, Alzheimer's disease, and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

With this in mind, take care this Christmas; present yourself the gift of happy, healthy holidays. ●

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

ALBERT ZIMBALATTI



In-cab distractions waste precious time

The danger of distracted driving appears to be a tough lesson to learn. Despite increasing fines and enforcement efforts alike, we still see drivers with phones stuck to their ears. At night we can see their faces lit by glowing text screens.

And, in each case, we know they are travelling blind to their surroundings.

A truck travelling at highway speeds is moving about 30 metres (100 feet) per second. Compare this to the fact that it takes an average of five seconds to read a text message, or 10.6 seconds to answer a phone without a hands-free device.

They are the moments that lead to disaster. A driver dialing a handheld

phone is three times more likely to be involved in a collision, while those in the middle of a phone conversation are four to five times more likely to be involved in a crash, according to the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA). As troubling as those statistics are, texting is worse. In these cases, drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash.

It all exacts a heavy toll. In 2010, the RCMP identified 104 fatalities that were linked to cases of distracted driving in B.C. alone.

The challenge is not limited to failing to identify an approaching threat. Drivers also steer a vehicle with their eyes. Those who look at a phone in their right hand will inevitably begin to drift to the right, potentially into a ditch or across

the pavement markings into an adjacent lane.

The need to continually monitor surroundings is one of the key lessons in any defensive driving course, including the Focus, Awareness, Communications, Time and Speed (FACTS) training offered through Northbridge Insurance.

It's where drivers are taught to check mirrors every five to 10 seconds, and to look ahead through the windshield every two seconds.

But it can be tough to ignore the chime from a phone or a glowing message on the screen, no matter how trained or experienced a driver may be. They will always be tempted to first check a message and then respond.

One of the best ways to protect against these temptations is to ensure

the phones are out of reach and out of sight. A hands-free Bluetooth headset will still be able to convey a call if the phone itself is stored in a sleeper or tucked in the side of a bag.

Smartphones are not the only distractions in a truck cab, either. Tools ranging from Global Positioning Systems to satellite communication devices all fight for a driver's attention.

A few strategies can make a difference here, too.

Satellite systems can be programmed to convey common responses with a single key.

The temptation to enter information of any sort can be removed altogether by programming the interlocks that disable electronic devices while wheels are turning.

Of course, distractions are not limited to communications devices. It takes a mere 1.6 seconds to change a radio station, but playlists can be pre-programmed before beginning a trip.

It takes 2.7 seconds to program an HVAC system, while temperatures can be set before the wheels turn.

The risk of pets leaping onto a driver's lap can be avoided by securing the

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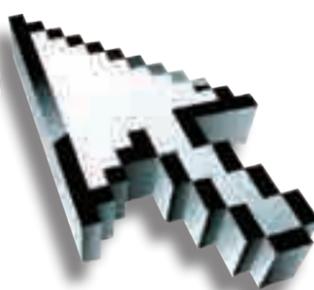
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A driver dialing a handheld phone is three times more likely to be involved in a collision.

animals in a sleeper. (They will also be safer in the event of a collision). A tidy vehicle will make a difference by ensuring that debris doesn't roll around the cab floor.

Alberta has even introduced eating among the distractions which can earn an on-road violation. Drivers can avoid this by eating when they are parked. The danger of spilling a cup of hot coffee can be minimized by ensuring take-out cups are not filled right to the brim when a journey begins.

A fleet's operations team can play its own role in minimizing distractions. Many messages can be timed so they are delivered after drivers reach their destinations.

Discussions about road conditions before a trip can give drivers a chance to reprogram a GPS before ever heading out of the fleet yard. They are all important steps because the concept of multi-tasking is a myth.

Those who think they can drive while focusing on another task are simply driving out of habit.

Anything that distracts the driver – including something that weighs heavily on their mind – can keep them from focusing on the task at hand. The job requires everyone to remain aware of surrounding threats, even if only to give someone a chance to respond to the distracted drivers around them. ●

This month's expert is Albert Zimbalatti. Albert is an executive risk services consultant for Northbridge Insurance, and has more than 35 years providing loss control and risk management services to the trucking industry. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a long standing history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at www.nbins.com.

You say tomato I say tomahto

MARK LEE



Buying practical accessories for your rig will help you be safe

I think I may have bought a lemon! There's nothing wrong with my truck mechanically, the fuel mileage continues to impress me and I can't really complain about any of the important things, but there are quite a few little things that I don't have that I've seen on other trucks.

Things like the ability to do a pre-trip without leaving my cab.

I've got a pre-trip assistant that I can use to cycle through my lights and check for air leaks, but I still have to get out and look at the lights and wipe dirt/snow off of them.

I can't check for flat tires or that my fifth wheel is still locked or any of the other checks I need to do.

I also don't have a magic hammer to check my tire pressures, mine just makes a thumping sound.

I recently aired my tires to 105 psi and did the tire thump.

I got the same sound from all 18 tires, yet when I checked the pressures on the trailer they were all at different pressures ranging from 80 psi to 100 psi, yet the noise was no different.

My hammer doesn't check my brakes either. I see other drivers at brake checks walking around banging away their tires with their special hammer and then setting off down the hill.

I have to actually look at my brakes and check their adjustment.

The clock is also not one of the special ones that other trucks have. I can pull over for an eight-hour break and while I'm lying on my bunk reading or messing around on the Internet and a truck will pull in next to me and shut down for the night. The next morning as I'm getting up that truck will be pulling out already, me I'm still stuck there for another 30 mins to an hour as my clock shows I haven't been there for eight hours yet.

I'm also losing time on the road, I can sit right at the speed limit according to my speedometer, which matches my GPS, but trucks blow by me as if I'm stood still, not just on the highway, but on city streets too.

The thing is, I see those same trucks with their special clocks and magic hammers quite often during the day, quite often I will be passed by the same truck a few times a day.

On the odd occasion that I drive my maximum hours I'm often in the truck stop within a few minutes of them and sometimes I beat them there.

In spite of having the full eight hours off, doing a proper pre-trip, sticking to the speed limit, doing a proper brake check, etc.

I still manage to cover the same ground, so with all the time those guys are saving, surely I could be a lot further down the road if I had the same advantages they appear to have?

The only thing is, I've already done about as much as it's possible to legally do in one day, so what would be the point in getting my clock or speedometer "fixed"?

And would it be worth the effort trying to find one of those special hammers?

I don't think so, I'm still getting the job done without them.

I may have to suffer the pain and anguish of doing a pre-trip, brake check or tire check by physically doing the necessary things, I may have to drive at the speed limit and take at least a full eight hours off each night, yet somehow I'm still getting the job done. Crazy, eh?

Okay, so I've been a little tongue in cheek there, but it leads me to where I'm going next, in a roundabout way.

So far I've bought a few accessories for my truck - all practical stuff. I've stayed away from lights and chrome so far. I'm slowly ticking off boxes from my wish list and the next two will help me in my pre-trips and brake checks.

I'm considering a tire pressure monitoring system.

This way I can know my tires are correctly inflated at all times.

It will save having to mess around on my hands and knees with a pressure gauge and instantly alert me if there's a problem, so if I do pick up some debris and start losing air, I know right away and can stop as soon as possible to save damaging the tire any further.

I know it will cost me a lot more than a magic hammer, but I'm convinced it will save me money long term. The other thing is so simple that I'm amazed it isn't fitted as standard, if not by the manufacturers, by fleets too. That is a set of brake stroke indicators.

Two little pegs that do exactly what it says on the tin, they indicate brake stroke.

One is fitted on the brake pot and the other is attached to the push rod, you only need to apply the brakes, get out and look at the position of the pegs to tell if you're good to go down the hill, a very simple and highly effective addition I'm looking forward to using now that the ground and the underside of my tractor is going to be messy for the next few months.

A fourth generation trucker and trucking journalist, Mark Lee uses his 25 years of transcontinental trucking in Europe, Asia, North Africa and now North America to provide an alternative view of life on the road.



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*2013 Bose studies of 100 drivers across multiple fleets.

Ankra has a new rep, Wheels Group names new president, AMTA shows its cards and Groupe Morneau hires help.

Ankra Canada has a new Eastern Canadian regional sales manager. Brian Larocque, managing director for the company appointed **Alain Levert** for the position in early November. Levert has more than 30 years experience in sales and service and was previously territory manager and parts and service manager. Levert is based in Ste-Adele, Que. and can be reached at (514) 346-3395 and/or alevert@ankra.com.

Wheels Group Inc. is getting a new president. John Kelly, who currently holds that title, is leaving the company. He will be succeeded by **Peter Jamieson**, Wheels' chief operating officer. Jamieson has worked for Wheels since 1997 in a variety of senior management and executive roles. In his new position, he will have direct responsibility for Wheels Canada. "Working with Peter and together with the strengths of our Canadian management team, we will drive continued success for Wheels Canada," said Doug Tozer, chief executive officer of Wheels.

Lorraine Card has been named the new executive director of the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA). She joins the provincial trucking association from Alberta Transportation, Carrier Services and assumed her new role Nov. 3. Richard Warnock will stay on as president and CEO for 2015 to help her with the transition, the AMTA informed members today. "Lorraine was selected as the result of an extensive search, which drew the interest of candidates from across Alberta," the association announced.

Groupe Morneau has added two new faces to its sales team. **Sylvain Lavoie** has been hired to be the new director of sales. Before joining the company, he was sales director with the recycling division of Kruger. At Groupe Morneau, Lavoie will be responsible for planning, organizing, directing, controlling and evaluating any activities related to the company's sales. He will also lead initiatives in business development, new client arrival, and partnership programming. **Pascale Simoneau** has joined Groupe Morneau as an account director. In her new role, Simoneau will be responsible for recruiting new customers in the western region of Montreal for all divisions of the company. She will also oversee account management for existing clients. Most recently, Simoneau was an account manager at Leyton Canada. Both Lavoie and Simoneau will be based in the Montreal office.

Eaton has named **Gerard DeVito** its new vice-president, technology, vehicle group. DeVito began with Eaton 27 years ago and was the previous director of next generation transmissions, North America Trucks. The new position began Nov. 1 for DeVito and he will be based in Galesburg, Mich. DeVito will now be in charge of leading and directing all engineering activities for the vehicle group in his new position.

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Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR



Five last minute tax tactics for 2014

Come the New Year, you're not just turning the page on the month gone by, you're taking down an entire calendar and replacing it with a fresh one. For a day or two, life is a series of empty boxes neatly lined up across the page, waiting to be filled. Until then, you have December to contend with. The weather. The traffic. The commitments. The lists.

The good news is that you have a month to make decisions that can save money on this year's tax bill. Here's where to start:

Keep the dates straight

Businesses use the accrual method of accounting. That means you report income in the fiscal period you earn it, not when you receive it, and you deduct expenses in the fiscal period you incur them, whether you actually paid them in that period or not.

For example, your first broker settlement in 2015 probably will be for a pay period ending Dec. 31, 2014. That income counts toward 2014. Likewise, the cell phone bill dated Dec. 28, 2014, is a 2014 expense even though

Not only will CRA add interest to your tax bill come April 30, it will charge interest on your overdue tax balance...That's right. They'll want interest on your interest.

you'll pay it just before it's due in the third week of January. Make sure 2014 income and expenses are reported on your 2014 return.

Make big purchases

If you plan to make a major purchase in the near future, consider doing so before Dec. 31. There's an advantage to loading up on deductible expenses in a high-income year. Spending \$3,000 on tires in December could save you \$900 owed to CRA when you file your 2014 tax return this April. Buying those tires in February, the following tax year, will delay your savings until 2016.

Collect your logbooks

Canadian and US laws require truck drivers to keep their logbooks for six months. Tax auditors have different standards, though. For instance, if you claim a meal expense, your logbook becomes a tax document. Like any other income tax receipt, you're required to keep it for up to seven years.

When logbooks are used as trip records for IFTA and IRP, an auditor

will want to see four years of records for IFTA and five and a half years for IRP. That's not always possible if you use an EOBR or electronic logbook. Find out where your logbook data is stored, how long it's kept, and then download or print out as much of your logbook records as you can. Make a habit of doing it every month.

Telling an auditor that you can't access your EOBR data or electronic logs is like saying the dog ate your homework. Or worse, considering the consequences.

Review your tax payments Plan

Installments aren't tax payments in advance. They're paid throughout the

calendar year in which you are earning the taxable income.

This month, compare what you paid in installments in 2014 against your estimate for the entire year. If you miss a deadline or owe more tax than you actually paid, CRA will levy penalties and interest. In fact, not only will CRA add interest to your tax bill come April 30, it will charge interest on your overdue tax balance, which of course includes installment interest. That's right. They'll want interest on your interest.

Saving money to pay income taxes takes discipline, especially when there's a pile of other bills to pay. We advise our clients to apply their quarterly GST/HST refunds to their income tax installment payments.

CRA can direct-deposit your GST/HST refunds into a separate account from your business operations to make sure the money doesn't get used for everyday activities.

If you need tax planning help, see a qualified accountant, preferably one who's familiar with trucking. Put it on your list while there's still time to do something about your taxes in 2014. You can start next year out fresh - with peace of mind and a plan to keep more of your hard-earned money in your pocket. ●

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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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION

2014 Summit



More efficient transportation strategies start with a frank discussion of current realities

With the North American economy gaining strength, the focus of shipper-carrier relationships is shifting. The shift is towards more efficient transportation strategies and practices to ensure adequate capacity for the growing amount of freight that needs to be moved and the quality of service that needs to be provided. After years spent dealing with a divisive inward focus on cost cutting it's a welcome sign to see both sides of the transportation equation once again looking outwards and focusing on improvements to our commercial transportation system.

Although the intentions are good, and the economic climate improving, the challenges remain substantial. Success, we strongly believe, is dependent on shippers and carriers finding ways to work together in a new spirit of cooperation and collaboration. And that is what drives us to bring shippers and carriers together every year for our annual Surface Transportation Summit.

Our third annual Surface Transportation Summit - organized once again in partnership with Dan Goodwill & Associates - took place Oct. 15 at the Mississauga Convention Centre. The focus on working together, on collaboration over confrontation, must be resonating with both shippers and carriers as our attendance has doubled since our first year. Almost 400 top-level transportation and logistics professionals answered our call for a full day of education and networking.

Our blue chip lineup included almost 30 speakers and they were able to provide deep and insightful views into the economic outlook, the reasons behind mergers & acquisitions activity, the regulatory and insurance scenes, alternative fuels, insurance telematics, warehouse strategies, human resource practices, and trends that could shape transportation's future. Back by popular demand were sessions that provided frank debates and helpful tips on the shipper-carrier relationship. New this year were two formal "speed networking" sessions designed to help attendees leave the conference with key new business contacts.

The exchange of ideas surpassed expectations but the conversation is too important to allow it to end there. So with this issue we are providing a comprehensive report on the major themes from the conference across all Transportation Media properties - *Truck News*, *Truck West*, *Fleet Executive* and *Canadian Shipper*, reaching more than 150,000 providers and buyers of transportation services across the country. Look also for our Inside the Numbers and HookedUp e-newsletters for more information as well as future episodes of our award-winning WebTV show, TMTV. We have already provided considerable coverage of the event on www.trucknews.com, www.canadianshipper.com, Twitter and on our Facebook page and will continue to provide more. This dialogue between shippers and carriers must continue beyond the Summit and we will be doing our best to ensure that it does.

Finally, we would like to thank our growing group of industry sponsors, whose support allowed us to bring the Surface Transportation Summit to a higher level. And don't forget to book Oct. 14, 2015 into your calendar for our next Surface Transportation Summit.

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Continued economic strength ahead, senior Scotiabank economist predicts

Now's the time to fix what's broken in your business, Kriska's Seymour advises

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

Leading economic indicators are pointing towards continued economic growth and favourable conditions for motor carriers.

That was the upbeat message from Carlos Gomes, senior economist with Scotiabank, when providing an economic outlook at the sold-out Surface Transportation Summit Oct. 15.

"Despite all the events of the last week in the equity markets, we continue to be optimistic with respect to our outlook," Gomes told nearly 400 motor carrier and shipper executives.

Gomes said global economic growth is expected to accelerate over the next year. New order activity, which tends to lead industrial activity, has been on the rise globally.

"When we look at the global economy, most regions are on an upward trend, especially the US," Gomes said.

The European economy has returned to growth mode, albeit at a modest pace. China's economic growth is expected remain around 7% per year.

While household debt in the US and Canada is high, Gomes said he isn't alarmed because interest rates are low and household finances are actually

indications are that they'll be kept low for the immediate future.

David Newman, equity research analyst, Cormark Securities, agreed with Gomes that economic indicators are strong and so too are conditions facing trucking providers. Newman noted about 20% of US trucking capacity was removed due to the recession, a tougher regulatory environment and the driver shortage. Trucking rates are going up, Newman said, and active truck utilization has reached 99%, giving carriers some pricing power.

Newman pointed out the US economy should remain strong, even if there is turmoil in Europe and China, since 80% of US corporate profits are domestic. The Canadian Purchasing Managers' Index recently hit a nine-month high, which is another indicator of freight volume strength.

Cormark's own North American Freight Monitor points "toward a healthy freight volume environment" as well as pricing increases, Newman said. Canadian ports are "booming," he added, thanks to the diversion of containers from the ports of L.A. and Long Beach, which experienced labour issues over the summer.

The Canadian spot market has seen volumes rise 42% year-over-year and rates have been increasing, which is

"It has been a good run but there's lots of work to do around drivers and wages and the way we treat them."

Mark Seymour, Kriska Group

healthier than in the past.

"In both the US and Canada, the key thing that's important is that household balance sheets have improved significantly," Gomes said.

In 2007, about 20% of disposable income went to paying debt, interest and energy costs. Today it's about 15%.

"While debt is high, the fact rates are low and energy prices are actually declining as we speak, means it's not consuming a significant amount of household income," Gomes said. "It leaves significant disposable income for other purchases."

This is good news for the auto sector, which has seen demand for new vehicles return to pre-recession levels while the average age of the fleet remains at a record high.

"The financial conditions of households are very healthy and the average age of the fleet in the US is about 11.5 years. About 40% of all vehicles in the US are more than 12 years old. That tells you if they're not going to be replaced this year or next year, they'll definitely have to be replaced one to three years down the road, so that gives me confidence we're going to have a decent cycle for an extended period of time," Gomes said. Gomes sees Canadian exports growing 6% in 2015 and is bullish on the US economy, where consumers are financially stable and manufacturing activity is up.

Asked if he has any concerns, Gomes said economic conditions in Europe and China still bear watching, as do interest rates in the US and Canada, though in-

now cascading over into contract rates, Newman said.

Providing a fleet perspective, Mark Seymour, president of Kriska Holdings, said carriers need to take advantage of current conditions and a healthy rate environment to fix what's broken within their organizations.

"We've had a good run the last three to four years," Seymour admitted. "It has been a good run but there's lots of work to do around our drivers and wages and the way we treat them. Those are the areas we are working on the most right now."

Seymour also advised carriers to take advantage of the opportunity to re-assess how they run their businesses now that freight volumes and rates are strong. And this will require working with shippers.

"There are lots of opportunities right now to work on the issues within our business as it relates to profitability and discipline," Seymour explained. "We can take this opportunity to fix things that are broken. There has never been a better time to do that; to tighten our network, charge for things we haven't been able to charge for in the past, to adjust short-term pricing strategies and not lock down into a three-year pricing model because our costs are going up too quickly. We are never able to engineer solutions and get waste out of the system if we're forever going back (to customers) year after year, wondering if we're going to be able to keep the business in certain lanes and certain markets." ●

Shipper-carrier collaboration and the 'cloud of continuous complaint'

By Julia Kuzeljevich

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

How do you define true collaboration between shippers and their carriers, when it comes to visible characteristics?

That was the question debated by a leading shipper-carrier panel at the 2014 Surface Transportation Summit at the Mississauga Convention Centre.

Jacque Meyers, president, Meyers Transportation Services, said true collaboration is about joint problem solving, long-term commitment and investment in that relationship.

"Give us a commitment of five years that you're going to work with us.

When you get to the step where you're investing and committing together the world is your oyster," she said.

Giving carriers that legitimate seat at the table is important.

"Collaboration saves you far more money than a poorly managed RFQ," Meyers said.

Susan Promane, Whirlpool Canada's director, supply chain, said that in her experience, "There aren't that many carriers who truly operate that way. How we define carrier management is that we make sure we articulate our business goals on a regu-

lar basis. We look at scorecards and reward annually. We lock in for two years, which we consider to be realistic. We do test the market after this.

We typically don't have that many changes but what we are really looking for are carriers who do what they say, and who can adapt to change, which is a real opportunity for some," she said.

"From my professional experience we have always taken the approach that the transport company we hire is an extension of our brand," said Anna Petrova, associate director, supply chain, for Ferrero Canada.

"Aligning strategies is an important part of the relationship. Our customers are the retailers who can punish us and fine us. When that happens it's important to stay aligned with the carriers. This is easier said than done, and requires commitment on both sides," she added.

Elias Demangos, president and CEO, Fortigo Transportation Management Group, stressed the communication factor as important to collaboration.

"It's about regular communication, and not letting issues fester. You have to go into this honestly. A lot of our partnerships are multi-year partnerships. A lot of hard work, dedication and straightforwardness has to go into continuing that partnership," he said.

It's a given that issues will arise, Demangos said, so "for me having a Plan B is critical to how we play in the business."

When you're entering into a rate discussion, said Promane, "everyone has cost pressures but I want to understand a little more about what they (carriers) are doing to drive down their costs. As a true partnership that's what I expect from the other side. But often-times this is met with resistance."

"It's sometimes difficult for shippers to be very clear about their execution expectations. It takes only so long to agree on the rates and then it takes two years to cohabitate on this hopefully successful marriage. There's a lot of room for grey areas when the expectations are not defined," said Petrova.

She suggests formalizing them in a document and designating it as a service level agreement, or carrier document, or by something the parties will recognize as such.

"Do you want a dedicated CSR on your account? Do you want regular reports? All those things need to be clarified and transparent. Demonstrating mutual respect and cherishing the partnership is what builds the relationship," Petrova said.

From the carrier side, how do you demonstrate to your partner that you are worthy of their trust?

"Don't ever lie to your customers. If my dispatcher lies to you they will not last as a dispatcher and I will not last as a supplier," said Meyers. "We are very open with our customers about where our costs are going, about our load balance and about what are we doing to improve our service levels. What do I expect back? Openness, honesty and transparency."

Ferrero's measurement of a carrier's performance, said Petrova, strongly considers the carrier's service capabilities.

"We measure on-time performance, carrier-controllable, safety, and what I would call compliance to administration, ie. billing accuracy, EDI compliance," said Promane.

Positive leadership at the carrier makes a difference, said Petrova.

"I attend lots of (transportation) conferences. They all tend to have that cloud of continuous complaint. We all have our challenges. We need to create more positive leadership for our teams and focus on our wins. I'm sure every transport company in this room has had great achievements. We're hoping for more visible positive leaderships - an industry that is always on the defensive is not very attractive," she said. "It's been very often that we as shippers had to drive the innovation. It so happened that for the most part it was always us." ●

'The Americans are coming'

And other reasons consolidation will continue

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

More consolidation within the Canadian trucking industry is coming, including the likely arrival of some major US players, according to experts speaking at the Surface Transportation Summit.

"I think the Americans are coming," warned Mark Seymour, president of Kriska Holdings. "They'll buy their way into Canada or find their way in some other way. Building mass and building scale puts us in a better position to defend against what it is they are likely to do."

Ongoing domestic consolidation and the potential arrival of new competitors from south of the border were a couple of the reasons Kriska chose recently to align with Mullen Group.

"Big customers are looking for capacity right now," Seymour said. "There are more discussions with shippers around capacity now than price."

Seymour said Kriska has tried growing organically for the past three to five years but has been unable to add capacity.

David Newman, equity research analyst with Cormark Securities, agreed that US fleets could be looking for a piece of the Canadian market as the owners of small- to mid-sized Canadian carriers look to sell.

"Smaller carriers face a whole host of challenges and it's going to get tougher," Newman said, citing a tightening regulatory environment and the driver shortage. "You've got US carriers kicking tires."

He cited Celadon's purchase of Yanke and Kenan Advantage Group's purchase of RTL Westcan's bulk division as two recent examples.

Newman said he wouldn't be surprised if TransForce is broken up into

several divisions and listed in the US or sold, potentially to American firms. But Newman also said there could be more Canadian trucking companies going public as well. Patrick Cain, vice-president of business development with Cain Express and Titanium Transportation Group, also addressed the appeal of consolidation, having recently sold his family business to Titanium.

"Growth creates challenges for organizations," he said. "Certainly for a company the size of Cain Express, as we continued to grow we put stress on our people, stress on our processes and systems and

stress on our equipment and financing."

Both Cain and Seymour concluded their respective businesses were too small to compete with the big players on their own.

"If we didn't have a significant role with a customer, we were relatively easy to replace," Cain admitted. "Bringing sale to your customers gives you a better relationship."

But while a merger or acquisition may look good on paper, Seymour acknowledged that how the corporate cultures of the organizations involved will mesh is another consideration. For this reason, Kriska and Mill Creek - the Mullen-owned van carrier included in the joint venture - will continue to be run separately.

"Between 1995 and 2008, Kriska made about seven acquisitions, all of which

ended up being tuck-ins," Seymour said. "Each time we had a rude awakening about how powerful culture was at the company we tried to tuck in. Over time, we learned from our mistakes. In this case we will not be putting Kriska and Mill Creek together for that very reason. Mill Creek by itself has significant scale, it's very profitable, safe and disciplined so there's no advantage to try to put them together but there's a tremendous amount of risk to try to do that."

Cain added differences in corporate culture are not necessarily a bad thing - as long as both organizations adopt the best that their new partner brings to the table.

"In some cases, differences (in culture) will be for the better," he said. "Hopefully you can bring something to the table that helps them with their business." ●

The three issues facing the trucking industry

By Carolyn Gruske

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

As executive vice-president and COO of Bison Transport, Rob Penner sees three top issues facing the trucking industry: driver challenges, equipment issues, and the changing freight network. Penner examined these issues during a presentation at the Surface Transportation Summit Oct. 15.

Like other trucking executives, Penner cited the driver shortage as a pressing concern, but said the company isn't so badly affected that it is willing to put just anybody in the driver's seat. Out of every 100 applications Bison receives, the company typically finds five or six job seekers attractive enough to offer them a thorough interview or a road test. And it usually only hires one or two from that small subgroup.

According to Penner, Bison has a turnover rate of approximately 18% and the company forces about half of that number. Of the 9% the company lets go, about half are dismissed before their first year of employment is over. Roughly a quarter of Bison's turnover is due to drivers retiring, dying, or leaving the business due to disability.

Perhaps surprisingly, given his concerns about the driver

shortage, Penner said "driver utilization has been a challenge." Although Bison added 100 drivers over the past year, it didn't add any tractors to its fleet.

"It takes more drivers to do the same job today," said Penner, adding that now there are multiple drivers required per truck.

Pay strategies are also top of mind at Bison. Whereas in the past, drivers would earn 90-95% of their pay based on mileage. Today that figure is down to about 60%.

"Mileage-based pay is not where the business is going," said Penner. How long a load is on a truck and how much revenue each truck can generate per day are they key factors, not the mileage per day.

"The driver is the only way we are going to make money," added Penner.

Beyond the driver, Bison also pays considerable attention to its service offerings and areas it feels it can offer specialized services. It looks for the same in its partners. Saying that most trucks are similar in terms of cost and technology, Penner explained that Bison looks to purchase equipment from suppliers that offer the best service networks in the geographical areas in which the trucks operate. ●

Ask the Expert

KEVIN BRANDON



Mentors play key role in retention

Few teachers are more effective than life experience. As much as can be conveyed through formal training, seminars and manuals, the missing pieces come together when applying the lessons in everyday life.

It is where drivers pick up details such as the best route into a particular loading dock, see first-hand how training in defensive driving can help to avoid a collision, or observe a company policy at work.

The problem is that the trucking industry is losing much of this experience.

The average age of a truck driver continues to climb as the industry struggles to find new recruits. Long-term employees are approaching retirement age at an increasing rate. Once they are gone, that know-how is gone forever.

But there is an opportunity to capture this insight for the next generation.

Formal mentorship programs offer one of the most effective ways for experienced personnel to share their knowledge with the industry's newest recruits.

The structured relationships play a key role in the driver finishing programs which help entry-level drivers complete the transition from a train-

ing school to workplace.

Mentorships can even help those who are making the transition from one fleet to the next.

Some people will make more-effective mentors than others.

The best candidates are able to explain what someone is doing correctly, or offer constructive criticism that will keep a protegee from becoming defensive. They have a well-deserved reputation for helping peers. Each piece of advice draws on personal experience to put information into context. They observe, listen and encourage; embrace the company policies and procedures that employees are expected to meet, instead of always presenting a "better way" to do things.

Rather than jumping in to take over a situation, they are also willing to let proteges learn from mistakes, unless a situation would truly put everyone in harm's way. Instead of delivering an answer outright, the pair can brainstorm about the pros and cons of different choices, leading to a solution organically.

Personal dynamics need to be considered, too. Fleets which take the time to screen mentors and protégés alike find the best matches between personalities and learning styles.

A new recruit with a particular cultural background or language barrier

might engage most effectively with someone who shares a similar background. Other people might feel most comfortable working with someone close to their own age.

Once in place, mentors who actually share a truck cab with their protegee can watch to see if a new employee is slipping into bad habits, such as following too close or failing to manage time and space to reflect traffic conditions.

They are the ones who will be able to ensure that pre-trip inspections are properly completed on the road. And they can also point their fellow employees to other areas of support, such as Employee Assistance Programs which can help the new hires overcome personal challenges.

The guidance, after all, is not limited to guiding a truck down the road. Mentors don't even need to share the truck cab.

They are a source of information that helps to steer someone through all the challenges and decisions which define the job.

Sometimes the support involves talking through personal issues, whether they involve struggles with a particular dispatcher, or dealing with extended time away from home.

Trucking HR Canada stresses the opportunity to serve as a mentor can even be used as a tool to retain ag-

ing drivers, who might be inclined to stay on the job to help the generation of people who will follow them in the driver's seat.

Everyone likes to be recognized for the skills they possess. Mentors of every age embrace the chance to develop new skills, increase self esteem, and enhance communication abilities which emerge in the process.

The ultimate structure of these programs vary. Trucking HR Canada suggests they should last at least 30 days, presenting enough time to discuss a broad range of issues and establish a relationship.

But there needs to be ground rules no matter how long it lasts. Everyone should understand how long the mentoring continues, the frequency and type of meetings (particularly if the employees do not actually share a truck cab), and how feedback will be shared.

Where one mentor might be willing to answer a call any time of day or night, another may prefer to set specific boundaries.

But even after that time period ends, the personal relationships remain for years to come. ●

This month's expert is Kevin Brandon, risk services specialist. Kevin has served the industry for more than 25 years in loss control, transportation safety and insurance risk engineering. 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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Are same-day delivery services a threat to trucking?

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

By the end of this year, Amazon will offer same-day delivery service to 23% of the US public. It's a trend that could revolutionize the transportation industry, according to Marc Wulfraat, president of MWPVL International, who spoke about same-day delivery services at the Surface Transportation Summit.

"Tomorrow is not fast enough anymore," said Wulfraat.

However, the question remains, are customers willing to pay for same-day delivery service and if so, how much?

"Everybody loves free shipping, that much is clear. Everybody loves same-day delivery, that much is clear. But what's not clear is how much people are willing to pay for it," Wulfraat said.

Amazon charges Amazon Prime members \$6 for same-day delivery on top of their \$99 annual membership fee.

However, Wulfraat said it's not viable to offer same-day delivery service

for much less than that. His consulting firm has calculated it would take 150 deliveries on a single truck in order to keep the price to \$4 per delivery.

"So if you don't have mass density and volume to support same-day delivery, you can get into the \$10-\$12 price tag very quickly," he said. "If you're doing 30 stops per load for \$5, it's going to be a money-losing proposition."

Still, same-day delivery services present opportunities for courier companies willing to dedicate a portion of their capacity to a customer who provides the service, Wulfraat noted. On the other hand, traditional package delivery companies like UPS and FedEx stand to lose if the trend continues. Wulfraat pointed out about 4.2% of packages shipped by UPS come from Amazon.

Amazon is using a broad network of fulfillment centres and sortation facilities to organize packages and then drops them off at local post offices or delivery companies for final delivery to the customer. Items ordered between 7 a.m. and noon will be re-

ceived by 9 p.m. Amazon's goal is to offer the same-day service to 50% of the US population.

"To keep up with Amazon in terms of delivery service levels, every other retailer has to keep up with that raised bar, so there's a mad rush now," Wulfraat said. Other retailers offering or planning to offer same-day delivery in the US include:

Google: Through its Google Shopping Express concept, customers can order things from local retailers, which will be delivered to their home by Google within two hours. The program is being tested in San Francisco with 20 retailers.

eBay Now: Since 2012, eBay Now has used couriers as local valets to pick up and deliver items from hundreds of retailers in less than two hours. It charges \$5 per order with a minimum order of \$25. However, plans to expand the program to 25 cities by the end of this year have been shelved, Wulfraat said.

Walmart To Go: WalMart is testing an online grocery delivery service in Denver. It charges \$5-\$7 per order with

a minimum order of \$30 in an aim to convert its stores into logistics centres.

Walmart.com: Operated as a separate business unit, Walmart.com will provide same-day delivery service from its stores.

Target: Not to be outdone, Target is offering same-day delivery in three markets - Minneapolis, Boston and Miami - with a \$10 charge for rush delivery. Items ordered by 1:30 p.m. will be received between 6 and 9 p.m.

Macy's: Macy's is launching a same-day delivery service in eight markets beginning this fall.

Instacart: This grocery delivery company provides delivery within one to two hours from a variety of grocery retailers including Costco. It charges \$4 for two-hour deliveries and \$6 for one-hour service.

"We haven't seen this in Canada to the same extent it's happening in the US," acknowledged Wulfraat. "Canadians don't order online as much as Americans do. But whatever is going on in the US is definitely on its way here, in certain markets where it makes sense." ●



Alex MacKinnon @AMacK



Rob Penner says "Growth is there for those that want to work for it." Time to think outside of the box! #2014Summit



John G Smith @wordsmithtrucks



Whirlpool's Promane: Just saying costs are up and need price increase not enough. "It's not a pass through." #2014Summit



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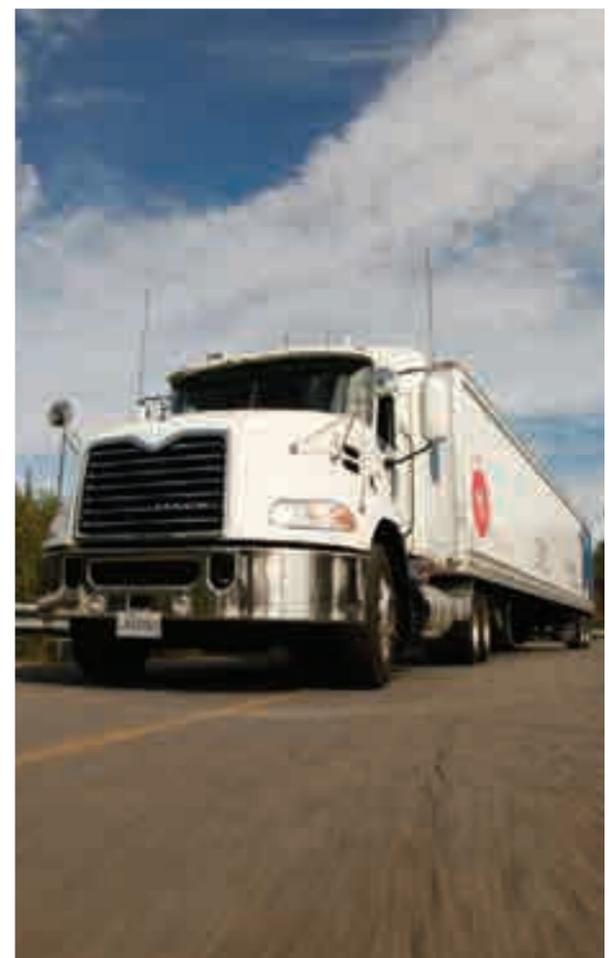
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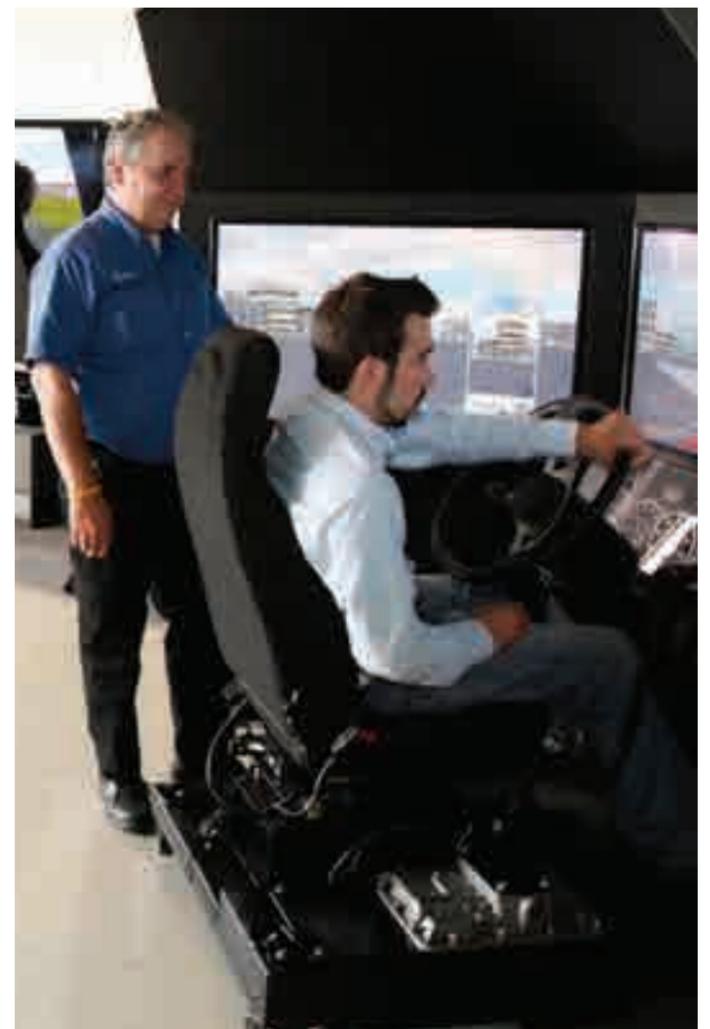
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Brighter, lighter, cheaper

Lighting systems are better than they've ever been and more advances are coming

By Harry Rudolfs

Truck lighting systems keep getting better: brighter, lighter, cheaper and more durable. The latest generation of LED lighting is going to have great longevity. Burned out headlamps should become a thing of the past.

GE's LED Nighthawk is designed to last 15,000 hours and replaces the seven-inch round and 5"x7" rectangular lamps. It draws less power than standard halogen lights while providing better road visibility (a 30% improvement, according to GE). No special adaptors required, the sealed beams plug into any existing 12- or 24-volt system. The Nighthawks come with a three-year warranty and offer a spectrum of white light close to that of daylight, accomplished by way of a non-yellowing poly-carbonate lens.

The manufacturer claims its units are particularly durable – and made in the US. Diodes are better at withstanding shocks and bumps than filaments, anyway, and Nighthawk headlamps feature a diecast aluminum housing and epoxy-sealed electronics. They're rated for temperatures between -40 C and 50 C, so extremes of weather shouldn't be

an issue. Nighthawks are designed to last for years, but if you're really interested in lamp longevity, GE's 2-6X Longer Life brand might be for you.

GE also offers an array of turn, signal and stop lights, that are available in standard, 2-6X Longer Life, and Nighthawk varieties, as well as a line of fog lights for on or off-road applications. Brand new to their catalogue is the 4.5-inch round utility light, which is maintenance-free ("except for cleaning the lens"), though I suppose any trailer hook-up light is maintenance-free until it stops working. This one shouldn't though, as it's backed by a two-year warranty.

Reliability and robustness are the watchwords when it comes to stop, tail and turn lights – or any trailer light for that matter. Getting a mechanic to climb a ladder and replace a clearance light is going to mean downtime any way you look at it.

Extreme conditions wreak havoc on electrical connectors, plug-ins and pigtailed. So Peterson Manufacturing, with its subsidiary company Maxi-Seal, has developed the Defender System which offers a 10-year warranty against corrosion and defects. The package includes Piranha LED lights along with its modular harness wiring system which they

claim to be totally sealed against moisture and corrosion. This would be particularly of interest to fleets running Canadian provinces like Ontario where brine usage is particularly heavy. Peterson has been testing this "integrated moisture barrier" on 20 trucks running with a large US fleet (they won't say which one). So far, they tell me the parts and assemblies are coming up clean.

At its campus in Grandview, Mo. (close to Kansas City), Peterson has also developed the LumenX series of truck and trailer lights which is touted as being at the forefront of LED technology. Using the standard format of seven diodes per light, they are getting reds 25% brighter than regular LEDs and ambers 100% brighter. Their engineers opted for "white diodes over coloured diodes for their superior thermal management – they don't lose intensity," according to chief project engineer, Jim Hansen. The white diodes provide a consistent look from reds to ambers to back-ups, he says, without dead zones or hot spots.

The new amber lights are a big deal because up until now LEDs haven't been bright enough to be legally used on front turn signals – there wasn't not enough contrast between the turn signals and headlights. But the LumenX LED amber turn signals are twice as bright and compliant with all safety standards.

Peterson has more products up its sleeve. One of them is dubbed "the Cyclops," because of its one separated white lens and beam. This is an

integrated stop/tail/turn signal with a self-contained back-up light.

"The idea of integrating a white back-up light into a red lamp was a feasible extension of the LumenX architecture," says Hanson. Like their other start/stop/tail lamps, the LumenX two-in-one lights are available in four-inch round and six-inch oval configurations. When used in pairs, the two-in-one lights meet DOT standards.

Peterson's 359 series cove lighting system is unique method for lighting the interior of reefer units, dry vans or small box trucks. These are 1"x18" tubes of LEDs that fit snugly in the corner of a trailer or the box of a straight truck. The lights can be connected in series for exemplary illumination and replace the overhead sunken pod lights that are the norm inside trailers and reefers. Refrigerated trailers no longer require sunken light fixtures that detract from a trailer's R-value. No holes required and the cove lights can be retro-fitted to any unit. All Peterson lights mentioned above are US-made and competitive with foreign manufacturers.

Lighting component manufacturer Truck-Lite also has some new products. Just released is the 4"x6" rectangular LED headlight aimed at the heavy-duty market. Marketing communications specialist Mitchell Wilston says, "they will be the industry's lightest 4x6 headlight."

Even more interesting is the debut of a seven-inch round "heated" headlight, which will no doubt please some drivers. I've heard several complaints about ice build-up on LED headlights and this should take care of that problem. According to Wilston, this lamp contains a micro-array of heating coils that switch on when the temperature drops below 50 F.

"Our research and customer feedback indicates that snow and ice build-up on headlight lenses affects a very small amount of users, in very specific and extreme climates," says Wilston. "But that particular product speaks to how willing Truck-Lite is to create targeted solutions."

Wilston suggests that customization is important to fleets and owner/operators alike. "Different trucking applications require different builds, and lighting is a key component to these builds,"

To wit Truck-Lite has just released two new lines of products under their Signal Stat brand: one batch of low-diode lamps and another featuring an integral flange.

Diodes have gotten brighter and often fewer are required these days. But the choice is really an individual one. For instance Signal-Stat has stop/turn/tail lights available with a 10- or a 24-diode pattern. "It's a different look, really," says Wilston.

The light emitting diode (LED) created a revolution of sorts and has all but replaced the incandescent bulb invented by Thomas Edison some 135 years ago. There are still some heavy truck systems using incandescent filaments, but the LED is going to win this war.

"Every OEM project that Truck-Lite is working on – for truck or trailer – is utilizing LED technology," says Wilston. "There are so many benefits (longer life, lower current draw, brighter and whiter light, impact resistance, less maintenance etc.) that the transition to LED won't slow down anytime soon." ●



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Cummins-Eaton collaboration paying off

No, it's not the SmartAdvantage. But a lesser-known example of collaboration between Cummins and Eaton is winning fans.

By James Menzies

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO

Cummins and Eaton have been cozying up of late in an attempt to ensure their future success in an increasingly vertically integrated world. The great-

est example of this heightened level of collaboration comes in the form of the SmartAdvantage powertrain, which combines the Cummins ISX with an optimized Fuller Advantage Series automated transmission. That package has met with some success in the US market but is currently limited to a GVWR of

just 80,000 lbs, constraining enthusiasm in the Canadian market, where greater payloads are often sought.

A lesser-known example of Cummins integration with Eaton comes in the form of the ISX15 mated to an Eaton UltraShift Plus LSE 16-speed automated transmission, which is approved for GVWRs of up to 110,000 lbs, offering a more practical powertrain for Canadian fleets.

The LSE stands for line-haul small step efficiency, and it's this short 17% step between gears that allows for quick, precise shifting, enabling the driver to spend more time in the engine's money-making sweet spot. The UltraShift Plus LSE was initially offered only in International trucks with Cummins or Maxx-Force engines, but that exclusivity period came to an end in August, meaning we could soon see this combination offered by other OEMs.

The Canadian customers who have been running this spec' seem to like it. Challenger Motor Freight took delivery of 10 International ProStar tractors with the ISX15/UltraShift Plus LSE package about a year ago and they've been run hard, put into service as team trucks running Ontario-B.C. I had the opportunity to drive one of these trucks and the odometer, after just a year in service,

had already surpassed 300,000 kms. I took to the back roads around Kitchener, looking for elusive hills, and then spent some time on the 401. I was pulling a load of canned peas, grossing just shy of 80,000 lbs, considerably less than what this combination can handle.

Traditional transmissions have a step of about 35% between gears, making each step about twice as tall as those within the LSE. The contrast was noticeable when driving, especially when accelerating from a stop. The LSE charged through the gears, getting up to top gear quickly, usually starting from second gear and then skipping third, fifth and seventh along the way.

During my drive, Brent Talbot, territory sales and service manager with Eaton rode along in the bunk. He told me the traditional strategy of getting into top gear quickly and staying there as long as possible has been replaced with the idea the driver should instead focus on getting into the sweet spot and remaining there, even if it means running in 15th gear at times. I spent most of my drive in 16th, so these aren't mutually exclusive scenarios.

When we think of manual or automated transmissions, we tend to think in terms of 10-, 13- and 18-speed gearboxes.

But the 16-speed UltraShift Plus LSE strikes a nice balance for Canadian fleets looking for a versatile transmission that performs admirably and is well integrated with the Cummins engine. The ISX/LSE combo provides fleets with the versatility they require when hauling loads ranging between 80,000 and 110,000 lbs; there's less risk of dispatch deploying the wrong truck to pick up a

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load that's heavier than what the truck is rated for.

The ISX/LSE doesn't downspeed to the same extent as the SmartAdvantage. While the SmartAdvantage allows the engine to cruise at just 1,200 rpm, the ISX15 I drove cruised at 62 mph at a higher 1,380 rpm.

Still, the integration between engine and transmission runs deep enough to provide a high-performing alternative to the SmartAdvantage while a more robust version approved for 110,000-lb GVWRs continues to be developed. The ISX15 I drove produced 450 hp and 1,650 lb.-ft. of torque, which was more than enough for southern Ontario and also sufficient to conquer the Rocky Mountains, one would presume - otherwise Challenger wouldn't be sending it there every week.

Downspeeding aside, there are a couple of factors that contribute to the efficiency of the ISX15/UltraShift Plus LSE package. For starters, the UltraShift Plus LSE is a direct drive transmission, which generally improves fuel economy by 2% compared to an overdrive, since parasitic losses within the transmission are eliminated. Customers who've spec'd the ISX15/LSE powertrain have seen fuel economy gains compared to say, an ISX15 with a 13- or 18-speed automated overdrive transmission, according to Adam Whitney, national account executive with Cummins, who was also along for the ride.

Cummins contends its ISX15, despite its higher displacement and greater bulk, is generally more fuel-efficient than a 13-litre, especially in Canada where a 13L has to work hard when making cross-country trips.

"A lot of that comes down to, it's not working at its maximum efficiency - it's not working as hard as a 13-litre," Whitney said of the ISX15.

Cummins and Eaton have collaborated in an unprecedented manner to ensure this engine and transmission are optimized to work together and this partnership has translated into noticeably improved performance.

"Historically, we wouldn't have shared our fuel maps but now we do with Eaton," Whitney explained. "They know exactly where we want to be rpm-wise, where it's going to be more fuel-efficient and they have optimized the shift points."

The UltraShift LSE makes smooth, quick shifts at just the right time, allowing the ISX15 to run in its intended sweet spot to perform to its full potential.

Unlike the new Fuller Advantage Series automated manual transmissions, from which Eaton has eliminated the oil cooler to save weight, the LSE still requires a cooler.

"It has a higher capacity gross weight, rated up to 110,000 lbs, and at that level if a customer were to maximize his gross weight he's going to need a cooler to maintain the transmission's operating temperatures," Talbot explained.

The ISX15 in the ProStar I drove was incredibly quiet, which I'm sure is appreciated by whichever team driver occupies the bunk at any given time. Whitney says the Cummins high-pressure common rail fuel system contributes to its low noise output.

It also features a highly effective engine brake, which is assisted by the variable geometry turbocharger to maximize its braking power. If you want to get the most available engine braking you can put the transmission into low gear when approaching a stop. (It's an automated, but you can still override this transmission by selecting M for manual or L for low on the shift console.



The 16-speed Eaton UltraShift Plus is a nice pairing for the Cummins ISX15 for fleets that need the versatility to haul a range of payloads.

When doing so, the transmission will defer to you - as long as you don't try something stupid that would hurt it).

Why shift to low gear when approaching a stop? "It's going to move your downshift rpm points out to the governed rpm where the engine brake is

strongest and it will continue to downshift right down to first gear," Talbot explained. "You can take it out of low and put it back into drive or manual and continue driving at any time."

This feature works exactly as advertised. Just ask the guys in the bunk, who

asked me to give them a warning next time I put it in low.

Other features of the UltraShift Plus LSE that contribute to its drivability include a grade sensor that's integrated into the electronic control module. This allows the transmission to hold the truck's position on hills for up to three seconds to eliminate rollback when the driver is moving his foot from the brake to the accelerator.

"It also allows us to make much better shift selections because knowing what the horsepower and the torque maps of the engine are as well as the throttle position, we can calculate the weight of the vehicle to within a couple thousand pounds," Talbot explained. "And if you know the weight of the vehicle and you know the grade you're on and you know the torque and horsepower maps, you can make very intelligent shift decisions."

The ISX15 delivers peak torque right down to 1,000 rpm, often preventing the

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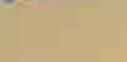
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Cummins-Eaton powertrain up to the challenge

Continued from page 41

need for downshifting.

The ISX15 I drove did not have Smart-Torque enabled, which would have provided another 200 lb.-ft. of torque in the top two gears when needed.

The UltraShift Plus LSE skip-shifted readily in the lower gears and why not?; the short step means it can jump gears like Eric Lamaze jumps fences at Spruce Meadows.

Navistar International has had its detractors in recent years, resulting from its ill-advised emissions strategy that backfired in a big way. But throughout its ordeal, no one had an unkind word to say about the ProStar. It's been a while since I've driven one and I was reminded that this is a nice, comfortable truck to drive with good visibility, a quiet interior and a steady ride. The quiet, steady attributes are likely what make it a popular team truck. The UltraShift Plus LSE gave International a differentiated product, even though its exclusivity was just temporary. It seems to have done a decent job of getting this truck out into the market.

"International has done a tremendous job of selling it," said Whitney, noting other well-known fleets such as Contrans have recently been taking delivery of ProStar trucks featuring this same powertrain.

As OEMs continue to espouse the benefits of vertical integration, indepen-

dent component manufacturers such as Cummins and Eaton have not sat idly by and watched demand for their products erode.

They've been working more closely together than ever before to ensure they can deliver the benefits of integration, even as separate suppliers. The ISX15 with UltraShift Plus LSE is another example of this conjoining of expertise, and it's one that seems right at home here in Canada. ●

The spec's:

TRUCK: International ProStar+

ENGINE: Cummins ISX 15 450, EPA 2010 450 HP @ 1800 RPM, 1650 lb-ft Torque @ 1000 RPM, 1800, RPM Governed Speed, 461 Peak HP (Max)

TRANSMISSION: Eaton Fuller UltraShift+ F-17E316B-LSE 16-Speed Fully Automated Manual; With Aluminum Clutch Housing, Direct Drive, Electronic Shift Controls, Electric Clutch Actuation, Air Range Shift, Internal Lube Oil Pump, Hill Start Aid

CAB: Conventional, Sky-Rise Sleeper Cab; 73" Seat to Inside Back of Cab, With 42" Wide Bunk. ●



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Black's Transfer receives award for 50 years in business

By Sonia Straface

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

For the attendees at the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association's (APTA's) Transportation Summit, things were going as expected for the second day of the event - a few informative morning sessions, followed by a lunch with more presentations to be had in the afternoon. But for David Black of Black's Transfer, the day was anything but predictable.

After guest speaker and RBC Olympian Una Louder spoke about her journey to the Olympics, Jean-Marc Picard, executive director of the APTA made a special (and surprising) announcement.

"On top of celebrating (its) 50th anniversary this fall, the American Truck Historical Society awarded Black's Transfer with the Golden Achievement Award," said Picard.

Across the room, David Black of Black's Transfer, sitting with his wife, turned red as he got up to accept the award which is given to companies who have provided 50 years of dedicated service to the trucking industry. He was completely surprised as his children have kept the award a secret for months.

"We didn't even tell mom," said Dale Black-Devrost, one of Black's daughters who works at the company as the dispatch administrator. "In case she said something accidentally."

David is the president and general manager of Black's Transfer, a short and long-haul company that has been in business for half a century this year. He started the company himself in 1964 after working local trucking jobs. He has been in trucking since he was in high school and stayed in the business because of his passion for trucks and the industry. Today, Black's (which is based in Saint John, New Brunswick) is one of the most recognized and successful companies in the Atlantic provinces.

"Right now we're operating 17 tractors and 42 or 43 trailers of various makes and models," he said. "It's a real mixed bag as far as what we deliver. A lot of container work, through the port of Saint John, a little through the port of Halifax. A lot of flatbed and building materials like steel

and lumber."

It was hard for Black to muster up a few words after receiving the award but he said "it was a great honour and a big surprise" to him.

He received another surprise award earlier this summer from the Port Saint John called the "Port Award of the Year" after being a long-time partner of the port corporation. It was the first time a trucking company has ever won the award. As far as retirement goes, it's not something Black is thinking about just yet since he says he still loves his job even though he has scaled back in terms of hours.

"I'm still really enjoying working," he said. "That said, I certainly don't work as hard as I used. I don't turn the lights out anymore but I'm like a dog with a bone, I won't quit." ●

Schneider awards top carriers

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Schneider has presented 18 carriers with Carrier Recognition Awards, including Day & Ross. The carriers recognized through the program represent the top 1% of Schneider's service providers, the company announced. The complete list of supply chain management winners include:

Bulk: Advantage Tank Lines, Inc.; HWR
Dedicated: Air Contract Transport
Flatbed/Specialized: Thompson Transportation; K&L Trucking
LTL: Standard Forwarding; Dayton Freight Lines, Inc.; Day & Ross Inc.; Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc.
Truckload: Millis Transfer Inc.; Bell and Sons Trucking Company, Swift Transportation Co.; Callaway Carriers, Inc.
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Trailers Canada's Conny Weyers to retire

By James Menzies

BRESLAU, ONTARIO

Trailer sales are booming and about 250 units are slated to be delivered in January to replenish a depleted inventory, but Conny Weyers won't be sticking around to sell them.

The popular president and part owner of Trailers Canada, who has made a good living selling trailers for more than 40 years, says the time is right to step aside and spend more time enjoying the finer things in life.

"I had a triple bypass three years ago and I need to spend more time with things that cause less stress and more physical activity, not sitting behind a desk," Weyers told *Truck News*. "Maybe even try golf."

Weyers plans to spend more time at the cottage in the summer and travel in the winter, and exercise with his wife who is a fitness fanatic. While demand for trailers is currently high, Weyers isn't tempted to stay in the business just to take advantage of the strong market.

"When business is booming, that's the best time to leave," he said. "It makes it easier for Bob to take over when the company is doing really well."

Bob is Bob Breadner, who will take over the role of president when Weyers steps aside at the end of the year. His son, Bob Breadner Jr. is coming on-board as vice-president of sales and a third-generation trailer salesman.

"Conny has been a wonderful partner for the last 18 years and we wish him all success and happiness in this new stage of his life. He is a true icon in the business," said Bob Breadner Sr., whose family founded R and S Trailer Rentals, parent company to Trailers Canada.

Weyers admits it will be an adjustment to take more time for himself.

"All I ever did in my life is work," he said. "So I have to go out and recreate something that I never did. We're going to head south for a few weeks this winter, maybe even a month. The longest I've ever been anywhere is a week, so to go for a month will be a totally different experience."

The Breslau area is home to many successful trucking companies, and Weyers said it has been rewarding to share in their successes as they have grown their businesses together.

"The advent of the auto industry coming to this area has made some really big carriers, so the transport industry here has really boomed over the last 10-15 years," Weyers said. "It's almost amazing when you look at the amount of equipment that's here now."

Weyers is also encouraged with the level of sophistication that has returned to the business. A pet peeve of his has been that many customers traditionally thought of trailers as a box on wheels, making it an underappreciated asset.

"Now we're starting to see highly-spec'd trailers, not just selling boxes on wheels," he said. "People are looking at floors, wheels, tires, disc brakes, lighting systems, air deflection systems. We have seen a definite change in attitude over the last few years. We've seen a lot of buying

taken away from the accounting people - it's back to the owner and the shop people and the people who know what they need."

Weyers says he'll continue to watch the industry with interest and feels confident the company is being left in good hands.

"I'm proud of my whole workforce," he said. "They're some of the best people I've ever worked with. They've helped us grow this into one of the premiere trailer sales and leasing companies in Canada. We've got a great group of people who're very dedicated and very knowledgeable. Bob has been in the industry all his life as well." ●



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Mascot Truck Parts eyes Canadian expansion

Under new ownership after being sold by Meritor, Mascot management says it's time to grow.

BRAMPTON, ONTARIO

Divested by Meritor and under new ownership, Mascot Truck Parts Canada will continue to be a major remanufacturer of heavy truck components with a renewed focus on customer service, officials said.

The company is looking to increase remanufactured product availability across Canada and to reduce delivery lead times for critical components to its wholesale customer base to better serve end-users. Since being purchased from Meritor a month ago, Mascot has been increasing production levels to increase inventory levels across an expanded Canadian distribution network, said Bill Statham, president of Mascot Truck Parts.

"The strategy has to change. Customers no longer want to wait for their most popular major drivetrain components to be repaired and returned," Statham said. "Our business model is largely based on opening multiple new logistics warehouses across Canada, strategically selected to complement existing logistics locations and to better mirror the expanding needs of our wholesale customer base."

Mascot says it has also stepped up its customer service by improving the response rate and measuring its own support of customers' needs.

"By centralizing and standardizing our customer service in one Canadian location, we can maximize upon the technical skills of our service experts," said Statham. "We must ensure that when our customers call, we have the right inventory in the right location at the right time. When we do not, it's critical we capture that information so we can consistently improve our customer experience."

Mascot will continue operating from its network of 17 third-party logistics locations across the US and says customer service levels and response times there will remain unchanged. It also plans to retain its current field representation.

Statham said Mascot is looking to move its Canadian production activities out of its current location and into another larger location within the Greater Toronto Area. Through its wholesale customer network, Mascot remanufactures and distributes a full line of all-makes manual transmissions, differentials, steering gears and pumps as well as build-to-order driveshafts for the heavy-duty aftermarket.

"We are proud to be the only wholesale aftermarket channel partner in our industry and are going to be working very hard over the next several quarters to redefine customer service once again," vowed Statham. ●



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How downspeeding can destroy your driveline

Downspeeding is great for fuel economy, but it can wreak havoc on an underspec'd driveline

By James Menzies

The trend toward downsped powertrains is unlikely to abate, since a 1% fuel economy gain can be achieved for every 100 rpm slower the engine runs. Several powertrain offerings have come out in recent years that downspeed 200 rpm, providing a 2% fuel savings, which can amount to about \$2,200 per truck annually based on US fuel pricing.

But those savings can quickly vanish if your truck is stuck on the side of the road with a mangled driveline.

This is a legitimate concern, according to Mike Schwanzl, senior manager, field sales with Dana. Schwanzl outlined these issues to *Truck News* during a one-on-one briefing at the American Trucking Associations Management Conference & Exhibition in October.

Downsped powertrains "need faster axle ratios to deliver the same horsepower to the driveline," Schwanzl explained. "This brings with it the challenges of more torque in the drivetrain. As axle ratios go down numerically, the driveline torque increases."

Dana claims a downsped engine at cruise speed increases torque in the driveline by 57%. Fortifying the driveline is the only way to protect it against the resulting long-term torque stresses. Dana has introduced the new Spicer Advantek 40 tandem axle specifically to address this new challenge. It features the industry's fastest axle ratios of 2.26:1, to handle the higher axle input torques resulting from lower engine rpms at cruise speeds.

The Advantek 40 is a more robust tandem axle than previous designs, which also weighs about 20 lbs lighter. It is coupled with the SPL 350 driveshaft and SPL inter-axle shaft to collectively provide a "fortified" driveline capable of handling the increased torque generated by downsped powertrains, Schwanzl explained. While the Advantek reduces weight by 20 lbs, the SPL 350 driveshaft actually adds 50, for a net loss of 30 lbs. However, Schwanzl pointed out the SPL 350 and SPL 250 have 40% greater torque carrying capability and twice the bearing life over competitive designs. He also noted a lighter-weight steer axle is in the works to gain back some of the weight added by the SPL 350's heavier-duty u-joint. Dana claims these are the only driveshafts and inter-axle driveshafts in the market today that can provide a million mile life expectancy in a downsped powertrain environment.

However, beefing up the driveline isn't the only thing a fleet can do to reduce the risk of damage. Schwanzl suggested fleets also torque-limit the engine through a software recalibration. This will minimize the risk of overloading the driveline in lower gears. "We advocate a combined approach," he said.

With fleets and OEMs pursuing even greater fuel economy, Schwanzl said the trend towards slower-running engines and the higher torque loads they create is here to stay.

"We are hearing the OEMs want to move down towards 900 rpm cruise speeds, so torques will continue to rise," he said. "We need to anticipate that and

engineer solutions now to accommodate more torque in the driveline."

In the meantime, since the concept of downspeeding is still relatively new, fleets need to ensure they're spe'ing their drivelines appropriately. Schwanzl said Dana saw a spike in equipment failures over the winter - especially in low-speed maneuvers - because customers paired downsped powertrains with traditional drivelines. Some fleets now stuck with an incompatible system have gone so far as to retrofit their driveline components.

"But that's expensive to do - it's really not practical," Schwanzl said. ●

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The offer is good on qualifying truck purchases in the US and Canada. When financing the truck through Mack Financial Services, customers will receive an additional \$500 on their card. The reward cards can be redeemed for parts and maintenance purchases at Mack dealers through Dec. 31, 2016, Mack announced.

"OOIDA members know that Mack has their back with the dependability and dealer support network needed to deliver their cargo on time," said David McKenna, Mack Trucks director of sales development. "With this special offer, OOIDA members can keep their Mack model running smoothly with \$1,500 to be used toward parts and maintenance services at participating Mack dealers."

Qualifying trucks include the Mack Pinnacle, Granite or Titan by Mack, either ordered or purchased from dealer inventory. Customers making multi-truck purchases can receive up to five loyalty reward cards. ●

Goodyear testing auto-inflation technology

AKRON, OHIO

Some Canadian and US fleets will soon be participating in testing to see if they can keep their pressures up - tire pressures that is.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company intends to put its air maintenance technology (AMT) out on the road for about 18 months to see if it works as promised and keeps tires inflated at a specified cold inflation pressure without the need for any external pumps or electronics. The Canadian and US fleets who are participating in the trial will be running specially equipped tires on their trucks during their normal operations.

The AMT system uses peristaltic (or positive displacement) pump technology to automatically maintain tire pressure at fleets' desired levels. All components of the AMT system, including the pump, are fully contained within the tire.

Goodyear received a US\$1.5 million grant from the US Department of Energy to support the testing and development of the technology.

"This is an important milestone in the development of AMT for the commercial trucking marketplace," said Joseph Zekoski, Goodyear's chief technical officer. "The tires equipped with AMT have performed well in testing, and we are pleased that so many of our fleet customers were eager to collaborate with us in the next phase of testing." ●



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Truck orders reach second strongest month ever in October

Class 8 truck orders were “phenomenal” in October, marking the second strongest month ever, according to industry forecasters.

FTR reported preliminary numbers of 45,795 Class 8 orders, up 87% month-over-month and 76% year-over-year. Class 8 orders for the last six months amount to an annualized rate of 354,000 units, a big increase over the previous six months, FTR reported.

“The huge amount of orders was driven by several very large fleets placing orders to be built throughout 2015,” said Don Ake, FTR vice-president of commercial vehicles. “This is the result of the industry operating near full capacity and fleets having confidence that freight growth will remain strong for the entire year in 2015. They want to lock in their orders now to guarantee future deliveries. We will be evaluating the second half of the 2015 forecast in light of the confidence reflected in this large order volume.”

ACT Research reported North American Classes 5-8 truck orders totaled 67,900 units in October, up 50% from a year ago. Over the past 12 months, Classes 5-8 net orders totaled 563,000 units, representing the strongest 12-month period since the 12 months ending January 2007.

“The 46,200 North American Class 8 net orders in October represent the convergence of a number of trends that continue to drive healthy or-

der activity,” said Kenny Vieth, ACT’s president and senior analyst. “Those trends include pent-up demand amongst small and medium fleets, superior new truck fuel economy, improved economic activity in key freight sectors, and most importantly, rising freight rates and fleet profitability.”

Classes 5-7 orders in October were the strongest since April and 14% stronger than last October.

Meanwhile, trailer orders have been brisk as well, with fleets ordering trailers for next year to get ahead of capacity constraints.

FTR has released its latest trailer stats, sowing “exceptional strength” in September with net trailer orders of 32,111 units. That marked a 32% increase from August and a 80% improvement year-over-year. Trailer orders for September were larger than the predicted seasonal increase due to the continued strength for this year and the booking of orders into 2015, FTR reported. Orders were particularly strong for dry vans.

“September orders at the larger OEMs reflect their increasing capacity constraints, which are recognized by the larger fleets,” said Ake. “To firm up their requirements for all of 2015, those fleets have started placing large orders now. The orders are spread throughout 2015, so they should not put much additional stress on production rates.”

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Seven tech toys I want on my trucks

We smaller operators have a considerably different wish list than the big trucking companies.

Rates, roads, ambitions, etc. are the obvious, but the one that really comes to mind lately, for me, is the available technological improvements and changes to equipment.

Super-single tires, for example, hold no allure to me, or a lot of other smaller companies. The same tire size fitting the whole fleet, in all wheel positions, provides a financial savings of its own. Add to that the damage that occurs if one of those big fellas explodes, or the fact that you can't gently limp to a tire shop in the event of a flat, necessitating a service call, or worse, destroying a rim trying to get off the road to a safe repair position, and any fuel savings are lost.

Our company does precious little van work, and what it does do, involves a strange configuration loading dock that would likely destroy side skirts, so again, no interest. I don't think a trailer tail would accomplish much on a flatbed, so again, count me out.

There are a few small technologies that would interest me however, and to my knowledge, nobody's thought of them. With scientific advancements, they could end up in full production by the time this goes to print, but so far, there's been nothing. Considering we can already remotely monitor engine operation and reefer temperature, most of my wish list could be easily attainable. None are really high-tech and all should be attainable.

1. A heart rate/algorithm monitor in the bunk. The human rights people would lynch me for this, but the fundamental flaw in electronic logs (here I go again), is they monitor the truck, not the driver. Who cares if the truck stayed stationary for 10 hours if the driver's eyes were open for eight of them? Years ago, I delivered a load of paper to a printing press in upstate New York at night.

The receiver asked if I drew the short straw. He explained: Four trucks came down from Quebec every night. The drivers would draw straws. The loser stayed all night shuttling everybody's trailers, while the other three closed down the neighbouring strip club. After sleeping three hours, they would have breakfast, then go home. An electronic log would show eight hours off-duty.

2. A remote torque sensor on winches and binders on flatbeds. It would give the carrier early notice when drivers either need further instruction on proper load securement, or need to be replaced with someone

Continued on page 57



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Here's some tech I'd pay for

Continued from page 55

more diligent about load security.

3. A 'proper pre-trip sensor.' Another remote download, one connected to the hood, and preferably, the dipstick. It was drummed into my head in my early teens that you never start a sleeved diesel engine without first checking fluids.

On older equipment, the coolant was as apt to be in the pan as in the rad. If you find that out after you start the engine, it's too late. It continues to amaze me how few hoods are opened during pre-trips, even though DOT regulations specify fluid and belt checks.

Maybe a fibre optic-style sensor to show the carrier which lights are not lit, and not being reported or repaired. While we're at it, a full gauge review, so we can see if the truck is taking off at full throttle before acceptable coolant temperature is attained, or being moved with just barely enough air pressure to release parking brakes.

4. A sensor attached to the fifth wheel, measuring the speed the truck is moving at hook-up (haven't we all seen someone slam under a trailer way too fast?),

or alerting the carrier when the wheel or pin is too dry? Too much pin-to-pin work breeds dry fifth wheels, and too many drivers don't seem to notice, or care.

5. The next remote read-out toy may be available soon. How about a sensor that measures axle weights, and if the driver doesn't correct improper settings in short order, alerts the carrier so they can notify the driver before the truck gets to a scale? We've always relied heavily on knowledge of air gauge readings, so we can (somewhat closely) scale the truck right where you load it, as long as you have level ground. Such a weight sensor would alert the carrier to drivers that either haven't learned the gauge, or aren't paying attention.

6. A "multiple direction-change" sensor. This would identify when the truck has to change direction more than the usual three or four times when backing into a dock. It would be up to the carrier to then identify if the driver's skills are lacking, or your customers are giving your drivers some real rat-holes to back into. Either one causes unnecessary extra driveline wear. Which brings us to...

7. A "driveline torque" sensor. Some drivers are on their rare best behaviour during the interview/road test, reverting to their old habits of trying to pull the left front wheel off the ground with every shift after they're hired. Besides unnecessary wear, it gives a very poor public image of the way your equipment is operated. Pretty basic stuff, huh? Now we just need people smarter than I am to build it. ●

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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Mercedes debuts 4x4 Sprinter, crosswind assist

Seemingly emboldened by the arrival of new European-inspired cargo vans, the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter has been loaded up with new features and options

By James Menzies

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

The Europeanization of the North American cargo van segment has been vindicating to Mercedes-Benz, which has offered its Sprinter van in various incarnations to this market since the mid-90s.

Seemingly emboldened by the arrival of the Euro-style Ford Transit and the introduction of new European-inspired

designs from Nissan and Ram, Mercedes-Benz has given Sprinter customers a full slate of new features and options on 2014 and 2015 model year vehicles.

The cargo van segment is booming, with demand for full-sized vans up 15.5% year-to-date, and Mercedes has positioned itself to increase its share of this segment, having in January created a dedicated US van division.



Mercedes demonstrated the capabilities of its ESP during a press event in late October by deactivating ESP and creating a rollover situation.

“Our sales are up just about 19% year-over-year, and that’s with seeing a great influx of new products into this market,” said Rob Moran, director of corporate communications during a press ride-

and-drive at the Charleston plant where US Sprinters are assembled. “When we started with the Sprinter we were a standalone. We’re now seeing some of our domestic competitors come out with their versions and it has really heated up the segment.”

Just how your Sprinter gets to you is an interesting story in itself. US cargo-carrying Sprinters are assembled in Dusseldorf, Germany, test driven, and then disassembled before being shipped to Charleston where the vehicles are put back together. This process contributes about 7-9% of the cost of a Sprinter, but is necessary to sidestep so-called chicken tax tariffs, which would total 25% of the cost of the vehicle.

Canadian Sprinters don’t have to undergo this ordeal. No such tariff exists in the Canadian market, so Sprinters headed here are assembled in Dusseldorf and then shipped in tact directly to market through ports in Halifax and Baltimore.

Mercedes-Benz has the re-assembly process for US cargo vans down to a science and visiting journalists were able to watch as vans were efficiently re-assembled prior to delivery to US dealers and customers. The entire re-assembly takes just about four hours.

In the US there are 200 Mercedes-Benz dealers approved to sell and service Sprinter vans, and 57 Freightliner dealers who offer the identical vehicle but with Freightliner branding. No such agreement exists with Freightliner dealers in Canada, so only the Mercedes version is available here, through 52 of 55 Canadian Mercedes dealers. Officials told *Truck News* that soon all Canadian Mercedes dealers will offer the Sprinter, but the company has strict training and tooling requirements that must first be met.

“Dealers have got to be trained and have the proper shop equipment,” said Claus Tritt, general manager of operations, commercial vans, Mercedes-Benz USA. “We are going to grow our way and do it right.”

The global van market is an important one to Mercedes’ parent company Daimler AG. It sold 270,100 vans in 2013. The US, for the last two years, has represented the second largest global market for Sprinter vans, behind only Germany.

“The US is a focused market for us and there’s still growth potential,” said Tritt.

About 60% of Sprinters sold in North America are deployed into the construction trades, while delivery services account for about 15%, retail and wholesale 10% and passenger transport 15%. In Canada, commercial customers can choose between the Sprinter 2500 cargo van, the new 2500 cargo van 4x4, the 3500 cargo van (in RWD and 4x4 configurations) and 3500 cab chassis. (Passen-

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ger vans are also offered). The 4x4 versions are scheduled to arrive in March 2015.

Mercedes sold 21,816 Sprinters into the US market last year and so far this year has seen sales grow another 18.6% through September. Tritt said that trend is expected to continue.

"There's a lot of pent-up demand in that segment," he said. "The average age of a van is over 11 years, so I think it's time to replace."

Mercedes-Benz is stepping up its marketing efforts as well, and will be rolling out its first ever TV commercial beginning in November.

The product itself has undergone an overhaul, including everything from a modest facelift to loads of new features and the addition of a more efficient diesel engine.

The 2014 model year Sprinter got a redesigned front end with new bumper and improved aerodynamics. It is now offered with a new OM651 four-cylinder turbodiesel engine that puts out 161 hp and 266 lb.-ft. of torque. This engine is mated to a seven-speed automatic transmission and offers 18% better fuel economy than previous offerings, according to Mathias Geisen, general manager of product marketing, commercial vans, Mercedes-Benz USA.

Geisen claims the new engine can attain mpgs in the "high 20s." The smaller engine mirrors a trend in Europe towards smaller, more efficient engines; 80% of Sprinter vans in Europe have engines that put out 121 hp or less.

Mercedes continues to offer the V6 OM643 turbodiesel with 188 hp and 325 lb.-ft. of torque, coupled with a five-speed automatic transmission. This engine can get up to 24.9 mpg (9.45 litres per 100 kms). There are no current plans to offer a gasoline engine.

Other upgrades rolled out this year include: a new steering wheel and seating for greater comfort and a new head unit with a 5.8-inch screen with standard Bluetooth and optional navigation. Load-adaptive ESP with trailer stability comes standard and other safety features including blind spot assist, lane-keeping assist, collision prevention assist and high-beam assist were also offered for the first time on 2014 Sprinters.

New for the 2015 model year will be

Continued on page 61

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New Sprinter loaded with features

Continued from page 59

crosswind assist, which will be standard on 2500 models.

The crosswind assist feature uses adaptive ESP yaw sensors to detect lateral wind force and then the adaptive ESP countersteers through selective lateral brake intervention to stabilize the vehicle, Geisen explained. The Sprinter becomes the only vehicle in the segment to offer crosswind assist.

To demonstrate its effectiveness, Mercedes assembled three jet boats whose motors were able to produce 90 mph crosswinds. A Sprinter without crosswind assist was visibly moved sideways as it drove through the gusts at 60 mph while the van with crosswind assist cut through the gusts without being blown off course.

This demonstration exceeded any real-life scenarios that would be encountered, unless you were to find yourself driving through a tornado or hurricane at 60 mph. Crosswind assist will give drivers some extra peace of mind when driving lightly loaded Sprinters in areas with frequent wind gusts.

Mercedes also showed off its ESP performance by loading up a Sprinter with about 1,500 lbs of water placed high up in the cargo compartment.

This van was fitted with outriggers so it could be pushed to its limits. ESP, which cannot be turned off on production vehicles, was disabled for the demonstration and an evasive maneuver performed at 30 mph was enough to cause a rollover had the outriggers not been present.

The same maneuver at 40 mph with ESP activated and with the driver's foot far from the brake pedal did not result in the outriggers touching the ground. It was an impressive display of a technology that could come into play many times in real-world driving conditions over the life-cycle of the van.

Also to be offered for the first time on the 2015 Sprinter is a 4x4 configuration, which Geisen says is the first in the segment to be offered with factory installation. Priced at US\$6,500 (for high range only) or US\$6,800 (for low and high range), the Sprinter 4x4 compares favourably to retrofit options that can run

\$10,000 or more, Geisen said.

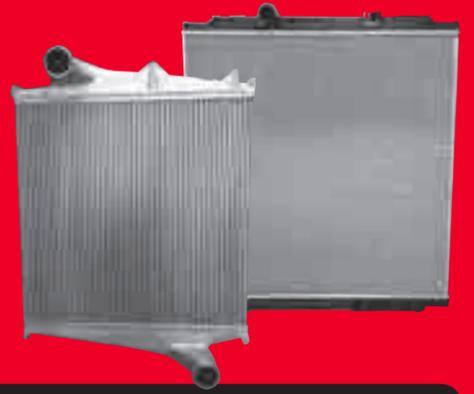
"We think it will be a great offering in the snowbelt region or dealing with challenging construction sites," he added.

An off-road course was constructed outside the Charleston plant, which was far more grueling than any construction site a Sprinter is likely to visit, and the van handled it with ease, even at times, with just three wheels on the ground. The 4x4 option will be appreciated by customers in the oilpatch, which is a key market for the Sprinter, enough to motivate Mercedes to set up a satellite facility in Fort McMurray.

Finally, Mercedes also announced it's increasing service intervals on the Sprinter from 13,000 miles to 20,000 (30,000 kms). Canadian pricing for commercial (non-passenger) Sprinters begin at \$39,900 for the 3500 cab chassis and goes up to \$49,900 for the 2500 cargo van 4x4.



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When the shoe doesn't fit

Relining and remanufacturing processes are not the same, the terms not interchangeable. Here's why it pays to understand the differences.

By James Menzies

When the initial lining wears off your truck's brake shoes, to maximize their life you'll want to have them relined or remanufactured. Just don't think those two terms are interchangeable.

Many fleets choose to have their brake shoes relined, which may do little to ensure the shoe is still suitable to redeploy back into service. Brake manufacturers say this is a concern.

"Probably half, if not more, of the

brake shoes out there are relined, not remanufactured," Frank Gilboy, product line manager, remanufactured wheel-end products with Bendix, told *Truck News* in an interview. "Relining is literally just as it sounds: stripping off the lining and putting on another piece of lining and not really addressing any of the problems with the shoe itself."

Slapping a new lining on a damaged shoe does not ensure the brake will perform as intended. However, reman-



Remanufactured brake shoes roll off the line at Bendix's Huntington, Indiana plant. Bendix remanufactures about 1.5 million brake shoes per year at the plant with the capacity to double production.

ufacturing the shoe restores it to original quality while still providing about a 30% cost savings over purchasing brand new brake shoes.

The remanufacturing processes employed by companies such as Bendix and Meritor are highly sophisticated and can't be matched by a reliner. It begins with a thorough inspection of the shoe.

"The first thing we do when the core or the used brake shoe gets returned back to us, is wash it so we can give it a good inspection. That's really to make sure this shoe is worth moving forward with," Gilboy explained. "There's probably anywhere between 4-6% of the shoes that get returned to us that aren't suitable to go back out into the field. The first thing you need to do is wash and inspect it and make sure you have a core that's worth remanufacturing."

Even the removal of the old lining is done a certain way during the remanufacturing process.

"There are a lot of different ways to do this in the industry," Gilboy explained. "There are some ways that could seriously damage the core, such as sheering the lining off. What we do at Bendix is, we use automated delining machines which are computer-controlled."

This ensures the holes in the table are perfectly rounded and sized for a proper fit with the new rivets so that there's no movement of the rivet with-

in the holes.

"The precision delining makes sure we move forward with getting the lining off without doing any additional damage to the shoe at that point," Gilboy added.

Next, the delined shoe is put through a blaster, which further cleans the shoe and prepares the surface for its future coating.

"Out of the blaster, you now have a clean shoe ready for coating," Gilboy explained. "Now, probably the most important step is the coining of the shoe. What happens to these shoes over their life out in the undercarriage of the vehicle is, a tremendous amount of force goes through them. Some of these could see hundreds of thousands of brake applications over their life out there and every one of those applications is putting force and temperature through the shoe. That builds up over time to the point where the shoe starts to get distorted. So they can get stretched, they can get twisted. All sorts of things could happen that really knock that shoe out of geometry."

Every shoe is recoined by being placed back into a press, which conforms it back to its originally designed shape. The next step is putting a new coating back on the shoe. And then finally, the new lining is riveted to the shoe.

"Here, there is an opportunity to really mess it up if you don't have






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Finding the right friction

Starting out with an OE-quality new or remanufactured brake shoe is a great start, but it could do you little good if an inferior friction material is attached to it. This has become a big issue since the implementation of reduced stopping distance (RSD) friction in 2013.

The aftermarket is rife with non-OE friction material that brake manufacturers say does not meet today's shorter stopping distance requirements.

"It's insane the amount of flavours of friction that are out there today," said Frank Gilboy, product line manager, remanufactured wheel-end products with Bendix. "You could have the perfect brake shoe, have a brand new piece of OE steel if you wanted to, and you could put some garbage friction on it and still have issues. One really doesn't work without the other."

Peter Freeman, senior project manager, aftermarket with Meritor, echoed those concerns. He said fleets must be more cognizant than ever about what friction material they are placing on their vehicles. It's especially important to use like material across an axle and to replace it at the same time, to ensure the balance and compatibility of the braking system.

The safest choice is to replace friction material with the same product that was removed.

"When you get our brakes on a new vehicle that has our brand of friction material on it and you start taking that friction material off and putting something else on, you are going to affect the stopping performance of that vehicle," Freeman warned. "There are already some competitive aftermarket linings coming out – including some from offshore – that are claiming to be just as good as OEM RSD friction, but the fact is, that aftermarket lining has never been tested by an OEM." ●

the proper controls in place," Gilboy warned. "We're looking at the torque of the rivet, we're looking at the geometry of the rivet and making sure that we've properly formed that rivet so that we get a secure attachment of that friction to the brake shoe. Now, it's ready to go back out for another full life on the truck."

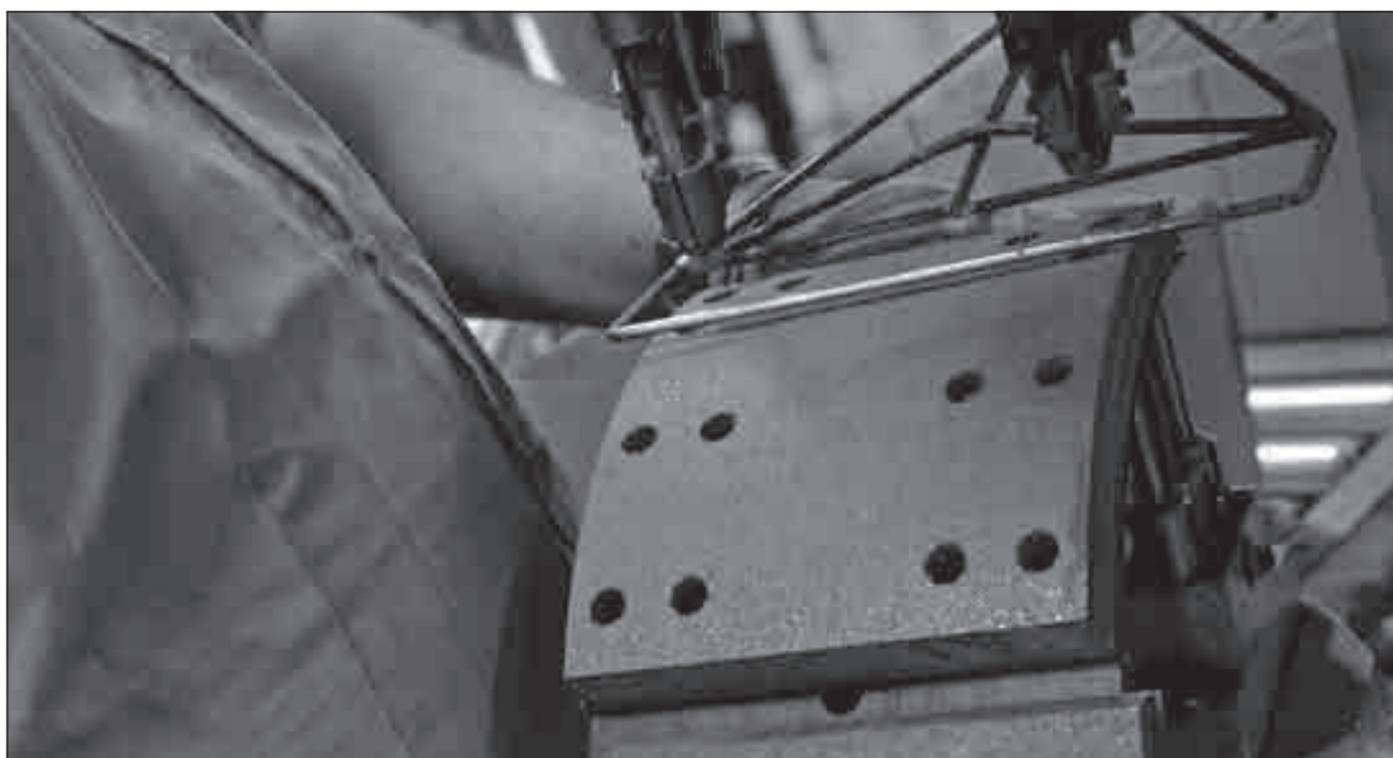
If the shoe is properly remanufactured and maintained in the field, it could live to see three or four remanufactured lives, Gilboy said, and even more in climates where it's not subjected to road chemicals.

Brake shoes that have been relined without going through the process described above can be an invitation for brake-related problems.

A poor seating of the lining upon the shoe surface can lead to all kinds of issues.

"Cracking is probably one of the bigger things that could occur if you don't have a shoe that's really mated with the lining material very well," said Joe Kay, director of engineering, North American brakes, Meritor, noting even shoes that appear to have a smooth surface could have underlying issues. "There's a tremendous amount of torque that goes through the brake. Every time you apply the brakes, it's heating up - that's its job - it converts energy. This brake pad is heating up, cooling down, heating up, cooling down and depending on the duty cycle, you could see temperatures of 600, 700 degrees Fahrenheit."

Starting out with a low-quality brake shoe heightens the risk of problems and will limit remanufacturing opportunities. Many low-cost after-market brake shoes have poor welds



Remanufacturers use sophisticated equipment to ensure the shoe is suitable to be deployed back into service and to ensure the remanufactured shoe meets OE-quality standards.

and weak anchor points and the core will not qualify for remanufacturing.

"A lot of times we'll see an after-market shoe come in as a core and the welds are already all cracked and the anchor points are already mushroomed out," Gilboy said. "Really, it's just a low-quality piece of steel that doesn't live up to the requirements of the job."

Cracked welds and mushroomed anchor points will lead to brake noise and poor performance.

"As the weld starts to break, the en-

tire assembly now is going to have a lot more movement in it, so it might be more likely to squeal or groan upon engagement," warned Gilboy. "And when you talk about the anchor points, if they're not hardened and they start to mushroom out, now you're going to get kind of a sluggish brake shoe because it's not going to be pivoting correctly. It might get wedged out, you might have some brake drag, which could hit you as far as brake temperature, fuel mileage and things like that go."

Meritor's Kay said technicians should inspect the lining for uneven wear, which could indicate the lining is not seated properly on the shoe. Drivers should report vehicles that are pulling to one side or the other while braking.

A properly remanufactured brake shoe, on the other hand, lined with OE-quality friction material, should deliver performance and a service life that's the equal to that of a brand new brake shoe and at a fraction of the cost. ●

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Natural gas fleets tout fuel savings

But for many, a 15-litre natural gas engine is necessary

By James Menzies

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Fleets attending the Natural Gas Vehicles Canada conference here Oct. 22 expressed dismay over the lack of a 15-litre natural gas engine, but also optimism that currently available product can provide savings worth pursuing when deployed into the right applications.

Fleets who've experienced the

Cummins Westport ISX12 G engine indicated it is performing well and delivering substantial fuel savings, but it is limited to 80,000 lbs GVWR, which for many applications is inadequate.

Mauro Fantin, national transportation manager with Labatt Breweries of Canada, said the beer company has tested the viability of LNG transport using Robert Transport's Peterbilt trucks with the now discontinued 15-litre Westport engine.

Labatt saved \$3,000 in fuel costs over the 30-day trial but without the ability to purchase a 15-litre natural gas engine to handle heavily loaded quad-axle trailers, Labatt found natural gas to be impractical for its Ontario and Quebec routes. Fantin said Labatt has a handful of trucks that haul no more than 80,000 lbs but those trucks don't run the mileage needed to justify the investment in natural gas.

However, Labatt is on a quest to reduce its emissions and hasn't yet given up on natural gas; Fantin said the company is exploring some dual fuel options.

The potato chips hauled by Frito-Lay weigh much less than beer, however national fleet manager Danny Vettoretti came to a similar conclusion about natural gas, since many of the company's routes (40% in Western Canada and Quebec and 25% in Ontario) are done via long combination vehicle (LCV) requiring, by law, at least 425 hp. (The ISX12 G caps out at 400 hp).

Frito-Lay's gross weights typically range from 80,000-140,000 lbs.

But while some carriers are shelving plans to adopt natural gas vehicles until a higher displacement engine becomes available, others are forging ahead with the ISX12 G and realizing major savings.

The success of Cold Star Freight's natural gas program has been widely told of late, with president Kelly Hawes singing the praises of the ISX12 G. He deployed 10 such engines inside Mack Pinnacle regional haul tractors last year and is saving about 30% on fuel. Hawes took advantage of a Fortis B.C. incentive that paid back to Cold Star \$45,000 of the \$60,000 cost premium per truck. This reduced the risk in switching to gas, helped convince the banks to lend Cold Star the capital required to fund the remainder of the purchase and ultimately led to a payback in less than one year.

Hawes said even without the incentives, the engines would pay for themselves in less than three years.

"Our drivers are extremely happy with the trucks," Hawes said. "They're quiet and clean. We've had great feedback from the community."

Cold Star will soon be taking delivery of three five-ton Freightliner

trucks with the 8.9-litre Cummins Westport engine.

Ira Pearl, president and chief operating officer of Mansfield Energy, visited from the US to share his company's experience hauling fuel with trucks powered by the ISX12 G. Pearl referred to the engine as a "game changer." Mansfield leases the trucks from Ryder Systems and they usually pull the 80,000-lb limit.

Pearl said Mansfield is saving about 16.6 cents per mile compared to its diesel trucks, which amounts to about \$19,000 per truck each year.

When you can create your own natural gas from the product you haul, the savings are even greater. Olivier Sylvestre, director of development for natural gas in transportation with Quebec trash hauler EBI, shared his company's success story. Last year, EBI displaced about four million litres of diesel fuel by instead burning renewable natural gas the company creates from the residential waste its trucks collect.

Sylvestre cited a fuel savings of 40% and noted the company has run more than 100,000 hours with its natural gas fleet this year alone. The savings to date have totaled in the millions of dollars, he noted. Sylvestre said EBI operates two fuelling stations in the Montreal area and now offers free 10-day trials of natural gas-powered vehicles as well as a long-term rental program for trucks powered by the ISX12 G with 400 hp.

One attractive option for fleets looking to enjoy the benefits of natural gas without the high up-front capital costs is to lease those trucks. Scott Perry, vice-president of supply management with Ryder, noted his company has invested in the vehicles, facilities and technician training required to successfully deploy and maintain natural gas-fuelled vehicles.

When buying natural gas vehicles, Perry said, "Finding an appropriate service provider is the last thing that's thought about, and one of the most important. Not every dealer has that capacity and that needs to be factored into the equation."

Ryder also has the experience and expertise to work with a fleet to determine whether or not natural gas is viable for them.

Perry warned that natural gas trucks typically incur an extra penny per mile in maintenance costs compared to their diesel counterparts but if deployed into the right application, the higher running costs will be offset by the fuel savings. ●

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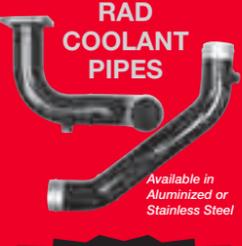



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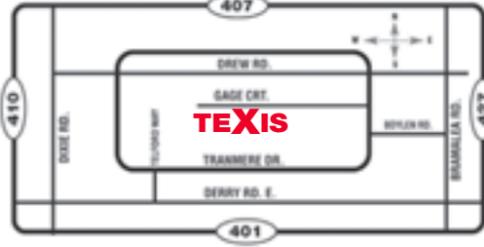


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Cold Star Freight's fleet of CNG-fuelled Mack trucks is providing a payback in less than one year, president Kelly Hawes claims.

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Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY



An idea whose time has come

In early October, Ontario's new transportation minister, Steven Del Duca, announced his commitment to introduce mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers seeking to become licensed in his province. This makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada, indeed in all of North America, to make such a commitment. Let's hope other governments join in this important initiative.

The suggestion that truck drivers should be required to receive entry-level training before they take their provincial Class 1 or Class A licence test, has been kicked around for years but never seemed to gain traction – either with industry or with government.

The most likely explanation for that could be that while the roots of the current driver shortage go back decades, the impact of changing demographics, changing expectations in terms of job satisfaction, etc., have really only emerged, or converged, in more recent times. In days gone by there always seemed to be just enough kids coming off the farm, or transferees from the construction industry, who were used to working around and with heavy machinery (and had likely been driving from an early age) to satiate the demand for drivers. The transition to driving a truck for a living was relatively easy for them and challenging the licence test without, or with a minimum level of training, and then taking the wheel, was common and acceptable.

It's a different world today. People are different. The highways are more crowded and congested. The level of oversight on the industry is greater. The demands from shippers are unceasing.

The CTA Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF) on the Driver Shortage, which comprises trucking company CEOs and senior executives from across the country, made mandatory entry-level training one its central – if not the central – recommendations in its seminal report back in 2011. The Conference Board of Canada raised the issue in its examination of the reasons behind the driver shortage and the economic implications for Canada.

The BRTF's thinking behind mandatory entry-level training reflected a number of concerns – all rooted in the fact that the truck driving occupation is not deemed to be a skilled occupation – not by shippers, or government, educators, job counsellors or many of the people seeking to come into the job. It's a sad thing to say, but the occupation, in too many people's minds, has become the job of last resort. Can't do anything else? Become a truck driver. You don't need training or at least if you do need

some instruction you can go to the local "licence mill" and for a few hundred bucks they'll teach you to just enough to pass the licence test, which isn't much of a feat.

Against that backdrop it's no wonder the BRTF identified carrier dissatisfaction over the quality and employability of many of the people coming through their doors with a newly printed licence in hand a key concern.

It may initially seem counterintuitive to some that the industry would be seeking to raise the bar at the same time that it's facing a chronic driver shortage. But the fact is the BRTF concluded that until such a time as the driving occupation is deemed to be a skilled occupation, the industry will continue to miss out on all those people – and their parents and guidance counsellors – who for the first time are suggesting "the trades" as a ticket to a bona fide career. (There's also money available for training in the trades).

It's a bizarre situation that in most provinces in order to get a forklift licence you need to take some level of mandatory training before you can get your licence, but to drive a truck you don't. It is equally bizarre that an occupation like hairdresser (and no offence to hairdressers intended) or any other number of jobs that don't require the same level of responsibility and skill as a truck driver, are considered trades. But the truck driver occupation is not. And, we talk about a lack of respect for drivers. To me, this is a direct reflection of that lack of respect.

However, there's really no point in dwelling on why it took up until now for things to start changing. We can't change the past, but it's up to us – the industry and the people with the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the people who drive our vehicles are safe and productive – to fix the problem.

Yes, we need partners too. The reputable training schools and the truck insurers all have a vested interest and are working with us. Governments regulate the training schools, licensing and safety on the highways. They need to join us and we welcome them. The Ontario government has given its commitment. The federal department of employment and social development is currently providing funding, along with CTA, to a project being administered by Trucking HR Canada which is laying the foundation for mandatory entry-level training through a truly industry developed National Occupational Standard.

It's somewhat unfortunate that the timing of the Ontario minister's announcement coincided with an investigation into the issues cited above from a major Toronto daily. The fact is OTA and the government had been discussing such an announcement and the minister had raised the issue with his provincial counterparts at the last meeting of the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety, well before the newspaper published its stories.

There's an old saying that "victory has a thousand fathers but defeat is an orphan." We may have begun to move the yardsticks, but we can't claim victory yet. There's a lot of work to do in Ontario and across the country. There are many challenging questions to be answered and consensus in our fragmented business is always difficult to achieve. But, the industry has a glorious opportunity. Let's make it happen. ●

David Bradley is CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance and Ontario Trucking Association.

Private Matters

BRUCE RICHARDS



Mandatory training is finally here

In my last column I expressed concerns with the manner in which the *Toronto Star* newspaper had covered a criminal trial, describing the individual charged as a 'truck driver', when in fact his occupation had absolutely nothing to do with the conviction.

As I indicated then, and firmly believe now, the reporter, editor, and publisher of the newspaper each demonstrated a complete lack of respect for the profession of truck driver by needlessly inserting into the headline unrelated information about the individual's work.

More recently that same newspaper investigated the way road tests for truck drivers are administered by at least one DriveTest location in Ontario, and reported deficiencies. The *Star* reports alleged that at least one testing facility short-circuits road tests by not requiring applicants to drive on a freeway or a four-lane roadway in order to demonstrate their ability to merge, exit, and drive at a minimum of 80 km/h. These are apparently required elements of the test.

The question in play now is who is providing the oversight necessary to ensure that the contractor delivers the test in the manner prescribed by the Ministry? The reactions from the Ministry and Serco to the *Star's* investigation were interesting; Serco responded that all of their test routes have Ministry approval.

A Ministry spokesperson responded that the routes in question "demand the same basic driving skills as the corresponding expressway would demand."

The Minister's own written response was that staff would take a close look at road test routes and make recommendations. While a closer look is underway, the Minister also indicated his intent to make entry-level training mandatory for aspiring truck drivers – a departure from the original topic, but a welcome one if it were to put an end to licensing mills.

It should be noted that PMTC has previously raised the subject of mandatory training for entry-level drivers with the Transportation Ministry. At that time Ministry personnel advised that the law did not allow for that concept. We were advised that it is everyone's right to challenge the test. Perhaps that has since changed. I spoke with one of the *Star's* reporters following the recent articles and we covered some of PMTC's concerns with the existence of these licence mills, and what we see as a lack of oversight or control over the training they deliver.

I made the following additional points and asked the reporter to consider them for a follow-up article (which has not happened at the time of this writing):

First, the articles were not balanced enough to comment on the many diligent schools that provide the level of training that entry-level drivers should expect for their money and that the industry wants.

Second, I advised her that many fleets operate with very strict hiring and training protocols. For example, within the PMTC we have award-winning fleets whose initial hiring thresholds are among the highest in the industry. These fleets also provide their own in-house training to new employees regardless of the level of experience that they bring to the job. Many fleets also include a mentoring program whereby a seasoned professional driver accompanies the new employee for a period of time.

I also suggested that this matter may

fall under the purview of ministries other than Transportation, including but not limited to, Training Colleges and Universities, and Consumer Services.

The latter may seem less obvious, but PMTC has maintained for years that consumers (ie., those training toward a truck driver licence) deserve protection from unscrupulous schools that deliver sub-standard training.

Having completed 'training' at some of these schools, and having somehow obtained a licence these new entrants to the field find themselves hard pressed to find any responsible employer to take them on. Hence, we may have a consumer protection issue.

Now, lest anyone thinks that mandatory entry-level training is a new idea, I offer a short history lesson: As far back as Target 97, I had the privilege of co-chairing the Driver Licensing Sub-committee. Among our recommendations to the Ministry were: New drivers should operate with a learner's permit and be accompanied by a fully licensed driver for a period of time; The road test should be improved to include specific skills (identified in the report); That specific training and licence endorsements be required to handle bulk, liquid, dangerous good, trains, etc.

From 2001-2003 the Ministry of Transportation consulted with the industry on a Commercial Driver Improvement Program that developed recommendations to improve the training and testing of entry-level drivers. In 2008, the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) published its National Occupational Standards and Essential Skills Profile that defined key areas of competence that a truck driver should have.

In 2009, Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities engaged in a project with industry to establish a training standard for entry-level truck drivers. PMTC pointed out at that time that CTHRC had already done much of this work with its Earning Your Wheels training program, and that its Essential Skills Profile provided an excellent basis for de-

veloping such a standard.

The points being that in pursuing mandatory entry level training for truck drivers Minister Del Duca has access to a

good deal of prior research on the subject and not a few challenges to overcome.

We at the PMTC's support the Minister's goal and are ready to lend our participation. It's a good idea and perhaps it's time has come at last. ●

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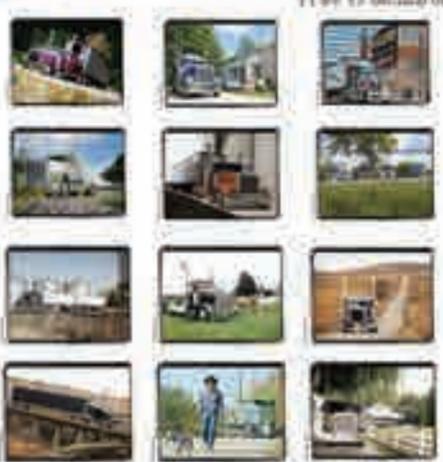
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By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark gets a nice gig shuttling the contents of a factory and warehouse from Montreal to Toronto. Among the trucks making the runs with Mark is a green rig with an off-colour door and fender that is driven by a team and making outstanding time between the two cities. At a stop in Montreal, Mark learns that the green International has done nearly three times as many loads as he has. That's because there are three drivers in the truck and - after watching one of their circle checks - it's obvious they are cutting as many corners as they can...

By the time Mark left Montreal, he had forgotten all about the team driving the green International and was worried only about himself getting to Toronto safely and on schedule. He'd heard from Bud and some of Bud's other drivers that the provincial Ministry of Transportation, or MTO for short, would be doing an inspection blitz along the 401 all week long. Mark was of two minds about inspections. On the one hand they served a great service to the trucking industry by ensuring that trucks were safe and not a danger to their operators and other people sharing the roads. Of course, the MTO blitzes couldn't check every truck in the province, but if the inspections were random enough and checked more than a token number of trucks, the checks provided a tangible reason for a driver to keep his truck safe and in good repair. On the other hand, the blitzes themselves could be a pain in the seat. It never seemed to fail that a blitz occurred whenever Mark was running behind schedule or trying to make up for lost time. They also seemed to happen whenever Mark decided he could go another week before getting something fixed. Getting repairs done took time - not to mention, money - and like every other driver both those commodities always seemed in short supply.

Sure enough, soon after Mark had passed Kingston, he was squeezed off the highway by a series of orange cones that led him right into a temporary inspection station outside of Odessa. He was confident his truck was in good shape and all of his paperwork was up to date, but he still hated the feeling he got in these situations. It was the same thing crossing the border into the US. Even though all the paper was good, and you had nothing to declare, there was always the chance that the officer dealing with you was having a bad day, or didn't like the way you answered a question, or didn't like the colour red. Mark knew in his heart that the officers doing the inspections were professionals with a job to do. They were also probably just as happy - if not happier - to find no violations with a truck than a truck with a laundry list of defects. Still, sometimes it sure felt like they were picking on you.

"Morning," Mark said as he eased up to the point where the female officer wanted him to stop.

"Morning," she responded. Then, without missing a beat, she said, "Driver's licence, registration, CVOR, and insurance?"



Puttin' on the blitz

Mark smiled and handed all of the documents over to her in a bundle. After glancing at his driver's licence, she took it over to a nearby cruiser and where he passed Mark's licence through a card reader. When she returned, she handed Mark his licence and asked for his daily inspection report and copy of his inspection schedule. Mark gave those to her gladly, knowing he was all up to date. "And now I need your daily logbook for the past 14 days."

"No problem," Mark said. He climbed into Mother Load and grabbed two books, including his current logbook, which had recorded the past five days, and his previous book that showed the previous nine days in addition to the past few months. These she barely glanced at, probably since everything else he had given her was proper and up to date.

"Everything's in good shape," Mark said, as she set about doing her inspection of Mother Load and the box trailer behind her.

"Uh-huh," she responded with a tone of voice that told Mark she cared little for what he'd found out this morning and a lot about what she would find out right now. Mark was confident about Mother Load passing inspection, but he'd only been driving the trailer for a few hours and even though he'd done a full circle check before he'd left Montreal, in these situations something always popped up that you never saw coming. After an uncomfortably long time looking at the trailer brakes, the officer pulled her head out from behind a tire and

asked, "You inspect these brakes before you headed out?"

"Yes," Mark answered. "Of course. Is there a problem?"

"One of your brakes is a quarter inch out of adjustment. If you had a second one, I'd take the trailer off the road."

Mark breathed a sigh of relief. He'd inspected the brakes fully in Montreal and they had looked fine. As well, the trailer was equipped with auto-slack adjusters, but that didn't mean there couldn't be a problem since automatic slack adjusters weren't always so automatic. After determining that the underside of the truck was satisfactory, the officer asked Mark to get up into the cab as she went around the rig checking that all the lights were working, including the orange ABS indicator light at the rear of the trailer.

"All good?" Mark asked when she was done.

"Pretty much," she said. "One brake slightly out of adjustment, and a headlight out."

"What?"

"Yeah, on the driver's side."

"That must have just happened."

"Sure it did."

Obviously she didn't believe him, but she'd probably heard it all from drivers over the years. "The headlight's not a critical item, so I'm issuing you a repair verification form. This will give you two weeks to fix the problems and the form can be faxed into our offices." She handed him a sheet of paper. "That's it?"

"Yup, you're free to go."

Mark took a deep breath, relieved that the inspection had taken less than 45

minutes and been so painless.

"Thanks," he said, taking the form from her. Then he asked, "How long is this blitz running?"

She looked at him, smiled and said, "I'm here all week - try the veal."

At first Mark didn't get it, then she laughed and he realized that - despite what most truckers thought about MTO officers - she actually had a sense of humour.

"We're up and down the 401 all week," she said.

"Westbound, eastbound, day and night, so...no, I don't know where I'll be tomorrow or the next day."

"Maybe I'll see you again, then."

"If you get pulled over again, show the repair verification form, it'll help move you along."

And with that she was onto another truck. As Mark pulled out of the inspection area and got back onto the 401, he noticed a familiar sight in his rearview mirror. The green International was cruising westbound, obviously lucky enough to be passing the inspection when it was already full of trucks. Mark laughed under his breath. They might have won this round and avoided an inspection, but they would be making upwards of 10 or 12 more trips over the next few days and they were bound to get stopped sooner or later.

Mark just hoped he would be around to see it happen. ●

Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of *Puttin' on the blitz*.

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE



Weighing in on MELT

There was much fist-pumping and high-fiving when Steven Del Duca, Ontario's Minister of Transportation, announced last month that the province will be moving forward with mandatory entry-level training for Class A truck drivers. For the pro-mandatory training lobby, this long sought-after commitment was heralded as a watershed moment for the trucking industry.

Del Duca's announcement came just days after the *Toronto Star* published a two-part story exposing the province's cut-rate driving schools which offer just enough instruction to pass the licensing test.

These so-called licence mills offer driving courses for \$999 or less, which puts them just under the \$1,000 threshold Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has set for regulated vocational training courses. This loophole exempts them from government oversight, and they flourish, many crossing the line of legality by tacking on an extra \$350 for shifting, say, or \$150 for air brake endorsement.

The government is well aware of what's happening; it has taken action against 40 or so illegal businesses in the past five years, but ministry sanctions aren't much of a deterrent. The *Star's* investigator found at least four of these schools still in operation; others simply close down and re-open under a new name.

The government dumps some of the blame on students who haven't checked the Ministry's Web site, where the names of illegal schools are published, to verify which ones are accredited by the province.

Blaming the student is a bit disingenuous. With the prospect of up to 33,000 job vacancies in the next five years, it's almost a no-brainer when an aspiring driver weighs the choices: a few days with 10 hours in the truck for less than a thousand bucks, or a 200-hour course, including 50 hours on-road instruction, for anywhere from \$6,000 to \$10,000?

And in any case, it's not the school that hands the driver his or her Class A licence.

The ticket to a trucking future is handed out by the Ministry of Transportation at its DriveTest centres, in sometimes less than an hour.

In Ontario, like every other Canadian jurisdiction, testing and licensing is the responsibility of the government transportation ministry. And when you walk through the door of your local test facility, it doesn't matter whether you've graduated from the best school in the country, or from a licensing mill, because no jurisdiction has a requirement for formal driving instruction. In fact, more than half of Canada's entry-level drivers get their licence without having attended any school at all. The *Star* investigator staked out the

province's Woodbridge DriveTest location just north of Mississauga, the only test centre in the province dedicated exclusively to commercial trucking. There, he followed, photographed, and videotaped tractor-trailer road tests conducted over a period of weeks. His exposé, geared largely toward an ill-informed readership, was scary for even the most seasoned professionals in the industry.

"Tractor-trailer drivers earning their licenses at Ontario's busiest truck testing centre without being taken on a major expressway," the headlines screamed. According to the *Star*, examiners routinely take tractor-trailer drivers into quiet, low-speed industrial loops, and on no roads with speed limits 80 km/h or higher. The driving portion of the test takes only about 15 minutes, with another 45 minutes or so spent back at the facility assessing skills such as uncoupling the trailer and backing up.

The *Star* didn't report on the quality of the written knowledge test, the second component of the licensing exam, but any experienced driver will tell you that come renewal time, the only "knowledge" tested is whether or not you can provide the correct answers to Ontario's outdated and inadequate questions.

Licensing requirements vary across the country, and many are appallingly low. This was highlighted in research carried out several years ago by the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council where they examined the commercial driver licensing regime of each Canadian jurisdiction.

The analysis was comprehensive, covering everything from medical requirements, to driver handbooks, and qualifications of the driver examiners, as well as written knowledge exams and road tests. When the results were compared against the National Occupational Standard (NOS) for an entry level driver, every province came up short. These standards, which were developed by CTHRC, describe the tasks that industry deems to be the minimum required to do the job.

Recognizing that among the thousands of skilled professionals on the road are a whole whack of incompetent others, it's hard to argue against better training. But whether or not is should be mandatory is a subject that's been long debated, and will continue to be for some time. Even if everyone votes "yes" there are so many other questions - who sets the standards, who enforces them, who pays - that I think it's safe to say we won't see mandatory entry-level training anytime soon. Bummer.

But there is one thing we shouldn't lose sight of while we're waiting. Nothing should let the provinces off the hook from fixing what's broken in their own backyards. More diligent oversight of training facilities, to be sure, and certainly more rigorous procedures when it comes to doling out Class A licences. A test tough enough to rule out those who don't have the knowledge and ability to do the job would be a good place to start.

To be fair, some provinces, notably Alberta and B.C., have recognized their shortcomings are working toward improvement. And Ontario, bless their hearts, did close the loophole that made it possible to take the road test using a pickup truck with a fifth wheel and a horse trailer. ●

Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Eyes trained on better quality drivers? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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Last Employer _____

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Joanne Mackenzie is pretty in pink

Joanne Mackenzie is a truck driver, a breast cancer survivor and a convoy organizer. Driving for nearly 23 years, Mackenzie's imprint on the trucking community is overwhelming. Not only is she a female driver who takes pride in her job, but she educates victims and raises awareness for breast cancer all over the province of Ontario. Sonia Straface caught up with her recently.

Pink – the colour of bubble gum, (most) little girls' bedrooms, and flamingos. Of course, for those who have been or are affected by breast cancer this colour takes on a whole new significance and meaning the second the diagnosis has been confirmed.

Joanne Mackenzie has been driving trucks professionally for 23 years and shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.

Almost 12 of those years have been with Highland Transport based out of Markham, Ont., a workplace she says she loves and is proud of.

Mackenzie got started in trucking back in 1991 when her then-husband, who also drove professionally, took her out on the road for one of his long-haul trips.

"I used to bug him and ask him when he was going to teach me how to drive truck and this one time he actually let me take the wheel," she recalled. "We were in the flatlands in Montana and it just overwhelmed me and I thought I could handle doing this and that kind of sparked a bigger interest in driving for me."

At the time, Mackenzie worked for a courier company and drove a cube van. With driving in her veins, she decided that she would try her luck and get her A/Z licence.

With the help of many "amazing mentors," Mackenzie did just that.

Like many other drivers, her favourite part about the job has been all the travelling.

Mackenzie said she has visited every province and territory in Canada and all the contiguous states in the US.

"In my earlier years, the travelling was just amazing, and getting to meet all these people. We've got beautiful land and I don't think people realize it," she said. "It's amazing to be able to drive through it, especially north-

ern Ontario in the summertime."

Now, Mackenzie doesn't go as far during her time on the road.

"I run the corridor," she said. "I go shorter distances now, I still go to the US – like New York and Pennsylvania, but mostly I run the corridor back and forth. It gives me the opportunity to work outside of my driving job on things I'm passionate about. It also allows me more home time."

Mackenzie's other passion is generating breast cancer awareness.

She is currently the organizer for Trucking for a Cure – a community event partner in the support of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation - Ontario Region.

Trucking for a Cure holds annual convoys where drivers from Ontario decorate their rigs in pink and roll down the road in support of cancer research.

The event is one of the top 10 fundraisers on behalf of the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation in the Ontario region.

"In 2013, we won the outstanding community event with the foundation which was quite an honour," said Mackenzie. "To be honoured with this award was amazing, especially knowing (trucking/transportation) is not an area that the foundation had ever approached for fundraising."

"The foundation is quite impressed with us and they invite us to all of their functions. It's been growing since day one and they're behind us 100%."

Breast cancer is an issue that is close to home for Mackenzie as she

"I don't consider myself a warrior because I have so many friends who are dealing with so much more than I did when I got diagnosed with my breast cancer."

herself was diagnosed with the disease back in 2006. Today, she is cancer-free.

"I'm a breast cancer survivor and there's a lot of men and women out there who are definitely warriors and survivors," said Mackenzie. "I don't consider myself a warrior because I have so many friends who are dealing with so much more than I did when I got diagnosed with my breast cancer."



Joanne Mackenzie

Thanks in large part to her aunt (who had breast cancer and taught Mackenzie a great deal about the disease), Mackenzie was able to catch her cancer at an early stage and it was eliminated through a few rounds of radiation.

Mackenzie says that in addition to helping the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, she hopes to educate more people on the disease.

"I'm a true believer of knowing your body and knowing your breasts," she said. "Having that education in front of me and knowing my aunt lost her breasts, I think that's what's saved me, is being breast-aware and being educated on the disease."

two convoys (one in Prescott, Ont. on Sept. 6 and one in Woodstock, Ont. on Oct. 4) that raked in more than \$70,000.

"I don't know what we'd do without our volunteers, all of these men and women who take time from their everyday lives to promote our event as well as our wonderful sponsors," she said. "And of course, our drivers are the heart and soul of our event. You need to come out to the convoy to understand what these guys put into it."

"They show up with their mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, sons and they just get into the pink and decorate their truck. So many of them are doing it because someone they know have been touched with some kind of cancer and this is a way for them to show their support and to honour them."

"Every year it just blows me away. These guys just come up with better ideas on how to pink out a big rig."

Mackenzie says the convoy is more than just raising awareness for cancer.

She says that the convoy sheds a positive (and pink) light on the trucking industry itself and that she wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's a great feeling that we've made our mark in the industry," she said. "The convoy really helps with the trucking image."

"It really shows that we're professionals and that we're people too – we don't just move the economy like some people think." ●

Unfortunately, Mackenzie lost her aunt to breast cancer in November 2007, though Mackenzie commemorates her every day by keeping a picture of her in her truck.

To date, Trucking for a Cure has contributed more than \$300,000 to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

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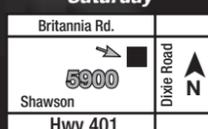
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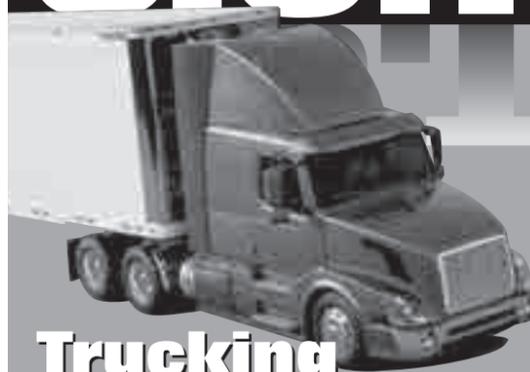
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