

TRUCK NEWS

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Bradley to move on

CTA, OTA head to step down at end of 2017

TORONTO, ONTARIO

David Bradley has announced he will step down from his role as president of the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) and Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) at the end of next year.

He has been with the organizations for more than 30 years, having joined the OTA as director of economics in 1985. He was promoted to president of the OTA at the age of 33 six years later. The CTA was formed in 1997 under Bradley's watch and he has served in the dual role as president of both groups ever since.

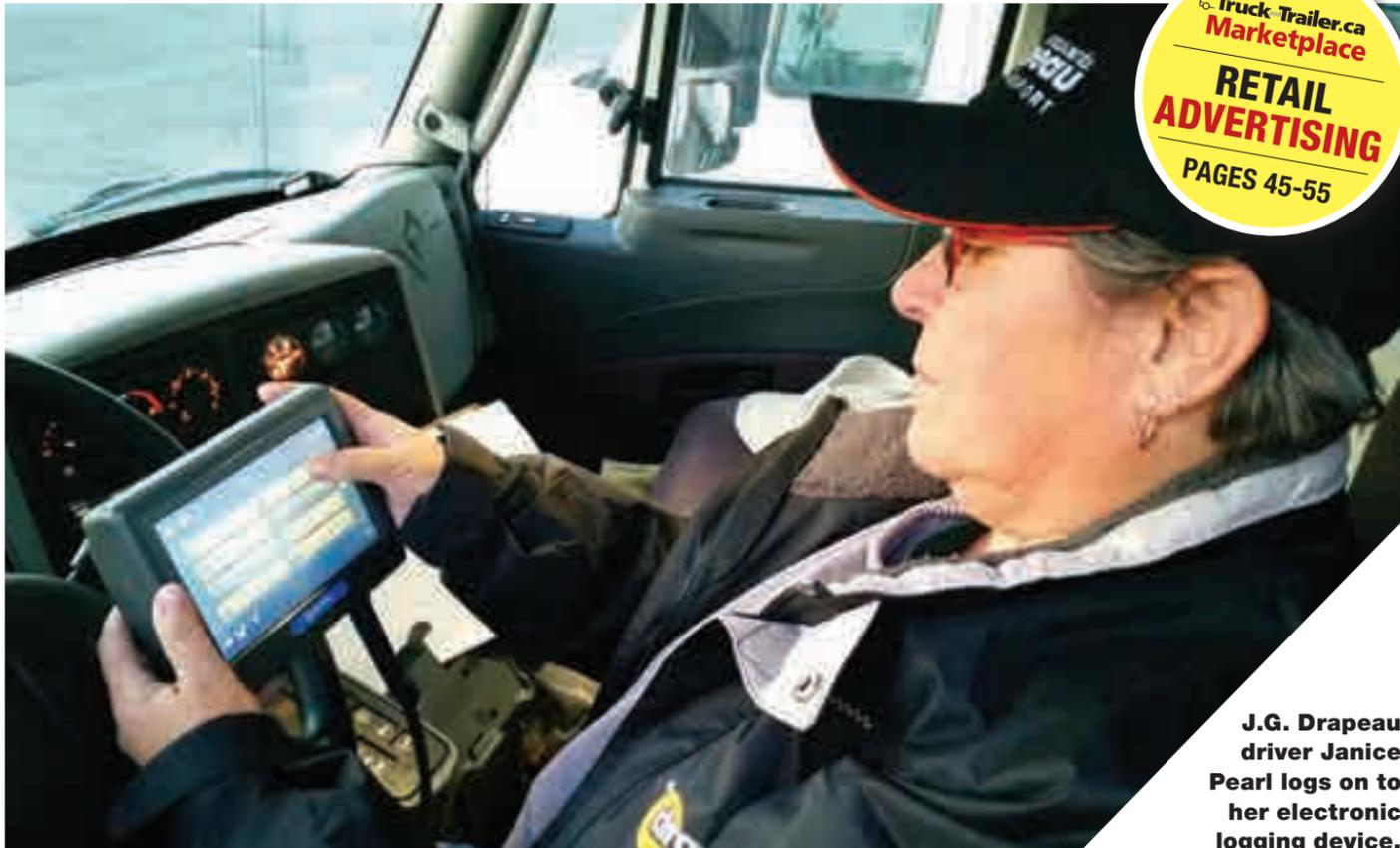
In a letter to OTA chairman Scott Tilley, Bradley said, "It is with some amazement, but always with appreciation, that I think back on what a leap of faith it was back in 1991 to have entrusted such a young guy to represent such an incredible and important industry. While I have loved dealing with the issues, it is the people I have had the pleasure to get to know, to work with and to learn from - the members, the staff and all the other characters I have come across in government, the media, etc. - that have made coming to work every day so energizing and rewarding. I have been truly blessed."

In a letter to CTA chairman Mark Seymour, Bradley wrote: "I am humbled by the trust placed in me and hope I have been worthy of it." Bradley says it will be "business as usual" as he continues to represent the organizations through to the end of 2017. ●

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J.G. Drapeau driver Janice Pearl logs on to her electronic logging device.

US to mandate e-logs

Drivers operating in the US - including about 140,000 Canadians - will be required to use electronic logging devices by 2017

By James Menzies

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A long-awaited final rule on electronic logging devices (ELDs) from the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will force truckers in the US - including the estimated 140,000 Canadian drivers who operate there - to modernize how they track and present their hours of work.

Released on Dec. 10, 2015, the hefty 516-page final rule outlines extensive technical requirements that must be met by ELD manufacturers before their systems are accepted by the FMCSA. Requiring drivers to transition from paper to electronic logs will improve compliance and simplify enforcement, according to US Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx.

"Since 1938, complex, on-duty/off-duty logs for truck and bus drivers were made with pencil and paper, virtually impossible to verify," he said. "This automated technology not only brings logging records into the modern age, it also allows roadside safety inspectors to unmask violations of federal law that put lives at risk."

Drivers operating in the US will be required to use electronic logs by Dec. 18, 2017. Systems in use today do not yet qualify, as they have not been updated to reflect all the technical requirements laid out in the final rule. As such,

today's e-log systems, under the context of the law, are defined as automatic on-board recording devices (AOBRDs). Users of those systems will have until Dec. 16, 2019 before they must transition to ELDs that meet the new technical standard.

Elise Chianelli, senior product manager, safety and compliance with PeopleNet, said during a Webinar explaining the new mandate that most ELD suppliers estimate it will take between 12 and 24 months to update their currently available AOBRD platforms.

"The FMCSA has introduced a grandfather clause that will allow two additional years for AOBRDs to come up to the ELD standard," she said.

Kate Rahn, director of marketing with Shaw Tracking, pointed out that systems in use today won't necessarily have to be replaced to comply with the new standard.

"For us, on newer versions of product, the requirements for ELD will be upgradable through software updates; both firmware and software applications," she said.

This should minimize the cost of compliance for fleets that have already begun electronically logging hours-of-service through AOBRDs. For those that aren't, there will likely be many options to choose from.

"This just opened up a billion dollar market and you

Continued on page 10

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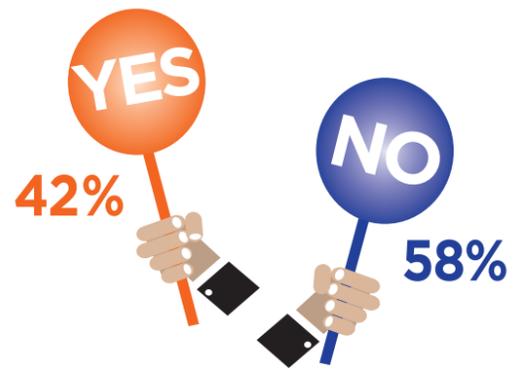
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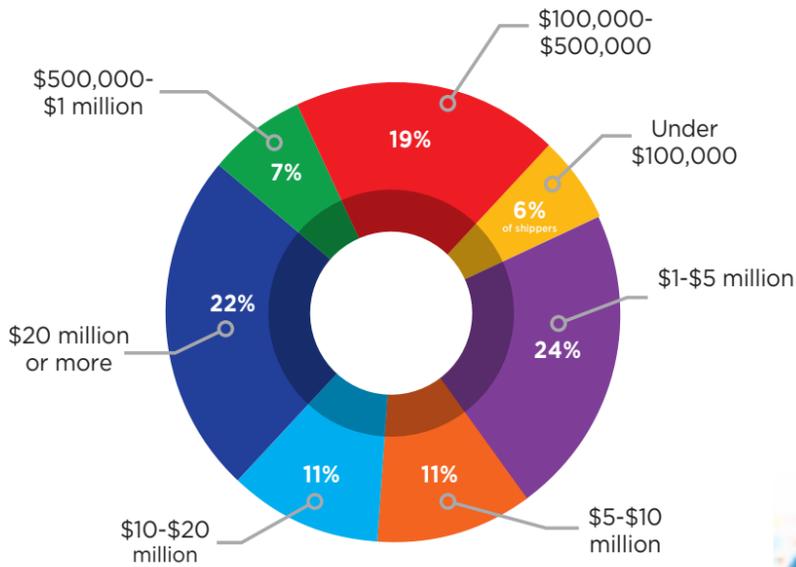
THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Two thirds of Canadian shippers spend more than \$1 million annually in freight transportation, according to our annual Transportation Buying Trends Research. And they are sensitive to price with four in ten acknowledging that higher rates and/or surcharges have affected their use of the different transportation modes. Rail is frequently the beneficiary when trucking prices get too high with 6 in 10 shippers responding to our national survey noting that at least some of their truck freight could be moved to rail.

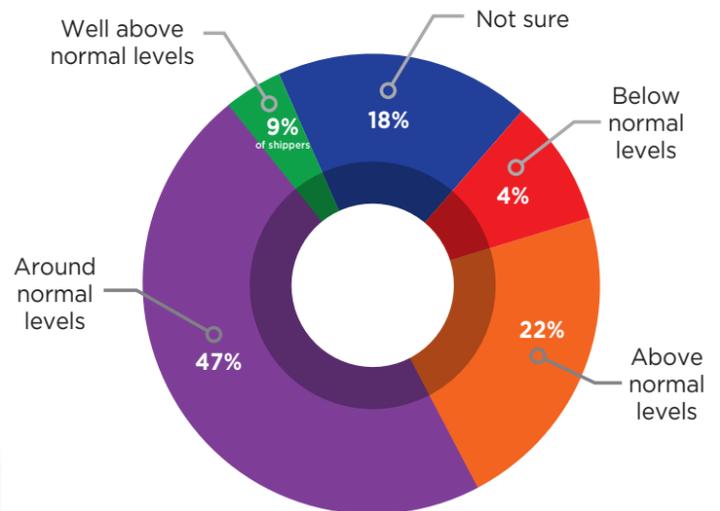
Higher rates/surcharges have affected use of transportation modes



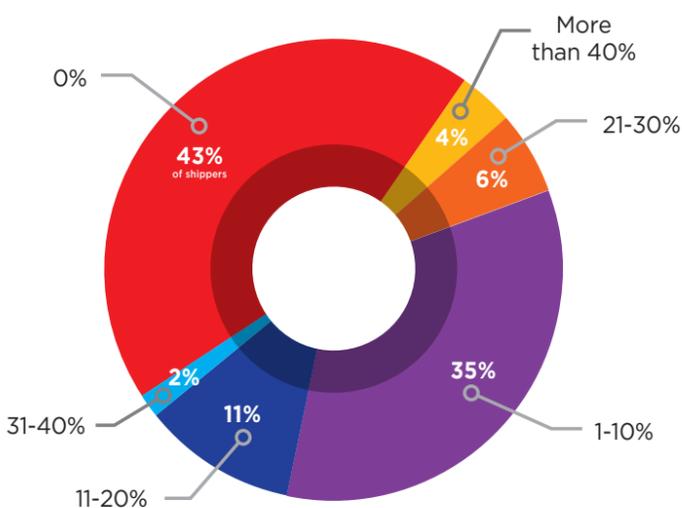
Canadian shippers' annual transportation spend



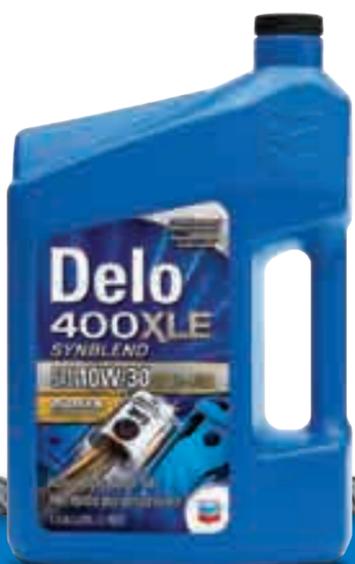
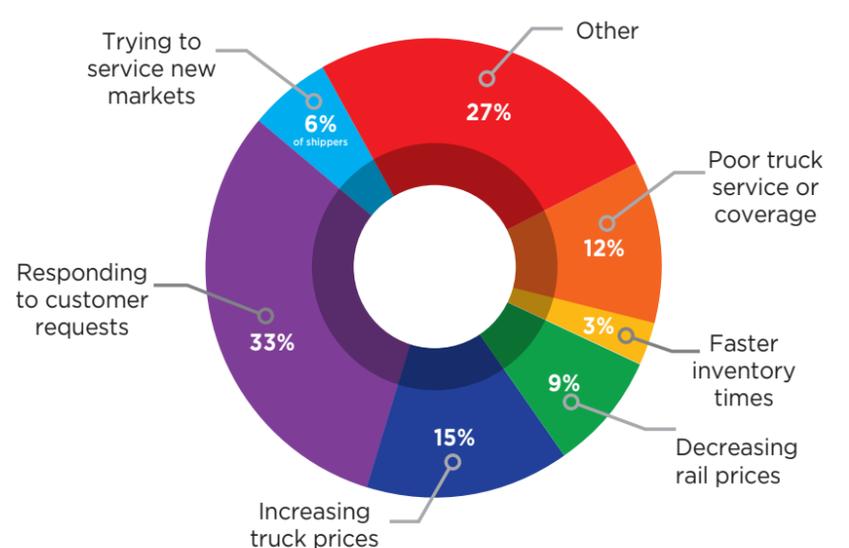
Shipper views on current competitive activity among transportation modes



Percentage of current truck shipments consider rail to be viable alternative



Main reasons for diverting freight from truck to rail in past year



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TRUCK NEWS

February 2016 Volume 36, Issue 2

ISSN 0712-2683 (Print)
ISSN 1923-3523 (Online)

Truck News is published monthly by Newcom Business Media Inc.



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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage.



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Editorial Comment



JAMES MENZIES

Extreme measures to fight cargo crime

At a recent Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTCC) seminar on cargo crime, Ron Hartman, director of security solutions, outlined some extreme, even badass, methods fleets can adopt to fight back against cargo theft. During his presentation he went over all the usual suggestions, namely security cameras, perimeter fencing, seals and locks, signage, monitoring visitors on your premises and general vigilance. You're probably already doing most of this.

But, according to Hartman, more carriers are now soliciting the help of security firms to take their cargo security efforts further. One method they're employing is to go undercover within their own organization. Under the guise of a new hire, an investigator is embedded into the trucking company and looks for suspicious activity. Maybe an employee who's always visiting areas he shouldn't be, frequent visitors with no apparent purpose to be there, discussions about theft, low employee morale or other signs that could be indicative of unrest within the workforce.

Hartman notes "most crimes involve

internal conspiracies" and advises carriers to look within when investigating cargo crime.

Another increasingly popular tactic is "breach testing," again usually employed with the help of a security firm. The firm sends an investigator to a facility to try to breach its security. If the investigator is able to gain access to sensitive areas or obtain information about cargo and routing, the fleet then learns where it needs to tighten up its security protocols.

For drivers transporting high-value loads, certain additional rules should be in place, including a no-stop rule requiring them to travel at least 500 kms before stopping for food or fuel. They should only be fuelling and stopping at pre-approved locations and should stick to recommended routes.

Hartman suggested hiring an escort to covertly follow the truck and ensure all those rules are being adhered to. "We find a lot of cargo escorts happen with cross-border shipments," he said.

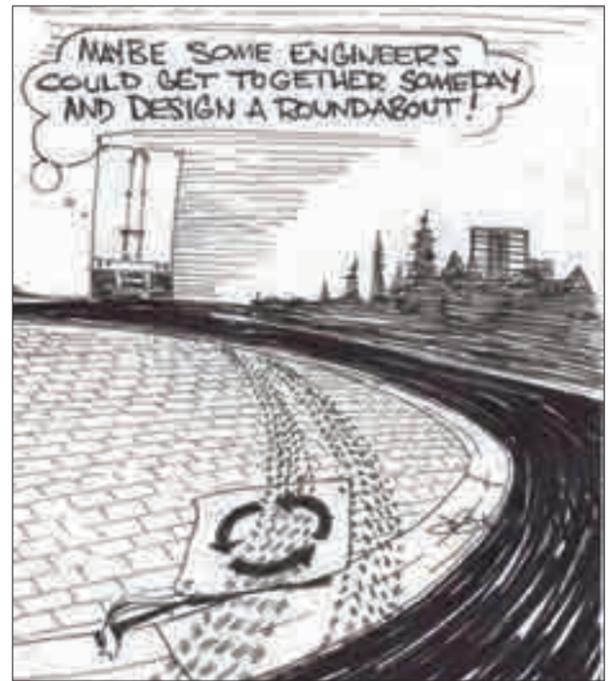
Fleets should have a plan in place to respond to a theft before a load even goes missing. Equip drivers with a wallet-

sized robbery procedure card so they know what to do if they've been relieved of a shipment in-transit. Make sure they know to look out for their personal safety first in the event of a hijacking and relinquish the load.

There should also be a policy in place to ensure drivers report lost or stolen personal effects such as jackets or wallets, which may contain important information about cargo or routing.

If, despite all these efforts, a load still goes missing, Hartman suggested looking into which employees had access to information about that specific load and its documents. "Make it a policy so no one feels targeted," he suggests.

Cargo crime is estimated to be a \$5-billion problem in Canada, but Hartman said it could in fact be much more severe, since many fleets are reticent to report thefts in fear of insurance premiums increases, reputational damage and



overall embarrassment over being had. While some of the methods he outlined at the seminar may seem extreme, it's a problem that is only getting worse and that warrants some extreme measures. ❁

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The view with Lou



LOU SMYRLIS

OOIDA's irresponsible stance on ELDs

Five years ago, when the issue of mandating electronic logging devices first started to heat up, I commented in this space that I found the "consistent and loud opposition coming from the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) puzzling, if not irresponsible."

As you will have read with our cover story this issue, the US Federal Motor Carrier Administration (FMCSA) has now issued its long-awaited final rule on ELDs, making them mandatory for truckers in the US as of December 2017.

It comes as no surprise that OOIDA remains vehemently opposed. Reading through OOIDA's defense of its position on ELDs, I'm no longer puzzled. I think I understand what drives OOIDA logic - and I use that term very loosely - on this issue. And I consider their position even more irresponsible than I did five years ago. OOIDA had previously scuttled

FMCSA's plan to mandate ELDs with a legal challenge that argued ELDs could be used by shippers and carriers to harass drivers into using up all their legally available driving time, even when tired. Bit of a stretch, I thought, but okay let's make sure drivers don't get abused by unscrupulous carriers and shippers.

This time, a few weeks before publishing its final rule on ELDs, FMCSA passed a law that prohibits the coercion of drivers by motor carriers, shippers, receivers and other transportation intermediaries. It even went so far as to build into the final rule safeguards to prevent driver harassment, including the requirement for a mute button on the device that can help prevent a driver from being disturbed by dispatch while in the sleeper berth.

What's left for OOIDA to oppose? Nothing, if you're willing to take a logical approach to the situation. But that's

clearly not OOIDA's plan. From what I can see, there are two reasons OOIDA remains opposed to this legislation.

First, because it is legislation supported by the American Trucking Associations, a carrier association. And in OOIDA's "us versus them" view of things, legislation supported by carriers can't be good for O/Os. The second reason is that OOIDA would rather keep hiding our industry's dirtiest secret - the fact that paper logs are easy to falsify and often are - than do anything about it.

Right now the fallout from inefficiencies caused by delays, paperwork errors and other issues all too often get pushed down to the driver. Drivers, faced with the possibility of losing income or running out of hours before getting home as a result of these inefficiencies, feel compelled to cheat the logbook. Yes, that puts some money in drivers' pockets. Yes,

it gets them home more often. But it also keeps our broken system of hours-of-service broken forever. Rather than fixing it, we cheat it.

If it was much harder to cheat the system, as would be the case with ELDs, carriers would have to deal with the inefficiencies in their operations. They would have to confront shipper practices that delay drivers and they would have the data at hand to prove it. This will not be easy. It will require change. But in the end, OOIDA's own members stand to benefit. So why isn't OOIDA in favour of ELDs? Jim Johnston, OOIDA president and CEO, describes the ELD rule as "absolutely the most outrageous intrusion into the rights of professional truckers imaginable." I will do him one better: I think OOIDA's opposition to ELDs shows "absolutely the most outrageous abandonment of the rights of professional truckers imaginable." ❁

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Chrysler converts truck fleet to natural gas

By Ron Stang

DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' (FCA) private transport fleet has become one of the largest in North America to convert to compressed natural gas (CNG). FCA Transport LLC (formerly Chrysler Group Transport LLC) finished converting its 179 Peterbilt-leased tractors in early December, a harbinger likely for other sizable transport fleets including those operating cross-border routes.

The fleet is based at the FCA Transport terminal on Detroit's northeast side, and hauls everything from stampings to engines to transmissions between the Motor City and various other company plants in the Midwest and Ontario.

FCA also has a truck fleet based in Windsor and company officials say they are looking at the performance of the Detroit fleet before possibly extending the CNG conversion to this side of the border.

FCA has long eyed alternative fuels for a variety of reasons – cost control, environmental, and in this case an investment in what has been a beleaguered City of Detroit's economic comeback.

It spent two years and \$40 million on the conversion, including switching to 179 CNG-powered Class 8 tractors, as well as spending \$5 million on a fast-fill and time-fill refuelling centre and \$1.8 million to upgrade its 36,000 sq.-ft. maintenance facility.

FCA Transport had been spending some \$8 million on diesel fuel annually to cover 16 million miles. "So we were looking for a solution that could offer



FCA fuels its trucks at a specially built CNG station, which it claims to be the largest privately-owned fast-fill CNG fuelling station in the US.

a couple of different advantages," FCA Transport head Martin DiFiore said.

One was a cost reduction, the other environmental sustainability. "So natural gas was a great option for us," he said.

The company expects to reduce costs 35% and reduce CO2 emissions by more than 16,000 tonnes.

Even with declining fuel prices FCA expects major savings.

DiFiore said that while diesel is currently priced relatively low, "What people may not realize is that natural gas is also at historical lows. So let's say diesel at a US price per gallon was \$2.75. At that price point my payback will be just under a year."

White Plains, N.Y.-based TruStar Energy built what it's calling the largest private fast-fill station in North America. The station's pumps dispense CNG at a rate almost the same as for diesel – al-

most 40 gas gallon equivalent (GGE) per minute. TruStar erected the facility in less than six months and will own and maintain it. Virtually the entire fleet can be filled at the fast-fill pumps while there are fewer time-fill pumps for overnight fuelling and providing slightly higher tank capacity.

"We use that as an option to fill some of perhaps our longer run tractors but 99% of the tractors that are being filled are utilizing the fast-fill portion of the station at this terminal," DiFiore said.

The tractors themselves have four CNG fuel tanks stacked vertically behind the cab.

The range is about 640 miles or almost 1,030 kms, DiFiore said. The company dispatches trucks to as far away as Brampton, Ont., 219 miles or about 352 kms each way. "Our longest run round-trip is about 540 miles," to Kokomo, Ind.,

he said. FCA Transport, which dates from 1925, has 405 drivers and 74 different start times a day.

"And we run 24/7 so we're constantly (going) around the clock so we have a constant need to fuel," DiFiore said.

DiFiore said it took more than 6,000 hours of training for the drivers and skilled trades alone. There was also time invested for management training and there were employee town hall meetings.

Bruce Winchester, executive director of the Canadian Natural Gas Vehicle Alliance, thinks FCA's decision could spur more Canadian fleets to convert.

"You can't discount how important those cross-border connections are," he said. "It says to everybody that's in their supply chains that they are using that as a way to move goods."

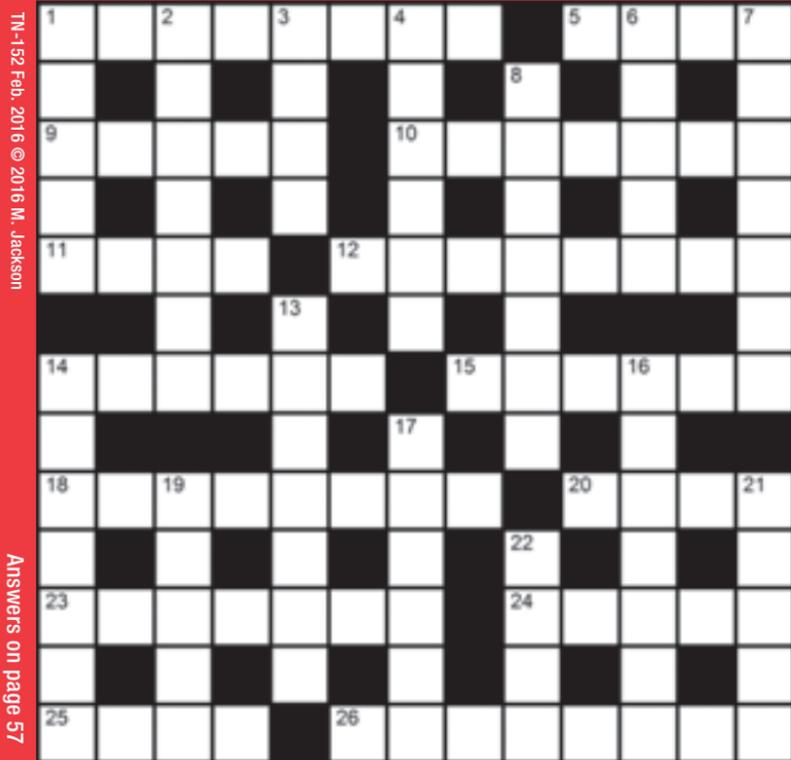
While there have been a few Canadian fleet conversions, Winchester said he thinks the Canadian trucking industry is "on the cusp of a pretty big push in Ontario around natural gas over-the-road trucking. We spend a lot of time doing outreach activities...there has been a lot of interest in it."

In the US, FCA joins other major fleets that have converted to CNG including Procter & Gamble, Anheuser-Busch, Frito-Lay and Unilever.

Matthew Godlweski, president of Natural Gas Vehicles for America, said while CNG has major advantages there also has to be an obvious business case.

"You have to make the investment in the vehicles," he said. "Chrysler doesn't own those vehicles, they lease them, so that helps on that end. But, again, price and performance have to come first, right? You've got to have vehicles that work for the duty cycle that they're interested in using them in and the numbers have to pencil out." ●

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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ELD mandate will 'change the industry forever'

Continued from page 1

know what that does – it attracts a lot of players,” said Jim Griffin, chief technical officer with Fleet Advantage. “You don’t have to get a big piece of the market if you’re a smaller player to make money, so there are a lot of smaller players coming into the market.”

The FMCSA will publish a list of accepted devices on its Web site as they are approved.

Griffin warns fleets may struggle with how to manage and coordinate the data generated by disparate ELD sources. Every ELD presents data differently, Griffin noted, and fleets could find themselves having to become familiar with many different platforms as they encounter systems from a wide range of suppliers through acquisitions, pre-equipped leased trucks, the purchase of pre-equipped used trucks or the signing-on of owner/operators.

“There will be a lot of mixed fleets running various on-board computers all within one fleet and that data all looks very different,” Griffin pointed out. “I think that’s something that is going to be overlooked.”

The new standard offers an exemption to operators of trucks of a model year 2000 or older, since those trucks lack the engine electronics necessary to communicate with an ELD.

The ELD mandate received mixed reaction in the US. The American Trucking Associations (ATA), long a proponent of mandating ELDs, welcomed the legislation, dubbing it a

“historic day for trucking.”

President and CEO Bill Graves said “This regulation will change the trucking industry – for the better – forever. An already safe and efficient industry will get more so with the aid of this proven technology.”

Less enthusiastic was the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), which vowed to fight the legislation.

“This rule has the potential to have the single largest, most negative impact on the industry than anything else done by FMCSA,” blasted Jim Johnston, OOIDA president and CEO. “This regulation is absolutely the most outrageous intrusion into the rights of professional truckers imaginable and will do nothing at all to improve highway safety. In fact, we firmly believe it will do exactly the opposite by placing even more pressure and stress on drivers than they already deal with.”

OOIDA successfully thwarted a previous attempt by the FMCSA to mandate ELDs, arguing they could be used by shippers and carriers to harass drivers into using up all their legally available driving time, even when tired.

But in November 2015, just weeks before publishing its final rule on ELDs, the FMCSA passed a law that prohibits the coercion of drivers by motor carriers, shippers, receivers and other transportation intermediaries, effectively addressing concerns ELDs could be used to bully drivers. It also built into the final rule safeguards to prevent driver harassment, including the re-

quirement for a mute button on the device that can help prevent a driver from being disturbed by dispatch while in the sleeper berth.

In Canada, the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) renewed calls for an

“This rule has the potential to have the single largest, most negative impact on the industry.”

Jim Johnston, OOIDA

ELD mandate to be implemented here.

Previous federal Transport Minister Lisa Raitt voiced her desire to mandate ELDs even before the US law was passed, but no legislation requiring their use was forthcoming. *Truck News* contacted the office of current federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau to see what the current government’s position is on the issue but as of press time, hadn’t received a response.

CTA chief David Bradley said the US law behooves the Canadian and provincial governments to follow suit.

“With the publication of the US rule the Canadian governments can no longer claim they need to see what the Americans do before getting down to

business here,” said Bradley. “Now we are under the gun and in the situation where we have about 24 months to introduce our own mandate.”

The Owner-Operator’s Business Association of Canada (OBAC) says that unlike OOIDA, it doesn’t oppose an ELD mandate outright.

However, Joanne Ritchie, executive director of OBAC, says she does question the need for such a rule. She says the operational and administrative benefits of using electronic logs are proven, though the safety benefits are not.

“There is no strong evidence that there are any direct safety benefits,” she told *Truck News*. “Which begs the question, if there’s no safety benefit, and ELDs are cost-effective for both industry and enforcement, why do we need a government mandate? It’s a question provincial and territorial governments (Ontario being the exception) are asking as well.”

Ritchie said OBAC is in favour of “voluntary adoption” of ELDs, particularly when accompanied by fair driver pay rates and operational practices that compensate for the shortcoming of current hours-of-service rules.

“Most small fleets, O/Os, and drivers we talk to support the use of ELDs,” Ritchie said. “Companies who are paying a decent dollar off the e-logs and managing their operations (legally) to compensate for the shortcomings of HoS that have earned their drivers’ acceptance of the technology. And even for the naysayers, it’s less about the technology, and more about driver pay and the unforgiving inflexibility of HoS.”

OPINION: BRING ON THE ELDs

By Margaret Hogg (As told to James Menzies)
PRESIDENT, J.G. DRAPEAU

We started with the e-log system back in 2013. We weren’t having any problems with compliance, but we realized that one day it would become mandatory and we wanted to start it early to get everybody adjusted prior to two months before it becomes mandatory.

It has been working out very well.

No drivers left the company because of this. Some of the older drivers were a bit hesitant just because of the technology but we mentored them, showed them how little hassle is involved because they are no longer doing paper logs and they all became very good with it.

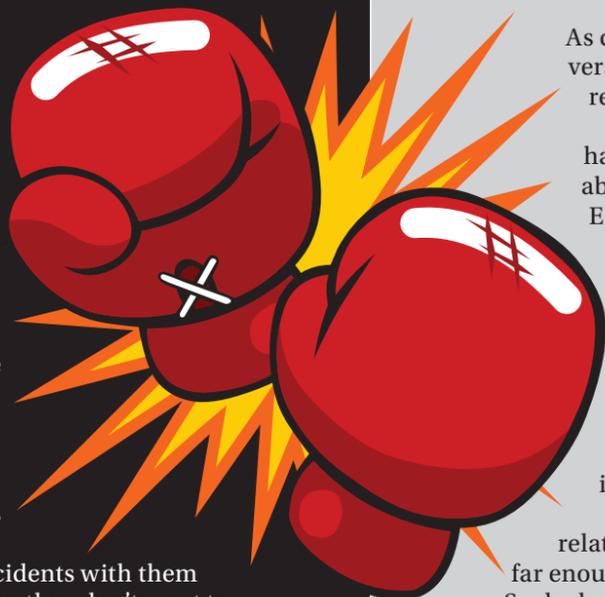
We have two US owner/operators and they don’t want to be on the e-log system as of yet. They will have to be, eventually, but they’re perfect drivers and we’ve had no incidents with them so I don’t want to get rid of them just because they don’t want to be on it right away. I have an outside consultant who monitors their logs and there are no issues with them.

We have 18 trucks and the main benefit I see, even though we’re paying a monthly fee for the e-logs, is that I can spend less time going and reviewing every single log that a driver does every day. That’s mandatory – you have to do that – and with the e-log system if a driver goes over by one minute, it pops up automatically on our computer screen. So that has been quite the benefit.

Our drivers are very good at not going outside the regulations. We have a very good record.

We haven’t had any issues at all with enforcement accepting the e-logs. We will never go back to paper logs. I’m all for it. It works great, it’s less work and you know more about what’s going on with every driver. You can see how many hours a driver has left. Our dispatcher is good, too. He will never ask them to go over their hours.

We had a customer once who always wanted us to go over. We said ‘We’re sorry’ and we let the customer go. We can’t be involved in that. It’s not right. ○



OPINION: ELDs AN UNNECESSARY, SUBSTANTIAL EXPENSE

By Bill Cameron
CO-OWNER, PARKS TRANSPORTATION

As co-owner of a small trucking company, I disagree with the universal mandatory implementation of ELDs, but not for any of the reasons that proponents of these devices would have you believe.

Some of the arguments being presented in favour of the law have created even stronger opposition, such as claims ‘Drivers abusing hours-of-service must be stopped,’ followed by ‘Use of ELDs will improve productivity.’ Which is it? If a driver is abusing their hours-of-service, slowing them down will hardly increase productivity. The use of ELDs isn’t foolproof in either case.

I respect the fact that large carriers may find ELDs beneficial. Long-term, there should be financial benefits – from the cost of paper logs to the clerical staff required to audit them – when large numbers of drivers are involved. If, after implementation, you discover a drastic change in individual productivity, you should review your screening/recruiting/training procedures.

Our company usually hauls to the same customer base, with relatively quick loading and unloading of freight. We rarely travel far enough for hours-of-service abuse to even be an option.

Such abuse would require deliberate effort; a ridiculous notion. With very few drivers, logbook auditing isn’t particularly time-intensive, yet still effective enough to monitor driver behaviour.

With everything from border times to fuel purchases accessible online, it’s quite easy to catch and deal with offenders. In recent years, this hasn’t been an issue for companies of any size. Drivers abusing hours are rare; drivers not using all available hours aren’t, giving credence to the popular assertion that some drivers may now be pushed beyond their personal limits.

I’ve spoken with drivers already using ELDs. Some of the less ambitious now manage their time in such a way to deliberately create delays at the shipper/receiver, so they will use all available hours earlier in the week.

Other drivers have told me they can move the truck around a yard for several hours without their ELD’s GPS registering any movement. So as long as the physical address has not changed or their duty status been manually updated, they don’t have to log the time on-duty.

For all these reasons, I resent bureaucrats legislating me into further unnecessary substantial expense with yet another one-size-fits-all law. The industry drastically needs improvement. Better training and testing will produce safer highways and greater productivity. Based on my dual role of driver/owner, I don’t believe that ELDs will. ●

Daimler takes bigger bite out of Mexican truck market

By James Menzies

PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO

Daimler's plan to attain the same market leadership in Mexico as it has achieved in the US and Canada is coming to fruition.

The company says it has grown its Classes 4-8 market share in the country by 6.7% year to date, to 29.1% of the total market. Its Class 8 share increased 7.2% to 28.4% through November and its Classes 6-8 share is now 30.6%, a 7% improvement compared to 2014. Whether that makes Daimler the market share leader is difficult to determine, since stats collected in Mexico do not break down the total sales by OEM. Still, its growth is encouraging and vindicating for Stefan Kurschner, president and CEO of Daimler Commercial Vehicles Mexico, part of the Daimler Trucks North America organization.

"We are pretty confident that we are going to close the year with market share above 30% (Classes 4-8), so we think we are well on our way to our target," said Kurschner.

Kurschner has served in his current role for two years, when Daimler decided to refocus on the Mexican truck market. It implemented changes, including 24/7 parts support and the industry's first adoption of "peso pricing."

Pricing vehicles and parts in pesos takes away uncertainty related to exchange rates and gives Mexican customers greater assurance regarding the price they'll pay for new equipment. Previously, all pricelists and invoices were in US dollars. Introducing peso-pricing was a game-changing move in the Mexican truck market, Kurschner said.

The company's growth has also been enabled by its strong flagship product, the Freightliner Cascadia with the Detroit DD15 engine.

"We introduced that product here in 2015 and it really changed the perception of our product," Kurschner said, noting the DD15 has a 90% take rate among Freightliner customers.

Still, the Mexican market is not without its challenges. Kurschner pointed out the average age of a Class 8 truck in Mexico is 17.9 years and there are more than 173,000 trucks on the road that are 21 years or older. Government attempts to encourage fleet renewal have met with little success, stunting the adoption rate of safer, cleaner, more efficient trucks.

Truck manufacturers are also faced with uncertainty regarding future emissions regulations in Mexico. A new standard is coming, but it's not yet clear whether it will be equal to US EPA07 or EPA13 regulations.

Mexico doesn't even have low sulfur diesel fuel widely available, so adopting stringent US emissions regulations may not be simple.

Kurschner said guidance from government is required so OEMs can begin preparing for the next emissions standard.

The transportation industry is crucial to Mexico's economic wellbeing. More than two million Mexicans work in the transportation industry, which represents 4.9% of the country's GDP.

More than 80% of all goods transported in Mexico travel by truck.

The country is also home to a vibrant truck manufacturing industry.

Kurschner said 35% of all commercial vehicles sold in North America in 2014 were manufactured in Mexico. Half of those trucks built in Mexico were produced by Daimler, which operates production facilities in Santiago and Saltillo, Mexico.

The nation's economy is expected to grow by 2.6-2.8% this year.

"That's not so bad when you think about the number but it's not good enough," Kurschner said. "An emerging economy such as Mexico's should see a growth rate of 4% or above." ●

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Where Industry Meets   

Mexico's top trucking companies leading a safety movement

But the competitive playing field remains very much uneven, fleet executives say

By James Menzies

PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO

In Mexico, a new breed of trucking company is emerging. These fleets are highly sophisticated, safety-conscious, environmentally aware and driver-oriented. But they're also in the minority, making it difficult to compete in what is still a largely unregulated industry - where hours-of-service regulations go widely ignored and unenforced.

Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) recently brought together three leading Mexican fleets for a roundtable discussion with members of the Mexican, US and Canadian trucking press. They spoke of the difficult operating environment faced in Mexico and of their shared desire to advance the industry.

An uneven playing field

Canadian carriers have complained at times of an uneven playing field, but it's laser beam-level when compared to the regulatory landscape in Mexico, where the average truck age is 17.9 years old and often fuelled with stolen diesel.

"They compete illegally, they buy

a used illegal truck, they buy stolen diesel and they don't pay taxes," Alex Theissen of FEMSA Logistica said of a sizable element of the Mexican trucking industry. "Top of the line fleets can compete with anybody in the US, but competing with that is a different story. Competing with somebody who doesn't pay taxes, doesn't pay drivers a competitive salary, buys stolen diesel, has no hours-of-service criteria and no safety and doesn't pay social security is a lot different."

FEMSA has taken a different approach altogether, focusing on safety and technology and regularly renewing its equipment. The company has won a national safety award 10 years in a row and in 2014 had an accident rate of just 0.156 per million kilometres travelled.

Fletes Mexico is another progressive Mexican fleet.

"Road safety has been one of the pillars that has given us growth," said Miguel Gomez, whose family founded the company in 1988. It is also quick to embrace technology, including asset-tracking systems that provide in-

Continued on page 14

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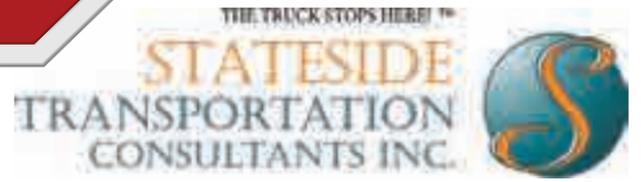
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Old trucks running on stolen diesel tough to compete against, Mexican fleets say

Continued from page 13

sight into a truck's location every five minutes, or even more frequently if it's carrying a high-value load. Fletes Mexico replaces its tractors every 3.5 years.

"We have all the new state-of-the-art technology that is in the market today," Gomez said. "We are working with our colleagues to bring the best technologies we can have to Mexico."

The age of the Mexican fleet is one of the biggest issues facing the industry today, fleet panelists agreed. In addition to an average age of 17.9 years, the Mexican fleet also consists of more than 173,000 trucks that have been on the road for 21 years or more. These trucks are often unsafe and environmentally hostile.

The Mexican government has developed fleet renewal programs in an effort to get older trucks off the road, but with little success. Stefan Kurschner, president and CEO of Daimler Commercial Vehicles Mexico, said a new scrapping program underway today was designed to remove 6,000 older commercial vehicles from the road, but so far, only 536 trucks have been scrapped.

"This is an indication there is a program in place but it's just not working," Kurschner said.

Gomez agreed, "The scrapping scheme is not working."

Another issue preventing carriers from updating their fleets – and one Canadian carriers can relate to – is that the peso has weakened substantially relative to the US dollar, making

new trucks more expensive to purchase. But because trucks sold today in Mexico are required to meet only EPA04 emissions targets, they're less expensive to buy than those sold in the US and Canada.

The driver scenario

Mexican drivers make about one-fifth what a US professional driver earns, but their cost of living is much lower, so it's enough to earn a decent living, fleet panelists explained.

"Our drivers can send their kids to college," said Ramon Medrano, president of Frio Express, Mexico's largest refrigerated goods transporter which, along with its partners, ships Mexican-grown produce all the way up to Canada. Still, a shortage of drivers persists, much as it does in the

US and Canada, and despite offering above-average pay, the industry still has trouble attracting youth. And

“Not being able to do cabotage in the US takes all the interest out of (operating in the US) for us.”

Ramon Medrano, Frio Express

drivers there are not well regarded within society.

Finding safety-conscious and professional drivers is difficult. Medrano said his company facilitates a psychological assessment with prospective drivers before they're hired.

One of the biggest problems, said Gomez, is that there's no government agency that tracks the safety performance of truck drivers.

"Right now, we do not have a record of what a driver has done (in the past)," Gomez said, adding safety-conscious carriers must phone past employers and painstakingly assemble their own driver profiles before making a hiring decision.

Infrastructure lagging

Mexico's infrastructure is also a hindrance to an efficient trucking industry. In the US, there are about 2.66 million miles of paved roads, but in Mexico the paved road network is just 84,480 miles, according to FEMSA's Theissen. It's even worse in some Latin American countries where his fleet operates, such as Colombia, where there are just 10,140 miles of paved roads.

There are also fewer rail providers (just three in Mexico compared to nine in the US), so close to 80% of freight must move by road. The roads get punished because Mexico allows heavy gross vehicle weights (GVWs) of up to 166,000 lbs at highway speeds of 70 mph.

While all three Mexican fleets on the panel have trailer interchange agreements with US-domiciled trucking companies, none of them seemed enthusiastic about making deliveries into the US. Medrano said finding loads to US cities is easy, but finding backhauls is considerably more difficult, so the existing agreements work well in the absence of a complete overhaul of cabotage regulations.

"We've had the trailer interchange program for the last 20 years and I'm very happy with it," Medrano said. "Not being able to do cabotage in the US takes all the interest out of it for us. Unless there are changes there, we will continue doing trailer interchange."

Theissen pointed out opening up the US/Mexico border doesn't make sense today, since US-based trucks won't even be able to find in Mexico the ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel required by current-generation emissions systems. Instead, Theissen said the focus should be on improving processes at the border, so the exchange of trailers between US and Mexican fleets can be conducted more efficiently. ●

US truck tonnage down slightly in November

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The American Trucking Associations' advanced seasonally adjusted For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index dropped 0.9% in November, after an increase of 1.8% in October.

According to the ATA, in November, the index equaled 134.3 (2000=100), down from 135.5 in October, and 1.1% below the all-time high of 135.8 reached in January 2015.

Year-over-year, the SA index increased 0.2%, which was the smallest year-over-year gain since February 2013. Year-to-date through November, compared with the same period last year, tonnage was up 2.7%.

"Tonnage gave back half of the gain in October highlighting weakness in factory output and new fracking activity, as well as a glut of inventories throughout the supply chain," said ATA chief economist Bob Costello.

"With year-over-year gains averaging just 1.2% over the last three months, there has been a clear deceleration in truck tonnage.

"Looking ahead, I remain concerned about the high level of inventories throughout the supply chain. We recently learned that inventories throughout the supply chain and relative to sales rose in October. This will have a negative impact on truck freight volumes over the next few months," he said. ●



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Could be some good truck drivers among those refugees

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Trucking HR Canada has released a series of free resources for fleets looking to hire refugees and other newcomers to Canada. *Your Guide to Human Resources: Module 4* offers information on how to develop a welcoming and diverse workplace, and is now offered as a free download at www.TruckingHR.com, the company claims.

Trucking HR Canada also said there is a free guide on how to create easy-to-read documents, which is important for those potential employees with limited English language skills.

"Considering the sheer number of new Canadians who are arriving, we think it is important to give trucking employers access to recently updated materials that support onboarding and integration," said Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada. "Our industry needs to take every possible step to ensure that newcomers are guided through reputable training and employment options, and

to ensure they are retained within the industry once they choose to follow a career path in trucking. We know that newcomers from a variety of backgrounds will play a vital role in addressing the intensifying shortage of drivers and other personnel."

According to Trucking HR Canada, creating diverse workplaces is already one of the best practices demonstrated by fleets looking to address the driver shortage.

The Trucking HR Canada site also links to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, complete with contact information for every Immigrant Serving Organization (ISO) in the country, helping Canada's newest workers integrate into their communities. ●

Canadian freight volumes decline

TORONTO, ONTARIO

Canadian spot market freight volumes fell for the second straight month in November, according to the latest TransCore Link Logistics Canadian Freight Index.

Volumes were down 8% compared to October and down 28% compared to November 2014's historically high numbers.

Cross-border loads leaving Canada dropped 12% and loads coming into Canada were down 39% year-over-year, TransCore reports. Intra-Canada load volumes were down 22% y-o-y.

Equipment capacity also dropped slightly in November, down 3% from October but up 38% year-over-year. ●

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Too young to drive?

Ambivalence colours an assessment of Quebec's young drivers experiment

By Carroll McCormick

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Take 40 young people aged 17 and 18, put them through Quebec's top driver training schools, pair them up with transport companies and mentors, and what do you get? Twenty-nine completed the program and some trucks got dinged up, but all things considered, things went very well.

This experiment in relaxing the standard age restriction for getting a Class 1 licence in Quebec began with the recruitment of 40 youth in 2011-2012 to take the 615-hour program at the province's biggest driver training schools, the Centre de formation du transport routier Saint-Jérôme and the Centre de formation en transport de Charlesbourg.

The plan was for them to study, train, get their licences and hit the road under supervision. The hope was that letting youth make an early career choice as a truck driver would go some distance to easing the looming driver shortage.

The experiment was called the Pro-

gramme enrichi d'accès à la conduite de véhicules lourds (enriched access program toward the driving of heavy vehicles), or PEACVL. It wound up in late 2014.

With the results in, whether PEACVL should be expanded is a tricky question. Problems with the participating transport companies and the program structure need to be addressed, but the less malleable reality that drivers in this age bracket are overrepresented in accident statistics makes the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) squirm.

The SAAQ, which calls the shots in Quebec regarding licensing, concluded that, as is, it couldn't recommend instituting a permanent program like PEACVL; it is, however, not against considering an improved version, a Phase II.

The trucking industry is interested in preserving a PEACVL-like program. It is confident that an improved version could work and benefit the industry.

The students' performance, summarized in a recently issued report by the SAAQ, seems reasonable for a group of teenagers. Some handled the responsibility well, others partied

hearty and didn't get enough sleep, stress took its toll, and some had a bit too much attitude, whatever the SAAQ means by that. This, and problems adapting to the trucker lifestyle, were thought to be much greater among these students than with adult students.

On the bright side, most of the students showed good technique and the difficulties that they did have – driving technique and administrative work – were not much different than those of other new drivers. In general, the students commented favourably on their mentors. The report concludes that most of the students developed sufficient skills to drive a heavy truck.

Problematic issues included being late for work, not respecting the conditions set by the employer, lack of cooperation, sub-standard driving behaviour, not doing their circle checks and not completing their log books.

And then there were the infractions. There were five accidents and 13 Highway Safety Code infractions while driving a heavy truck. Fifteen Highway Safety Code infractions landed in their personnel files, and three students had their permits suspended or revoked.

Five withdrew before getting their Class 1 due to attitude, two because of a lack of independence and competence operating the vehicle, one because of a difficulty adapting to the work schedule, one for health reasons and one because of a suspended permit.

But not only the young'uns had issues. Most of the companies failed to

send in their reports on time and they otherwise had serious paperwork issues. They were largely unprepared to integrate young drivers without any experience and that created difficulties. Some didn't have enough, or suitable work for their young interns. Bus companies had little interest in taking on these young students because of worries about their insurability and the possibility of an unfavourable public perception.

That said, the businesses were satisfied with how the internships went and enjoyed the experience, on the whole. Many of them showed an interest in doing it again, despite some "unfortunate pairings." The businesses and the driving schools were upbeat about their involvement in the project and the results of those students who completed the program.

The program itself had some shortcomings. There was serious criticism of the student evaluation tools. The students could have been better informed about the demands of the job. The program was complex and demanding for the schools and the SAAQ staffers involved.

As a first crack at integrating younger drivers into the life, PEACVL seems to have done well. The sample size of students was small, and therefore the SAAQ cautions against drawing too many conclusions.

Asked about a rumour that PEACVL would be expanded to 300 students, SAAQ had nothing to say.

It would only say that discussions with industry representatives are ongoing and a meeting is expected in the next few weeks. ●

EBI opens its fourth CNG station

JOLIETTE, QUEBEC

EBI has opened the doors of its fourth compressed natural gas (CNG) fuelling station in Quebec, in what it says was in the context of the recent climate change agreement signed in Paris.

The new station is located in the Lanaudière region on Hwy. 158 near Hwy. 31 next to Techno Diesel, the largest service centre for trucks and trailers in the area.

"The business relationship between EBI and Techno Diesel has lasted for several decades and this project raises that cooperation to another level," said Caroline Thuot, general manager of Techno Diesel. "In fact, interest in the use of natural gas has multiplied in recent years and Techno Diesel customers are no exception to this trend."

EBI said the station is part of its development strategy, which aims to continue in the coming years.

"We offer a service that is unique in Quebec," said Olivier Sylvestre, manager of natural gas transportation development for EBI. "In addition to producing renewable natural gas, we offer our clients turn-key solutions for CNG fuelling and CNG truck leasing. We have the expertise to accompany our clients in transitioning their fleet of trucks to this fuel of the future."

EBI has produced renewable natural gas using biogases extracted from its technical landfill site since 2003, and has more than 110 trucks running on natural gas, a fuel source it says can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 90% compared to diesel. ●

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LCV fleets spec'ing for versatility, fuel economy

A relatively new 16-speed Eaton/Cummins powertrain package is finding a home in LCV fleets. We rode along with Armour Transportation to see how it's performing.

By James Menzies

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

The Trans-Canada Highway from Moncton to Edmundston, N.B. is a long, plodding route with little to see and hills that will test any diesel engine's mettle.

At night, it's teeming with wildlife – moose, deer and even bears – which keep a driver on high alert. There's little else to see along the way except for trees, rocky outcroppings, the meandering Saint John River...and more trees. Usually, the only excitement to this drive comes in the form of violent and unpredictable storms, which can arrive with little warning, making the trip harrowing for the ill-prepared driver. But for Dwayne Schurman, it couldn't be more idyllic.

"I've been in the trucking industry since I was 18 years old looking for a job like this," Schurman, who hauls long combination vehicles (LCVs) for Armour Transportation Systems told me as we made his regular run on a cold November night. "I landed it when I was 44 – I wish I would've found this job when I was 24."

Aside from the weather, Schurman said it's "stress-free." He arrives to work around 2 p.m. and connects two 53-ft. trailers via a converter dolly, does his pre-trip and hits the road. He needs to be out of the city by the afternoon rush – one of the many additional rules that apply to LCV drivers. Edmundston is about 500 kms northwest of Moncton. There, Schurman meets a Rossignol Transport driver to make a switch. He drops his trailing trailer (referred to as his 'tail'), disconnects the converter dolly, then parks the lead trailer.

He then couples to a new lead trailer (the heaviest trailer must always be at the front), reconnects the converter dolly and skillfully reverses the dolly into position to attach a new tail.

All this takes less than half an hour with the help of Marty, a Rossignol driver who lives nearby and leaves the warm confines of his home to walk over to the switch yard in order to lend a hand positioning the equipment. That's the type of inter-carrier driver camaraderie that you'll still find in Atlantic Canada. Rossignol Transport will pull Schurman's two dropped trailers individually across a 60-mile or so stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway in Quebec that has yet to be twinned, before re-assembling them as LCVs for the trip on to Montreal. Schurman, doubled up once again, heads back to Armour's Moncton terminal. All in a night's work.

"It's a long day. A lot of guys would love to haul the LCVs, but this run is 600 miles a day and that's hard on any trucker, let alone an LCV driver that's doing 90 km/h (another of the rules that applies only to LCVs)," Schurman explains. "But in the truck, I'm thinking of how fortunate I am to be doing what I'm doing and to have the freedom to do what I'm doing – sitting behind the wheel rather than sitting behind a desk with some boss bitch-

ing at me all day. I feel like I'm my own boss. I feel like I have the freedom a lot of people don't have and I have a lot of responsibility, but also the freedom to go with it."

Schurman makes this run four nights as week. When he agreed to the job, he did so thinking it would take him to his retirement – as long as he didn't burn out.

"I said I want to do this for 20 years, I don't want to burn out," he tells me, which is why he makes the run four nights as week and not five. He sleeps in the truck at Armour's yard on driving days and enjoys three days off every week, which allows him to pursue his other passion – golf. He golfed 100 rounds this summer.

"Weather permitting, I golf two

"In the truck, I'm thinking about how fortunate I am to be doing what I'm doing and to have the freedom to do what I'm doing."

Dwayne Schurman, Armour Transportation driver

rounds a day," he says.

You get to know a guy pretty well when you spend 12 hours in the truck together. The purpose of my visit to Atlantic Canada was to report on a reasonably new powertrain combination that's gaining a following in Canada – you could even call it a made-for-Canada spec'. It brings together Eaton's 16-speed UltraShift Plus LSE automated manual transmission – the only 16-speed in the market – and the Cummins ISX15 engine. I've driven this combination in a Challenger truck grossing about 80,000 lbs but never in



Dwayne Schurman says the Moncton-Edmundston LCV run is ideal for him – he only wishes he discovered this job earlier in his career.

an LCV application (I'm not LCV-certified) or hauling heavy payloads. The LSE/ISX combo was initially exclusive to Navistar but it has since been rolled out to other OEMs and is now widely available.

This powertrain was under the hood of a Volvo VN670, and the powertrain package was rounded out with Meri-

to Edmundston but two loaded trailers back, averaging about 110,000 lbs in-bound and about 90,000 lbs out. While there's more freight entering the Atlantic region than leaving it, Armour still has to balance its trailer pool, which is why Schurman often hauls an empty tail west and why a versatile powertrain spec' is required.

"The 16-speed is designed for 110,000 lbs. It covers that niche we have in Canada," explained Peter Meseroll, who handles large fleet accounts in Canada for Eaton. "Fleets don't want two different spec's – one for 80,000 lbs and another one to do 110,000 lbs. The 16-speed covers the 111,000-lb segment."

One of the trickier aspects to spec'ing this powertrain, Cummins rep Adam Whitney explains, is dialing it in for optimum fuel economy at both 90 km/h, for when hauling double-53s, and at 100 km/h, for when pulling single trailers.

The transmission boasts small steps through the entire range of gears, providing quick, precise shifting. It has been well integrated with the ISX15 to remain in the engine's sweet spot as much as possible – when driven properly, that is.

Wes Armour, CEO of Armour

Continued on page 20

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Driving LCVs challenging but rewarding

Continued from page 19

Transportation, said some driver training is required when switching from manual transmissions to automated manuals. This engine lugs down on the hills more than drivers were accustomed to.

"LCVs haul hard," Armour said. "You can put the same weight on a tri-axle trailer and does it ever haul a lot easier than that second trailer behind; it's just a dead pull. I figured, we've gotta give the drivers something to work with here."

Some drivers were initially put off because they were moving from engines rated at 450 hp to Cummins' new 475-hp rating and so they expected to be able to charge up the hills. But the powertrain wasn't spec'd that way, even if it had sufficient power to do so.

"I think the perception of what they were getting was something different or better, or more torque in the hills, but it's not designed that way, it's designed for fuel economy," Messeroll explains. "If you're hauling heavy, it's going to run like such."

Whitney said peak torque on this ISX occurs at 1,000 rpm, down from about 1,200 rpm traditionally, so the engine does lug down more than in the past. This ISX15 was rated at 475 hp and 1,650 lb.-ft. of torque. It was equipped with Cummins' new ADEPT package, including SmartCoast and SmartTorque 2.

SmartCoast disengages the transmission while keeping the clutch closed on downhill grades of less than 4% to save fuel. When the truck exceeds the set cruise speed by more than 3 mph, the engine brake kicks in to control the speed.

Our drive was well suited for SmartCoast and it did its thing frequently, at times dropping to idle for 10 seconds or more as we descended longer grades. Schurman is still getting used to this feature and had to fight the urge to tap the brakes to re-engage the transmission.

"It's not a big thing, it's just something I'll have to get used to," he told me. "But I find I'm on the brakes now more because of that."

The speed at which the transmission will re-engage with the engine is programmable. You can let it exceed the set cruise speed by as much as 6 mph, but the truck cops here keep a close eye on LCV traffic and don't take kindly to violations.

SmartTorque 2 interacts with the grade sensor on the transmission to determine exactly how much torque is required given the current road profile, calculating the torque required based on road grade and GVW.

"If we know we're not on a significant grade, we can decrease the torque available at that given time without taking it away from the driver when he needs it," Whitney explains. "It's seamless to the driver. It's going to give maximum torque when the engine estimates there's about a 76,000-lb GVW. For an LCV application, we're really not going to take away any of that torque but when you're light on the way out and heavy on the way back, we may dial it down to 1,550 or 1,450 lb.-ft."

Whitney said in a typical line-haul application averaging 80,000 lbs, SmartTorque 2 can reduce fuel consumption by about 1-2%.



Armour Transportation has spec'd the Cummins ISX15 engine with Eaton 16-speed automated manual transmission to optimize fuel economy on LCV runs and also when lightly loaded. Inset, Schurman affixes LCV signage.

Three trucks spec'd with the 16-speed Eaton UltraShift Plus LSE and Cummins ISX15 engine were deployed into Armour's LCV fleet in June. So far, Armour is pleased with the results versus the 10-speed manuals drivers were previously operating.

"We're finding we're getting better fuel mileage than I ever thought we'd get with LCVs," Armour said. "We're seeing fuel mileage in that 6 mpg range, some a little over 6 mpg. To me, that's very good when you're hauling the weights we're hauling with the drag of that back trailer."

Eaton's Messeroll is quick to point out the 16-speed isn't for everybody. With weights beyond 110,000 lbs he suggests going with a 13-speed transmission and slower rear axle ratio.

Back in the truck, Schurman talks about why he enjoys pulling double-53s and why he especially loves doing so for Armour.

"They're fair to their employees," he says. "The pay is comparable to any other company, but they just treat their employees well. You look around Armour and there's so many people who've been there 25, 30 years - drivers, in the office, dispatch - I've known all these guys for 25 years from when I first started coming here."

Schurman drove for Armour for a spell early in his career and then left - on good terms - to pursue other interests and opportunities, including a sojourn to Alberta. He returned when Armour got into the LCV business and he was offered the opportunity - on the golf course, no less - to rejoin Armour and take on a dedicated LCV run.

Schurman said he's paid a flat rate per trip and extra for coupling and uncoupling, so his income and schedule are predictable.

Having nice equipment to run doesn't hurt either.

"They run good, top of the line equipment," he said. "I've been here three years (running LCVs) and this is my second brand new truck in three years. They like to have newer trucks on this run because of the long distance."

He said they also usually save his truck for him on off-days, which is a

nice bonus.

As for the added challenge of pulling two 53-ft. trailers, Schurman said it's something you get used to.

"You've always got to be paying attention and know what's ahead of you and beside you and what's coming past you - especially when it gets raining and windy," he says. "Some people will try to pass you and they don't see the second trailer till they're halfway out, then they don't know what to do. I'll back off a little bit and let them get around me. I think that's the purpose of our speed limit of 90 km/h; it's not necessarily because of our ability, it's because of the traffic that has to get around us. I think if you're aware of what's around you, what's going on, you can almost tell what a driver's going to do before they even do it."

While the prospect of pulling Twin-53s over the hilly terrain of northwest-

ern New Brunswick may seem daunting to many drivers, Schurman said he finds it "relaxing and peaceful."

"It's a stress-free job," he said. "The only stress I have in this job is the weather. I call the other driver (arriving in Edmundston) and they let me know what it's doing up there. I make the decision (whether to pull one trailer or two) and if I tell (Armour) I'm only taking one trailer, they don't question it. It's my decision and they respect that." ●

The spec's:

Tractor: Volvo VN670

Engine: Cummins ISX15 475 hp/1,650 lb.-ft.

Transmission: Eaton UltraShift Plus LSE (16-speed)

Tandem axles: Meritor MT40-14X, 2.85 ratio ●

Maritime truckers in giving spirit

MONCTON, NEW BRUNSWICK

The Nova Scotia Community College Foundation received a \$20,000 donation from the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association (APTA) Jan. 6, which will benefit four campuses in the province that offer the heavy-duty truck and transport program.

"Colleges needed to upgrade some equipment in order to effectively train the students to be ready for the job market when they graduated," said Jean-Marc Picard, executive director of the APTA. "The equipment they were using was too outdated; therefore, once they got on the job market, there was a huge learning curve. Now they can actually get trained on the latest equipment the market has to offer."

The APTA said the trucking industry is desperate for technicians, and that the course offered at the four Nova Scotia campuses - Marconi in Sydney, Kingstec in Kentville, Pictou in Stellarton and Akerley in Dartmouth - was vital, making the decision to donate the funds an easy one.

"We are very lucky to have members that are extremely involved with the colleges and our industry," said Picard. "This is a great initiative by all the suppliers and carriers that make up our membership."

Meanwhile, the Transportation Club of Moncton (TCM) was also feeling generous, as it made a contribution to Food Depot Alimentaire.

A cheque for the amount of \$1,000 was presented to Ray Gould and Chantal Senecal of Food Depot Alimentaire on Dec. 18 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Moncton during the TCM's annual Christmas luncheon. The TCM has been a supporter of the Food Depot Alimentaire for several years, donating more than \$15,000.

"We are very lucky to have such a great group of members to take part and donate to families in our community every year," Rodney Hamilton, president of the TCM, said. "The trucking industry is always eager to help and support any families in need during difficult times. While raising funds at our monthly luncheons throughout the year, it has become a tradition for the club and directors to contribute to this great organization." ●

A bridge too fragile

Nipigon River Bridge splits, effectively severing Canada in half

By **Sonia Straface**

NIPIGON, ONTARIO

The newly built Nipigon River Bridge located in Northern Ontario split thanks to the cold on Jan. 10, severing the only transportation link between Eastern and Western Canada – the Trans-Canada Highway. The next day, on Jan. 11, the OPP tweeted that the bridge had been re-opened to a single lane, helping ease traffic, to the pleasure of the Canadian trucking industry and those travelling through Nipigon, Ont.

Traffic on the bridge began alternating east- and westbound and traffic control was still in place with the help of a pilot vehicle when *Truck News* went to press. At the time of print, the bridge was still operating one lane and delays in Nipigon were reportedly averaging one hour as trucks were still being escorted across.

There has been no indication as to whether this is a temporary fix or a long-term solution. Vehicles were being limited to 25 km/h across the bridge.

What happened?

The OPP closed Hwy. 11-17 at 3:05 p.m. on Jan. 10 “when bolts holding the girder to the bearing on an expansion joint broke on the bridge’s north side.”

Officials said the eastern half of the bridge had risen two feet because of the split. At the time, the OPP said the bridge was to be closed indefinitely but one lane was opened early the next morning to help move traffic. These delays are still affecting the Canadian trucking industry, however, and carriers were told to expect major delays.

“Right now, we’ve been hearing from our member companies that cer-

tainly people are being delayed at this point,” Terry Shaw, executive director of the Manitoba Trucking Association told *Truck News* on Jan. 11. “But prior to an hour or so ago, we had people who were stuck out there.”

way, it’s a critical pathway. Again, this is the Trans-Canada Highway and we do need a national infrastructure plan and a national highway plan that ensures we have some security so that if a bridge was to go down again, or we have a major snow storm, that our country doesn’t shut down.”

Stranded

Truck News managed to speak with one commercial driver who was stuck in the Thunder Bay, Ont.-area because of the closure on Jan. 10.

Manminder Rattu, a driver for Day & Ross, was on his way back to Brampton, Ont. from Vancouver when he was stopped. He said around 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 10 he received a message from dispatch. At first, he just thought it was a weather update, since it was a rather cold night. As he continued on the highway, he saw a sign on the road informing him the Trans-Canada Highway was closed indefinitely.

“Obviously that was not good news,” he said. “So, I pulled off and read the messages from dispatch. Dispatch told me it would be a minimum of four days (for the closure) and that they would keep me updated. I then went online to see what happened and sure enough I saw reports of bolts being broken and that the bridge was not doing what it was supposed to do.”

Rattu decided to travel to a Thunder Bay Walmart parking lot for the night. He said there were lots of other truckers who also chose to park there for the night and they were all talking about the closure.

Rattu added in his four years as a commercial driver, he’s never encountered anything like the situation in Nipigon before.

“It’s kind of embarrassing because, how can this be happening in Canada? And why is there only one route?”

Manminder Rattu, Day & Ross driver

Shaw said even though one lane has been re-opened, which is helping traffic flow, there are still concerns for trucks operating above Highway Traffic Act (HTA) weight limits since they will not be permitted to cross the bridge. He added he believes the country needs a better infrastructure plan to prevent something like this from happening again.

“Well when you think about it, it’s the Trans-Canada Highway,” he said. “And (the Nipigon bridge) is in our most populous province. So the simple fact that Canada can get kind of split in half is concerning. Even though (the bridge) is not in a popular area, people need to think of it as a major pathway. We routinely tell the Manitoba government to tell the Ontario government that although it’s not a popular path-

“Well sometimes (as a driver) you get stuck passing through with accidents or weather, but nothing like this has ever happened to me,” he said. “I mean, the main artery was shut down. It’s big news. Even my cousins in England were hearing about it and they know I drive, so they were concerned. It’s kind of embarrassing because, how can this be happening in Canada? And why is there only one route? If you’re shutting down the transport industry, you’re stopping people from getting food, merchandise, everything.”

When the bridge was opened to a single lane, Rattu was able to head back to Brampton that afternoon. He added that at the time of his crossing, there was still lots of congestion in Nipigon.

“Everyone was taking their time going over, listening for creaks and cracks,” he said.

Prior to the single lane being opened on Jan. 11, commercial vehicles on that route were being encouraged to travel west through the US via the Sault Ste. Marie border crossing.



Trucks slowly, cautiously cross the broken Nipigon River Bridge after one lane was re-opened Jan. 11 following the split.

“For similar events in the future, OTA would like to remind carriers that Canadian carriers are legally able to move Canadian goods in transit through the US provided the carrier is able to supply an eManifest to US-CBP, including the value for all shipments on board – something, admittedly, that to date has been the biggest obstacle for Canadian carriers wishing to move in-transit,” the association said in an official release. “As such, the association has contacted US CBP and the government of Canada to consider temporarily allowing paper in-transits without value for the purposes of an emergency contingency. OTA and CTA will apprise members on its discussions with both US, Canadian and provincial authorities on contingency options going forward.”

On Jan. 13, the US CBP revealed some positive news to the Canadian trucking industry. It announced it was temporarily allowing commercial vehicles to ship Canadian domestic goods in-transit through the US using a limited data set at select ports of entry. The temporary contingency plan allows carriers to enter the US between Port Huron, Detroit or Sault Ste. Marie, International Falls or Grand Portage, Minn. (between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.); and Pembina, ND.

The OTA and CTA were pleased with the decision.

“We are extremely pleased by and appreciative of this outcome and the swiftness with which our concerns were responded to,” said David Bradley, president and CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance and the Ontario Trucking Association. “This will assist many truckers who are currently being impacted by the bridge problem on the Trans-Canada Highway at Nipigon, Ont.”

The OTA warned that while this temporary in-transit solution will provide some relief, all current regulatory requirements with respect to entering the US remain intact.

Meanwhile, the NDP party released a statement expressing its disappointment on how the Liberal government has handled the situation.

“The failure of the Nipigon River Bridge shows the Liberal government’s mismanagement of Northern Ontario’s roads and highways...The bridge is the transport lifeline for Northern communities and for commerce across the province. The closure of the bridge separated families and workers throughout Northern Ontario. Now with only partial repair, the faulty bridge is seriously hampering movement of families, workers and commerce throughout Northern Ontario and the province,” said Wayne Gates, MPP for Niagara Falls and the NDP’s Transportation critic.



Construction crews scramble to fix the Nipigon River Bridge to restore traffic.

“Right now, the Liberal government’s infrastructure plan for Northern Ontario seems to be: ‘Drive through the United States,’” added Michael Mantha, MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin and the NDP’s Northern Development and Mines critic. ●

Canadian Fleet Maintenance Summit coming in April

TORONTO, ONTARIO

A revitalized Canadian Fleet Maintenance Summit (CFMS), supported by Newcom Business Media and PIT Group, will be held in April in conjunction with Truck World.

The event will be held in Toronto on Wednesday, April 13 and will represent the first industry-wide supported CFMS. It will bring together the Automotive Transportation Service Superintendents’ Association (ATSSA), Canadian Transportation Equipment Association (CTEA), Transportation Maintenance & Technology Association (TMTA) and the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA).

“Canada’s maintenance managers and service professionals deserve a premier educational event dedicated to their needs. With CFMS we are bringing all industry stakeholders – service professionals, manufacturers, researchers and enforcement officials – under one roof to discuss the industry’s most pressing issues and point the way forward,” said Rolf Lockwood, vice-president, editorial, Newcom Business Media.

Registration for the Summit will open this month and will include an all-access pass to Truck World, which runs from April 14-16 at the International Centre in Toronto, Ont. For more information on CFMS, visit www.TruckSummit.ca. ●



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Healthy Fleet Challenge inspires TST Overland Express

TST dominated the Healthy Fleet walking challenges in 2015, so, to senior staff, it was only natural to implement a new, company-wide wellness program in January.

By **Sonia Straface**

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

This year, TST Overland Express is focusing on ensuring the health and wellness of its employees, customers, and company. The company is rolling out a brand new wellness program designed to help its employees get more active, eat better, and quit smoking. You could say it's TST's New Year's resolution.

According to president Robert O'Reilly, the wellness program is in response to Healthy Trucker's Healthy Fleet Challenge, which encourages participants to walk as much as possible during month-long contest periods. Participants measure their steps with fitness trackers like Fitbits or smartphone applications like Moves, and their steps are posted on an online leaderboard. At the end of the competition, the team with the highest average step count per day won bragging rights.

"I'm a member of the OTA's Education Foundation committee, and in June 2014 Glenn (Caldwell of Healthy Trucker) did a presentation on the Healthy Fleet Challenge," said O'Reilly on how he was introduced to the challenge. "At that point, I hadn't heard about it. He did a video presentation and he showed some of the companies involved and to my surprise, TST Truckload was part of it... and that got me wondering about it."

O'Reilly said he was curious about the challenge and decided to join the Truckload team when the wheels started turning in his mind to get more of the company involved.

"But then I started talking to my executive group at TST Overland Express and we thought this could be a really good thing for us to get involved in. We thought it could be really fun and we knew we already had a really competitive group, and quite honestly, we had some people who were in better shape," he said. "So then we decided to get the TST Solutions LP group started in January 2015 with the Healthy Fleet

Challenge."

The TST Solutions LP group saw great success last year, winning the most recent Healthy Fleet Challenge by a landslide in December 2015 and placing second in the year's first challenge, which ran from January-May 2015. In addition, two of its nine members, Reg Peters and Paul Bomben combined lost 75 lbs during the first Healthy Fleet Challenge of 2015.

The success of the small TST group participating in the walking challenge really turned the heads of the senior staff at TST and they wanted to get the whole company involved.

"We had a manager's meeting coming up in the fall of 2015," explained O'Reilly. "We talked about it as a group and asked ourselves, how do we introduce this wellness theme to the masses? And what we decided to do was to have the theme of our upcoming company meeting to be wellness. So what we did - and these were terminal managers across the country as well as administrative manag-

"For a company to be successful and healthy, you have to have good, healthy employees and good, healthy customers."

Robert O'Reilly, TST Overland Express

ers, basically the senior group of the company - was, as a theme, we broke it into five teams and we gave them all objectives on what to focus on."

As a team, the senior staff came up with a new logo for the wellness program that encompassed the program's goals: employee wellness, company wellness and customer wellness.

"Because for a company to be successful and healthy, you have to have good, healthy employees and good, healthy customers," explained O'Reilly.



Glenn Caldwell of Healthy Trucker (far left) congratulates the TST team for winning the Healthy Fleet walking challenge in December.

It was also decided that to get more involvement, O'Reilly would have the company pay for half the price of a Fitbit or Garmin fitness tracker once employees showed they reached 75,000 steps on the tracker. This would allow employees of TST Overland to participate in their own internal walking challenge.

After it placed flyers explaining the fitness tracker reimbursement program and the internal walking challenge at its 21 locations across Canada, O'Reilly said employee participation grew. TST Overland now has more than 100 participants in its company-wide walking challenge that pits employees against each

others and BBQs, we really want to get that sense of team and family in there."

But the wellness program is much more than just a series of internal walking challenges, O'Reilly said. There will also be quarterly newsletters going out to employees with various healthy themes like how to quit smoking and tips on how to get active. In addition, blogs highlighting success stories will be posted regularly and members of the appointed wellness committee will be available to employees who have specific health-related issues and questions.

"It's one thing to reimburse people, but I'm hoping through the newsletters and blog posts and getting this team challenge going, that we're able to encourage a lot more employees to join the challenge," O'Reilly said, adding the focus on wellness is important because of trucking's aging workforce.

"So far it's going amazing," said O'Reilly. "At our larger terminals we've heard that people are coming in before their shift to walk as a group. I came in yesterday morning and I got in at 7:30 and it was -16 degrees and people were just walking back from their morning walk. Here at the head office, there are three floors and we have an elevator, but now people are taking the stairs and trying to get their steps in. So there's a lot of enthusiasm in it and I hope to see that continue. I really hope by the end of the year we can get to 200 participants across our terminals."

To join the Healthy Fleet Challenge and get your business involved, visit www.HealthyFleet.com or call 855-569-2514. ●

other based on their terminal location. There are four teams: Head Office, Ontario, Quebec & Labrador and Western Canada.

O'Reilly said he thinks reaching 100 employees shows the dedication of TST employees.

"I think we reached so many employees because of the way we've introduced it," he said. "Plus, we're a really competitive group, that really likes to have a bit of fun. We always encourage employee involvement. During National Transportation Week, we make sure we host break-

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Over the Road

AL GOODHALL



Drivers' voices must be heard

It is a privilege to be able to speak out on issues that affect the transportation industry each month from the perspective of a long-haul driver.

One of the temptations I face is whether or not to climb on my soapbox and rant about the erosion of the independent trucking lifestyle. With each passing month, "safety" is used as the overriding issue to push forward a broad agenda by a variety of transportation lobby groups that have little to do with the actual human safety issues we face each day.

This fact hit home with me yet again as I was driving along westbound I-294 in Chicago late one evening this past December. I had that "let's get it done" trucker feeling, that energy that fills you up and has you feeling like you could drive forever.

You're just cruising. The iPod is on shuffle and each successive tune builds on the last. It's just trucking and it feels great.

Directors and managers practice trucking from the boardroom and profit from it. Drivers live trucking from the driver's seat and suffer from it.

But you know there is a time each day when that feeling will end. For me it's three or four in the morning and three or four in the afternoon. That's when I need to be in the bunk and I know it. You, fellow driver, know when your downtime is.

The MTO doesn't know, the DoT doesn't know, the FMCSA doesn't know, the CTA doesn't know, and the ATA doesn't know. There isn't a lobby group or safety organization out there that can raise the level of public safety better than a driver with a passion for trucking and the experience that has taught them to recognize when they are in that trucking groove and when they are not.

Yet, on that December night when I was in peak performance mode, I had to shut it down thanks to the hours-of-service regulations. Earlier in the day I had to work through one of the downtimes in my circadian rhythm, thanks to the hours-of-service regulations. When I found my groove I had to park and sleep. When I would have been better off in the bunk, I was on the road. Rules and regulations aimed at building a safety culture often tear it down by ignoring the human condition.

The industry as a whole has to face up to this issue. The reason there continues to be such opposition to electronic logging devices is the fact that they eliminate the flexibility for drivers to operate at the time of day that best suits the driver's individual needs. This issue is so obvious when you compare drivers that have a fixed daily routine to drivers operating in

the "open board" arena that has many variables throughout the day.

Drivers with daily dedicated runs rarely have an issue with ELDs. The ELD eliminates paperwork and saves time. But for the long-haul driver it eliminates much of the flexibility provided by paper logs.

Let's be clear, this isn't about working more hours but about flexibility within the 24-hour day. We need that flexibility to rest when we need it. Flexibility allows us to find our trucking groove each day and when we are in that groove we are awake, alert, aware, motivated and happy.

So there you have my rant from my soapbox, yet again. But the question is, what can we do as a group to affect positive change? What actions can we take? How do we come together around this basic issue that affects public safety and our personal health and wellbeing?

The fact is, we do not have a voice at the table. When drivers do participate in the management of the industry by participating in safety groups, industry think tanks or panel discussions, it is on terms dictated by the transportation lobbyists, regulators, and enforcement agencies.

These large lobby groups focus on logistics, costs, corporate strategy and positioning, politics and of course, the bottom line. Drivers focus on the individual human condition. Directors and managers practice trucking from the boardroom and profit from it. Drivers live trucking from the driver's seat and suffer from it. The inability of the industry to recruit and retain drivers along with the health issues drivers face supports my position.

Drivers will never gain a voice at the table through divisive actions such as rolling blockades or withdrawal of labour. Those actions will not affect long-term positive change.

We need to start holding the trucking lobby groups to account by bringing our individual stories to the atten-

tion of our fellow citizens.

Every driver now has the tools to be able to tell their individual story to the world. That is how we can make our

voices heard. "I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take it anymore," was Howard Beale's mantra in the movie *Network*. In 2016, it's time individual drivers made that mantra their own. ●

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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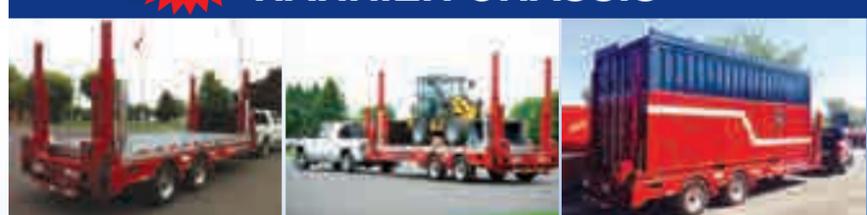


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KEVIN COLE



When tackling losses, track from 'Dollar One'

The price of a collision might seem pretty obvious at first glance. Repairs to cracked fiberglass and twisted metal all come at specific costs, and insurance deductibles dictate the dollars that will come directly out of pocket.

Insightful fleet managers who carefully track all the related costs – beginning with the first expense, or what I like to refer to as “Dollar One” – know that such physical damage is only the beginning.

Damaged trucks lead to delays, delivery penalties, tow bills and fees for short-term rentals. Injured drivers need time to recover.

Even in-house repairs carry real costs in the form of wages, replacement parts and overhead. Insurance premiums rise. And damaged reputations can certainly lead to lost business opportunities.

There is a good reason to track each underlying cost. They are the details that help to refine any mitigation strategies.

Most fleet managers will recognize that a driver who has been involved in a collision could benefit from additional training, but those who apply extra data in the decision-making process will identify the type of training that will deliver the biggest results and make financial sense.

Look to a vehicle's electronic control module for just one example. Signs of excessive speed, hard-braking events or unusually harsh turns can point to a specific driver who could benefit from training in the defensive driving that enhances safety, increases fuel economy, and reduces the strain on equipment. Cost savings can be calculated for each issue, and used to justify investments in a particular training program. The same details can then be used to determine if the training changed habits and delivered the desired results.

Meanwhile, increases in the collisions linked to lane changes, backing and striking fixed objects tend to involve visibility.

In cases like these, refined route plans, spotter mirrors on fenders, and training in mirror adjustments might be the most cost-effective strategies to help drivers identify hazards before metal collides.

Other insights emerge when comparing collision data to the time of day, day of the week, and ultimately hours-of-service records. Collisions that come near the end of a driver's allowable hours could suggest that driver fatigue played a role. Investments in a case like this might involve training in fatigue management strategies, or electronic on-board recorders that offer an unwavering focus on a driver's hours.

Reports that track the type of damage identified after a collision can offer several other insights.

A surge in hoods that were damaged while parked in a specific truck stop, for example, might point to drivers who tend to rest near the edges of active lanes.

If the damage tends to occur in a specific customer's yard, it might be time to revisit traffic flows, or open

discussions about moving physical hazards such as idled equipment.

Evidence of sideswiped vehicles, meanwhile, tends to be addressed by adding and aiming mirrors, and ensuring that drivers know how often they should be peering into the reflective surfaces.

Data about the drivers can offer insights of its own.

A cluster of problems that involve those who have been on the job for less than a year can point to the need to refocus hiring practices and training.

But sometimes the collisions can be traced to drivers who have been on the job for five to 10 years, and know every bump and bend in a particu-

lar route. In cases like these, drivers might have become complacent, and benefit from occasional changes in routes.

Then there are the drivers who record moving violations.

The fines are only the beginning of the unwanted costs. Every ticket for following too close, speeding or careless driving can suggest the increasing threat of a collision – particularly the high-cost events such as rear-end collisions.

Those who work behind the wheel need the training to ensure they can identify and react to approaching threats.

But the underlying costs are not limited to drivers or even collisions.

Those who spot a surge in out-of-service defects might want to investigate whether preventive maintenance activities are completed in a timely manner, or see if the issues are the type that should have been identified during a driver's pre-trip inspection.

In every case, this is about gathering the data that can be used to focus resources.

The same data can help to identify the strategies that offer a measurable return on investment, rather than looking like an additional cost. ●

This month's expert is Kevin Cole, risk services specialist. Kevin has served the trucking industry for more than 25 years providing loss control and risk management services to the trucking industry. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a long-standing history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at www.nbins.com.

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Not afraid to say 'I told you so'

I hate to say "I told you so." Okay, that's wrong. Like most of you, I get a certain sick pleasure out of it. I may not be very smart – just lucky – but in the last few years, I seem to have been able to say it a lot and this is one of the few times that being right about something provides little, if any, satisfaction.

In 2008, when the economy first started to slide, we had an owner/operator leave the company. I had a really uneasy feeling about what I was seeing, so not only did I not replace him, I sold the trailer he'd pulled and our spare. As a small operator, I've never felt that optimism was a wise strategy for business planning. I was teased relentlessly for my pessimism, told that I was over-reacting to a 'seasonal slowdown.'

The teasing stopped when I went into the recession owing not a nickel on equipment while others around us learned some very creative accounting practices just to stay afloat.

The next year, I had the engine on my truck rebuilt. Some people questioned the wisdom of sinking that much money into an eight-year-old truck. At the time, we had two owner/operators working here who had trucks spec'd the same way I did, only a few years newer.

My fuel mileage with my faithful antique was the same pulling seven-axle trains as the other guys got pulling tandems. My engine paid for itself at the fuel pumps in 14 months, in a truck that doesn't have multitudes of sensors and wiring, and runs every day. Told you so.

The same year, an owner/operator's truck finally died a long-expected death. He wasn't great with finances (always broke, no matter how much he earned), and not remotely mechanically inclined, to the point that changing a headlight meant a trip to the shop.

We encouraged him to dump his lemon to the scrap dealer and use the funds for a down payment on an immaculate, low-mileage truck at the local dealer. Instead, he started visiting other dealerships and after some incredibly creative financing, drove a brand new truck home, strengthening my theory that new truck manufacturers shouldn't be allowed to have a finance division.

His co-workers had all advised against a new truck. He fell into the 'warranty trap' though and couldn't be convinced that warranty doesn't cover downtime, which new trucks at that time were well known to experience. He also swallowed the sales pitch that the new truck would practically cover its own payments through fuel savings. How many '09 models are more fuel efficient than an '02? Right. Within months, umpteen days in the shop, with multiple non-warranty rides behind a tow truck, combined with a 'spend every penny' attitude, the truck was turned back in. The 2005 model we recommended is still running strong today. We were unfortunately all painfully thinking: Told you so.

When the recession really hit full strength, we all remember how many carriers slashed rates simply to keep the wheels turning. I think we can all

agree that behaviour was foolish and destructive, for several reasons.

How do you steadfastly stick to a freight rate, then slash it by 30-40%? You've just shown the customer, whether true or not, that you actually can work cheaper than you were – *much* cheaper.

Considering the 4% profit margin that many large carriers claim, I can't imagine many weren't operating at a loss, something any small business owner can't even fathom. If we have no profit, we cease to exist, so break-even operation, or worse, operating at a loss, isn't even an option.

The common justification at the time was that the revenue lost on southbound freight was regained

on northbound loads. US to Canada freight rates climbed dramatically because of a shortage of trucks able to get to the US.

I thought anyone building this shaky 'house of cards' was playing with fire. So now, with a 70-cent Canadian dollar, what's happening with Canada-bound freight? Predictably, it's far scarcer than before and paying lower rates. We now have carriers running south too cheap, with less freight coming home – and at reduced rates. How's that game of Russian freight roulette working for you? If this keeps up for even a few months, get ready for more trucking companies to fall, something that, when it happens, will give me no pleasure to

say "I told you so" about.

Maybe the herd needs culling occasionally, but a bloodbath benefits nobody. This isn't rocket science – it's just the lessons of 2009 repeated, hopefully on a smaller and shorter scale. I understand that some were desperate enough to try nearly anything, no matter how dangerous, to stay afloat in 2009. It's just regrettable they didn't have time to get rates back to where they need to be before present circumstances occurred. Some otherwise good carriers may unfortunately be doomed.

With my political views, given the result of our most recent federal election, I foresee many upcoming opportunities to say "I told you so." Now, if only I could figure out how to be right with some more positive predictions. ●

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

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Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY



The future ain't what it used to be

There are four bodies that report to the Canadian Council of Deputy Ministers of Transportation and Highway Safety: The Engineering and Research Support Committee, the Policy and Planning Support Committee, the Task Force on Weights and Dimensions Policy and the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators.

For the most part, these groups work independently of each other, which might seem surprising. Many trucking issues could easily fall within the scope of two if not all of the committees. That is just the way it has been.

So, I was pleased recently to be able to address a joint meeting - the first ever - of the engineering committee and the Weights and Dimensions Task Force on Trucks of the Future 2030-2035. While it is hard to forecast what might happen in two weeks, let alone 15 to 20 years, this is a timely and important discussion.

The last comprehensive, national review of truck weights and dimensions standards was undertaken by the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada (RTAC) back in the mid-1980s, which culminated in the 1988 Memorandum of Understanding on minimum standards for a relatively limited number of configurations, which are still commonly referred to as the RTAC standards.

There have been some changes and additions to the MOU since then, but for the most part the basic configurations have remained more or less intact. Despite the MOU's limitations, most would agree that overall the RTAC standards have served the country - in terms of safety, infrastructure and productivity - well.

But a lot has changed since 1988. Back then the economic deregulation of trucking, which opened the floodgates in terms of truck traffic, was in its infancy. The new wave of competition spawned greater innovation leading to enhanced productivity, efficiency and safety.

Around the same time, the first Canada-US trade agreement was introduced, followed shortly thereafter by NAFTA. Both led to changes in the level, mix and trajectory of freight traffic.

More recently, a trade agreement with the EU was announced and another - the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Continued on page 33

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What the future holds

Continued from page 31

(TPP) is likely to be ratified this year. When the RTAC standards were introduced, Canada was much more inward looking. Now at least half of Canada's GDP is dependent upon trade. More than ever the country needs to be competitive on a global scale.

Highway and bridge infrastructure is also under much greater pressure today. There is more traffic, both personal and commercial. Congestion is choking some of our most significant economic corridors. At the same time, coming up with the funds to maintain the infrastructure and to support new investment is increasingly challenging. This is exacerbated by the constant expansion of the National Highway System.

Transit is taking precedence over roads. Politicians remain resistant to dedicated funding. There continues to be a paucity of rest stops. The use of smart scales is non-existent in most provinces.

All forecasts point to continued growth in trucking. Weights and dimensions standards have a role to play in maximizing the productivity of the infrastructure. Some of the pressure on the infrastructure has been alleviated by the expansion of the LCV network to a number of new provinces in recent years, although this necessitates a review of roadway geometrics.

New infrastructure-friendly configurations have been introduced in certain provinces. The introduction of autonomous trucks raises a host of new issues and perhaps is the impetus for a meaningful look at the potential for truck-only lanes.

Safety will continue to be a major priority. How will the introduction of a mandate requiring electronic stability controls on all new heavy trucks change perspectives in terms of the dynamic performance standards of certain configurations? What about the ability to supplement driver skill through telematics?

Perhaps the most significant issue to impact vehicle standards over the next 15 to 20 years will be protection of the environment, which was not a big issue in the 1980s. Now it is near or at the top of most governments' political agendas. In recent years, the era of the smog-free truck was ushered in, which is great, but it has also created significant challenges, some of which include compliance with RTAC standards - ie., the need for weight increases to accommodate particulate traps.

Today the battle is to reduce greenhouse gases. Hundreds, including all of the major developed and developing countries, signed on in Paris last December to take the world off of carbon-based fuels over the next 50 years.

In the meantime, the Phase 2 GHG reduction standards for heavy trucks will be rolled out this year and pose many challenges, including ensuring Canadian heavy truck owners have access to and the ability to use all of the likely to be prescribed or avail-

able GHG reduction technologies and devices - in all jurisdictions, without penalty - such as wide-base single tires, 6x2 axles, smart lift axles, etc. The use of natural gas as an alternative fuel, if only on a transitional basis, will require among other things some leeway to account for the increased weight of the fuel tanks.

All of this changes the equation by which we need to develop the truck of the future. The lens through which we need to develop the next RTAC standards has changed. We know some of what is coming down the pike but we don't and can't have all the answers today. However, one thing is clear: the future ain't what it used to be. Let's hope the recent joint meeting is the start of a new process to ensure we have a framework that allows the truck of the future to be used in every Canadian jurisdiction. ●

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



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Cummins offers sneak peek at 2017 ISX engine

Cummins officials, though tight-lipped on details, promise further fuel savings in 2017

By James Menzies

MARSHALL, MICHIGAN

Having recently completed a coast-to-coast tour in the US and Canada showcasing its prototype 2017 ISX15, Cummins joined Eaton in mid-November in Michigan to allow the first editor test drives of the engine and to announce the launch of a new SmartAdvantage powertrain.

Michael Taylor, general manager, global powertrain with Cummins, said the 2017 engine has already been well tested, even though it won't launch until later this year. He said it has already accumulated more than nine million miles in real-world customer applications, which is equal to 4,000 trips from coast to coast. Early indications are that the engine will excel in the four key areas customers care about: uptime, fuel economy, driveability and maintenance.

Taylor vowed the 2017 ISX15 will deliver the best fuel economy and lowest overall total cost of ownership in the industry, even when compared to 13L engines.

Asked how a larger, heavier engine

can compete with a more compact 13-litre in terms of fuel economy, Taylor said, "With a big bore engine like the 15-litre ISX, you are able to take advantage of the low-end torque and you're able to lug the engine down to a lower speed. As you go lower in speed, you reduce frictional losses and improve your overall parasitics, so you're actually operating in a more efficient range of the engine. With a big bore engine you have the opportunity to utilize that low-end torque and therefore get higher efficiency compared to a smaller engine, where you're not capable of lugging down as far and therefore have to run at higher speeds, which generates higher friction."

Taylor also noted 15-litre engines tend to last longer and maintain a higher residual value than 13-litre engines.

The truck I drove on some Interstate highway and secondary roads near Marshall was equipped with the 2017 ISX15 and SmartAdvantage powertrain. The SmartAdvantage

Continued on page 36

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New SmartAdvantage ratings revealed

Continued from page 35

combines the ISX with the Fuller Advantage Series automated manual transmission. The overdrive transmission features a small, 26% step between ninth and tenth gears, allowing for quick shifts and the ability to easily and efficiently pop back and forth between the top two gears so the transmission is always in its most efficient gear.

"The small step between ninth and tenth gives us the opportunity to switch between ninth and tenth and keep the engine right in the sweet spot," Taylor explained. "It's okay to downshift. It's switching gears fast enough and selects the most efficient gear based on all the data exchanged between the engine and the transmission."

Taylor said this is an ideal line-haul

spec', where engine cruise speeds would average 62 mph or higher. During my drive the transmission did change frequently between ninth and tenth gears. We were loaded to about 65,000 lbs and cruised at about 1,150-1,200 rpm. All SmartAdvantage powertrains are limited to gross combination weights of 80,000 lbs, making it an ideal spec' for north-south runs into the US but posing some limitations for higher-payload domestic routes within Canada. The SmartAdvantage powertrain with small step technology can now be ordered with 400- and 420-hp ratings, in addition to the 450-hp initial offering.

The 2017 ISX15 carries over all the latest features Cummins offers on its current product. These include: vehicle acceleration management, which limits power on acceleration to save fuel; SmartTorque2, which senses ve-

hicle weight, grade and operating gear to select the appropriate torque output; and SmartCoast, which disengages the driveline when coasting downhill to save fuel. Cummins officials were reluctant to divulge specific changes that have been built into the 2017 product, but those details will be available closer to the official launch date. The engines available to drive were prototypes, but fairly advanced in the development cycle.

During their joint press event, Cummins and Eaton also announced availability of a new SmartAdvantage powertrain featuring a 10-speed direct drive transmission. The new offering, intended for regional haul and LTL applications with average road speeds of less than 62 mph, gives the SmartAdvantage broader coverage of the industry. While the small step overdrive SmartAdvantage readily jumps

between the two top gears to ensure maximum efficiency, the 10-speed direct drive is inclined to grab and hold tenth gear to maximize the time spent in more efficient direct drive.

The direct drive SmartAdvantage features faster rear axle ratios (2.26, 2.28 and 2.39 ratios are available, while the small step overdrive version offers rear axle ratios of 2.64 and 2.78).

"One of the key enablers of this technology is the release of 2.26 and 2.28 axles, which gives us the opportunity to downspeed our direct drive transmission," explained Ryan Trzybinski, product strategy manager, commercial powertrain, Eaton. "With those axle ratios, we can run our direct drive as low as 1,240 rpm at 65 mph - not quite to the overdrive level, but running in direct drive brings new features and opportunities to us...In regional haul applications with slower speeds and where you're able to maintain and hold top gear, direct drive can give you an advantage over our SmartAdvantage small step."

Generally speaking, direct drive transmissions, with their ability to transmit power directly through the main shaft without parasitic losses, are more efficient than overdrive transmissions. But throw in some hills and higher average road speeds and an overdrive transmission could provide better performance, which is why Cummins and Eaton are now pleased to be able to offer both solutions.

The two companies first announced their SmartAdvantage integrated powertrain in 2014, touting a 3-6% fuel economy advantage compared to their existing products at that time, which weren't yet fully integrated. The addition this year of SmartCoast has added another 2% in fuel savings, the companies say.

Having expanded the SmartAdvantage options available, Cummins and Eaton have also revamped their joint Web site. Customers can now access more tools and information at www.SmartAdvantagePowertrain.com to determine which configuration is best for their application. ●

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Cummins gets GHG17-certified

COLUMBUS, INDIANA

Cummins announced it has received GHG17 certification and will offer engines in 2017 that will be 2.5-7.5% more fuel-efficient than the 2013 ISX15.

The company's entire diesel and natural gas engine line has been approved by the EPA and meets Phase 2 fuel economy/greenhouse gas emissions standards created jointly by the EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and set to go into effect in January 2017.

"Cummins is committed to providing customer-focused innovation as soon as it is ready," said Amy Boerger, vice-president, sales and support. "For example, efficiency improvements implemented in the 2016 ISX15 400 hp-to-475 hp ratings will provide customers with fuel economy gains over the 2013 ISX15, ranging from 2.5% on the base engine up to 7.5% with a SmartAdvantage Powertrain with ADEPT (SmartCoast) features."

Cummins says it implemented efficiency improvements throughout 2014 and 2015 to set it up for compliance with GHG17 standards. More enhancements are coming this year, the company says. ●

Slow and steadier

New features improve UltraShift Plus handling in low-speed scenarios

By James Menzies

MARSHALL, MICHIGAN

Two new features are available for the Eaton UltraShift Plus transmission, which improve its low-speed maneuvering characteristics. And you don't need to buy a new transmission to get them.

Blended pedal and urge to move are available as software updates through Eaton's ServiceRanger 4 service tool. The upgrades themselves are free of charge, but fleets that don't have their own ServiceRanger 4 tools may have to pay a labour charge for the updates.

Blended pedal gives the driver the ability to use the accelerator as though it were a clutch, to control clutch engagement at engine idle and precisely position the truck. Urge to move allows the truck to creep forward (or backwards, in reverse) when the brake pedal is released, much like a passenger car.

"Both urge to move and blended pedal allow for controlled motion, controlled discharge of payloads, and more controlled operation when launching the vehicle," said Evan Vijithakumara, prod-

uct strategy manager for Eaton. "Blended pedal delivers a level of fine control that, until now, has been exclusive to manual transmissions. The end result blends three-pedal operating performance at low speeds with all the benefits of our latest driver-friendly two-pedal automated technologies."

Both were demonstrated by Eaton at a press event at the company's sprawling Marshall, Mich. proving grounds. And there could be no better place to demonstrate the functionality of both new offerings.

I drove a Western Star 4900SB with the 18-speed UltraShift Plus MXP loaded to 125,000 lbs and stopped halfway up an 8% grade to test the urge to move feature. When I released the brake pedal, the truck crept up the hill at a slow, steady 1 mph or so. More impressively, I stopped it halfway down a 15% grade and put the truck in reverse and it backed up the hill, easy peasy. The controlled descent is ideal for logging and other heavy-haul applications where hilly terrain is unavoidable.

But urge to move is equally beneficial in more mainstream linehaul applications. When mired in stop-and-go traffic, the driver can give his leg a rest and let the truck creep forward on its own, adjusting speed up and down by toggling the plus/minus button on the shifter. The driver can work through all the transmission's lower gears in this manner and then, when traffic begins to move, launch using the accelerator from any of the lower gears.

This feature also assists with coupling, providing controlled, low-speed backing when reversing into the kingpin.

Both urge to move and blended pedal really shine in mixer applications. I drove a Kenworth T880 mixer with the UltraShift Plus VMS, equipped with both new features. Blended pedal gives back to the driver some of the ability to manipulate the clutch that automation took



This Western Star 4900SB was loaded to nearly 125,000 lbs, but was easy to back up a 15% grade with the help of Eaton's new low-speed features.

away. Feathering the accelerator allows the driver to more precisely position the truck while at idle, so it doesn't, in mixer applications, affect the rotation speed of the drum.

I experimented with both blended pedal and urge to move on an off-road track that featured a 20% grade while loaded to 45,000 lbs. When you're pouring cement and being guided into position by someone outside the vehicle using hand signals, the added control is welcome. Control is the key word – both features give the driver better control of the vehicle in low-speed situations.

The nice thing about both new fea-

tures is that, since they come in the form of software updates through the ServiceRanger 4 tool, they can be immediately deployed on existing UltraShift Plus transmissions. Or not deployed. Or deployed and then removed if they're not to a driver's liking. Some fleets are making vehicle-specific decisions based on driver preference or application, so it's not an all-or-nothing proposition.

Vijithakumara revealed more than 1,000 updates were installed in the first few weeks it was made available, making it one of the most quickly-embraced product roll-outs the company has seen. ●

Pride Group grows into new location

MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO

Pride Group has announced its move into a larger Mississauga location.

The new facility at 6050 Dixie Road houses Pride Truck Sales, TPine Leasing and TPine Rental. The company has nearly 14 acres there, including a cross-dock facility where it will operate its warehousing operations for the Pride Group Logistics organization.

"The Pride Group has grown exponentially in last few years and it was essential for us to move to a bigger location so that we can serve our customers with much ease and make them comfortable during the buying process. The new spacious building provides a pleasant environment for visitors and employees alike," says Sulakhan (Sam) Johal, CEO and president of Pride Group Enterprises. ●

Cervus adds Barrie dealer

BARRIE, ONTARIO

Cervus Equipment announced Jan. 8 the opening of a new Peterbilt dealership in Barrie, Ont. just off Hwy. 400 in what is called the 'Golden Horseshoe.'

The dealership – located at 3269 Thomas Street, Innisfil, Ont. – is within a one-day trucking distance of more than 131 million consumers in North America and boasts five service bays, in-store parts and delivery and new truck sales within the 6,000 sq.-ft. facility. ●

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38 OPINION

**You say tomato
I say tomahto**

MARK LEE



Trucks are addictive, now I have two

I recently received a call from my truck salesman, who claimed he had what he described as the perfect truck for me. He advised I needed to grab it ASAP before it was snapped up by somebody else.

I told him I wasn't looking for another truck and if he had read my column in that month's issue of *Truck News*, he would be left in no doubts as to my plans for the future – and they didn't involve buying another truck.

I completed my trip and went to a party that weekend; work and trucks were not topics I wanted to spend much time talking about.

But there were a few drivers there, so inevitably the conversation turned around to trucks and one of the guys said he was going to go back on long-haul after a couple of years on city work.

I know this guy well. We were on the same plane from England and did our training together. I was also best man at his wedding a few years ago, so I guess I owed him for that.

So I said if he was serious about returning to long-haul, I would buy another truck and give him a job.

He agreed and the next day – after checking that it had all really happened the night before – I called the salesman and did a deal for the truck over the phone. So that was that, I now have two trucks.

I managed to call in and take the truck for a quick test drive, but apart from seeing that it hadn't been knocked around, it didn't tell me too much.

A 10-minute run around the block isn't going to give much indication of how a truck will perform for the next few hundred thousand miles, but it seemed a good truck and I was happy with it.

Has it all been clear sailing from that point? Of course not.

First of all, my driver was due to have a knee replacement in October. The expected recovery time was four to six weeks, so it would be two months from the point that I said yes to the time that my man could hit the road.

I managed to talk the dealer into holding on to the truck for as long as possible and they were very accommodating, which when you consider that they could've sold that truck a hundred times for more than I had paid, that was pretty good customer service. I offered to give them a larger holding deposit to ease the pain a little for them, but they insisted that they were happy to wait and help me get all my ducks in a row.

I spent a bit of time exploring vari-

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ous different finance options, both with the dealer's finance arm and with all the high street banks. I then went to my accountant and we discussed all the options and decided on which would be best for me in the long term.

The decision was made and I start-

I know this guy well...So I said if he was serious about returning to long-haul, I would buy another truck and give him a job.

ed working on that, the deal I settled on was good, the company was a pleasure to deal with and worked with me every step of the way.

I had certain stipulations I demanded and nothing was a problem.

To be completely honest, I was shocked at how accommodating they were - after all, I was only buying one used tractor unit, not a fleet of trucks. While all the background stuff was going on I was still out working.

I had a few signing sessions at the truck stop in Headingley, Man. as the dealer's finance guy came out to meet me to make things happen without me having to take time off.

The whole process was made very easy for me.

My driver went under the knife and

that all went well; he was in pain for a while, but the general consensus was that it was no less than he deserved anyway. His recovery went well and he was ready to go after the recovery time he had told me he would need.

The dealer delivered the truck to the yard and the guys in the shop had it in for decals and the satellite installation before I got back from the trip I was doing.

I then had to wait another week for the hitch assembly to be fitted so I could use it on the LCV work I do.

I was going to be driving the new one myself, first because it has a 13-speed rather than the I-Shift that my bionic knee-equipped driver would need and secondly, because I wanted to.

By the time all that was done it was nearly the end of November. It made no sense to put it on the road until the beginning of December, so it sat in the yard looking pretty until then, but it hasn't done much sitting around since.

The way Christmas and New Year's Day fell meant that my usual schedule wasn't interrupted at all and both trucks have been out there putting miles under the bumper without problems so far.

So 2016 has started very well so far. I have no plans to get any more trucks just yet, however the salesman has called and told me about a very interesting deal on offer and I know of a couple of good drivers looking to move, so who knows what's around the corner? ●

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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JOANNE RITCHIE



The Nipigon River Bridge fiasco

By the time you read this, we'll no doubt know more about why the Nipigon River Bridge had to be closed in mid-January.

As I write, it's only about 36 hours after the incident, and there is already a surfeit of armchair engineers offering up explanations of why the cable-stayed bridge split under frigid temperatures, as well as a growing number of voices demanding answers for the newly constructed bridge's failure, the lack of alternative route options, and what some are calling the "mismanagement" of northern Ontario's highways.

The bridge was to be the crown jewel in Ontario's rapidly expanding infrastructure renewal program; now it's a na-

tional embarrassment.

When construction began in July 2013, Michael Gravelle, the province's Minister of Northern Development and Mines, touted the bridge as a "magnificent structure" that was "sure to become a destination attraction in its own right."

This is likely not the kind of attraction he was thinking of. But here's the thing. *Even when* a forensic investigation determines what caused the bolts to break, *even when* blame has been ascribed, *even when* there's a viable contingency route found, vehicle weights and dimensions obstacles are overcome, or we negotiate emergency stop-gap procedures to get Canadian goods moving through the US, we still have one mammoth problem on our hands.

The real question is why is there any place in this country where cross-Canada traffic can be effectively severed because there is only a single transportation link between Eastern and Western Canada? The failure of a \$106-million, 49-day-old piece of infrastructure is indeed a catastrophe, but our country can just as easily be cut in half by a major snow storm, a flood, or even a traffic accident at this critical juncture.

To say that investment in Canada's National Highway System (NHS) is sorely lacking is an understatement, considering that every day the bridge is closed is a \$100-million blow to our economy. Put another way, the business loss from a one-day shutdown would pay for a new bridge.

The Trans-Canada Highway, which travels through all 10 provinces between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, is the core of the 38,000-km network of roads designated as the NHS. While the NHS represents only about 3% of roads in Canada, it accounts for 40% of all vehicle-kilometres travelled in the country. And more significantly for this industry, more than 94% of truck travel occurs on the NHS core. What makes the Nipigon fiasco so dreadful is that for 1,300 trucks a day, their access to this vital stretch of the NHS disappeared with the snap of a bolt.

So could an integrated national highway program have saved the Nipigon River Bridge? Federal-provincial relations in this country are complex and can be incredibly frustrating for JQ Public who just wants "government" to do something. But it's the fundamental characteristic of Canadian federalism, and it's not going to change. Highways are primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories, although the federal government has a long history of providing assistance for highway construction under specific pieces of legislation, and a variety of funding programs. Under the current system, provinces decide on the design, construction, safety standards, and financing of highways within their boundaries, then look to the feds to share the cost. Federal funds flow primarily through ad-hoc, bilateral agreements with individual jurisdictions.

Efforts to establish an integrated national highway policy go back decades. One time we got pretty close. In 1988, the federal and provincial transportation ministers commissioned a huge, multi-phase study. Design standards were identified, costs of upgrading the NHS to the recommended standards were estimated, options were set out for a national policy, and cost-sharing and funding formulas were recommended. After six years, governments couldn't agree on the funding mechanism, and the idea of a national highway policy was road kill.

Yet the lack of a long-term commitment to highway funding from the federal government is a recurring issue. There is no argument that efficient transportation is a key contributor to our country's economic productivity and competitiveness, not to mention the overall quality of life for its residents, but there is still no consensus on a long-term funding formula between the various levels of government.

Provinces continue to commit huge sums of money to infrastructure renewal, the feds promise infrastructure investment of historic proportions, and everyone talks about secure, long-term funding, but what we haven't seen yet is any policy change to the Canadian approach of planning, building and paying for highways. The current federal government's pot of infrastructure money promises to be bigger, longer, and more transparent, but doling it out in a series of bilateral agreements that will meet local infrastructure needs and priorities of individual provinces and territories doesn't sound like we're moving any closer to an integrated policy that speaks to national priorities.

As we approach the celebration of Canada's sesquicentennial next year, we remain the only G8 country without a national transportation vision. It's too late for the Nipigon River Bridge, but this debacle might be a wake-up call to start working toward a truly national policy that considers our country's primary highway system as a whole. ●

Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Is your bolt ready to snap? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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Now that the calendar has turned to 2016, we are in full planning mode for the 2016 PMTC Annual Conference.

Many speakers and topics have already been lined up and this year's conference promises to once again be one of the best educational and networking values in the industry.

The conference is being held June 16-17, once again at the Kingbridge Conference Centre in King City, Ont. One of the highlights of our conference each year is our awards program, which is expanding this year.

Most of the people in the general public only hear about drivers and the companies they work for when they are involved in an incident, have a mechanical defect, or when the industry is the subject of a sensationalized story to draw ratings for the evening news.

Positive stories about the industry

The people who work in this industry are safe, courteous, professional operators.

and its drivers are few and far between within the media outside the industry.

That is an issue we have been trying to get in front of for years, but that is a story for another day.

Those of us in the business know what a massive role the trucking industry and its drivers play in the economy and we are fully aware that the majority of the companies in this business and the people who work in this industry are safe, courteous, professional operators, who are the best at what they do.

The awards program is a way for PMTC and our sponsors to acknowledge the great successes of our industry, to celebrate the truly great people in it and to recognize their achievements.

It always brings a smile to the faces in the audience to see a humble, professional operator, who is always just happy to do their job without praise or acknowledgment, be truly grateful of the recognition they are receiving – and in our view, justly so!

Here is a brief overview of the awards program for PMTC.

The **Hall of Fame for Professional Drivers**, sponsored by Huron Services Group, a CPC Logistics Company, inducts up to four professional drivers each year.

The Hall of Fame resides on our Web site and a visitor can review the outstanding records of all our inductees, dating back to 1990.

The **Private Fleet Safety Awards**, sponsored by Making Eligibility Easier (MEE), a division of ISB Canada, are open to all private fleets in Canada. These awards recognize companies that have successfully integrated detailed safety programs as a key compo-

nent of their operations.

The **Vehicle Graphics Awards**, sponsored by 3M Canada, add colour and drama to our annual awards luncheon. This award is open to all fleets, private and for-hire, and attracts entries from across the country.

We have two new awards added to our program this year.

The **PMTC Young Leaders Education Bursary** will provide two PMTC young leaders with the funds to cover two of the four courses that are required to complete the PMTC Logistics Management Program. The courses have been selected from CITT's extensive library of logistics programs.

Each bursary has a value of roughly \$1,300. This program, when completed, will arm the new leader with the skills and confidence necessary to climb the ranks in his or her company and become a successful leader in their organization.

The second new award this year is the **PMTC Professional Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver Training Scholarship**. This scholarship will cover the costs for the recipient to complete a full training program through Kim Richardson Transportation Specialists (KRTS), or another training provider should the candidate be from outside Ontario.

This program is an intensive 200-hour course, which when completed, will arm the new professional driver with a high level of training as set by the Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario (TTSAO) and Professional Truck Driver Institute (PTDI) mandatory requirements.

These standards will provide the student with the skills and confidence necessary to become a successful professional operator and will help to promote investment in the training needs of our great Industry.

All entry forms, applications, and criteria are available at www.pmtc.ca, or by calling the office at 877-501-7682. You can also e-mail info@pmtc.ca.

Please consider nominating someone from your company and allow them to receive the recognition they deserve in front of their peers.

Who knows, maybe we can convince someone from the general media to attend and cover these positive and truly remarkable stories from our industry as well. ●

Mike Millian is president of the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada, the only national association that represents the views and interests of the private fleet industry. He can be reached at trucks@pmtc.ca.

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Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR



Fire up the Wi-fi (and other tax to-dos)

In life, taxes are inevitable but there are times when they don't need to be a high priority.

This is not one of those times.

February is a busy month. You've heard the thud of tax packages hitting the counters at Canada Post outlets and Service Canada offices. Tax software companies are all shouting about how simple it is to file a return. And with the RRSP contribution deadline on Feb. 29 this year, you'll gladly take the extra day to try to come up with the money.

Let's slow down and make a to-do list for the month. Before we begin, make sure your Internet connection is up and

running. You're going to need it.

Organize your paperwork

Most accountants (or whoever prepares your taxes) will send you a checklist of what he or she needs to file your return. Take a few moments to read it and ensure that you're gathering all of the necessary tax slips and information.

I hesitate to call this "paperwork" because in today's world not everything is mailed to you anymore. You have to go online and get certain items. Printing these documents and slips is great but also start keeping folders on your computer for each year to save these files to.

Since you are now responsible for going to get some tax slips, that

means you have to be proactive at this time of year. You simply cannot just wait for everything to show up in the mail, throw it on your desk, and in early March throw it at your accountant.

Credits and benefits

Changes in your life can make you eligible for benefits you never considered before.

For example, if your kid went to college or university, you can transfer up to \$5,000 of your child's tuition and education amount to your return as a deduction. The school will issue a tax slip showing the tuition paid for the year and number of months attended to calculate the education

amount. Problem is, no school I know of actually mails these out. Students must go into their student portal and download it. Second problem is, your kid isn't going to think about this so you'll likely have to chase after him/her to do so.

Students can also claim moving expenses if they moved away from home to go to school. If they live in Ontario they can also claim the rent that they paid. You may have paid it, but they claim it. Did your child get a new job or go into apprenticeship? I can't tell you how often our clients' kids who are working and apprenticing forget to get their EI slip for when they were in school and collecting. Service Canada no longer mails T4E slips to recipients of unemployment insurance benefits. You must go online and download this tax slip.

Speaking of apprenticeship, Service Canada has a wonderful program called the Apprentice Incentive Program. This program will pay \$1,000 per year, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per person, to registered apprentices once they have successfully finished their first or second year in certain trades. So the first piece of advice here is if you have a family member apprenticing make sure they apply for this. The second piece of advice is that this grant is taxable and has to be shown on their tax return.

The third is to make sure you keep your accountant up to date on the family news, and to have your spouse and kids' tax returns prepared at the same place.

I've never understood why cou-

Taxes never really go away but February is not the month to bury your head in sand. Be proactive: gather up your slips and work with a trusted tax pro.

ples have different service providers preparing their returns. Unless your spouse is in a specialized business like you are in trucking, having all of your family's returns done by the same person will help ensure all income and deductions are used to the maximum benefit.

Consider charitable donations. It doesn't matter whether your name or your spouse's name is on the slip; it is generally best to group all your donations together and claim them on one tax return. This is especially true if the total is more than \$200 as you will get a larger tax credit deduction.

Taxes never really go away but February is not the month to bury your head in sand. Be proactive: gather up your slips, work with a trusted tax pro, and set up your desk within range of a good Wi-fi connection. 📶

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

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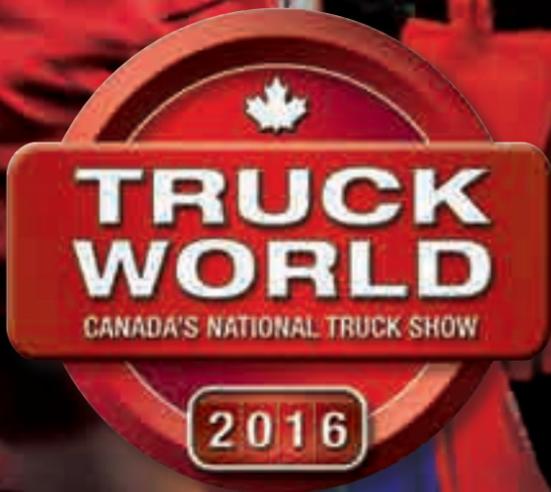
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Preventive maintenance pays

Trucks have evolved. Has your PM program?

Heavy-duty trucks have undergone significant changes in recent years, mostly driven by government-mandated reductions in emissions. If your preventive maintenance program hasn't been updated accordingly, your equipment could be spending more time than necessary in the shop.

"Quite often, a lot of fleets are using preventive maintenance programs that may be back-dated a few years," said Michael Kirby, service director, Altruck International Truck Centres. "We covered two emissions changes in the last five years. The question is,

who wrote the PM program, when did they write it and what was it focusing on? And what are the additional systems we are maintaining today that were not included in the original iteration of the PM program when it was written?"

A PM program written in the early-to mid-aughts probably doesn't adequately cover new emissions-related components such as diesel particulate filters (DPFs) and diesel exhaust

fluid (DEF) systems. Smaller filters on the vehicle need attention too, including the screen on the DEF tank filler neck.

"Something that's often overlooked is the DEF filter and auxiliary bunk heater filters," said Marc Poland, service manager, Sheehan's Truck Centre. "They are tiny little things, not something you think of, but you can end up with a \$4 clogged fuel filter that provides fuel to the bunk heater going and then you end up with a

“Most of our service calls in winter are quickly resolved with a set of batteries.”

Michael Kirby, Altruck International Truck Centres

fluid (DEF) systems.

"The DPF has been around since 2008 but we still see guys trying to push it extra miles or they forget about it on the PM cycle," Kirby said. "As a best practice, try to schedule that to be (cleaned) according to your manufacturer's specifications, or err on the side of caution with that."

A DPF that becomes clogged can cause the truck to de-rate or shut down on the side of the road, or can contribute to other engine problems. Several cleaning methods are available so when getting the filter serviced, be sure to use a reputable provider.

"The big thing is to understand your vendor's cleaning process," Kirby said. "There are a lot of snake oil guys in the marketplace who will hook up an air compressor and tell you they've cleaned the filter out. Others have invested in the proper equipment to do it properly."

driver who's cold and ends up running your truck and using fuel."

Cabin filters are another item that's often overlooked, according to Mike Allen, service director for Greatwest Kenworth.

"These filters can cause poor air flow and cab air quality and are very easy to service, but as you guessed, they don't get changed until there is a problem with the unit," Allen explained.

The desiccant cartridge in an air dryer is another small item that can cause big problems if it isn't replaced about once a year.

"What happens is, the air dryer works well in the summer, then you get into winter and because the cartridge hasn't been changed, a lot more water and contaminants get into the air system and freeze up suspension valves, brake valves – not only on the trucks, but on the trailers," Poland explained. "Fleets need

to be cognizant that their owner/operators are on a similar plan because you can maintain all your company-owned vehicles as well as possible but if you have an O/O who hasn't had an air dryer cartridge changed pulling your trailers around, it could be one of your company trucks at the side of the road with its brakes frozen or damaged as a result."

Most service managers we spoke to cited batteries as one of the biggest headaches for fleets.

"Batteries are only occasionally checked over and often not until there is a problem with the unit," said Allen. "With the increase over the past few years in electrical/electronic requirements, it is important now, more than ever, to keep this system top notch."

Altruck's Kirby agreed. "Most of our service calls in winter are quickly resolved with a set of batteries," he said. "When the truck is getting a PM inspection, hook it up for a load test."

Kirby also stressed the importance of plugging trucks in when it's cold outside.

"It sounds silly and at the end of the day everyone is looking to go home, but the big thing is, plug your truck in," he suggested.

Poland said batteries and connections should be inspected regularly, not only when there's an issue with starting.

"A lot of people think just because the truck starts, it's fine," he said. "But we definitely see issues with connections that are corroded or loose. They should be cleaned and sealed at least every six months."

The same goes for electrical connections on the starter, Poland added.

Fleets and owner/operators should also monitor the condition of their coolant, especially on trucks that have been in service for a while.

Poland said extended life coolant

Continued on page 56

Don's 11 best PM practices

Don Bailey, director of parts and service operations for Custom Truck Sales in Winnipeg, suggests fleets adopt a 'best practices' mentality when it comes to their PM programs.

Here are 11 best practices that he says are easy to adopt:

- Servicing of your diesel particulate filter at the recommended interval for your vehicle and application. It is recommended that it be tied to a regular maintenance activity such as an annual regulatory inspection.
- Perform the initial valve set at the interval recommended by your OEM.
- Perform visual inspection of exhaust system for leaks, as leakage can cause frequent and incomplete regenerations.
- Clean the DEF doser nozzle annually (refer to owner's manual).
- Flush the EGR cooler as recommended by the OEM.
- Replace your DEF pump filter as recommended by the OEM, normally once per year.
- Change all fluids and filters at the intervals recommended by the OEM based on your specific application.
- Use only TMC-approved winter fronts during cold weather operation, as these are designed to allow the proper air flow through to the engine. It is not recommended to completely restrict air flow through the grille and it is important to remove the winter front when there is a change to operating in higher ambient air temps.
- Use high quality DEF and if buying DEF in bulk, be sure to rotate the stock.
- Keep all outside sources of possible contamination away from entering the DEF tank, including: diesel fuel; plastic caps from DEF containers; paper seals from DEF containers, etc. Also, do not use containers from other substances for DEF as cross-contamination will likely occur. We have seen many occasions of each of these presenting serious problems for the vehicle.
- If there is a build-up of crystallized DEF around the filling neck of the tank, take a clean shop towel and clean them away from the tank opening. ●

Maintenance helps improve MPG, too

Implementing a robust preventive maintenance program can improve a truck's fuel economy by 5-10%, according to a new Confidence Report issued by the North American Council for Freight Efficiency (NACFE). While a maintenance return on investment is typically calculated based on uptime and equipment life, NACFE urges fleets to also consider the impact proper maintenance has on fuel economy.

"The reason you do maintenance is to keep trucks up and running," said NACFE's Mike Roeth on a conference call to discuss the findings. "Our major finding is there's a secondary benefit with respect to fuel economy."

NACFE examined 10 components and systems as part of its study. They included: lubricants/engine oil; intake/exhaust system and DPFs; engine cooling; air compressors; wheel alignment; tires; fuel filter systems; aerodynamic devices; electrical systems; and air-conditioning.

The report found that proper maintenance can address 30-50% of the fuel consumption related to those parts and systems.

"Certainly no truck will ever have problems with all 10 of these components at once, but the massive size of that figure is indicative of just how significant the opportunity is to use maintenance to improve fuel efficiency," NACFE reports. "In short, proper maintenance saves fuel."

Fleets surveyed as part of the study said they have seen a 5-10% fuel economy improvement after implementing rigorous

preventive maintenance practices.

NACFE came to four key findings through the study: That fleets value maintenance but tend to look at it as a means to reduce downtime rather than improve fuel economy; there is strong evidence that well maintained trucks will enjoy improved fuel economy; that increased fuel economy can be used to justify investing in preventive maintenance technologies, tools, etc.; and that there are many sources available to help with decision-making.

Denise Rondini, NACFE study manager and communications director, said savings are available even with many well-running trucks.

"Even a vehicle that is running safely and reliably may still enjoy substantial fuel economy savings thanks to additional or more optimized maintenance," she said.

NACFE acknowledges it's difficult to quantify the overall savings available through preventive maintenance. However, it scored a robust preventive maintenance program highly within its Confidence Matrix.

NACFE also looked at telematics-enabled predictive maintenance and found more study is required due to the lack of information available and the costs associated. The full report is available free of charge at www.TruckingEfficiency.org. Among the tools included is a checklist one progressive fleet employs to manage maintenance-related issues that can affect fuel economy. ●

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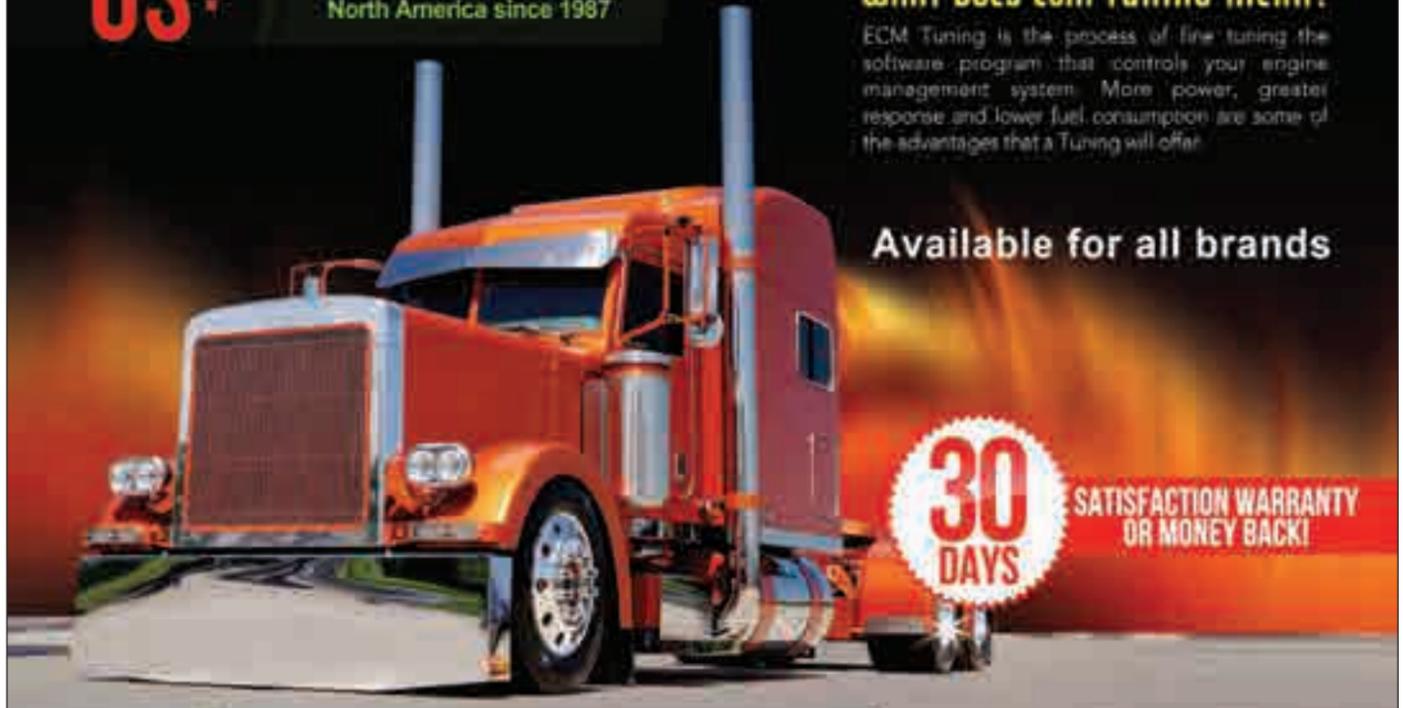
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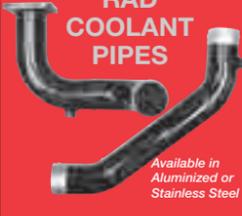


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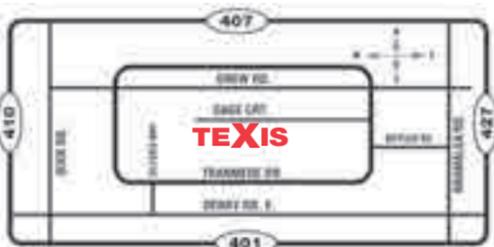


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PM programs shouldn't be 'set it and forget it'

Continued from page 44



A preventive maintenance program should be updated as new components and systems are introduced.

on a truck that's been on the road for five years or more may be reaching its best before date.

"We're seeing trucks on the road now that, unless they have had a cooling system repair where the system had to be drained, they could be running on fluid that's really old and can cause all kinds of problems inside the engine," Poland warned.

Mechanical items on a truck, if not monitored as part of a PM program, can cause problems, as well.

Allen said suspension bushings and spring pins are usually inspected annually but should be examined throughout the year because "they can fail and cause different concerns, for example tire wear and steerability issues."

While oil manufacturers have been

producing better heavy-duty engine oils, allowing OEMs to extend engine

oil drain intervals, Poland said some fleets are mistakenly assuming the

same extensions apply to the lubrication of other components.

"OEMs are pushing out oil change intervals, so you're seeing something that was changed at 40,000 kms pushed out to 50,000, 60,000 kms," Poland said. "What happens is, some people aren't maintaining the lubrication intervals for the chassis. We're seeing stuff coming in with seized king pins and that sort of thing because it hasn't been greased as it should have been."

In addition to regularly monitoring problematic components and systems, fleets should also advise drivers on how to protect these systems from premature wear.

The easiest way drivers can help, according to Don Bailey, director of parts and service operations for Custom Truck Sales in Winnipeg, Man., is to reduce idling.

"The consensus number one item operators of heavy-duty vehicles can take action on to improve reliability and at the same time lower costs, is to keep engine idle time to a minimum," Bailey said. "It is our experience that the lower the idle time, the fewer visits to a service provider a vehicle experiences."

Reducing idling time also extends engine and emissions aftertreatment system life. Bailey said drivers can also help reduce downtime but conducting thorough pre-trip inspections, which should include checking all fluid levels. ●

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By Edo van Belkom

It's a moonless night in Brampton. In a truck yard in the southeast corner of the city, a single overhead light flickers over a line of trailers neatly parked, one next to the other for as far as the eye can see.

Two sets of eyes are looking them over.

A flashlight sweeps up between the trailers, momentarily shining on a serial number then moving onto the next.

At last the light catches the right sequence of numbers.

"This is the one," a voice whispers.

"Right," says another.

Seconds later a tractor pulls into the yard through an unguarded gap in the fence. It rumbles slowly through the lot, all its light dark as the night.

The flashlight flickers... "Over Here!" And the tractor picks up speed until it reaches the two men on the ground.

Then, with a precision of a team that has done this sort of thing dozens of times before, the tractor is hooked up to the trailer.

In less than a minute the two men on the ground are in the truck and the trailer is being eased out from between two others.

Lights still out, the tractor glides toward the gap in the fence, then through it. At the roadway, there's no signal, but the rig turns right.

Now the driver of the rig runs up through the gears. Third...Fourth...Fifth...

Suddenly the lights of the truck come on and the rig instantly becomes just another truck rolling down the road.

The only difference is there's a half-million dollars worth of stolen auto parts inside its trailer.

Mark was hours away from reaching the rail yards in Vaughan to deliver his load, and hadn't planned on speaking to Bud for a couple of days while he took some time off.

Nevertheless, here was Bud calling him on the phone...something had to be up.

"Hello," Mark said.

"Mark, it's Bud." Mark smiled and was about to give him the old 'Bud who?' routine, but Bud cut him off. "Now before you go and make some smart-aleck remark like 'Bud who?' just listen."

The smile vanished from Mark's face. "I'm listening."

"Now you know that cargo theft is a big problem in our industry."

"Sure. Drivers are telling me all the time about how their trucks are stolen, or how they're being robbed...sometimes at gunpoint."

"Right. Everybody's getting hit but some companies are getting hit more often than others."

"You mean the ones without security cameras, security gates and security guards. The ones who don't realize their loads are worth millions."

"Exactly," Bud said. "And there's one company in



Dalton Undercover

Brampton that's getting hit more often than most. They had two trailers vanish from their lot just last week."

"Vanished? Like just disappeared into thin air?"

"Of course not. They were hooked up and driven away by thieves."

"You mean stolen?"

"Yes, and they know it's a little late in the game, but they want to figure out how it's happening and stop it."

"Security cameras. Security..."

"They're doing all that, but they want to do more."

"Let me guess. That's where I come in."

"Exactly. They figure the thefts are all inside jobs, or at least the thieves are working on inside information, but so far they haven't been able to prove anything."

"And?"

"And they need someone to get inside the ring and help their internal investigation so they can have something concrete to pass along to the police."

"And of all the drivers in the city - no, the country - why am I the guy who's so lucky to get this job?"

"You like this kind of stuff, don't you?"

Mark wasn't sure if Bud was asking him or telling him. "Sure," he said, making sure his voice had just the right tone of sarcasm. "I love getting into

situations where my life might be in danger."

"Like you've never put yourself in that situation all on your own."

Mark thought about that for a moment and had to concede that he'd done some reckless things over the years. But getting into most of those spots had been his choice.

This time he was being asked to put himself at risk for people he'd never worked for and didn't even know.

"Anyone can leave their truck lying around to get stolen. In fact, this sounds like something the police should be doing, sending someone in undercover."

"Sure, they could put a cop into the company, but he'd be spotted right away. They need someone whose been driving for years and knows the business so he won't look like he came out of nowhere when he arrives on the scene."

"So, why me?"

Bud sighed.

Mark knew he was forcing Bud to say something nice about him and he was enjoying the dispatcher's struggle.

"Because you're not only a great driver, but your background as a private detective and the number of daring adventures you've been on in your life make you the ideal candidate." A pause. "The only one for the job as far as I'm concerned."

Mark was left speechless a moment. So much so that he was sure Bud was

lying. "You're so full of it."

"No, it's true. And I convinced them that it's all true as well."

"Oh yeah?"

"That's right. In fact, I pumped you up so much that they've agreed to give you nothing but the best loads and to pay you double their regular mileage rate."

Mark sat up behind the wheel when he heard that.

"No kidding."

"Yes," Bud said. "And all you've got to do is show up and be your usual self, getting into trouble taking names."

Mark had to admit he was intrigued. This was the best of both his worlds.

For one, he would be doing some investigative work like he'd done for years before becoming a truck driver.

And second, he'd be driving good loads for top dollar.

In a nutshell, this might be some of the most dangerous and exciting truck driving he would ever do.

How could he resist?

"Alright," he said at last. "I'm in."

Sure it was dangerous and he'd be taking a risk, but in the end, how much could go wrong? ●

- Mark Dalton returns next month in Dalton Undercover Part 2.

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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Kriska partners with Unilever to create safe haven parking program

By James Menzies

PRESCOTT, ONTARIO

A successful pilot project that allows Kriska Transportation Group drivers to park overnight at a major customer's facility is proving that collaboration between shippers and carriers can be more than just a buzzword.

The idea originated this spring when Unilever approached Kriska – its largest cross-border carrier – and asked what it could do to become a shipper of choice and to ensure capacity availability in a tight market.

“The memory of the winter of 2014 was still fresh in most peoples’ minds in the shipper community and capacity was a hot-button topic, so they said, ‘What can we do to make us more attractive as a customers so if things get tight, you keep giving us your capacity?’” Jonathan Wahba, chief operating officer of Kriska Transportation Group told *Truck News*.

Kriska director of operations Tammy Cryderman brought attention to some of the challenges related to servicing the customer, primarily the lack of truck parking in the area of Newville, Pa., where Unilever’s distribution centre was located. The nearest truck stops are located 20 miles away and often fill up by 6 p.m.

This put Kriska drivers in a tough spot – do they park in Carlisle, Pa., stopping short of their allowable driving hours and risk a late delivery? Or do they park illegally closer to Unilever’s DC and risk their personal safety and/or a ticket?

“Our drivers would often give us feedback and say ‘This is a tough load for me to cover because I’m going to be out of hours right at the finish line and there’s nowhere to park,’” Wahba says.

Cryderman suggested that creating a limited number of overnight parking spots at the distribution centre would allow drivers to make their deliveries on time and would give them peace of mind, knowing a safe parking spot was waiting for them at the delivery point.

“Many big shippers don’t allow drivers to sleep on site,” Wahba says. “Unilever decided they would tackle this problem with us on a pilot project to allow drivers to sleep on-site

in a ‘safe haven’ environment when needed.”

For a global company such as Unilever to obtain the necessary permissions wasn’t easy, but Wahba said they were committed to the project and managed to do so, initially as a pilot project. Two truck parking spots were set aside at the DC, which is managed by Exel. Kriska dispatch is responsible for determining who gets to use the parking spots, which are allocated based on need. Kriska forwards the tractor numbers of the trucks that will be using the spaces to Exel and they, in turn, direct the drivers to the designated parking spots. Facilities are available for the drivers to use.

Certain rules were put in place. Drivers must wear safety vests at all times, carry a flashlight at night, follow on-site safety rules, must decouple the tractor from the trailer prior to parking for the night and may not move the tractor on-site once parked, except to back into the loading dock at their appointment time.

As often as possible, Kriska gives the parking spots to trucks equipped with no-idle cab comfort systems, to comply with Unilever’s anti-idling policies.

The project was so successful, Unilever permanently adopted the program and expanded the number of truck parking spots in Newville to six. It has also rolled the safe haven parking project out to other locations across its network. And as a result, the Newville Unilever run has become a driver favourite at Kriska, meaning Unilever has achieved its goal of being a shipper of choice.

“For drivers, it has become our most requested lane because there’s no stress for the driver,” Wahba says. “We offer a choice dispatch model, not forced dispatch.”

Kriska is now hoping the safe haven trucking project with Unilever can be used as a model for other shippers to follow.

“The hope is, we can share this with other shippers and that they see the positive impact it has had,” he explains. “Right now, the market is pretty balanced in the cross-border space – not too oversold or under-sold. But if the market tightens, what a great strategy a shipper can employ that doesn’t cost them much.”

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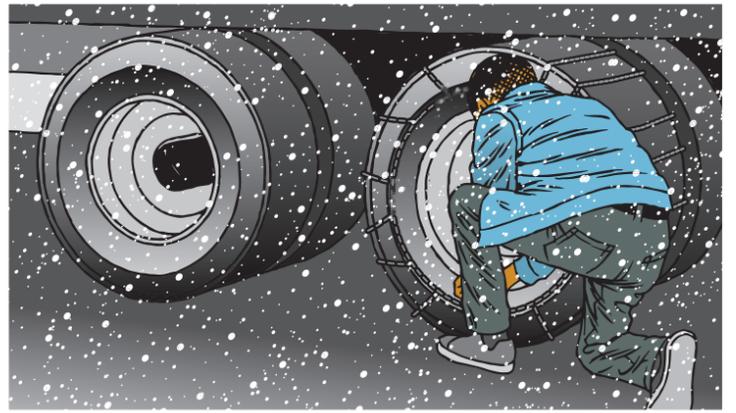
The Adventures of NEWLAND TRANSPORT

By Edo Van Belkom

On the road again, Vic takes things slow. Few other drivers seem to be as cautious and cars -- even a few trucks -- are speeding to get past him. One flatbed driver comes up behind Vic blasting his horn and gives Vic the finger as he overtakes him. Vic just waves.

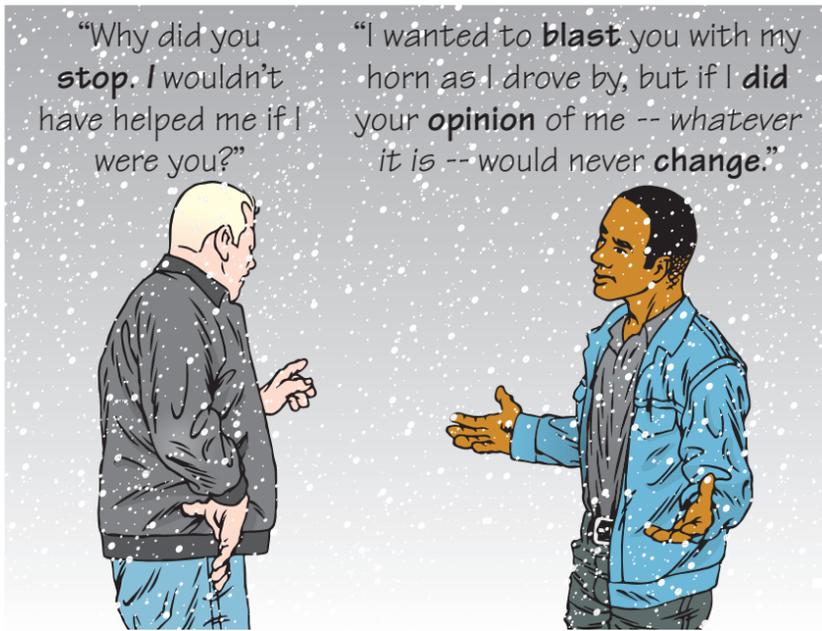


Vic is back on the road and his latest load has him heading into Northern Ontario. He drives as far north as he can in the good weather, but by the end of the day the snow is starting to fall and he can see cars beginning to slide on the road. He checks the forecast which reveals a big storm is on the way. When he stops for dinner, he sets up his chains for what should be a bad day of driving in the morning.



A half-hour up the road, traffic is backed up and is down to a crawl. As he approaches the trouble, he realizes the flatbed driver, the very one who made an obscene gesture a while back, is stuck in a snowbank of the highway's shoulder. Now other drivers are berating the flatbed driver for causing a delay, honking and shouting at him as they drive past with no one stopping to help.

Vic sees the situation, shakes his head and decides to stop. He pulls over in front of the stuck semi careful not to get caught in the snowbank like the other driver did. When the flatbed driver sees it's Vic who stopped to help him, he seems humbled by Vic's gesture.



The flatbed driver is left speechless and for a long time the only sound that can be heard is the falling of snow and the engines of the two idling tractors. Finally, Vic's voice broke through, "Are you going to help or not?"

In minutes the two men took a couple of extra straps from the back of the flatbed and used them to connect Vic's trailer to the tractor stuck in the snow. Then when everything was set, Vic pulled the straps tight, then eased forward. The flatbed lurched forward, wheels spinning, but with vic's help, finally got some traction and broke free of the snow.



When the flatbed was free, Vic helped the driver wind up the straps. But before he was on his way, the man called Vic over and extended his hand. In it were two bits of paper. "What's this?" Vic asks.



"Two tickets to Truck World. My company will have a big showing there and they've got some tickets to give away. I can't think of anyone better to give them to."

"Thanks," Vic says. "I'll be there."

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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Canadian drivers honoured; Trailcon appoints key executives; TTSAO forms new Carrier Group headed by Topping; and APTA gives out awards.

Trailcon Leasing says two recent appointments have rounded out the ideal team to carry out its plans for national expansion.

Darryl Hartman was hired in late October as vice-president, finance and administration and will report directly to president Alan Boughton. Hartman is a chartered professional accountant and has substantial practical business experience, the company says.

The company also hired **Don Andrews** in the position of director of operations. He brings to the position experience in upper management roles with larger corporations.

The Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario (TTSAO) Board of Directors has announced the launch of the TTSAO Carrier Group, which will be chaired by **Geoff Topping** of Challenger Motor Freight. The new Carrier Group's goal is to support the TTSAO in all efforts to improve education and recruitment and retention for entry-level and existing professional drivers. It will work with the Board of Directors and member schools to increase awareness and education.

Darcy Kells, a company driver with Logikor, has been named the Fleet Safety Council's Central Region Chapter Driver of the Year. According to his employer, Kells is a dedicated driver who is always on time and follows company policies. He is also always more than willing to lend a helping hand and assist his

team members whether they be drivers, dispatchers or managers. Kells started working for Logikor in 2008.

As the winner of the award, Kells received a plaque, a leather/melton jacket embroidered with 'Driver of the Year' and a \$250 gift certificate to the Kitchen-er Harley-Davidson.

The Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association (APTA) recently celebrated and recognized five individuals for their contribution to the trucking industry during the group's annual banquet.

Donnie Fillmore Jr. won the Service to the Industry award, **Mark Reeleder** was named Driver of the Year, **Wanda Cull** won Dispatcher of the Year, **Joe Sullivan** of Day & Ross won the Safety to Motor Transportation Award and the Good Samaritan award went to **Stephen Bartlett** of Armour Transportation Services.

The Truckload Carriers Association announced the finalists for the 2015 Driver of the Year competition and two Canadians have made the cut. Finalists in both the Owner/Operator of the Year category and the Company Driver of the Year category will each compete for \$25,000 prizes. **Edward Tricco** of Brandon, Man., who is leased to Bison Transport was among the finalists for the O/O award. **Guy Broderick** of Cambridge, Ont., who drives for APPS Transport Group was the Canadian finalist among company drivers. Winners will be announced in March. ●

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Trucking is a fishy business for Shoreland

Vertical integration was the aim for Cooke Aquaculture since its inception. So when it came to transporting its product – fresh fish – it was only natural to create Shoreland Transport, which has been turning heads in Atlantic Canada for years. Sonia Straface caught up with Shoreland recently to discuss its keys to success.

For Shoreland Transport, trucking is a fishy business. But that's only because it's in the business of going from fish egg to plate and everything in between.

Shoreland is the trucking arm of Cooke Aquaculture – one of the world's largest independent salmon farming companies. Cooke Aquaculture was established in 1985 by Gifford, Michael, and Glenn Cooke with one marine cage site containing a mere 5,000 salmon. Through vertical integration and smart business maneuvers, the Cookes expanded the business, and today sell 115,000 tonnes of Atlantic salmon and 20,000 tonnes of sea bass and sea bream each year. The company has operations in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Maine, Chile, Spain and Scotland, while its annual sales are estimated to be at nearly \$1 billion.

Much of Cooke Aquaculture's success comes from its aim to be as vertically integrated as possible, said Ted Weaire, director of service operations for Shoreland Transport.

"Part of our philosophy is to vertically integrate our business," he said. "So we have other conditions that complement more of our existence, which is salmon. So for example, we will have the processing facility, we have the hatcheries division, we have our saltwater division, we have cage buildings, nets, repair buildings...and we do this for a number of reasons. But in particular, we believe that having parts of business vertically integrated allows us to be competitive in the marketplace, while ensuring service levels."

This is especially true for the business' trucking division, Shoreland, which was established in 2002.

"From a trucking perspective, we can ensure the cold chain and we can do it for less," Weaire said about why Shoreland was born.

Hiring the best staff and not relying

on a third-party trucking company was Cooke Aquaculture's top priority because of the nature of the product it had to haul to customers.

"Our product is very time-sensitive because it has a shelf life. So as soon as we pull it from the water, it's very important that we process that and transport it to our customers in a timely manner," Weaire said. "It's very critical."

Currently, Shoreland consists of 25 long-haul tractors and drivers, six local day cab trucks and drivers and two boom trucks. All of the company's trucks are Kenworth T680s and all have reefer units to deliver the fish from the one facility in New Brunswick to Toronto, Montreal, and the eastern and mid-western states, like Illinois and Virginia. The company aims to deliver within a 24- to 36-hour window to ensure the freshest fish possible.

So far, Shoreland has built a positive reputation both on the road and with its customers. This feat is thanks to its employees, according to Weaire, who claims they are the company's biggest strength.

"We have a very dedicated staff in the office and a tremendously dedicated group of drivers," he said. "Like anything, it's a team, and the team takes the request and carries it out. If it wasn't for the people who work for us, we'd be stuck using a regular trucking company more or less. Our staff has a personal touch with things. Our office staff is always in constant contact with our drivers

"If it wasn't for the people who work for us, we'd be stuck using a regular trucking company more or less."

Ted Weaire, Shoreland Transport

from the time that they're called to do a load to the time they deliver it. Our office staff is always communicating with our drivers and it gives the drivers a sense of commitment on both ends. It's not just, 'Here's the address, take off.' It's working together from the time that the load is picked up to dropped off and sent back. It's constant communication. It's caring, because we all care for each other."

Weaire added that Shoreland driv-



Shoreland Transport

ers stand out from the rest because of their unrivaled professionalism that gets noticed on a daily basis by customers.

"There's numerous examples of our drivers doing everything that they can to get our product delivered to our customers in a very professional manner," Weaire said. "For one, our trucks are always clean and presentable. And we always have very professional drivers that are all constantly working towards a common goal – getting the product from the ocean to the shelves."

The trucking company's turnover rate is also incredibly low and Weaire

friendly schedules and having them drive good, reliable equipment and having a good supporting cast around them. We've got great people who look after our drivers and make sure they're able to maintain a life outside of work."

Similar to most North American trucking companies, Shoreland's biggest struggle is the looming driver shortage, though all its trucks currently have someone occupying the driver's seat.

"We're not affected by the driver shortage right now," Weaire said. "But we could grow faster if I had a pool of drivers that I know I could pick from."

Much like its parent company, Shoreland has its eye on expanding through smart business acquisitions and has recently purchased a fishery in Virginia that has a small fleet containing a handful of trucks. It plans on integrating the handful of trucks it has acquired in the near future.

However, in the distant future, Weaire said slow and steady growth for Shoreland is the ultimate goal.

"I think we're going to continue to grow the old-fashioned way which is to keep adding trucks and drivers as we go," he said. "But if the opportunity were to come that there was a trucking company for sale, where we could acquire something, then we certainly will. We have a lot of product to haul and our customers have product to haul, so there's no reason why we can't all work together to do that." ●

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