

TRUCK WEST

January 2013 Volume 24, Issue 1

SPECIAL
2013 Calendar
of Events

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at www.trucknews.com



GIVE US SOME CREDIT: The requirements of professional drivers have changed dramatically. So, why is the profession still designated as unskilled when others, such as hairstylists, are recognized as skilled workers?

Unskilled designation 'stupid and hurtful'

The trucking industry has sought recognition of drivers as a skilled trade before. Will the result this time be any different?

By Jim Bray
EDMONTON, Alta. – Driver shortage, driver shortage. It seems as if all we hear about these days, at least from a personnel and planning perspective, is the lack of skilled professional drivers in the industry as the

baby-boomers get close to retirement. There are reasons for the shortage beyond an aging demographic, of course, and one may be that new blood is unwilling to step up to the plate and invest time and money pursuing a professional career that's

classified only as unskilled. And it doesn't look like anything's going to change in the near future.

"It's disgusting, it's sad, it's incorrect and there's nothing good about this," said Roy Craigen of Edmonton's

Continued on page 20

Foreign workers

Getting them here is one thing. Keeping them is another.

By Jim Bray

BANFF, Alta. – Embracing foreign workers – figuratively, if not literally – can be a good way for today's trucking companies to help avoid a driver shortage that only promises to worsen as the local workforce ages and few youngsters step forward to take their places.

But what do you do once these people arrive here? How do you help ensure your investment of time, money and red tape navigation doesn't blow up in your face when your new hire suddenly figures the grass is greener on the other side of the yard?

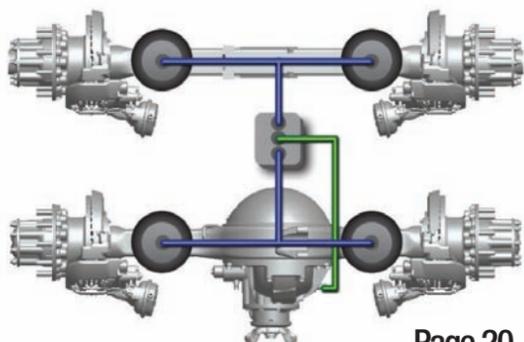
That was one of the questions dealt with at the Alberta Motor Transport Association's annual conference, where an expert panel dealt with the ins and outs of foreign recruiting. In part one of this series (September 2012, *Truck West*), we covered their advice on how to find workers and get them here. In this second part, we look at how to keep these workers in your employ once you get them here.

However you slice it, bringing in foreign workers isn't cheap, and it's

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Here come the 6x2s

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



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Inside This Issue...

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Mark Dalton O/O



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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

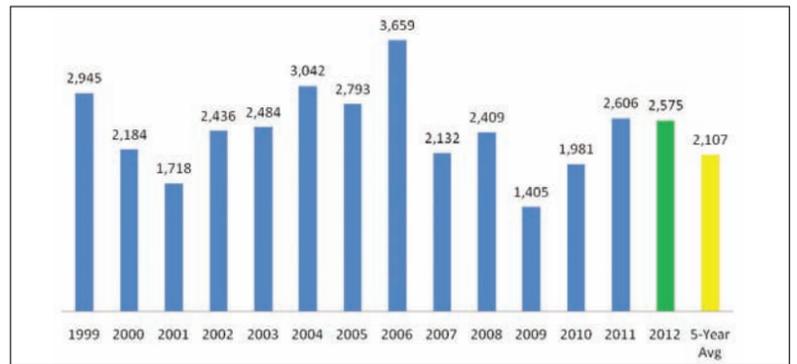
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Class 8 truck sales in October once again topped the 2,000 mark but sales have been slowing during the tail end of the year and this month actually fell below last year's total. The 2,575 Class 8 trucks sold into the Canadian market in October was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

Monthly Class 8 Sales – Oct 12

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

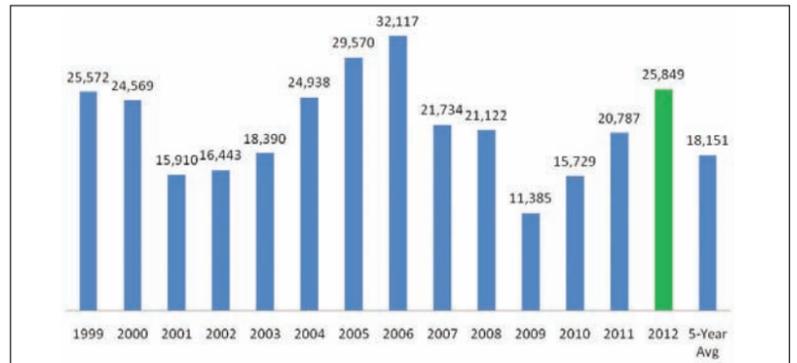
Historical Comparison – Oct 12 Sales



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

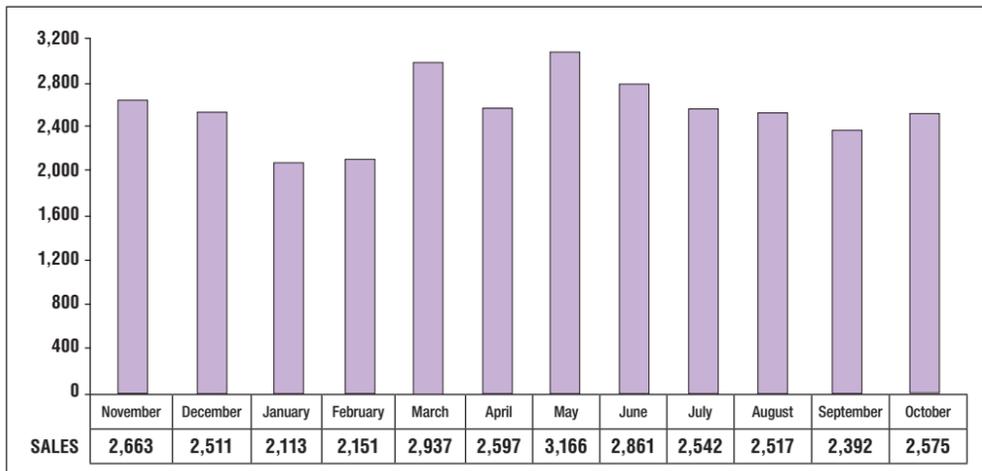
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	512	661	198	505	2,948	1,098	288	126	24	14	6,374
Kenworth	556	2,116	335	187	911	913	98	0	0	0	5,116
Mack	91	351	170	95	769	335	69	36	0	23	1,939
International	138	668	71	221	1,713	784	151	73	24	53	3,896
Peterbilt	330	1,164	264	463	598	508	144	24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

Historical Comparison – YTD Oct 12



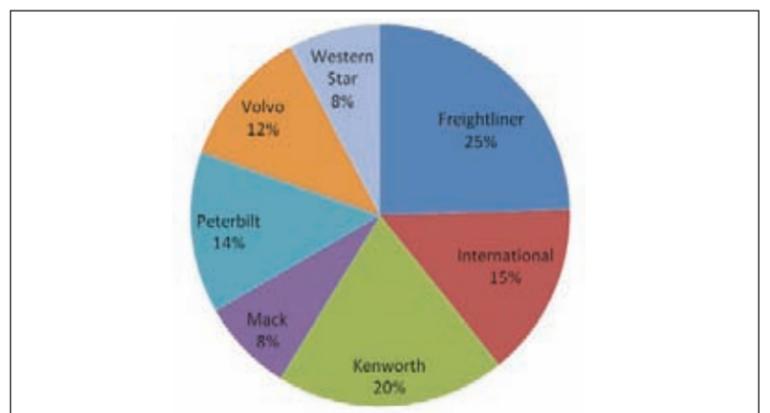
The Canadian and US economies have slowed over the summer, particularly in manufacturing, but there is still economic growth. Many industry experts believe the economic softening will impact Class 8 truck sales for the remainder of 2012. So far sales in August, September and October have shown signs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

12-Month Sales Trends



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

Market Share Class 8 – Oct 12 YTD



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

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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What lies beyond the low-hanging fruit?

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

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

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

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

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

It seems OEMs and component manufacturers are already working hard on the next generation of fuel-saving technologies. One of the more promising technologies is waste heat recovery, which will allow the excess heat created by the engine to be captured and then used to power certain functions of the vehicle, decreasing the load on the engine.

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

Fleets can save about 400 lbs by running a dead axle, increas-



ing payload or improving fuel economy by more than 2%. This solution won't work for everyone, but the 6x2 is a standard spec' in Europe, including in some of the most rigorous applications.

Electronics can now shift the weight of the load onto the powered axle in low traction situations, automatically and transparently to the driver. I saw a demonstration of Meritor's soon-to-be-released 6x2 SMARTandem this past month and was impressed by its capabilities.

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

As always, there is no magic bullet that will deliver double-digit fuel savings, but there are still plenty of opportunities for

incremental improvements. Some of these emerging technologies, like 6x2 axles, will require fleet owners and owner/operators to take a leap of faith and abandon some of their preconceived ideas.

Stepping outside of our comfort zone and doing things differently than what we're accustomed to is never easy, but it's necessary to stay ahead of the game.

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

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The new rail reality

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

Is rail ready to made significant inroads into trucking-dominated markets? Industry analysts point out that as truck capacity tightens, placing upward pressure on trucking rates, intermodal's savings of 10% to 20% will look increasingly better. The Class 1 railways have all made significant investments in their intermodal operations. In fact, the LTL and small parcel segments of the trucking industry themselves are becoming large supporters of placing their freight on rail. Some truckload carriers are doing the same as a way to reduce fuel costs and deal with the driver shortage.

Our own annual Transportation



Buying Trends research is showing strong growth for intermodal among shippers.

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

There are developments I've seen of late though that will likely go a long way towards improving the shipper experience with rail. The first involves a decision just reached on the legislative front, which addresses shipper frustrations in dealing with railway penalties or ancillary charges they consider unfair. Back in 2008, a provision was added to the Canada Transportation Act, which, for the first time, allowed shippers to file complaints to the Canadian Transportation Agency when they found themselves at odds with their railway service providers over such charges. It was a big deal because for some shippers, such charges amounted to millions annually. It was a big deal

for the railways too, and they have been fighting it in the courts since then. At the start of November, however, the Federal Court of Appeal decided shippers are now free to file complaints on penalty and ancillary charges even if a confidential contract is in place. So there should be peace on that front, with the Agency able to step in when necessary to handle disputes.

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

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

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IN BRIEF

Saskatchewan truckers once again providing road report info

SASKATOON, Sask. – For the second winter season in a row, Ridsdale Transport drivers will be providing road condition information as part of Saskatchewan's Highway Hotline.

The hotline will report new and up-to-date road conditions in the Trucker's Report, a special green text report that can be accessed from the Highway Hotline Web site at <http://hotline.gov.sk.ca/textreport.html>.

"Last year, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure teamed up with Ridsdale Transport to provide enhanced reporting on road conditions and the partnership has paid off very well," said Highways and Infrastructure Minister Don McMorris. "Saskatchewan citizens have benefitted from overnight information provided by truckers on certain routes."

Saskatoon-based Ridsdale drivers will be providing road condition information on 12 of their Saskatchewan routes, between the hours of 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. The routes include Highway 1 between Swift Current and the Manitoba border, Highway 6 between Regina and Melfort, Highway 10 between Regina and Yorkton, Highway 11 between Regina and Saskatoon, Highway 16 between Saskatoon and Lloydminster, and Highway 41 between Saskatoon and Melfort.

"The participation of Ridsdale

Transport reporting to the Highway Hotline last winter was a project that we renewed without hesitation," said Wayne Kowalshyn, director of operations at Ridsdale. "I look forward to our drivers and line haul dispatch assisting our fellow motorists again this year."

"The Saskatchewan Trucking Association applauds the efforts of Ridsdale Transport and the partnership with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to make our highways safer for all motorists," said Saskatchewan Trucking Association executive director Al Rosseker.

Road conditions will be called in by the drivers at terminals, switch points, or other stops, as well as in extreme weather conditions.

Calls will be made to the dis-

patcher who then sends a report to the Highway Hotline office, which is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the winter months.

For the Highway Hotline's latest available Saskatchewan road conditions, visit <http://hotline.gov.sk.ca> to check map and text reports and access a mobile Web site with similar features or dial the following for recorded reports: 306-787-7623 in the Regina area, 306-933-8333 in the Saskatoon area or 888-335-7623 toll-free across Canada.

For road closures and "travel not recommended" alerts on Twitter, check out the Highway Hotline account @SKGovHwyHotline. For general tips, visit the Highway Hotline on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SaskatchewanHighwayHotline. □

US truck tonnage crunched by Sandy, ATA index shows

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

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

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

British soldier's ice road trucking dream ends tragically

LETHBRIDGE, Alta. – A former British soldier turned ice road trucker has died following a crash on the Alaska Highway, reports the *Calgary Sun*.

Brett Colley, a 45-year-old father from Bewdley, Worcestershire, was driving through the Pink Mountain area of northern B.C. on Nov. 13 when his truck plunged off the highway. The fatal crash is still under investigation by the RCMP and his trucking company, H&R Transport, according to the *Sun* report.

"I knew him very well – he was a great guy, absolutely. He was very dedicated to the company and to his family," said Mike Weir, safety boss at H&R Transport in Lethbridge. "He'll be missed."

According to the *Sun*, Colley became "enthralled" with the idea of trucking in the Great White North after watching the television show *Ice Road Truckers*, and ultimately moved to Lethbridge to realize his dream.

Colley's funeral took place back in England, after H&R Transport helped to return him to his family back home, including his Russian wife, Svetlana, and four-year-old son, Misha. □

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

By James Menzies

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

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

CSA (Compliance Safety Accountability) was launched in December 2010 as a way of measuring and monitoring the safety and compliance of carriers operating in the US. Since its launch, subtle changes have been made in response to feedback from the trucking industry and other stakeholders. The changes included in SMS 3.0 are among the most drastic. The three principle changes include: expanding the Vehicle Maintenance BASIC to include cargo violations; replacing the former Cargo-Related BASIC with a new HazMat BASIC; and the re-weighting, renaming and elimination of certain violations.

As part of the overhaul, more than 100 violations have been transferred from the Cargo-Related BASIC into Vehicle Maintenance, which was already the category containing the greatest number of possible infractions. In the Cargo-Related BASIC's place is the new HazMat BASIC, which is heavily focused on compliance-related issues, such as proper documentation and placarding.

Drew Anderson, director of sales with Vigillo, said the changes stemmed from the concerns of flatdeck and open deck carriers that felt they faced increased scrutiny when compared to van operators, solely due to the visibility of the freight they haul.

"This change has been two years in the making," Anderson said. "There was a huge bias against flatbed and open deck carriers under the old methodology. They were subjected to more maintenance inspections as opposed to dry van and tanker trucks. Industry stakeholders went to the FMSCA and lobbied for this change."

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

"What we see is the bias shown against flatbed and open deck carriers is eliminated," he said. "As the Cargo BASIC fades into the sunset, all open deck and flatbed carriers with a Cargo BASIC alert, that alert goes away because the BASIC goes away."

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

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

Vigillo ran an analysis of 2,000 cus-

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

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

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

The second major change, according to Sloan Morris, director of client services with Vigillo, is that the former Cargo-Related BASIC will be identified as the HazMat BASIC. These scores will be kept from the public's

view for the next year. You don't necessarily have to be a hazardous materials hauler to be measured under the HazMat BASIC. Even hauling a few placarded loads will subject carriers to scrutiny under this BASIC, so carrier will want to ensure they are complying with all requirements as they pertain to placarding and paperwork. Because of the thinning of the former Cargo BASIC, the new HazMat BASIC now becomes the thinnest of BASICs in terms of violations, and as such, the most sensitive to violations.

One large carrier evaluated by Vigillo, running 1,900 power units and travelling 183 million vehicle miles, would immediately receive an alert in the HazMat category when the changes are made, Anderson pointed out. This despite the fact that carrier incurred only 10 violations under the new HazMat BASIC over the past two years, and for infractions that don't directly affect safety.

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

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

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

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OVER THE ROAD

Coping with stress at home and on the road

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

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

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

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

No matter how many times I grabbed hold of my mind and pulled it back into the present moment over the past couple of weeks, all my mind wanted to do was chase down every dark thought that would arise and blow it out of proportion.

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



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

to that feeling.

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

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

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

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

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

Our families are aging also. Death and dying isn't something our society does a good job of addressing.

So it is usually a source of great stress within most families. In many cases a person's death is

usually preceded by a period of time that requires hospitalization, home care, or some form of assisted living.

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

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

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

This can be a huge source of stress within families.

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

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

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

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

the best-laid plans go awry.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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TAX TALK

More flags than in a pennant factory

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

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

Ya gotta file

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

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

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

I know you're busy. I know tax forms are complicated. But if you end up in court for not filing your tax returns, chances are you'll be fined and/or jailed, and be made to file them anyway. File your income tax return. Death and taxes, you can't avoid them.

What you earn is income

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

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

This case has more red flags than a pennant factory. First, Kovulak reported income earned through her dental practice as sub-contract expenses and not as personal income. Report your income properly.

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

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

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

They know where you live

Robert Parnell of Seven Sisters

Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR



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

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

It didn't take much of a CRA investigation to see what Parnell was up to.

He pleaded guilty to tax evasion and was fined \$24,750.

Get that taxable income down

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

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

Sudar pleaded guilty to two counts of income tax evasion and

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

Do it right

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

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

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

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ALBERTA

In need of a woman's touch

Women may be missing link to career vacancies in supply chain

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Alberta is going to need some 50,000 new workers in supply chain industries alone over the next 10 years. That's a pile of people to place – and the need spans professions all across the supply chain spectrum, including, of course, the trucking industry.

The 50,000 figure came from a national and Alberta-based labour market study by the Calgary Logistics Council, and helped lead to the Council, Calgary's Van Horne Institute and other partners creating a series of events focusing on women as a mostly untapped resource within the supply chain management sector.

The latest incarnation of their outreach was a Nov. 22 gathering called: Inspire! Women in Supply Chain Roundtable Reception. The second in a series of events on the topic, the evening saw a group of about 50 females gather at the Calgary Art Gallery to hear three women with successful careers outline their experiences and offer encouragement and insight for women who may be looking for such a career.

"By putting together and offering the Women in Supply Chain initiative, we are working collectively to answer the current and forecasted supply chain worker shortages," Calgary Logistics Council's Linda Lucas told the audience at the affair. "We are driven by a desire to see that supply chain management becomes a profession of choice, not by default, and that we work to differentiate this sector through our connections and community."

As for that 50,000 figure, Lucas said "this presents a huge issue for employers in terms of attraction and retention, but on the flip side, it represents great opportunities for those who choose this sector in making their career."

That doesn't mean it's easy breaking in – or sticking around – if you have a second X chromosome. According to presenter Siobhan Chinnery, vice-president, corporate supply chain, for Sanjel Corporation, "It's especially challenging for women because they have other choices to make in their lives besides where to work."

Chinnery said that as a mother of two teenage girls, she has passed up opportunities because "being a mother is incredibly important to me." One example she cited was a chance to travel with her company's CEO, talking to shareholders. She said she turned it down because "it wasn't about my schedule, it was about (the CEO's) and if he was ready to go somewhere on Tuesday that's when he went. It didn't matter if it was my daughter's birthday."

That said, however, "You have to be open to accept opportunities. Luck is only half of it. You have to be in a situation where opportunity presents itself. So work hard, work smart – but accept those opportunities," she added.

Opportunities coupled with hard work brought Audrey Mayr to her gig as chief operating officer of the event

planning company E=MC2. She had a varied background in the hospitality industry before E=MC2 came knocking, and since then has worked on such projects as the Toronto International Film Festival's inaugural gala, which she described as "one of the most spectacular events seen in Toronto."

Closest to the trucking industry was third speaker Cindy Clark, dealer principal of Sterling Western Star Trucks in Calgary and Red Deer. She talked about the challenges of becoming what she described as the only woman in Canada doing what she does.

Clark worked in accounting at the Calgary Motor Dealers Association early in her career and discovered that "the whole dealer industry, the whole dynamics of having an auto dealership in trucks and cars, was such an old boys' network. Daughters were not even considered at that point."

Eventually, Clark decided to start her own business, having learned from her experiences that "if someone else had done something, I could do it too. That really was my driving force."

Mayr agreed with that sentiment. "It think it's just confidence, in realizing that we are women and we have a lot of strength," she said. "If someone else has done it, you can do it, too – probably better, with your own finesse. Set your sights and go out there and make your mark on the world. Everything's possible."

The women agreed that one way of helping advance your career is to find a guardian angel. "Have sponsors in your career rather than just a mentor," Chinnery said. "Mentors will help you, but sponsors will actually go to someone and recommend you. And they don't need to be women; there's lots of great men and women out there who can sponsor you and help your career."

Chinnery added: "Traditionally, it's always on the mentee to seek out the mentor. So do that. Seek out the person and ask him, but be prepared to tell him what you're looking for, what you want to learn from that person."

Going for the brass ring is also important. "One thing I would really encourage you to do is let them know where you want to go with your career," Chinnery said, noting that one of the biggest mistakes she made was when a supply chain position was posted at her job and she didn't go after it.

"I just assumed they'd come ask me because I was the best person for the role," she said. "The posting just screamed my name, and then I didn't get the job. And I was mad. You have to actually tell people that you want the job!"

Tooting one's own horn doesn't hurt in other ways, either. "Women doubt themselves," Chinnery said. "Women tend to not like to brag. You need to stand up and tell people what you're good at and where you want to go in your career. If you sit back and wait for everyone to mastermind your career it'll never happen. You have to set your course and figure out where you're going."

And don't be afraid to use your strengths. On that topic, Clark said



TOPS IN THE SHOP: Former Schneider National maintenance manager Lisann Nicholl is a female success story in a male-dominated industry. Nicholl now works as branch manager at Ryder Transportation.

she had learned that "standing pat and listening was my best skill. I learned never to take anything that the guys would tell me as the truth – not that they were trying to undermine me necessarily, but I became aware of the threat. Women don't do what I'm doing. I'm the primary owner of the dealership and in North America there's only a couple of women at this level and none in Canada."

Women, Clark said, actually have an advantage over men in some ways. "One of the things that's been really good about being a female in this industry is that (people) automatically disqualify me right away and that gives us, as females, the greatest opportunity to shine, because while they're waiting around we can take over."

On the other hand, women can be their own worst enemies. Chinnery and Clark both noted that women should be concerned about how they carry themselves in the work environment.

"A lot of women don't dress appropriately for the office," Chinnery said. "Men have suits, and you don't see them in all sorts of bizarre outfits. If you want to undermine your credibility in an office – which, by the way, is still run by men whether you like it or not – go in with your cleavage hanging out because that's not going to do you any good. There's no room for cleavage or short skirts, in an office."

"Women dress down, thinking that's what clients want," Clark added, "instead of dressing up to who they want to be. As soon as you think nobody's going to care, then you don't care about yourself. And yes, people judge you, but it's you that you're taking care of, that you're measuring."

Despite the obvious focus on the distaff side of humanity – and the lack of males at the event who weren't actually working there in one way or another – host Linda Lucas was quick to point out that the issue of putting new bums into empty supply chain seats isn't just a female thing.

"This is an issue of talent, an issue of the things that make our economy work," she said, "and we are collectively determined to bring supply chain into the fore, to reinforce the work done every day as part of a huge, huge network of extremely capable individuals."

The next part in the Women in Supply Chain series is a conference planned for Jan. 31 and Feb. 1. "We're going to carry on this conversation and bring people into our meeting who will help us advance our own thinking about the supply chain," Lucas said. "What are the values behind it? How is it changing? Who are the people in the world that we need to influence above us and around us, to have understand the importance of the work that people in the supply chain do? What are practices that other sectors are using to develop talent – part of that talent being women?"

Lucas said the plan so far is that, at the end of the two days, participants will be invited to help shape the last two segments of the Women In Supply Chain program. "It's kind of like writing your own end to a story," she said. "We're looking for input from you, from the community, to tell us the things that you think are the most important. And we will build the last two events in March and May of 2013 around the input we get. Maybe we'll take one of these issues and dig more deeply into it."

They're also working toward bringing the message of a supply chain career to more potential newcomers, including students.

"We collectively are working with the Calgary Board of Education to build a supply chain program at the high school level," Lucas said. "One of the findings of a sector council study was that there was a total lack of awareness at the high school of supply chain focus for teachers, students, and councilors, so I am very pleased to say that we are working with the CBE."

Their first challenge in this regard is to raise money for the initial teacher. "We can't move forward without the first teacher," Lucas said. "This work at CBE will lay the groundwork across the province, so it's big stuff and we have a big opportunity – but we're at the heavy lifting stage at this point and we do need some help."

Lucas said they hope to have some courses in place for September, but there's plenty of work to do before that happens. "It's huge," she said, "but the opportunity is also great. And the other side of that is that if we do nothing, the impact is equally great. So the status quo is not an option." □

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ALBERTA

Fleets share their secrets on retaining foreign drivers

Help them transition into their new Canadian communities, experts advise

Continued from page 1

only fair that employers should see a return on their investment. And “as an investment” is how immigration lawyer Evelyn Ackah thinks employers should view the whole process.

“Employers spend a lot of money bringing in foreign workers and I’ve seen them cross the street for \$1,000 more a month,” Ackah said.

She puts it down, at least in part, to the way an employer actually brings the new workers over and tries to help them assimilate. “It’s almost as if they’re your children, because they know nothing about our culture here,” she said, advising sponsors to consider “helping them with housing, community support, preparing them for what they’re coming to once you’ve hired them, meeting them and their family at the airport.”

It sounds like a lot of hassle – and it probably is – but Ackah said it can pay off. She noted that one of her Toronto clients literally sets up connections for the families before they arrive, with appropriate ethnic communities, churches, grocery stores, etc.

“These may seem like small things,” she said, “but in terms of

having happy employees – and their families – if the spouse is at home with the kids and she’s happy then he’s going to be happy and they’re going to stay. The few times I’ve seen it go off the rails is when the wife just hates it and everyone goes home and you’ve lost it.”

So think about the domestic side as well, and not just the work side. “Even in things like language training,” Ackah said, “just treat it like an investment.”

Not every investment works out

‘I would say that out of every four drivers we bring to Canada, maybe one won’t work out,’

Shauna Kit, WK Trucking

in life, of course, so what’s a reasonable time to expect these people to stick around to maximize your ROI?

According to Shauna Kit, of WK Trucking, “If we get three, four, five years out of (a foreign worker) and then he moves to another trucking company, what we’re doing is helping with the market of available drivers here in Canada.

So while it may be turnover for us, it means there’s more drivers on the market who weren’t there in the first place.”

WK’s first batch of foreign workers arrived in 2006, at which point the issue of retention came up.

“It wasn’t long before we realized we needed to keep (the workers), too,” Kit said. “We’re not long-haul, we return to base every night, so we couldn’t use the (temporary worker program) at the time. So I wrote a letter to the immigration minister and our MLA asking for help, saying we have these foreign workers and we don’t want to lose them to other companies.”

She got action. “We were allowed

paperwork and brought the person over and road tested them and put them through some training, the trainers can announce that it isn’t going to work out anyway, for whatever reason. Fortunately, that’s the exception to the rule.

“I would say that out of every four drivers we bring to Canada, maybe one won’t work out,” she said, noting that sometimes it’s a lack of driving skills, but sometimes it’s family issues: they wanted to come to Canada but once here, away from their families, they’re hit by extreme culture shock. It also doesn’t help if a worker from warmer climes arrives in the dead of winter. On the other hand, “for the ones who can do the job, and who’ve been here for six months or more, I’d say we’ve retained 80% of them,” Kit said, noting that “most of the turnover comes after they get their permanent residency, so by then we’ve had a few good years out of them, which isn’t such a bad thing.”

Kit said WK’s decision to import bodies came partially because of the success of others – in this case, a supplier.

“During the boom, we had equipment sitting and no one to drive it,” she said. “We had contracts we couldn’t take, but at the same time we owned an Esso station, and three times a week Westcan Bulk delivered our fuel and I would notice some of the drivers’ accents and I’d ask them where they were from.”

It wasn’t just that these new Canadians were in the country that caught her eye, however: it was their attitudes. “The key was that they were happy, very happy to be in Canada, happy to have the hours,” she said.

Still, it’s a fact of life that the call of the competition can be strong – and it’s also true that sometimes the new workers just decide to leave the industry altogether and do something else. That could leave the sponsor company twisting in the wind.

So how can the company that stuck out its corporate neck protect itself from having its hard work, training, and investment sashay down the road for whatever reason? Is there not some legal requirement that, when you bring in a worker, they’re not going to bolt?

According to April Shand, vice-president of human resources for Westcan Bulk Transportation, “When we bring them over, they get a work permit that’s tied to us so unless they go to another company that can get them (a permit), then they’re tied to us. Which is okay.”

Ackah sees another legal angle. “What I tell people is that if you’re going to invest the time and money (bringing people), you get them to sign an agreement so that if they do decide to leave, you’re going to recoup some of your costs – maybe their last paycheck or legal fees – just so they’ll think about it a little bit.”

She said it doesn’t necessarily keep people from following their wanderlust, but “maybe that new employer will be on the hook for

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Of course, contracts, like life, don't always work out as planned. “It depends on what you put in writing,” Ackah said, “but we'd recommend something like a non-solicitation, a non-compete, so it limits their ability to just jump across the street. And once you've had this done by a lawyer, you can use it for all your employees.”

Legalities aside, it appears that walking a kilometre in the new Canadians' shoes can also help, a lot, because it can help you better understand the new workers and their needs.

“They're coming here and they're locked into you for three years,” Kit pointed out. “As a Canadian, can you imagine being tied to your employer – and from their perspective with no recourse – for three years? These are people, not property. They're not our trucks.”

Kit noted these people have lives and families, and things they want to do with their lives and families. And it's natural that “they want to see if the grass is greener out there,” she said. “That's the free market and the free country that we live in – and that's also what we're selling (to them). So, of course, when they get the opportunity to do that, they want to.”

Westcan's attitude, Kit said, is that “as long as you don't burn bridges and leave on bad terms, the door will swing back open if you want to come back. And we're seeing that.”

Employers can also help ensure stability – and not just with immigrant workers – by being such a great place to work that few of them will want to look around.

“Retention is about being the best,” Kit said. “It's a mindset. And yes, there's more cost in international recruitment, but if you're going down that road I think you need to just treat them more like you'd treat Canadians instead of thinking they're like property you've bought.”

Assimilation is also important, but in both directions.

“When we first started back in 2003, there would have been some resistance (to recruiting overseas), because, primarily, the truckers are the good old white men,” said Westcan's Shand. “However, we've evolved to such a point now that we have a couple of hundred foreign workers at our terminals and they're accepted the same as everyone else. Go outside and walk down the street and look at the variety of people to look at and that's just the way it is today. “

Lawyer Ackah had a cautionary take on the situation: that equality rules. “Some of my clients have issues on-boarding,” she said, “and some of the Canadian employees felt the foreign workers were being given special treatment, extra support and all that stuff. If you don't manage that well, it can blow up in your face.”

It's all about being transparent, Ackah said, letting the “native” Canadian workers know that not only are the newbies coming and that they'll need extra help, but also reassuring them that the newcomers aren't being paid more or treated differently.

She also recommends some diversity training – again, in both directions – to avoid cultural misunderstandings. “As Canadians, we have our own views on who's coming and they have their views of who's coming,” she said, “and because of cultural differences, you can say the same thing to me and to someone from, say, the Philippines and they'll have a completely different view of what's been said. So that meshing of understanding in the workforce is really important.”

Obviously, recruiting from overseas involves a lot of stuff to take into account, but (as is being demonstrated daily in companies across the country) with some care and a little luck, recruiting from overseas can turn into a win-win scenario for all involved. □

FLEET NEWS

ATS moves into Alberta market

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

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

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

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

Penske retrofits fleet with LED headlights

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

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

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

“Our LED forward lighting capabilities and product line has continued to strengthen and grow,” said Beth English, vice-president of marketing for Truck-Lite. “The overwhelming

response from the military and commercial vehicle markets has allowed us to push forward and move the technology toward the custom heavy-duty market and our fleet partners. As a direct replacement to current headlamps, retrofit is easy, taking only minutes.

“Our new LED headlamp offering really speaks to high performance, durability and increased visibility for forward lighting applications,” English continued. “Offering longer life than comparable incandescent lamps, these LED headlamp products are worth the upfront investment, saving the time and expense of replacing lamps multiple times while offering increased safety for the driver.”

Truck-Lite's LED forward-lighting headlamps are designed to offer improved driver visibility through a more natural light spectrum, which officials say can help lead to improved object recognition at night and increased daytime visibility.

The LED beam pattern also reduces eyestrain for drivers and reduces harsh headlight glare to oncoming traffic, according to the company. As an additional benefit, the LED reduces amperage draw on the vehicle's electrical system, and can result in lighting system life 50 times longer than conventional halogen technology, Truck-Lite officials said. □



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**PRODUCED BY JAMES MENZIES
EXECUTIVE EDITOR TRUCK NEWS/TRUCK WEST**



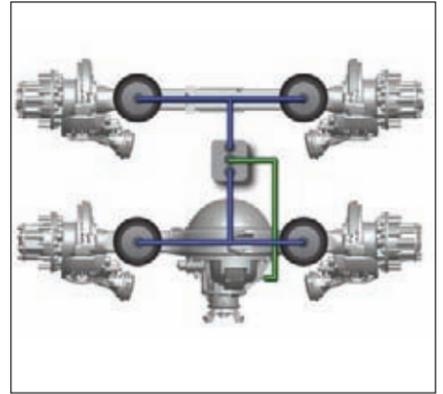
OUTSTANDING!

The 6x2s are coming

The low-hanging fruit has been picked. So, what will fleets do next to increase payload and save fuel? Another European spec' could be the answer.



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



By James Menzies

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

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

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

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

Meritor recently demonstrated its 6x2 axle capabilities at a press event at its Fletcher, N.C. axle plant. The company launched its SoloDrive series of 6x2 axles at this year's Mid-America Trucking Show with the introduction of its FUELite tandem axle, based on its 160-Series drive axle. Its next offering in the 6x2 category, scheduled for launch in 2013, is the SMARTandem,

which combines elements of the FUELite with other characteristics borrowed from Meritor's popular 14X tandem drive axle. The SMARTandem provides the fuel and weight savings offered by the FUELite, along with greater traction that rivals that of the 14X tandem.

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

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

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

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

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

Still, only 10% of the fleets surveyed that run more than 100 trucks, and 13% of those run-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The SMARTandem has been used in Europe – where 6x2s are commonplace – for four years and has been in testing here in North America for the last two years. Charlie Allen, general manager,

rear drive axles with Meritor, said there are 15 SMARTandem's undergoing field-testing in North America, and they're performing well, even in wintery conditions.

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

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

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

The test truck was rigged so that the operator could switch between traditional 6x2 and SMARTandem performance. In traditional 6x2 mode, the powered axle's wheels spun hopelessly, but with SMARTandem's electronics activated, the truck pulled forward with very little wheel spin at all. It's one of those demonstrations, like electronic stability, that has to be seen to be fully appreciated.

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

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

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

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

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

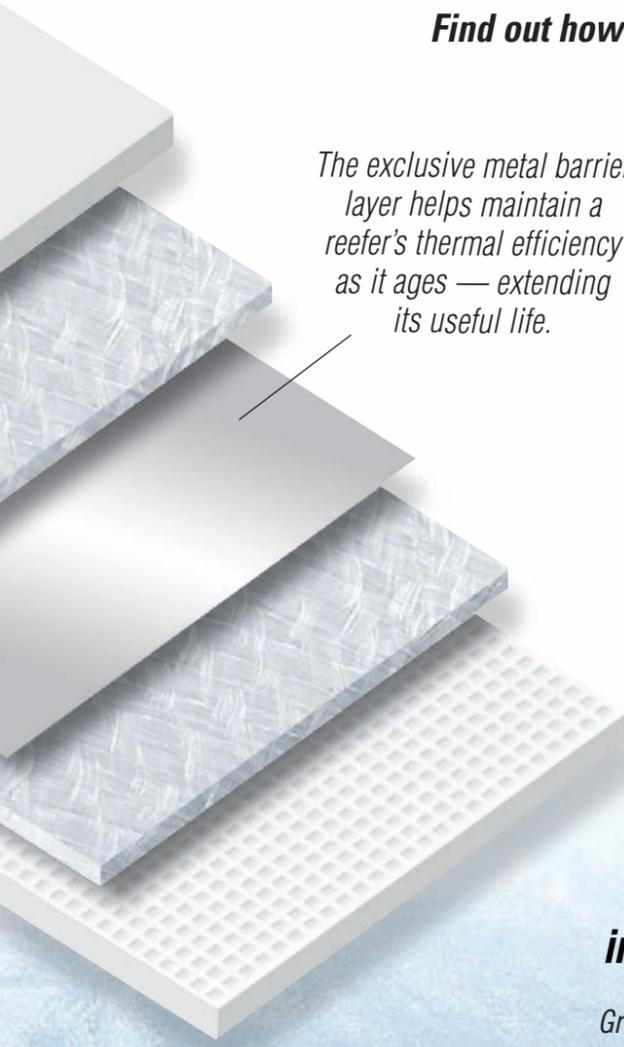


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COVER STORY

Fight continues to get trucking recognized as skilled trade

Continued from page 1

Transcom Fleet Services. “It’s old-fashioned and out of date.”

Craigen’s Transcom bills itself as a company that develops programs aimed at improving trucking operations across North America “by shifting culture, attitude, and, ultimately, performance.”

Craigen himself is well-versed in the professional designation problem, and has been involved in trying to get the proper recognition for several years. Obviously, he’s frustrated.

And he’s right about it being unfair. After all, there are many professions designated as skilled that don’t require the practitioner to be responsible for a multi-thousand-dollar-and-kilogram piece of technology on our busy highways. Yet, it seems as if truck drivers are always the proverbial bridesmaids when it comes to having their skills recognized.

Craigen says the situation has been like this for a long time.

“Nothing’s really been done for 50 years,” he told *Truck West* in a recent interview. “We have 285,000 professional drivers and 280,000 of them are salt-of-the-earth professionals,” he said, acknowledging that “five thousand of them are idiots – but that’s the same with any trade in the world. We have tens of thousands of awesome drivers going to work every day and no one knows that they’re doing good work because they’re so good they’re almost invisible.”

Perhaps that’s part of the problem: perception. Most drivers go about their business – keeping Canadian commerce moving – quietly and professionally. Yet, all heck breaks loose when one screws up, setting off the predictable news media and usual suspects’ frenzy, all of which may contribute to the impression that today’s truckers are no more skilled than hairstylists.

Except that “hairstylist” is rated as a Red Seal skilled profession. So are cook, baker, bricklayer, carpenter – a total of 63 professions. So why not professional drivers?

It certainly hasn’t been for a lack of trying. A current push in Alberta to have the professional designation changed, led by Bob Hill, the Alberta Motor Transport Association and others, is merely the latest such attempt. Craigen also has a history of such involvement. His dates back to 2009 when, as he put it, “the federal government went to the University of Waterloo and asked (Robert Scott, a professor there) to go out, find a handful of people across Canada that can help with his research and bring back some valid information that can help them make a decision on whether or not this (designation) should be changed.”

Craigen said that initiative saw him putting together a multi-page

until we’re blue in the face, but at the end of the day, it’ll be the federal government that will either say yea or nay to any effort that we make.”

Craigen doesn’t think people should put a lot of hope into gaining the profession a Red Seal designation, either.

“If we try to have it registered under the apprenticeship board and the Red Seal program, it’s a dead end,” he said. “We will not, in most likelihood, ever have the truck driver occupation registered under the Red Seal of the trades because – and I’ve gone through this hoop once before – the tradespeople say, and they’re absolutely right, that our training for entry-level truck drivers does not come close to meeting the

“to better support immigration of new drivers to Canada. Because being listed as a non-skilled occupation really hurts an individual’s chances of actually getting to Canada.”

There may be some strategies that could help show the feds just how important the skilled designation is.

“One of the core functions of recognizing the Canadian truck driver as a skilled occupation is highway safety,” Craigen said. “We, both from insurance point of view and from a road safety point of view, should, as a nation, grab (skilled profession designation) with both hands just from a public safety point of view. To raise the bar in our truck driver training schools, to raise the bar in our provincial licensing for the Class 1 – all of that makes our roads safer.”

The idea, Craigen said, is to “force the federal government to give us a logical reason why three years later – when everything has more pressure and there’s more rules at the border, there’s more technology, there’s less professional drivers, there’s more immigration – nothing has been done.”

Craigen thinks it’s going to be an uphill battle, though. “I don’t think anything’s hopeless, but we have keep pushing, and to rally the individuals or organizations who took a past shot at this and the group that’s taking a current shot at this, and pool their efforts together and keep pushing,” he said.

Such movements don’t spring from the ground fully formed, however. They take leadership.

“I don’t disagree with that,” Craigen said. “There’s been a good push, but the push hasn’t been constant and it hasn’t been inclusive, either. The CTHRC (Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council) pushed, but we didn’t necessarily have the provincial trucking associations pushing at the same time. They agreed with us, but they weren’t all pushing at the same time.”

Right now, however, it’s different. “Now we have the trucking associations pushing,” Craigen said. “I think what we need is to have all of these identities push the federal government at the same time, and get in the truck magazines and *The Globe and Mail* and show this is a serious, important initiative. Collectively, we can push this and keep the heat on this to get the change.”

In the meantime, Craigen said, the industry has basically one choice to make: “Are we going to train a whole bunch of drivers at poor standards and put them on our highways or are we going to go to the provincial immigration programs outside of the federal government and get drivers from other parts of the world and put them on our highways?”

To Craigen, the push for recognition of driving as a skilled occupation isn’t only about facilitating recruiting; it’s also about correcting a situation where the status quo disrespects an entire profession. “It is absolute stupidity,” he said. “And it’s hurtful. Drivers have had to learn and know so much – and most of it they’ve had to learn on their own. And it’s not the same for one driver at one company as it is for one driver of another company; it can be extremely different.” □

‘I think taking another shot at it is really worthwhile...it’s something that I believe in,’

Roy Craigen, Transcom Fleet Services

report outlining the reasons why he thought the National Occupational Classification (NOC) code 7411 – which deals with truck drivers – should be changed. Among the reasons he cited in his report to the university were technological change, new regulations including border rules, and major changes in the industry overall, all of which he said combined to require more skill on the part of the driver than ever before.

But it was all for naught. “He (Scott) would’ve compiled the documentation he got and then forwarded that onto Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, who would have looked at the information and then made the decision not to change the NOC code.”

And that was that. Changing the NOC code has to be done in Ottawa because, Craigen said, “the keeper of the NOC code is the federal government. We can jump up and down in the provinces all we want. We can write letters and do surveys

model of the Red Seal.”

Which leaves the logical first step as getting the NOC code changed so professional driving is considered a skilled occupation. And Craigen thinks it’s time for another stab at overturning the status quo.

“I think taking another shot at it is really worthwhile,” he said, noting that he’s aware of the petition that’s going around Alberta right now and thinks it’s a great idea. “I haven’t been around to sign it yet,” he said, “but I will sign it gladly and I’ll support AMTA in taking another shot at this because it’s something that I believe in.”

Another reason for changing the NOC code is immigration.

“When the professional driver is registered as a non-skilled occupation, the points system in immigration makes it very difficult to immigrate here,” Craigen said. He thinks that, beyond the stigma of being labeled as unskilled, the immigration aspect is also a primary reason for pushing changes to the NOC code,



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OPINION

Ready or not, here comes 2013

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

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

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

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

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

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



Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

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

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

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

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

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

The other big change coming this year is new fuel economy, or GHG re-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And that brings us to a central ques-

tion going into the New Year: will the economy improve to the point we can start ratcheting up rates?

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

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

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

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

Less flexible HoS regs, increasing costs, and a precarious economic environment that could keep rates down might make you want to side with the doomsday crowd, even if the sun did come up on Dec. 22. On the other hand, it might not hurt to let a bit of that New Age thinking rub off on you. Positive transformation, an opportunity for new beginnings, and all that jazz might not be so bad after all, especially if it means more sleep, higher pay, and cleaner air. □

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

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License# _____ Prov/State issued _____

Total Truck Driving Experience _____/yrs Has your license ever been suspended? Yes No

Last Employer _____

Name _____ Company City _____ Prov/State _____

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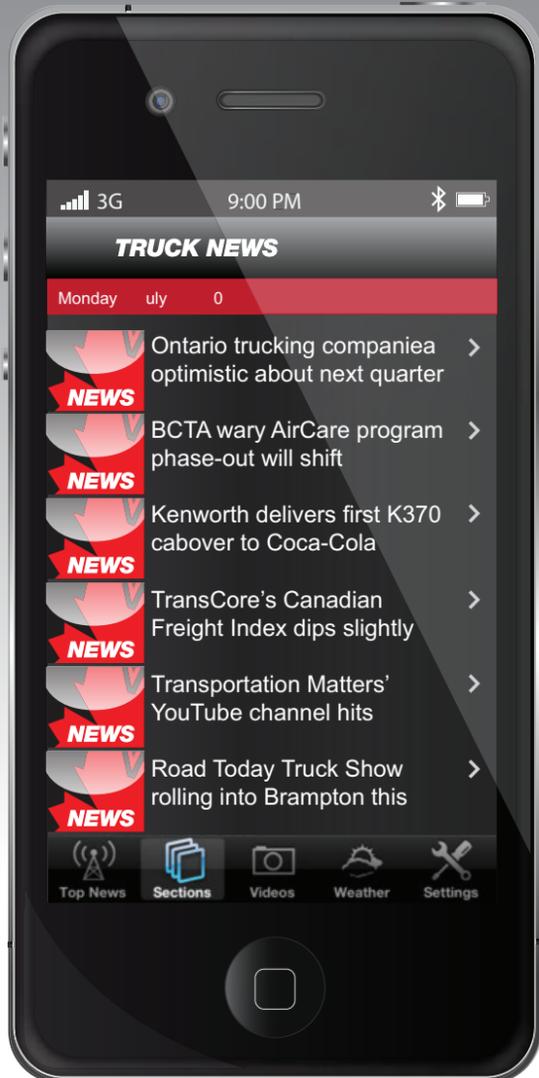
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TRUCK NEWS

TIRES

Let's talk tires

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

By James Menzies

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

When you operate one truck or just a few, it's easier to stay

on top of problems and to closely monitor tire performance and wear characteristics.

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

Invest in good rubber

Angelo Diplacido, a former owner/operator who ran mostly punishing regional LTL routes, admits he once bought a set of offshore, non-brand name new tires, think-



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

ing they'd perform better than retreads.

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

The tread life was adequate,

Diplacido said, but the performance was anything but. He was soon longing for a set of quality re-caps. He saved less than \$400 on the purchase price of a set of four tires and soon regretted it.

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

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

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

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

Manage tire pressures

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

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

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

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

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

All kinds of bad things can happen when tire pressures are ignored. For every 2 psi that a tire is underinflated, its temperature will rise by 10 degrees C, Diplacido

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explains. So a tire that's down 20 psi is going to experience a temperature increase of 100 C, and "It's just a matter of whether the adhesive holds up" before a blow-out occurs.

Managing tire pressures doesn't necessarily mean ensuring they're all equal. Holman employs a trick learned from Nascar, and staggers the air pressure on his steer axle to compensate for the subtle drainage slope in the road from left to right.

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

Rotate tires as required

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

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

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

Decker is also a believer in tire rotation. He says the key is to closely monitor tread wear and to rotate as required to ensure the consistent wear of all tires.

Keep an eye on things

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

He suggests doing a quick tire inspection every time the truck is

parked. What's he looking for?

"You'll see feather wear on the edges, especially on air-ride trailers. If you start to see that, you've almost waited too long," he says. "When you walk around the truck, thump the tires, check for flats and look for visible wear spots. If you have one tire that you flat-spotted and didn't realize it, it will show itself. When walking back to your truck, look at the tires. Sometimes you won't see it when standing right there beside it, but you will see it when you're standing back. Sometimes you have to be back 20 feet before you notice something looks wrong. If you do this every time you walk up to the truck, you will see when something is wrong."

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

Pay attention to your casings

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

"When I do buy casings, I want matching casings," Holman explains, "because the casing is the model. I might get a tire that's the same size, but it has a different profile. Some are narrower and some are wider. They all look the same and they may have the same tread, but you forget they don't have the same foundation."

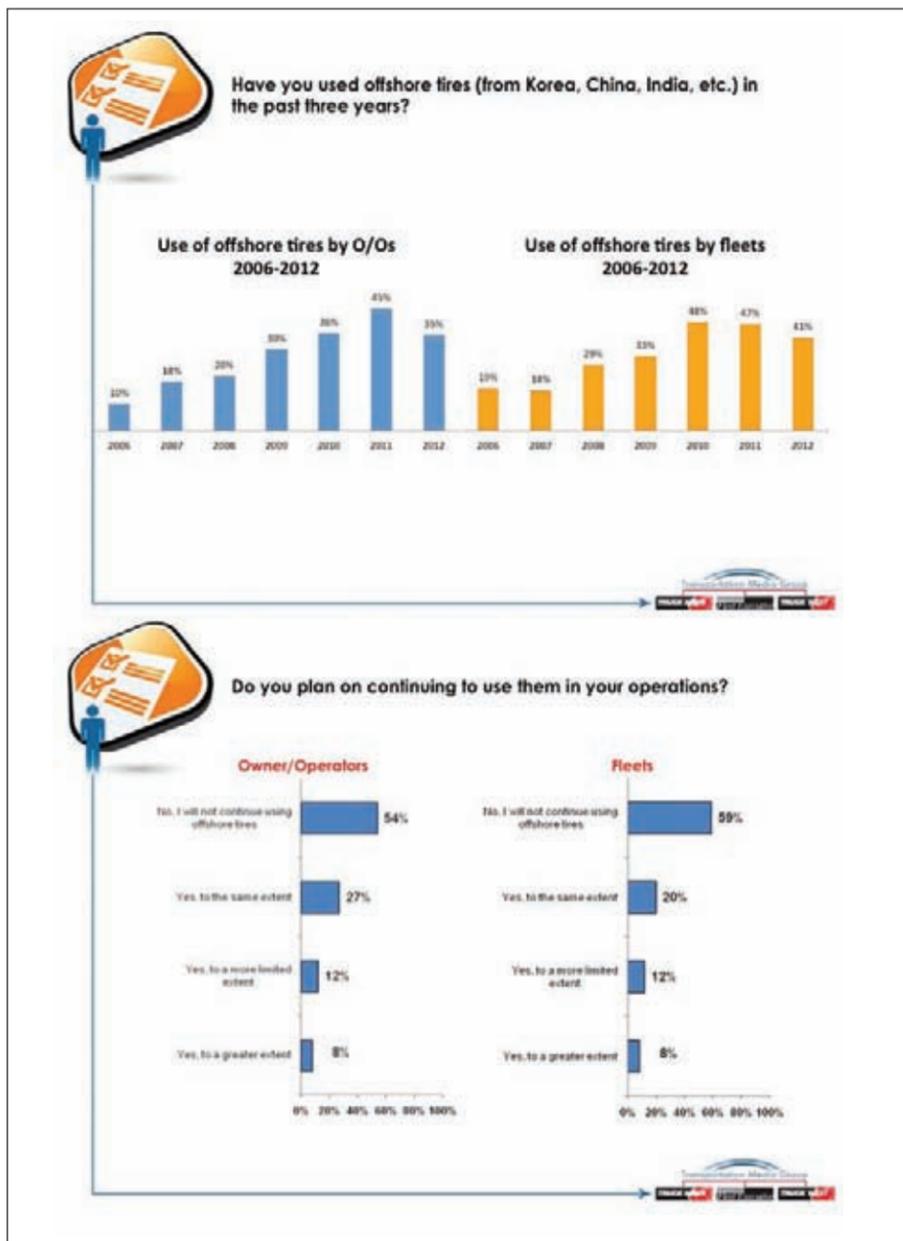
"So, you get one that's a little higher, one that's a little narrower and the first month you're going down the road and the one that's higher is going to wear fast and the one that's wider is going to carry a little more heat, so you end up having mismatched tires and you're going to wear them down. You might have 6/32nds of an inch of tread on the drive tire beside one that has 1/32nds and is worn out.

"Now, you have a tire that's worn below its limit right beside one that still has a full summer's mileage on it, what do you do? You put a brand new tire on to replace the bad one and now the one that was good isn't touching the road anymore."

It's a nasty cycle to get into.

Keep the truck dialed in

A truck that's out of alignment or



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

running on worn shocks can be hell on tires.

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

"I've had new trucks where two months in, the tires look like they've been through a war," Holman says.

"I took the shock off and the shock was screwed. I changed the shock and the tire, in some cases,

rights itself and tries to return to a proper wear pattern. You're not going to get the life out of it, but maybe you'll save it if you catch it early enough."

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

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

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OPINION

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

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

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

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

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

I've just read a survey by the very well respected J.D. Power

**You say tomato,
I say tomahto**

MARK LEE



& Associates. It tells a very sad story, one that has a chance of changing the face of trucking as we know it.

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

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

Now, there will have been quite

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

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

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

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

rious implications to the whole economy, because as we all know, trucks keep our economy moving.

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

Glider kits, they could be the future. I can see that's raised a few eyebrows and got more than a few of you shaking your heads, especially those of you that remember the gliders of the past. But think about it, you can get a brand new rolling glider kit from several of the manufacturers. You source a pre-emission engine from your manufacturer of choice, bolt it together and you go to work.

You don't get any failures from EGR valves, EGR coolers, variable geometry turbos, turbo actuators, DPF filters, SCR and all the other mumbo jumbo that contributes to the vast majority of the 99% of breakdowns that affect 46% of all new trucks. What you get is a solid, robust truck that gets the job done like it's supposed to do. However, in Canada, we don't have that option. Environment Canada has a rule in place that a chassis must have an engine of the same model year's emissions level.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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OPINION

Finding Christmas spirit through film

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

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

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

In my house, we make a point of watching the classics, including: Scrooge, It's a Wonderful Life, Miracle on 34th Street and my favourite of all time,

A Christmas Story. For any of you who haven't seen this one, it's set in the late '50s and tells the story of little Ralphie and his quest to unwrap a Red Ryder BB Gun on Christmas day.

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

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

Although not a classic by any means, I also enjoy Home Alone. Granted, the Christmas message plays a poor cousin to the slapstick abuse that Macaulay Culkin installs on the bad guys, but the importance of family is loud and clear in the movie's final moments.

I suppose the classic of all classics is Alastair Sim's Scrooge. I recall the first time I watched this on the old RCA black and white. To be honest, I spent a good portion of that production with the blankets pulled over my head.

As a four- or five-year-old, the ghosts were just a little too real

Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



for my liking.

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

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

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

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator Collision Course

By Edo van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR...

Mark is driving along Steeles Avenue in Brampton with a clear road ahead of him. Suddenly a car pulls in front of him and slams on the brakes. Mark rear-ends the car and five people get out, all injured. Mark calls Bud for some advice about what to do.

Mark video records the damage to both vehicles and the injuries to the people involved. A bystander suggests a mechanic to Mark, but Mark has his own, thanks. The police and ambulance arrive, taking two passengers to hospital and issuing Mark a ticket...

Several days later, after Mark was finished with the job moving the warehouse from Toronto to Brampton, he was contacted by a claims adjuster from his insurance company.

When he realized who was calling, and that he'd be on the phone for a while, Mark pulled over and shut down his truck, giving all of his time and attention to the man on the phone.

"What do you need to contact me for?" he asked. "I didn't make a claim on my truck. You know as well as anyone that the deductible's too high to make it worth my while. It's cheaper for me if I get it fixed myself."

"I can appreciate that, Mr. Dalton, but I'd like to talk to you about the accident in general. You know...what happened. Your side. Their side. The damage and injuries to everyone involved."

"I wasn't injured."

"We're all grateful for that, believe me. But I understand that the people in the car suffered some serious injuries."

"Serious injuries?" Mark said. "Everyone got out of the car on their own and were walking around right after the accident."

"Well, that's not what their doctors are saying. A couple of people suffered broken bones, as well as significant back and neck injuries."

"Nobody broke a bone."

"Even though you're not a doctor, I appreciate your opinion and I'm making a note of it. In fact, it supports our belief that the accident might have been staged."

"Might have been staged?" Mark said, trying not to sound sarcastic but failing miserably. "No kidding."

"Yes. But in order to be certain we need proof, and that's where we were hoping you might be able to help."

"Well, I might be in luck."

"How's that?"

"After the accident I used my cell phone to take video of the driver and four passengers."

"Four passengers?"

"Yeah, there was a driver and four people in the car. Two up front and three in the back. Five altogether."

"That's a great start, Mr. Dalton, considering we have claims from the driver and five passengers." The tone of the man's voice seemed to brighten. "I'm even more anxious now to see this video of yours."

"I'll e-mail it to you," Mark said.

"That would be great. It would really be a big help."

"So, I get the feeling what happened to me is pretty common?"

"Very much so. In fact the type of accident you were involved in is so common it has its own name – the 'Swoop and Squat.' That's where a car will pull out in front of an unsuspecting driver and suddenly slam on its brakes...usually for no reason, but sometimes because a decoy car that's in on the scam pulls out in front of it, forcing it to make an abrupt stop."

"There was nothing in front of that car but clear road."

"Yeah, they're getting a lot more brazen, paying less and less attention to the details. It's an easy one to pull off, especially when the police always issue a ticket to the person who does the rear-ending, putting them at fault. That's one of the reasons why this kind of scam is so prevalent."

"There are others?"

"A few. Another one is the 'Drive Down' where a driver will wave you ahead, then cut in front of you so that you hit their car, usually on the front fender or driver's door."

Mark sighed.

"Then there's the sideswipe, where a driver will swerve into your lane on a double-lane left hand turn, then claim you drifted over into their lane."

"They've thought of everything, eh?"

"Finally there's the 'Shady Helper' scam where someone who's witnessed the accident steps forward and suggests a repair shop they know of that does good work for cheap prices. Then once the car's in the shop they gouge the insurance company for all kinds of bogus work."

Mark thought about that. "You know," he said, "someone did come to me right after the accident and suggest a mechanic they knew. I told him thanks, but I had my own mechanic."

"That's good for you. These repair shops really know how to work the system. They'll sometimes even charge the

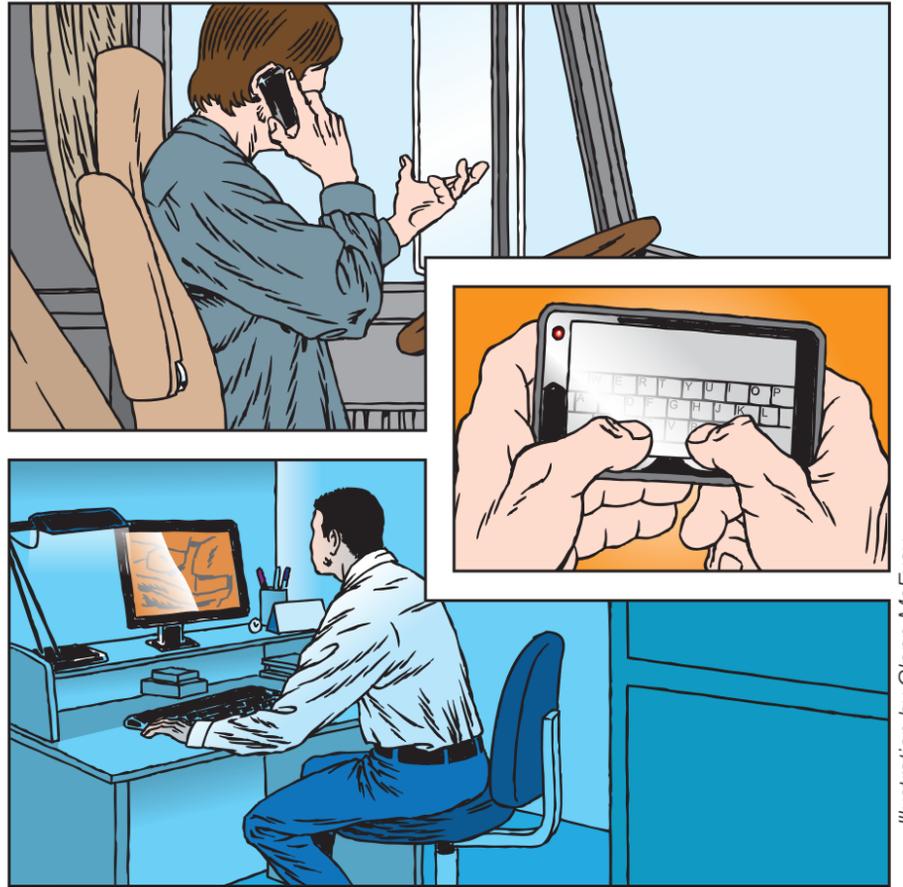


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

vehicle owners money for extra repairs they say are needed but aren't covered by a person's insurance. It ends up costing everyone a bundle in the end."

"This all sounds pretty organized."

"Believe me, it ends up costing the insurance industry billions each year. But it's not a victimless crime because the extra costs of all these settlements get passed down to the consumer who pays more for their insurance coverage."

"The little guy always pays in the end, doesn't he?"

"Unfortunately, yes."

"So my video will help you nail these guys?"

"Absolutely. In fact, you did just about everything you could after the accident to protect yourself...write down everyone's information, take pictures, count the number of people involved, and note how people act before and after the police and EMS arrive."

Mark smiled at that. Mark Dalton was nobody's fool.

"With the video," he continued, "at least we'll have the proof we need to deny most of their medical claims. Hopefully, once they know we have a video of the accident scene, they'll back off and we can close out the claim."

"Hopefully?"

He could hear the insurance man sighing over the phone.

"Unfortunately, it's just as hard to prove there is no soft-tissue damage, as it is to prove there is. We can provide all the proof in the world, but they can still claim to have injuries. At least with the video we can dismiss the claim of the person who wasn't at the accident outright...and that'll make it that much harder for the rest of them to prove their case."

"Then I'll e-mail the video to you

right away."

"That would be terrific. Thank you so much."

"Just do me one favour," Mark said.

"What's that?"

"Remember this when it comes time to raise my insurance rates."

A slight laugh. "That's a different department, but I'll try and pass along the information."

"I'd appreciate that."

Mark hung up the phone, clenching it in his fist for several seconds. Even though he'd done all he could to protect himself, he still couldn't shake the feeling that he'd been played...taken advantage off.

It was a strange feeling for Mark, and for a moment he wished that he had missed the brakes and plowed right through that car.

But the moment passed.

And he remembered the advice Bud had given to him just moments after the accident happened: Put it behind you, deliver your load, and get on with your life. Basically, keep on trucking.

Mark turned the ignition and Mother Load's Cummins roared to life. Then he shifted her into first, and got back to work. □

– Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Collision Course.

Did you know that there are two full-length novels featuring Mark Dalton? Mark Dalton "SmartDriver" and Mark Dalton "Troubleload." For your free copy register with ecoENERGY for Fleets (Fleet Smart) at fleetsmart.gc.ca. Both are also available in audio book format.



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SAFETY

Carrier report cards deserve some added attention

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

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

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

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

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



Ask the Expert

KEVIN COLE

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

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

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

These good news stories can help

to reduce violation rates, but they also encourage the thorough pre-trip inspections that can reduce the cost of roadside breakdowns.

There is value in sharing the wider safety ratings with staff as well. Improving scores validate safety programs, improve morale, and enforce a company's broader safety culture. Besides that, the data is already publicly available to anyone with a computer and an Internet connection.

The emerging insight even predicts future threats better than tracking high-cost events on their own. One driver who is moving too fast for winter conditions may lose control, cross the ditch and remain upright. Another driver in the same situation may cross the ditch and hit an oncoming vehicle. The underlying challenge is the same. The only thing that changes is the severity of the collision.

Once a report's data is confirmed, fleets can use it in a proactive way to target any shortcomings, adopting a clear action plan, setting benchmarks, and monitoring the related results to see if strategies are making the expected difference.

But the action plans themselves will always be unique to each challenge. Climbing out-of-service rates may require a change in maintenance programs or service intervals; an increase in logbook violations might lead to hard-coded logbook sheets to eliminate form and manner vio-

lations, or even shifts in dispatching procedures. If a large share of collisions can be traced to drivers who are changing lanes, there may be a need to offer added training in defensive driving or adjusting mirrors.

The one thing effective action plans share in common is that everyone – from operations teams to safety departments, salespeople, drivers and mechanics – has a role to play in any lasting solutions. Issues with something like hours-of-service, for example, can require a combination of driver training, trip planning, and customer contracts that reflect more reasonable demands.

The process never actually ends. But those who keep a close eye on results, and set related goals every year, will be in the best position to identify the root cause of any challenges and track the related improvements.

That approach is bound to earn a good grade. □

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

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Jim's Brayings

COMMUNITY NEWS FROM THE WESTERN PROVINCES

BY JIM BRAY



Welcome to Jim's Brayings, a quick look at some interesting community news items from across the west that we think will interest you. If you have some news you think will be a good match for this column, pop me off an e-mail at jim@transportationmedia.ca. We can't run everything, of course, but we'll try to get in as much as space permits...

STA celebrates 75 years

Well, here it is winter already, the time of year where it's traditional to look back at the past year – and in many cases even farther back than that. So it's fitting that the Saskatchewan Trucking Association gathered in late October to celebrate its 75th anniversary of existence.

Started in 1937 by "a group of truckers who saw a need for a united voice in dealing with the government" (kind of reminds me of an old song by the Bobby Fuller Four), the association also offers industry training in a variety of disciplines important to trucking.

The bash, which accompanied the STA's AGM, was held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Saskatoon and also saw various award recipients honoured. They included:

- Volvo Trucks Canada Driver of the Year: Roger Thompson, DJ Knoll Transport;
- Frontier Peterbilt Sales Dis-



MANITOBA DRIVER OF THE YEAR: Ed Dueck (Big Freight Systems) is presented with Driver of the Year honours by Marcie Dueck, and Randy Fleming (Volvo Trucks Canada).

patcher of the Year: Shannon Mensinger, Edge Transportation Service;

- Shaw Tracking Service to the Industry Award: Gary Redhead, Redhead Equipment.

Leadership plaques were also awarded to past STA presidents. And special mention should be made of the man who perhaps most personifies a person Argo-haters outside the centre of the universe can't help but like and respect. Mike "Pinball" Clemons, the former Grey Cup winner who went on to a fine career in the front office after he finished carrying the ball in anger,

was a special guest that evening. Clemons is a terrific speaker, and the STA said he worked the room that evening, speaking about leadership, family, heroes, etc.

Congratulations to the STA and the award winners!

MTA dittoes

They were doing the same kind of thing in Winnipeg in mid-November, when the Manitoba Trucking Association threw its annual Fall Awards Gala. And they handed out their share of hardware as well:

- MTA-Payne Transportation LP Associate of the Year: Geoff Bell, Arthur J. Gallagher (Canada) Group;
- MTA-Volvo Trucks Canada Driver of the Year: Ed Dueck, Big Freight Systems;
- MTA-RBC Royal Bank Service to Industry Award: Helene Nadeau, La Broquerie Transfer. Nadeau was also inducted into the MTA Pioneer's Club for 25 years of involvement in Manitoba's trucking industry.
- MTA-Shaw Tracking Distinguished Member Award: Big Freight Systems.

A 'Hayle' of a good idea...

The trucking, farming and ranching communities are traditionally quite closely knit, and this has meant that when something goes awry in one person's yard, a neighbour rises to the occasion and helps out. Such is the case with the AMTA's HayEast 2012 initiative, which follows that timeless code by asking Alberta truckers to help some folk in Ontario and Pontiac counties in Western Quebec. See, we Albertans don't all hate Quebec!

According to the AMTA, during the last major prairie drought 10 years ago, more than 1,800 farmers from Ontario to Nova Scotia donated 35,000 tonnes of hay to 1,000 Alberta and Saskatchewan farmers. That HayWest initiative is the obvious inspiration for the current HatEast push that asks AMTA members to donate their time and equipment to haul hay donated in Alberta and Saskatchewan to Ontario. They would also like help in getting hay transported inside Alberta, from farms to collection spots so they can be loaded onto trains for the trip east.

If you're an AMTA member will-

ing to donate your trucking services for a worthy cause, you can contact www.hayeast2012.com or call 855-429-2012.

Now you're loggin'!

If you're looking for a "tree-mendous" career, or just to branch out a bit (okay, enough!), the Central Interior Logging Association wants to see you. The group has received funding for its next FIRST Logger program, which is designed to help train people on how to become log haulers or heavy equipment operators.

The FIRST (Forest Industry Readiness Skills Training) Logger program snagged just shy of a half million tax-funded loonies (\$494,000) last spring and used it to help train and place 28 log truck drivers and logging equipment operators in the Prince George area. A similar amount is available now to continue the project.

It appears that the initial program had good roots that helped prove the concept, and that prompted the renewal of the program's lease. That's the impression given by B.C. Forestry Minister Pat Bell, anyway. He barked out via a press release when the new moolah was announced that the response to the first FIRST Logger program was "phenomenal."

The Central Interior Logging Association says the training combines private trainers and contractors, offering real-time projection experience and on-the-job training.

Contractors interested in axing for more information can contact CILA at 250-562-3368 or visit www.firstlogger.org.

Speaking of Saskatchewan...

At the AGM that accompanied the abovementioned 75th anniversary bash and awards gala, the STA also elected a new board of directors.

Taking on the thankless tasks of such a gig require are:

- President: Terry Siemens, Edge Transportation Systems;
 - First vice-president: Graham Newton, T&T Trucking;
 - Second vice-president: Steven Balzer, Transall Group of Companies;
 - Past president: Glen Ertell, Northern Resource Trucking
- Board members:
- Bryan Richards, Yanke Group of Companies;
 - Reg Quiring, Q-Line Trucking;
 - Don Paul, Westcan Bulk;
 - Harvey McClelland, Turner Transport;
 - Wayne Ridsdale, Ridsdale Transport;
 - Doug Siemens, Kindersley Transport.

Also serving on the Board for the next terms are:

- Doreen Pankewich, Jay's Group of Companies, Regina;
- Garth Pitzel, Bison Transport, Winnipeg;
- Harvey Scaddan, Husky Energy, Lloydminster;
- Harvey Stewart, A&S Transport Ltd., Yorkton;
- Russ Turgeon, Jay's Moving & Storage Ltd., Regina

That's it for this time. As always, if you have an item you think your peers should know about, pop me off an email to jim@transportationmedia.ca. Space, taste and legality aside, we try to get as much info into these rambling rants as possible, so get in touch! □

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