

TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989 • February 2014 Volume 25, Issue 2

Page 8 Recruiting from abroad: The BCTA has published a guide to help fleets find qualified drivers abroad.

Page 20 Losing weight: We drive Volvo's new Optimized Series regional haul VNM, which saves about 1,200 lbs.

Page 22 Take the B-train: The B-train has enhanced trucking's productivity but is it really a Canadian invention?

Page 24 Tire tips: How do you generate savings out of thin air? Easy. You keep the right amount in your tires.

trucknews.com



Diesel supply shortages have driven up the cost of fuel in Western Canada, but fleets here may be suffering because surcharge formulas don't take such disparities into consideration. Western associations are sounding the alarm for fleets and shippers.

Photo by WowTrucksCalendar.com



Reach us at our Western Canada news bureau

Contact **Jim Bray** at: jjm@transportationmedia.ca or call **403-453-5558**

Fuel surcharge disparities

WINNIPEG, Man. – Fuel prices are rising, but they're rising at different rates in different parts of the country, and the Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) wants the industry to do a better job of explaining those differences.

The MTA is urging trucking companies and the trucking industry as a whole to take the time and inform shippers about the reasons behind the price changes.

For example, it notes that prices in Western Canada were higher in recent months due to local geographic factors – specifically a Shell plant shutdown in Edmonton, Suncor equipment failure in Fort McMurray, and a power loss incident in Edmonton.

The MTA said doing a better job of educating customers is necessary since fuel surcharges often don't reflect the rates trucking companies should be receiving, especially when the surcharges are calculated using a program based on the FCA (Freight Carrier's Association) index – a model built only on retail diesel prices drawn from Ontario and Quebec.

The association encourages its members to explain the situation to carriers as part of the process of negotiating contracts that include temporary measures to compensate for the price differences.

The MTA also suggests the industry warn its clients that fuel surcharge rates are likely to increase in the future.

The Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) was quick to agree. In a notice posted on its Web site, the association wrote: "AMTA is adding its voice to the industry chorus encouraging...fleets to make shippers aware that diesel fuel prices have dramatically increased in the west because of refinery issues; based on these increases it may be prudent for parties to examine their current fuel surcharge program."

The AMTA urged carrier members and the trucking industry in general to discuss options with their customers to provide temporary relief from these latest cost impacts as well as make shippers aware of the fluctuation in fuel prices across Canada and to expect higher fuel surcharges because of it. **TW**

A natural home for natural gas

By **Jim Bray**

CALGARY, Alta. – Calgary and its surrounding area is well positioned for the adoption of natural gas as a transportation fuel. That, at least, is the word according to a newly published report from the Van Horne Institute at the University of Calgary.

The 70-page report, entitled *Natural Gas – The Transportation Fuel of the Future for the Calgary Region*, was prepared for natural gas giant Encana and Alberta Energy and, perhaps not surprisingly, it paints a rosy picture of the benefits of converting to natural gas. That doesn't mean we're going to wake up some morning in the near future and find diesel engines relegated to a motoring museum somewhere, of course, but if the study is to be believed, the doors are wide open to a broader adoption of the greener gas in the Calgary area and beyond.

There are problems to be addressed before the fuel becomes mainstream, of course, but Reg Johnston, the report's author, thinks these are eminently addressable.

Regular readers of *Truck West* know there's a movement already toward

Continued on page 6

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

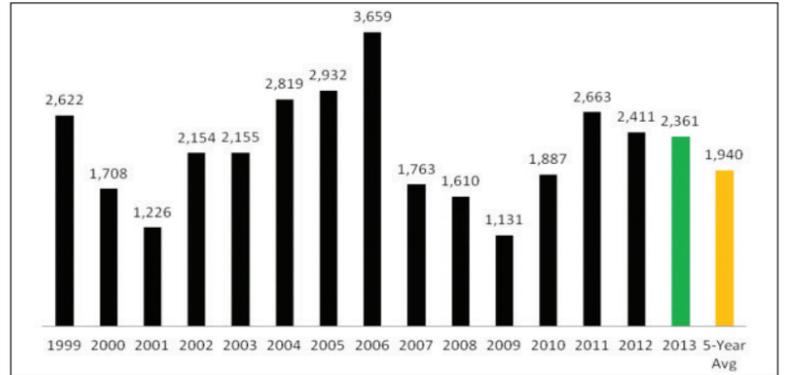
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The 2,361 trucks sold in November reflected a return to the trend Class 8 sales have experienced for most of 2013, coming in slightly behind last year's totals. October's higher than 2012 totals was an aberration. It made for the seventh best November going back to 1999. Only International and Volvo posted slightly higher figures than the previous year. The sales total for the month is also more than 400 above the five-year average.

Monthly Class 8 Sales – Nov 13

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	578	723
International	391	236
Kenworth	341	421
Mack	150	164
Peterbilt	283	343
Volvo	434	312
Western Star	184	212
TOTALS	2361	2411

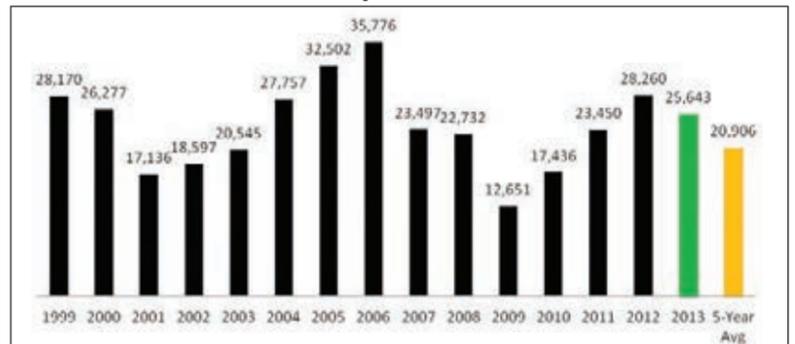
Historical Comparison – Nov 13 Sales



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

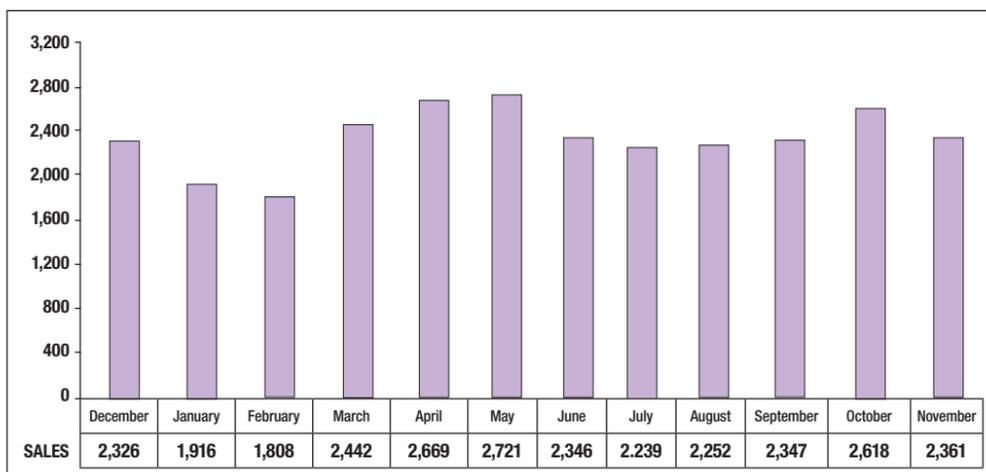
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	521	748	198	364	2,819	1,115	364	118	25	50	6,322
Kenworth	710	1,663	448	104	753	801	98	0	0	0	4,577
Mack	152	320	181	61	734	341	73	70	0	14	1,946
International	144	639	78	188	1,757	726	121	47	34	34	3,768
Peterbilt	476	1,184	303	215	615	472	161	53	0	0	3,479
Volvo	345	287	120	212	1,419	752	132	65	0	8	3,340
Western Star	338	711	74	70	436	416	55	86	5	20	2,211
TOTALS	2,686	5,552	1,402	1,214	8,533	4,623	1,004	439	64	126	25,643

Historical Comparison – YTD Nov 13



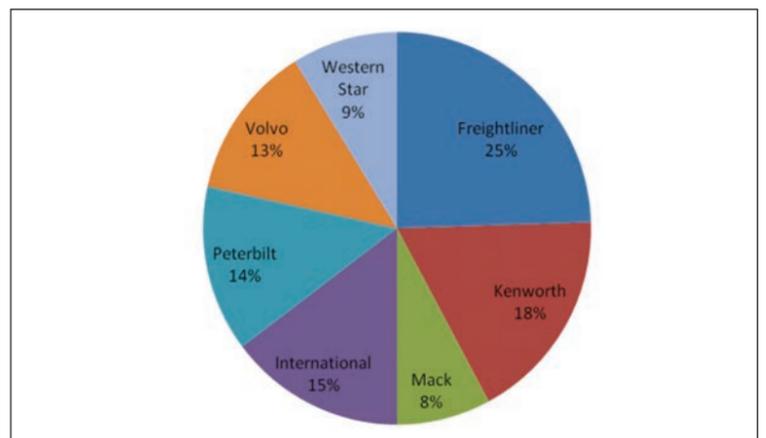
YTD Class 8 sales of 25,643 places 2013 more than 2,600 trucks behind last year's pace but also more than 4,700 above the five-year average. So far this is the 7th best year in sales going back to 1999 and the slippage we were expecting for the final quarter did not surface. Assuming truck sales of 2,300-2,400 in December, sales for 2013 will come in very close to our revised estimate of around 28,500 vehicles.

12-Month Sales Trends



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

Market Share Class 8 – Nov 13 YTD



With one month left to report, Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, is solidly in control of the market share lead with about a quarter of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Kenworth finished 2012 in the number two spot for market share and there it still sits with an 18% market share. Navistar International finished the year with 15% market share and remains in a close race with Peterbilt which has a 14% share of the Canadian Class 8 market. Volvo is the only other OE with a market share above 10%.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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 ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER – Kathy Penner
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR – James Menzies
 RESEARCH DIRECTOR – Laura Moffatt
 CIRCULATION MANAGER – Mary Garufi
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 CREATIVE – Carolyn Brimer, Beverley Richards
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Advertising inquiries

Kathy Penner (416) 510-6892
 Fax: (416) 510-5143



Lou Smyrlis
 Publisher
 (416) 510-6881
 lou@TransportationMedia.ca



Kathy Penner
 Associate Publisher
 (416) 510-6892
 kpenner@trucknews.com



Brenda Grant
 National Account Sales
 (416) 494-3333
 bgrant@istar.ca



Don Besler
 National Account Sales Manager
 (416) 699-6966
 donbesleris@rogers.com



Doug Copeland
 Regional Account Manager
 (416) 510-6889
 dcopeland@trucknews.com



Carolyn Gruske
 Contributing Editor
 (416) 510-6809
 cgruske@TransportationMedia.ca

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The future of freight brokering

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



Just before Christmas, I had the opportunity to sit in on a roundtable discussion hosted by Mike McCarron, who heads mergers and acquisitions for Wheels Group. McCarron was one of the Ms in MSM Transportation, which he and his partners sold to Wheels Group last year.

Now he works at Wheels, where he is looking to help consolidate the Canadian 3PL space. McCarron assembled a group of ‘power brokers’ to discuss industry trends and where they see the 3PL industry going in the years ahead.

Included in the discussion were: Manny Speranza, FBI-Freight; John Tittel, Hot Freight International; John Flaherty, HTS Freight Logistics; Ian MacDonald, ShipNorthAmerica Transportation; Larry Cox, Polaris Transport Group; and Eric Carusi, Transpro Freight Systems.

Interestingly, throughout the discussion it occurred to me that freight brokers have many of the same concerns Canadian truckers do. They worry about consolidation and the impact of losing access to small-sized carriers. They feel personal relationships are still the key to success in business. And they recognize technology – and the ability and willingness to invest in it – is pivotal to companies that want to remain relevant going forward.

Their insights into the evolving sales process also included some good advice for motor carriers.

“It’s very difficult to door-knock like



we did 25 years ago. We tried hiring some people on salary and it didn’t work out. Today, the guy who controls that freight may be in Los Angeles. I see companies investing less in outside sales. It’s too costly to make a sales call. You still have to have that relationship, but it may be at a different level,” noted Speranza.

These brokers also agreed that the 3PLs – or carriers, for that matter – that invests in technology and has the ability to provide real-time visibility of freight, will be the ones that succeed.

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

Added Polaris’ Cox: “The num-

ber one question in this industry is ‘Where’s my freight?’ The ability to answer this question in real-time is becoming increasingly important, whether you’re a broker or asset-based trucking company.

The challenges – and the opportunities – facing freight brokers and motor carriers are similar. Going forward, success will hinge on their ability to forge strong relationships with customers, to continue investing in technology and to differentiate their service offerings from their competitors. To read a three-part series I wrote from the day’s discussions, visit Trucknews.com and search for ‘The future of freight brokering.’ **TW**

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

The deal on deregulation

The trucking and taxicab industries, despite the obvious differences in the sizes of vehicles used and the distances travelled, share similar operational challenges: managing capacity, reducing empty miles, and operating across jurisdictional borders.

Yet the two industries have travelled two very distinct roads since the 1980s. Trucking was deregulated while the taxicab industry remains very much in the clutch of market supply controls. A recent study from the Conference Board of Canada, *We Have Been Here Before: Supply Chain Management in Transportation*, pulls no punches in choosing which has proven the better path.

The study concludes that deregulation has proven to be good for both motor carriers and shippers; prices fell while productivity increased. It points out that from 1986 (the last year of regulation) to 2003, trucking industry total factor productivity increased by an average 1.7% per year. Prices meanwhile increased by just 0.8% per year on average in nominal terms and actually

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



dropped in real terms. And this took place despite average increases in input prices such as fuel, labour, and the cost of new trucks, of 2.6% per year.

In other words, carriers, despite facing higher costs, were forced by the competition created by deregulation to innovate to the point that their productivity gains not only helped them overcome rising costs but to pass on a substantial part of those productivity gains on to their customers. The study estimates 87% of productivity gains have been used to hold down output prices in the face of rising costs. And yet deregulation also helped for-hire trucking grow from a \$9-billion industry to nearly \$30 billion (in nominal terms) over the same period.

By contrast, the consequences of continued stringent market regulation in the taxicab industry include: high capitalized values of licenc-

es, ultimately paid by higher prices charged to customers; and higher taxicab miles stemming from restrictions on picking up passengers in neighbouring municipalities.

In other words, the study concludes, the regulated taxicab industry is both more expensive and less efficient than it should be. I agree deregulation was best for the trucking industry. I’m just not sure it’s quite as good as it is made out to be. Does passing on 87% of productivity gains to hold down prices make for an industry worth investing in long term? Does it make for an industry economically healthy enough to continue to invest in innovation or their people? Interestingly, the study itself points out that prior to deregulation truck drivers and their helpers earned wages estimated to be 50% above the competitive level. Not too many drivers these days will tell you they earn a fair wage.

I can’t see ever turning back the clock on deregulation. But let’s be clear-eyed about the sacrifices made and the pitfalls that may lie ahead. **TW**

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

Natural gas a natural Alberta solution: Report

Continued from page 1

adopting natural gas, though so far it's more of a pilot project-type thing than a mainstream groundswell.

But Johnston, owner of RJ T&L Consulting, noted in the report that there are early adoption opportunities that could give farsighted companies a competitive leg up.

Johnston noted that natural gas use leads to fuel savings, makes a positive impact on the environment (despite gas still being a fossil fuel) and could also help attract investment to the region. And he says it's happening already, in limited ways.

"We found a lot of precedents already in the market, which was a good sign," he told *Truck West*, pointing to projects that are either underway currently or in the planning stages by such diverse outlets as Calgary Transit, Calgary Waste and Recycling and Bison Transport. Adding fuel to the growing fire are the facts that Calgary has its first public access LNG facility - at a Shell Flying J Travel Plaza in the city's southeast quadrant - and CN is looking at natural gas fuel for the rail side of things.

"Those are good findings, good signs that there's ways to find solutions that are cost-effective," he said, "so the business case is there and the interest is there in some point or form."

Johnston's study looked at each transportation segment, including passenger vehicles, to see if the vehicles and the refuelling infrastructure are ready to start, well, cooking with gas. And while implementation in the region is more a ripple than a wave so far, "at the end of the day," he said, "I think there's a healthy amount of adoption there, if the model holds true, to motivate the players to keep going at this. I think the region is positioned well."

As for LNG as it relates to the trucking industry specifically, Johnston said he's optimistic.

"We know the logistics industry uses a lot of fuel and (is looking for ways to save money), and we know that there are governing bodies that are interested in them reducing their CO₂ footprint, so there's some good characteristics about that particular sector that make it a good candidate for adoption."

The big if, of course, is infrastructure, but Johnston noted that the trucking industry needs less of a network than ordinary citizens do because "you can set up the corridor approach to refuelling. Unlike with a commuter car, you don't need fuelling stations at 75, 80 places in one city. You can get away with a few refuelling stations along the way."

Another legitimate reason to look at natural gas is as a way to avoid or extend the possibly inevitable day when there's either no more oil to be found underground or the world chokes in a cloud of haze. Or both. "Lots of companies, lots of folks out there doing long-term outlooks at energy consumption are saying that natural gas has got to bridge us off of fossil fuels at some point in time in order to keep up with energy demand and environmental impacts," Johnston said, citing one of the other studies he used in his research.

On the other hand, while natural gas's current low price is another strong reason to consider it, it seems as if new oil deposits are being found all the time.

Could that mean there's an oil glut coming that could make its price competitive with natural gas? Johnston doesn't think it'll happen in the near future. "In the study I looked at and quoted in the report, they continue to see a gap between the two. I guess it depends how far out you want to look."

He noted, however, that the situation isn't completely unprecedented, in that some fleets embraced propane in the 1980s.

But "then they started pricing propane like gas and some of (the) cost savings went away" he said, speculating that fears of a repeat of such a scenario could make some people skittish about making the capital investment to natural gas conversion.

"At the end of the day it is a very complex decision and it's very specific for

each organization," he said. "But what we predicted is that if early adopters start to gain a competitive advantage,

ing early successes in Quebec and British Columbia. "There are companies out there saying very positive things about their adoption, including cost savings and environmental impact, and so if that positive experience keeps up then I think you'll see others having to switch."

And while much needs to happen before everyone jumps into a pool of liquefied natural gas, good strides are being made in some areas already - including the

'At the end of the day it is a very complex decision.'

Reg Johnston

then you'll see... everybody come on board and there'll be more adoption from there."

Johnston thinks that's quite likely, cit-

trucking industry.

"It varies for each segment," Johnston said, "but to summarize for the heavy-haul industry, we've got the beginning

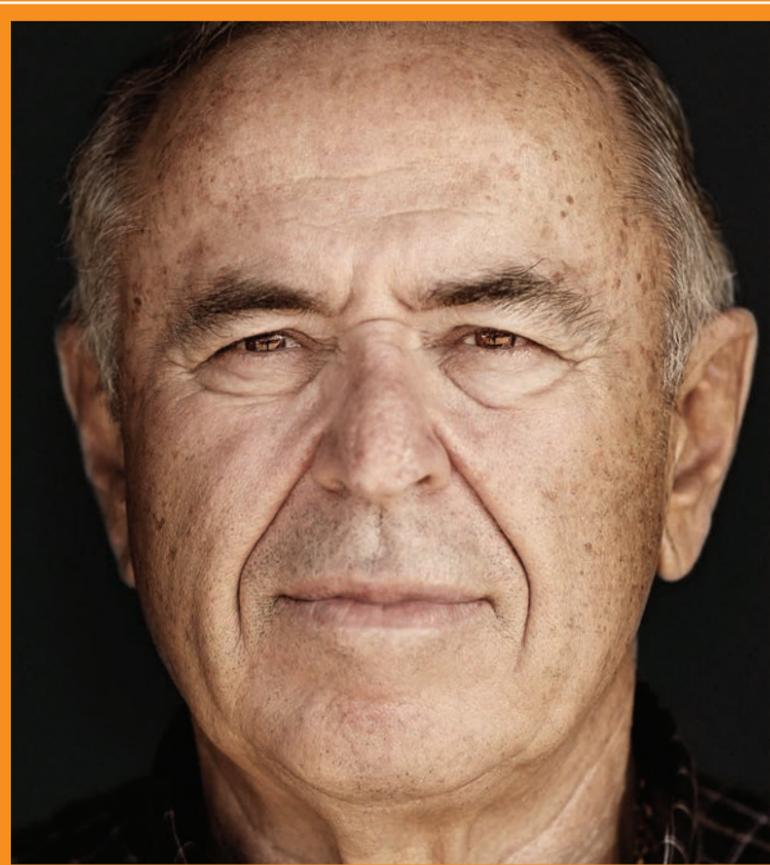
"Who could possibly keep up with all the new trucking regs? Good thing Northbridge keeps me current."

Brian Kurtz, President, Kurtz Trucking, Breslau, Ontario

"I'm old school," says Brian Kurtz. "When I started my trucking company over 30 years ago, you didn't worry too much about the rules. Now there are so many rules and regulations. Every province and state is different. And we're getting more regulated every week."

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"Someone once said that trucking has twice as much paperwork as banking. Too bad

of infrastructure, in a corridor perspective that we're starting to see. We've got upstream gas plants being built by major players that feed into that, so the infrastructure side of things is looking better."

He doesn't think it's enough, though. "We need continued investment," he said. "We need to find great tractor solutions to align with that infrastructure so there's a good business case for the end-user and, further to that, we need government to work on it as well and provide as much stability within that decision-making process and make the business case easier for local companies to convert and start purchasing fleets."

If that happens, Johnston said, "like a lot of things, once you get an economy of scale and momentum then you'll see greater adoption."

When asked if he's calling for tax dollars to be used to encourage natural gas adoption, Johnston was quick to reply "yes, absolutely. At the end of the day,



A new report says Alberta is a great place to expand the use of natural gas as a transportation fuel.

the government has to pick a way to go on a lot of issues if they want that result in their jurisdiction. So if you believe

in the outcome being a cheaper way to move our goods around, which is great for our economy, and with the outcome

of a lower CO₂ impact, which is great for the economy as well, then I think government should do that."

One way Johnston thinks government could help is by giving natural gas-fired trucks a bit of a break.

"You carry more weight on the truck for the fuelling system," he said, "and that reduces the load you can put on the back. There's interest in having a slight adjustment done on the vehicle weights so they can carry the same payload."

But Johnston said the most significant barrier to natural gas adoption has little to do with infrastructure or price: it's the fact that it's change, and that means people must be willing to change. And that means following the lead of places such as Brazil and parts of Europe, who have been using natural gas for a long time already and are reaping the benefits. Johnston said he'd like to expand his findings to include a broader view well beyond the Calgary region, but so far there isn't the funding. He thinks the reaction to this particular work could help spur a flow of dough, though.

"We're hoping to get this paper out into the market and see what thought it provokes, because that was the main intent," he said, "but at the same time it would be good to take a look at other regions - in the heavy hauling industry in particular - you're looking at national systems that have to change, from both a vehicle production perspective and a refueling infrastructure perspective."

The idea, he said, is to "create enough interest and momentum in the market, in both the public and private spaces, to keep this top of mind and keep people working at implementing it." **TW**

we don't have twice the profits," jokes Mr. Kurtz.

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Business Kurtz

Alberta truckers to pay less for WCB

EDMONTON, Alta. – Alberta trucking companies will pay less for Workers Compensation Board (WCB) coverage in 2014, the Alberta Motor Transport Association says.

It was informed recently of the rate decreases in three groups: trucking general; trucking specialized; and garbage collection/disposal.

Rates are based on the industry's overall performance.

The AMTA reports trucking general rates will go down 12.47%; trucking specialized will decrease 13.66%; and garbage collection/disposal rates will decrease 5.06%. **TW**

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BCTA releases guide to hiring foreign drivers

LANGLEY, B.C. – The B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA) has created a reference guide for carriers looking to recruit drivers from overseas.

The 55-page *International Trucking Reference: Roads, Rules and Drivers* guide identifies key considerations for carriers that wish to hire immigrant drivers. It provides an overview of the trucking environment in 10 countries to help motor carriers understand how the skills and experience of an immigrant driver may translate to a professional career in B.C., the association announced.

The *International Trucking Reference* was developed with input from carriers about the information they require to make hiring decisions about drivers who've gained the majority of their ex-

perience outside of Canada.

"Given that most B.C. trucking companies are small- to mid-sized, they may not have the staff to research the background of a job applicant with foreign experience. BCTA is pleased that funding from the federal and provincial governments has allowed us to create the *International Trucking Reference*, a dependable, easy-to-use resource that will save employers time and help them make better-informed hiring decisions," said Louise Yako, BCTA president and CEO.

The guide was authored by Ottawa-based training and consulting firm Graybridge Malkalm. Countries included in the guide are: India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, Korea, Romania, Russia, the Ukraine and the United Kingdom. The guide provides a profile of the driving environment in each country, including training standards and commercial vehicle types.

"Immigrants who call B.C. home bring a wealth of talent to our province – talent that employers can tap into as long as they know how to recognize the skills and experience. BCTA's project will help employers understand the working environments of qualified professional drivers who have immigrated from other countries, and give them confidence they are hiring people with the skills their companies – and our economy – need," said Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour, Shirley Bond.

The free guide can be accessed at www.bctrucking.com/careers. TW

South Fraser Perimeter Road now open

DELTA, B.C. – B.C.'s South Fraser Perimeter Road has opened to traffic. The new four-lane highway will provide greater access to Vancouver ports and will alleviate congestion in the region.

"The completion of the South Fraser Perimeter Road is good news for the Metro Vancouver region. It means a better road network and more capacity to transport goods to and from fast-growing markets throughout the Asia-Pacific region," said MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay. "This project demonstrates that when we work together with our partners through the Asia Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative, we can develop projects that facilitate international trade and create jobs and economic growth in local communities across Canada."

The new highway connects all five major Fraser River crossings to improve transit times. For instance, travel time between Hwy. 1 and the Tsawwassen ferry terminal is now less than 30 minutes, or half what it would take using Hwy. 10, the province claims.

The new route will provide about 7,000 long-term jobs along the corridor, the province claims. It will also separate commercial traffic from residential areas. TW



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Gord Cooper talks about Kenworth restoration

CALGARY, Alta. – As Kenworth celebrates its 90th anniversary, the truck maker took time recently to recognize the truck restorations completed by some of its biggest Canadian fans.

Among them was Gord Cooper of Calgary, Alta., who restored a 1935 Kenworth Model 89. Cooper came across his Model 89 at the 1992 American Truck Historical Society (ATHS) Antique Truck Show in Vancouver, Wash. He noticed the three-ton single drive axle flatbed truck still ran with its original 65-hp gas engine, four-speed manual transmission, two-speed Brown-Lipe auxiliary transmission and Timken two-speed rear axle.

However, the wood frame cab and exterior were in poor shape.

“It had been repainted an ugly utility orange colour, but I still fell in love with it,” Cooper said. He bought the truck from Pat Stump of Yakima, Wash., who found it sitting abandoned in the corner of a field near Yakima with a layer of Mount St. Helens ash still covering its dashboard and much of its interior.

With help of his friends in the Pioneer Chapter of the American Truck Historical Society, Cooper finished the restoration, complete with a rebuilt stakebed.

Since then, Cooper has restored a number of Kenworth trucks, including a 1957 Kenworth 923 conventional, which was featured in the Kenworth Truck Company’s 75th Anniversary in 1998.

The Kenworth 923 also served as the bridal carriage in three weddings, including his own wedding and the wedding of his daughter. He’s currently restoring a 1926 Kenworth Model OL.

“I have been a diehard Kenworth fan for most of my life,” said Cooper, who owns and operates O.C.E.A.N. Hauling and Hotshot, a light oilfield hauling company based in Calgary.

His company runs several Kenworths including a 2003 tri-drive Kenworth T800 with a 15-ton hydraulic picker.

Equally passionate is Pierre Aubin, who has owned five Kenworth K100s throughout the 80s and 90s.

“Over the last two years, I searched for one and with the help of one of my drivers, Luc Lemieux, I found the one I wanted,” Aubin said. “Luc found it in Land-O-Lakes, Fla.”

Aubin drove it back to Montreal, where he had it refurbished.

Aubin occasionally takes his refurbished 1986 Kenworth K100 out for short two- or three-day trips. **TW**

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Excessive regulations are eroding the freedom of the job

“I moved here to be with the love of my life. I hope he realizes on nights like this when I drive home from work, I risk my life to live with him!”

That was a comment made by one of my friends after a harrowing winter drive from London to her home in Tillsonburg. It made me realize that what I consider fun and challenging is to most people an experience they would rather do without. When it comes to winter driving, the majority of people are white-knuckling it out there, and it shows. My driving experiences over this past holiday season reinforced my belief that the greatest hazard we face on the road as professional drivers, is in fact, other drivers. You can manage the curves that Mother Nature throws at you pretty well, but managing the actions of other drivers is a different story.

By far the majority of “accidents” I saw over the course of the 2013 holiday break involved a single vehicle.

The majority of people had simply run off the road and the bulk of those events resulted in a simple winch back on to the road accompanied by a bruised ego. It wasn’t difficult to pick out the



higher speed events: rollovers and vehicles that had ridden the guardrail or retaining wall for extended distances. I’ve found that the best practice for staying safe in the winter months is to simply stay as far away from other drivers as you can, or at least give it your best shot. If there is a pack of vehicles traveling together, bumper to bumper during poor weather events, I don’t want to be near them. I know that’s easier said than done when faced with some of the busiest travel days of the year.

When I do have to travel close to others, I try to bear in mind that most folks behind the wheel of passenger vehicles (some commercial vehicles too, let’s not forget) are pretty nervous on snow and ice. Patience. Patience. Patience. That’s the key. Although I admit my patience wears pretty thin at times.

That leaves a minority group of drivers that usually make driving truly miserable for the rest of us. You know, the

ones that may be sliding into you from behind, or spinning out in front of you, or bouncing off a wall or guardrail and ending up underneath you. They exude overconfidence and a general disregard for safety. If you are practicing patience you would call this group of drivers a challenge. My friend’s comment also spoke to the value we place on different classes of work. When I tell someone that I drive for a living, it can sound like a pretty cushy job, or at least pretty simple and straightforward.

It’s not often a person views a professional driver’s job through the anxiety they have experienced driving in crappy weather. When the average person recognizes that driving may put their life at risk, it says a lot about what we expose ourselves to every day as professional drivers. In fact, it’s easy for us to forget about that and become complacent as we tackle the daily grind.

When I get out in the nasty weather it gives me a true appreciation of how much I enjoy my work.

In a funny sort of way, coping with the risks we face on the road every day is where I find the greatest joy in the job. After all, that’s where true freedom lies isn’t it? Having the ability to choose your

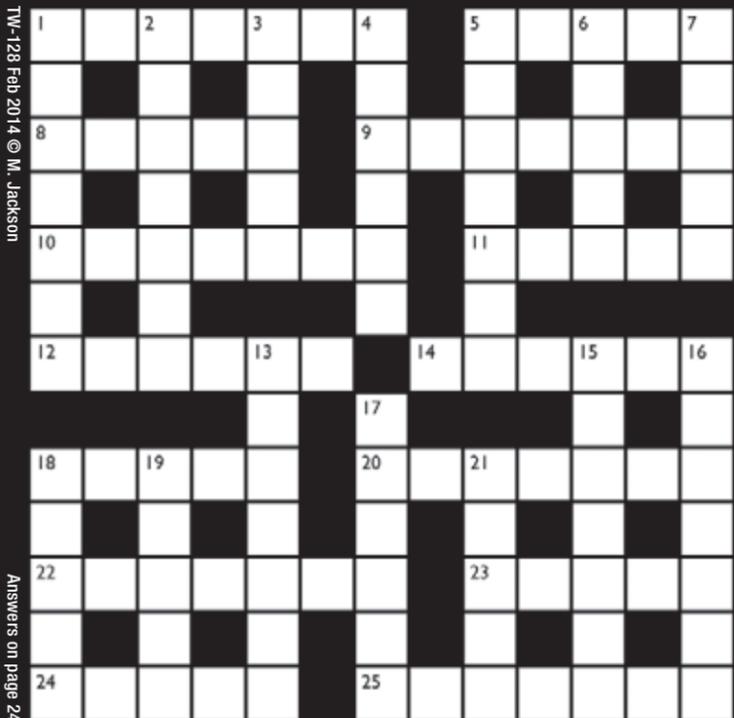
own path down the road. The comment my friend made about the stress of her commute got me thinking about a lot of different anxieties we face as drivers. But my mind always comes back to the issues we face surrounding our freedom of choice and the effect that has on our personal safety and that of the travelling public. Road safety is about the driver behind the wheel making the right choices. Those choices extend beyond the decisions we make when we are behind the wheel.

Over the course of the last few decades, professional drivers have found their hands increasingly tied when it comes to how they manage their time, when they should drive, and when they should rest. The freedom of the open road is the greatest attraction the trucking industry has to offer when it comes to recruiting and retaining people with the right skill set and personality traits to get the job done in the best and worst of conditions. That freedom continues to be eroded through hours-of-service legislation, consolidation of the industry through mergers and acquisitions, and technology implemented to control actions of drivers rather than complement their skills.

My friend reminded me we put our lives on the line every day in our profession. Our safety is dependent on our freedom to choose. Is that something we have given up on? **TW**

Al Goodhall has been a professional long-haul driver since 1998. You can follow him on Twitter at @Al_Goodhall.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

- 1 With 5-Across, deadheading (7,5)
- 5 See 1-Across
- 8 OPEC-oil description
- 9 Breaker ____, CB words (3,4)
- 10 Gladhands-connected line (3,4)
- 11 Accident-factor, frequently
- 12 “Big D” city
- 14 Highway-access lane
- 18 Post-crash insurance action
- 20 New-truck buying incentives, sometimes
- 22 Truck-loan providers
- 23 “To ____ and protect” on Smokey’s door
- 24 Gentlemen, ____ your engines!
- 25 CBs, slangily (3,4)

Down

- 1 Seven-time NASCAR champ Petty
- 2 Shifter selection
- 3 European big-rig brand
- 4 Drivers’ hand protection
- 5 Manitoba border-crossing town
- 6 Truck-shopper’s concern
- 7 Triangular-sign command
- 13 Driver’s seat feature, frequently
- 15 Medium-duty Sterling model
- 16 Rear-engine motor homes, slangily
- 17 Truck-stereo station-select button
- 18 Truck-battery compartments
- 19 Sleep-related industry issue
- 21 Winnipeg-based ____ Transport

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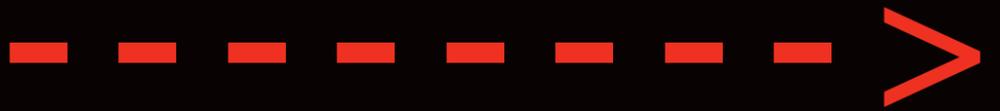


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Six deductions you don't want to miss out on this tax season

It's February and those of us in the tax business are feeling like Santa as we make our lists and check them twice. We want to make sure clients know about payroll source remittance payments, T4/T5 summaries (due Feb. 28), RRSP contributions (due March 1), and all the other data necessary to file their personal income tax return.

So while you're gathering up log-books, cell phone bills, utility bills, T4's, etc., here's a little advice about items not to leave unchecked:

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



Income splitting: The object here is to have income taxed at the lowest possible rate by splitting your income with your spouse or children, assuming that they're in a lower tax bracket than you.

Any income paid to your spouse, son, or daughter has to be shown on their return and has to be reasonable

given the work they have done for you. If a wage from you means that your spouse or child's refund will be reduced, just write them a cheque for what they should have received and call it good. Guaranteed, the amount is less than what you would have written to CRA.

Tuition and education: If you have kids in college or university, you can transfer up to \$5,000 of your child's tuition and education amount to your return as a deduction. The school will issue a tax slip showing the tuition paid for the year and number of months

attended to calculate the education amount.

Caregiver and family caregiver: You can claim caregiver-related expenses if you maintained a dwelling where a dependent person with a physical or mental impairment lives with you. Just so we're clear, a dependent can be a child, grandchild, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, parent, or grandparent of yours or your spouse or common-law partner. If the dependent is a parent or grandparent, he or she had to have been born in 1948 or earlier.

Medical expenses: Include any premiums you or your spouse/common-law partner paid to an insurance company (not a government body) for medical coverage, along with receipts for the actual drugs, glasses, hearing aids, and dental and medical services you paid for your family. CRA has a great list on its Web site if you want to see what qualifies as a deductible expense. If you're self-employed, the premiums may be better listed as a business expense rather than a medical expense on your return.

Donations: It does not matter whether your name or your spouse's name is on the slip or receipt, it's generally best to group all of your donations together and claim them on one tax return. This is especially true if the total is more than \$200 as you will get a larger tax-credit deduction.

Talk to your accountant about CRA's new first-time donor's "super" credit. It gives you an extra 25% tax credit when you claim your charitable donation tax credit. You qualify as a first-time donor if neither you nor your spouse or common-law partner has claimed the charitable donation tax credit since 2007.

A word about tax services: There are lots of people out there who want to help you file your tax return. They include big accounting firms, accountants that specialize in a particular industry like trucking, national tax-prep chains, the bookkeeper looking to make a little money on the side – and they all vary in knowledge, services, qualifications, and cost.

Once you find someone you trust, get your family's returns all done at the same place. I don't understand why some couples have different services preparing their tax returns. Unless your spouse is in some sort of specialty business (like trucking), your returns should be done by the same person to ensure all income and deductions are used to the maximum benefit. Most of the credits you may qualify for are based on household income. It saves confusion and hassle if all of your returns are done together.

Whether you were naughty or nice in 2013, CRA does not care (unless your naughtiness includes tax fraud). We all must file a tax return.

So for goodness sake, be good to yourself and take time to prepare. It's the best way to ensure that your return is accurate, on time, and takes into account all the tax planning you did throughout the year. **TW**

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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Proper tools and techniques help keep cargo secure

Freight needs to move. The business of trucking depends on it. The secret is to ensure that freight doesn't move off a trailer before a trip is complete.

North America's Cargo Securement Standard – applied in Canada as National Safety Code 10 – defines the various steps which will keep cargo snug and secure during a journey. It is where fleets and drivers alike learn how to apply tools such as straps, chains and hooks to hold freight as varied as logs, skids, metal coils and rolled paper. Re-

Ask the Expert

David Goruk



lated fleet training programs and manuals tend to focus on the specific loads a driver will encounter.

But as important as the number and placement of load security devices will always be, there are other factors to consider in the efforts to avoid spills or fines.

Cargo straps offer a perfect example.

Those which are safely stowed away when not in use can be protected against common causes of nicks and cuts, and they are certainly easier to manipulate when protected against salt, ice and snow. Other options will shield the straps that are in place. Premium designs often come with plastic wear sleeves that protect against abrasion, while plastic corner protectors shield the straps from sharp edges on the cargo itself.

In each case, the required number of straps is dictated by clearly marked Working Load Limits, and the quality of the related markings will make a differ-

ence of its own. Some roadside inspectors have been known to reject straps because the recorded limits were simply too faded to read.

It is not the only cargo securement device that deserves ongoing inspections during circle checks. The bungee cords which hold tarps in place are prone to their own weather-related damage. Those that are always left exposed to the elements will begin to crack. And, if the cords snap, the hooks at their ends will become dangerous projectiles.

Even seemingly rugged links of chain can use some added support. While load binders help to pull the links snug against a piece of cargo, the drivers who apply the leverage of an oversized bar can actually stretch the links out of shape; rusty chains might break altogether. The threats are not limited to the chain, either. Long bars applied to over-tightened binders have been known to snap back at the drivers who use them.

The hooks used to connect straps and chains to their respective anchor points complete the job. Straps which are fed under a rub rail, for example, can be locked firmly in place with a closed hook. Well-maintained binders, meanwhile, are properly secured with dedicated mechanical locking devices rather than makeshift anchors made from coat hangers or O-rings.

A few pieces of personal protective apparel will shield drivers against any swinging or snapping straps in the process. Work gloves are a start, but safety glasses will be a welcome protector if a bungee cord breaks free or if sand and gravel begins to fly off the surface of a tarp on a windy day. Safety boots will help to secure proper footing when climbing on top of any load to inspect the different securement devices.

As important as each tool will be, drivers also have a chance to enhance cargo security by observing how freight is stacked inside a trailer. Those hauling half a load, for example, can pile goods in staggered tiers. This lowers the centre of gravity and makes a trailer less prone to tipping. Filling vacant spaces with dunnage materials or air bags will keep items from shifting side to side, while a few sheets of plywood will distribute the pressure from a load bar and hold everything tight. Stacking the heaviest freight on the driver's side of the trailer – so it sits close to the highest point in the lane – helps to keep a trailer from pulling toward the shoulder of the road. And when the heaviest trailer is placed in the lead position on an A-train, the configuration will travel in the straightest-possible path.

The final step in any commitment to load security involves actions in the driver's seat. Freight is more likely to topple if trucks head too quickly into a highway off-ramp, and seemingly secured cargo can be dislodged when trailers are allowed to slam into loading docks. The light touch of an accelerator or brake pedal will limit the forces which can cause trouble. Actions like those should help everyone feel more secure. **TW**

This month's expert is David Goruk, a risk services specialist who has served the trucking industry for more than 25 years. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at www.nbins.com.

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18 PEOPLE

Ancra Canada has named **Mike Comstock** western Canada regional sales manager for its cargo systems division products. Comstock brings more than 20 years of industry experience in the heavy-duty transportation industry at the fleet management and supplier levels, announced Brian Larocque, managing director for Ancra Canada.

Meanwhile, **Neil McCall** was named to the position of central Canadian regional sales manager.

According to Larocque, McCall brings with him over 25 years of sales and service experience as a territory manager for the heavy-duty transportation aftermarket and OEM markets.

Cummins Westport has named **Gordon Exel** president. He assumed his new role Jan. 1.

"Gordon's experience with Cummins Westport and solid understanding of the customers and markets are key assets that will contribute to the ongoing success of Cummins Westport," said Ed Pence, Cummins vice-president and general manager, High Horsepower Engine Business.

Exel joined Westport in 2002 as vice-president and general manager Americas for CWI and spent 10 years at CWI. In 2012, he moved to Westport's European office in Lyon, France, as vice-president, sales and marketing.

Jim Arthurs, current Cummins Westport president, will be returning to a senior leadership position at Westport, the company announced.

Eaton Roadranger kicked off 2014 with new appointments for three employees. The regional sales manager position has been awarded to **Mike Sharpe**, who will assume the role of Canadian regional sales manager for the Eaton Roadranger Field Marketing Organization. Sharpe has been with Eaton in Canada for nine years, most recently as a territory sales manager.

Steve McCallum has been named territory sales manager, responsible for executing sales strategies within the Central Ontario region (including the Greater Toronto Area). McCallum has been with Eaton in Canada for 18 years, most recently as a territory service manager.

Bud Ralf has been named territory service manager for Central Ontario. As a territory service manager, Ralf will be responsible for executing the service strategies within the territory, the company announced.

Rob Phillips has been named president and chief operating officer of Phillips Industries.

He represents the fourth generation of the Philips family to lead the company, succeeding Bob Phillips, who will stay on as chairman and CEO. Meanwhile, the company has named **Dave Phillips** executive vice-president.

Phillips Industries makes electrical and air brake interface equipment for commercial vehicles.

"It's time to pass the baton to the next runner as we look to the future and even more success for the company," said Bob Phillips, who has led the company for 50 years. "With this latest transition, Phillips falls into a very elite group of only 3% of family-owned businesses that survive into the fourth generation. I'm confident Rob and Dave will build on the Phillips legacy and make it even stronger." **TW**

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Driving Volvo's Optimized Series VNM

Volvo has optimized its regional haul tractors to save weight. But is the D11 engine up to the task? We took one out into the Virginia hills to find out.

By James Menzies

When it comes to removing weight from a Class 8 truck, how do you determine the value of a single pound removed? That's one of the questions Volvo sought to determine when optimizing its regional haul tractors for lighter weight.

To find an answer to this question, Volvo approached several weight-sensitive customers, whose answers ranged \$6-\$12 for every pound saved.

The fact customers were willing to pay a premium for lighter-weight trucks sent Volvo on a quest to develop the Optimized Series of regional haul tractors – a line of eight VNL and VNM tractors that were designed to be as lightweight as possible. The new line includes: the VNL 300, 430, 430 mid-roof and 630 mid-roof; and the VNM 200, 430, 430 mid-roof and 630 mid-roof. This new series of regional-haul tractors runs the gamut from day cabs to 62-inch mid-roof sleepers, suiting everything from local drivers to those who are on the

road for two to three nights at a time.

The VNM trucks have a 10-inch shorter bumper-to-back-of-cab (BBC) than the VNLs, but share the same cab. The easiest way to differentiate them at a glance is that the hockey stick-shaped vents on the side of the VNL hoods are simple rectangles on the VNMs. With the exception of the VNL 630, each of these trucks is powered by the Volvo D11 engine. But most intriguing of all; they each provide up to 1,200 lbs in weight savings, which means more payload for bulk and tanker operators and improved fuel efficiency for those running heavy.

How'd Volvo find 1,200 lbs of weight savings in its Optimized Series? Chris Sadler, product marketing manager, regional haul, said the savings came from: vendor components (190 lbs); aluminum components (150 lbs); wide-base tires and aluminum wheels (300 lbs); an aluminum fifth wheel (240 lbs); and a 6x2 axle (380 lbs). That's 1,260, if you're keeping score, and doesn't even take into consideration the 300 lbs in



This Volvo VNM with D11 engine was loaded to close to 80,000 lbs, and was able to hold top gear up most of the grades we encountered.

weight that moving from the D13 to the smaller D11 will net.

Granted, Volvo knows not every customer will want or require every one of those weight-saving options.

"You may need that 13-litre engine or some other features that are not in these spec's," Stadler acknowledged. "But the key point here is, you're going to see value in taking weight out of the truck."

How much value? That, of course, depends on application. Examining

customer scenarios where payload is paramount, Stadler said a fuel hauler could increase its profits by \$95,000 per year if it increases payload by just 320 lbs. His calculations are based on carrying an extra 50 gallons of fuel per trip, making three deliveries a day, 250 days a year. That totals 37,000 gallons of extra product delivered at the end of the year.

Those are heady numbers, and offer insight into why bulk haulers would consider paying extra for a lighter-weight truck. And they'll pretty much have to. The reality of lightweighting is that aluminum components, wide-base tires and the like are generally more expensive than their more conventional, but heavier counterparts.

"Aluminum can be very pricey in this market, so usually what happens is when you get into lightweight (spec'ing), you're going to pay a little bit more," Stadler noted.

Bulk haulers understand the value of additional payload, but the bigger question, at least here in Canada, is will they trust the unfamiliar components such as 6x2 axles or the D11 engine? Volvo says it has customers in the Upper Midwest running 6x2 vehicles without any issues relating to traction – one of the most common concerns among fleets. These trucks use the Meritor Fuelite 6x2 with electronics that shift weight to the powered axle in low-traction situations. It should be noted, not every province allows 6x2s at this time, though that could change.

Every truck in the Optimized Series line-up features the Fuelite 6x2 rear axle, but customers can order the weight-reducing components a la carte and still enjoy some savings.

Canadian customers may also be uneasy about using a D11 engine in place of the popular D13. The D11 has some faithful fans here in Canada. I recently visited auto parts hauler Verspeeten Cartage and was surprised to find many of the trucks in its yard were D11-powered. Count me among the skeptics that a D11 would provide sufficient power to pull 80,000 lbs across even moderately hilly terrain; at least till I had the chance to drive one of these vehicles over about 100 miles of more-than-moderately hilly terrain in Virginia.

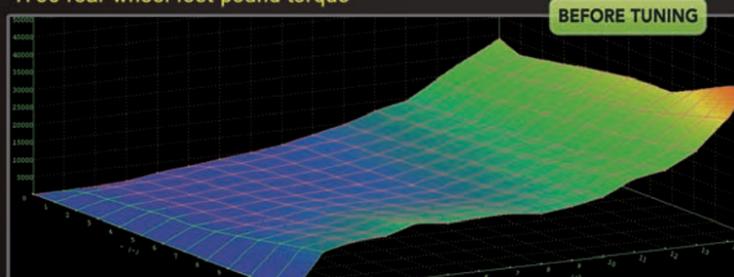
The truck I drove was the VNM 430 mid-roof sleeper and I was pulling a

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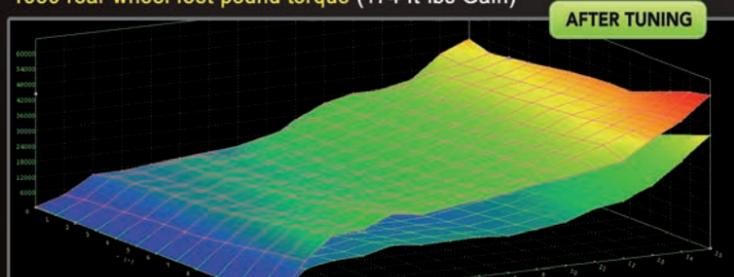
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John Moore, marketing product manager, powertrain, admitted Volvo would likely have suggested the D13 if I were to run these hills on a regular basis. But they wanted to prove the D11 could handle the grades, and it certainly could.

The I-Shift held top gear up most of the hills and I was able to hold my own with traffic. The engine strained while pulling some of the steeper hills I encountered on my drive, but I never felt like a moving chicane – at least not to other truck traffic.

The speed limit is 70 mph in Virginia – trucks included – and so yes, I was getting passed, but not because the engine was grossly underpowered. The D11 engine was actually nice to drive on the flatter sections of road. It seemed a tad quieter than the D13 and it wasn't a big downgrade in terms of terms of torque or power.

Moore bristles at any suggestion the D11 is a "throwaway" engine or bored-out 9-litre.

"It's one of our most reliable engines," he said. "It's actually reverse-engineered from our 13-litre. If you look at the size of the bearings on this, the bearing surfaces are larger than those of the 13-litre Paccar MX or the 13-litre MaxxForce. They're also equal to the size of the DD15 and DD16. These engines can easily get a million miles without any problems."

Volvo backs the D11 with the same base warranty it offers on its 13L. But it does have its limitations. Volvo holds firm on its 80,000-lb GVW rating for the D11 and it doesn't suggest running it over the Rockies on a regular basis. It's best suited for regional haul applications grossing no more than 80,000 lbs and with cruise speeds of 63 mph or less.

"We don't want to underpower a vehicle, because drivers are going to hate it and they'll think it's a bad engine. It's not, but it can be put into the wrong application, so you have to be very careful here," Moore said.

Volvo's keen on promoting the D11 engine because it is well suited for a wide range of regional haul applications and that's a segment where the truck maker wants to grow its presence. Volvo recently expanded its popular XE (exceptional efficiency) powertrain package to include the D11. This involves mating the engine to an I-Shift overdrive transmission with a ratio of 0.78:1 and axle ratios of 2.64-2.80. Spec'd this way, the sweet spot is widened and the engine runs about 200 rpm slower, providing a fuel savings of about 3%.

But the XE package isn't for everyone. Moore said it works best in applications where vehicles are running at high speeds and delivering diminishing loads. Spec'ing trucks, as if it wasn't complex enough to begin with, is even more so today with the advent of more sophisticated powertrains and a broader array of lightweight components. Volvo seems to want to challenge truck buyers to re-evaluate some of their traditional spec'ing decisions. That may mean different spec's within the fleet for different customer sets.

"The day of having one truck for everything is pretty much gone," Moore said. "Customers can't afford to lose money every year because the truck is not optimized." **TW**

Train Trailer Rental places largest single order ever for van trailers: Manac

Train Trailer Rentals has placed an order for 700 Manac van trailers, which the company believes to be the single largest Canadian trailer order ever.

"Seven hundred vans, one order, one basic specification is, to the best of my knowledge, the largest Canadian trailer order ever seen by any manufacturer.

"Our ability to secure this business from Train Trailer Rentals is based on years of collaboration and mutual support. It is also a tribute to our employees' commitment to providing a cost competitive product, the solid design of our UltraPlate model and an excellent level of service," said Charles Dutil, president of Manac.

Production of the trailers will begin in the first quarter of 2014 and will be completed by the end of the third quarter, Manac announced in a release.

"After recently amalgamating Westvan and Train Trailer Rentals, this transaction secures our position as a leader in the full-service trailer rental sector in Canada," said Rick Kloepfer, president of Train Trailer Rentals.

"We were focused on quality and performance in the purchase of these trailers. We're certain the team at Manac will provide comprehensive, leading-edge support, which is extremely important to us." For more info, visit www.manac.ca. **TW**

SAF-Holland offers lifetime warranty

SAF-Holland has announced it's offering a lifetime warranty on its Atlas 55, Atlas 65 and Mark V landing gear.

The warranty covers defects in material and workmanship for as long as customers own their trailers, and is part of the 10-year NoLube landing gear option, the company announced.

The NoLube option eliminates the need for greasing for 10 years after the in-service date of the vehicle.

"Fleet owners have told us they want to keep their trailers longer. We listened and we're helping," said Randy Flanagan, director, sales and marketing. "By offering this lifetime coverage, providing the up-time peace of mind they've requested." **TW**

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The B-train has been widely adopted across Canada, though its origins are subject to debate. Photo by WowTrucksCalendar.com.



Ode to the B-train

Canadians may not have invented the B-train. It depends on who you ask. But we certainly have put it to good use from coast to coast.

By Harry Rudolfs

Another LCV season has come and gone in Ontario, and by most measures the program has been a success in this province. As of October 2013, there were 295 LCV permits shared between 72 carriers, and we can expect the program to keep ramping up. But as the double-53s sleep for the winter, let's not forget the heavy-hauling doubles that keep motor-ing no matter what the weather or time of the year.

I'm talking B-trains here: one tractor pulling two trailers coupled together by means of a fifth wheel attached directly to the rear of the lead trailer. These sets have earned their keep on Canadian highways for more than three decades: 60 feet of combined trailers grossing up to 63,500 kgs/140,000 lbs. And not to be confused with A-trains: two pup trailers hauling much lighter payloads linked together by a pintle hook and ring extended from a converter dolly, a kind of rolling fifth-wheel assembly. By eliminating the ambulatory converter, the B-train removes a point of articulation and has been proven to be more stable and much safer than A-train "wobble-wagons."

I first encountered B-trains in the mid-80s, during a one-day training session for a bulk job in London, Ont. This particular company hauled everything in those buckets. The trainer was a senior driver who sat in the passenger seat while I delivered coils of steel to Wayne, Mich., crushed glass to Wallaceburg, a load of corn to Labatt's in London, and finished the shift loading up more steel coils on a set of flats in Hamilton.

Years later I was hired as a fleet driver for Eaton's and pulled their aging B-trains for a couple of years, just before that great Canadian institution closed its doors in 1999. No bulk commodities here; this was light stuff going to department stores, and versatility was the name of the game. One driver could cover two stores in Montreal or Ottawa, all pin-to-pin work.

The driver-trainer at Eaton's told me not to worry about backing up. "You never have to," he said. But when I got to the Bayshore Mall in Ottawa on my

first night run, it sure seemed a lot easier to try reversing into an adjacent door rather than splitting the trailers. It took me 45 minutes to figure out how to back the trailer in straight, but after that I got pretty good at it, even jackknifing the set at times to get into some tricky docks.

I've always liked the solid feel of a good set of doubles when they're loaded and set up right. They turn much tighter and some drivers will tell you they prefer them to 53-footers. Even better, most companies pay a premium to pull them.

So what makes a good B-train driver? "The same thing that makes a good LCV driver," says Desmond Hearn of Crossroads Training Academy in Barrie, Ont. "Attention to detail, safety procedures, lots of experience and excellent driving skills."

His driving school has one client that is particularly keen on cultivating B-train drivers, and Hearn can provide specialized training for candidates looking to upgrade.

"They've got to be able to back them up," adds Hearn. "Our customer delivers to some difficult places and wants the drivers to be skilled with this equipment." Unlike LCV certification, no formal training programs for "train" drivers exist in this province, but Hearn thinks they should.

"An operator should be certified for every piece of equipment they use - B-trains, A-trains, tankers, anything like that - that shows they have received training and understand how to operate it safely. Why not?" he asks.

My most recent experience with B-trains occurred a few weeks ago. Puro-lator has been running a set for the last year, leased from SLH and I've been chomping at the bit to try them out. My chance came the other week when the driver-trainer pulled me aside for a few hours. I practiced hooking, splitting, sliding the tuck-away fifth wheel, hooking again, followed by a short run up Hwy. 427, followed by more hooking and splitting.

This was a fairly new set of gleaming Manacs, and frankly I expected there would be some technological changes in 15 years. But these were essentially

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the same as Eaton's old corrugated wagons, except they are lighter and stronger, and the sliding bogies are stainless steel these days.

The configuration is almost exactly like the first prototypes developed by Hutchinson Industries of Toronto way back in the mid-70s. But before I make the case for the B-train as the symbol of Canadian unity, here's a little about its genesis: Shippers and truckers have always liked the idea of running more than one trailer. If a teamster could hook two wagons behind his animals it stands to reason he could almost double his revenue. Wagon "trains" of double wagons were not unusual on the Cariboo Wagon Trail in British Columbia back in the 1860s. And those early coupling systems may have been the precursors of the technology used on modern trailer trains. As far as the claim that the modern B-train originated in Canada, let's look at the history. The late Martin Phippard (historian, truck enthusiast and former assistant editor of sister publication *Motortruck*, who passed away recently in England) disputes the contention that the B-train was born here in an engaging article "B-Trains, Interlinks and B-Doubles" found on www.hankstruckpictures.ca (well worth the read).

Phippard claims the earliest example of a B-train was fabricated by Dan Keeney, a truck line owner in California, way back in 1947, who was the first visionary to install a fifth wheel on the back of a trailer. In Canada not much later, according to Doug McKenzie, "My dad was an owner/operator with Tank Truck Transport back in the 50s and he frequently mentioned that they had developed one for their use."

Veteran trucking interloper and consultant Ken Hellawell recalls that Adam Ledig was driving a flatdeck B-Train set for OK Transportation of Scarborough, Ont., back in 1961. "The front deck had a fifth wheel bolted on the back which was mounted on another piece of frame that fit inside the lead trailer's frame."

As Phippard notes, "It is a moot point as to whether a trucker engaged in hauling lumber from Ontario saw and copied the 1970s B-train configuration from a Michigan-based steel hauler, or whether it was the other way around."

Personally I liken the phenomenon of monkeys on separate islands discovering hand tools about the same time. Something was in the zeitgeist in that era. B-trains and C-trains (now obsolete), seemed to solve a weight problem as evidenced by several bad crashes in the GTA and Michigan in the early 70s. These major mishaps involved heavily-laden A-trains hauling fuel and lumber. A subsequent Michigan DoT study determined that weight was an important factor, and to this date Michigan has some of the stiffest axle-weight restrictions, which is why you need six axles for the same load that can be handled by four axles in Ontario. It also explains why Michigan is one of the few US states that is accepting of B-trains.

The Canadian connection takes us to a shop in Downsview, Ont. in 1976, to a family-owned business founded by William J. Hutchinson in 1918. Imperial Oil engineers had approached a tank trailer manufacturer about designing a coupling system that would safely accommodate heavy loads; the detachable "A" train converter was too unstable. Right from the get-go, engineers at Hutchinson and Imperial Oil were looking at moving the maximum 63,500 kgs (140,000 lbs).

"Yes it was exciting," says Ralph Hutchinson Jr., who was directing the project for Hutchinson Industries. "It was a fairly new concept. There had been smaller versions of B-trains in the States, but we had to start from scratch in dealing with weight issues like weight displacement, for instance. It was a steep learning curve."

These days, Joe DeSimone is vice-president of sales at Tremcar (which acquired Hutchinson several years ago), but in 1976 he was a novice engineer who had just started with the family-owned company. He wasn't directly involved in the B-train initiative, but he remembers the buzz around the activity, and the first attempts to fabricate a prototype.

"We were very instrumental in the development," says DeSimone. "We did something unusual for those days – hired an outside engineering firm to do a stress analysis at the back of the lead trailer. That resulted in a very good base, and it allowed the development of the B-

train. Along the way we refined the design, using less material but making it stronger, streamlined the components, made it more visually appealing, and brought the two trailers closer together."

The B-train has always been a winning formula in Canada. By the early 80s a number of other trailer manufacturers had jumped into the market with their own B-train offerings.

Among them was Manac, which today calls itself the leader in B-train manufacturing in North America. In 1982 they built some of the first B-trains for Labatt's using the revolutionary hide-away fifth wheel. The trailers could be joined and loaded straight through or split at the transfer point without requiring cross docking. The vice-president of sales at Manac, Tom Ramsden, estimates they sell about 500 sets yearly of "flats, dumps and vans," the majority to Canadian customers.

"Typically a customer will want 60 feet of trailers overall, either 30/30 or 32/28,"

says Ramsden. "We've changed some little things over the years on the frame, making it stronger and maintenance easier. But what hasn't change is the slide-away bogie activated by a third gladhand, that's pretty well unique to us."

The B-train may have been discovered in California or Whitehorse or New Zealand prior to 1977, but Canadians have warmly embraced the design while the US has shown only lukewarm interest.

Besides Michigan and Washington, and a few grain states in the Midwest, "Canadian-style" B-trains are rarely seen south of the border. Some states even prohibit their operation within their jurisdictions.

But in Canada, B-trains are well represented in every province and you can run coast-to-coast with a gross of 62,500 kgs and never have a weight problem at the scales. Fact is, B-trains are as Canadian as hockey, lacrosse, back bacon and maple syrup. And that's the way we like it! **TW**



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Generating savings out of air

By James Menzies

When you purchase tires, do you think of them as an asset or a necessary expenditure? Just how you think of tires at the point of purchase may influence the care and maintenance they receive over their life-cycle. And that, in turn, could impact your tire-related expenses, one way or the other. Tires, and the air inside them, are the only things separating a vehicle from the road surface. Without them, your truck gets nowhere. So tire experts can be forgiven for becoming frustrat-

In Part 2 of this series on tires, we examine ways fleets and O/Os can maximize their tire investments.

ed when tires don't get the respect they deserve and viewed as an asset. *Truck West* recently caught up with tire professionals from leading suppliers to find out how fleets and owner/operators can lower their tire-related costs.

This is Part 2 of a two-part series. Part 1, in the January issue of *Truck West*, focused on the importance of inflation pressure and the not-so-subtle differences between the various SmartWay-approved tires.

Tires as a messenger

Regular tire inspections allow operators to not only monitor the health of their tires, but other aspects of their vehicles as well. Stephane Beaudoin, marketing manager, Michelin truck tires, encourages customers to think of tires as a messenger. "If you have a mechanical problem, it's going to show in your tire," Beaudoin said. "Check your tires, and as soon as you see some irregular wear, make sure your bearings and things like that are in order. A lot of times we neglect the trailer, and the trailer will have some effect on your tractor (tires)."

Greg Cressman, technical services director, Yokohama, added "A regular tire inspection program - either by a fleet or a servicing dealer - will spot such things as low air, lack of valve caps, mismatched duals, misapplied tread patterns, alignment wear, mechanical wear, drive-related conditions, tires ready to be pulled for recap to save casings and so on."

Rotation and alignment

One of those conditions that may be

present if irregular wear begins to show, is a truck or trailer that's out of alignment. Beaudoin suggested users take a tread depth gauge to compare the wear of the tires at various positions. If the tread depth is consistent, the vehicle is likely properly aligned, but if the tread depth measures 16 mms at some positions and 12 at others, "you know you have a problem," she warned.

Trailer alignments are often overlooked, but also impact tread wear, she added. Trucks that pull a dedicated trailer could see costly tire wear if the trailer is not properly aligned. Beaudoin said Michelin also recommends tires be rotated when there is more than 4/32nds difference between the tread depth at steer and drive positions, or more than 2/32nds difference between right and left tires on the same axle.

Retreadability

Most fleets today are taking advantage of retreading as a way to maximize their tire investment, but even those who are reticent to retread can capitalize on the trend. There's a healthy market for casings that are in good condition, which varies seasonally and geographically, said Bert Jones, product marketing manager at Bridgestone Commercial Solutions.

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"There is a strong demand for casings," he said. "It varies throughout the year; it's higher in the summer than it is in the winter and it moves through different geographic areas. You can have spot shortages. There is a strong market and need for retreadable casings."

The retreadability of a casing should be a consideration when choosing a tire. Retreaders themselves have significant data they can share, which indicates the tire brands and models that provide the most retreads.

"Ask the tire supplier or a member of a network, what are the statistics that are available that show the average age of scrap for a particular manufacturer, how many times have those tires been retreaded and what are some of the conditions of the scrap rate?" advised Goodyear's Donn Kramer, director of marketing and product innovation.

Goodyear and other tire manufacturers track the scrap rate of their own and competitive tires, as well as the average age of the casing when it was removed from service.

But buying a retreadable tire is not enough, added Jones.

"Air pressure, properly maintained, increases the life of the casing so you can retread it," he said. "So you're preserving your asset, you're preserving the value of the casing that you paid for when you bought the new tire."

Yokohama's Cressman agreed. "Proper maintenance and usage procedures - air pressure maintenance, speed and load included - will allow the casing to reach its full retread potential," he said. "Of course, no system is perfect, and it's possible to lose even the best casing at mile number one due to a road hazard."

Note also, the use of aftermarket tire sealants can complicate retreading. Goodyear's Kramer pointed out any aftermarket sealant must first be removed from the chamber, otherwise it could cause a fire during retreading.

Wide-base tires gaining widespread acceptance

Wide-base single tires continue to gain prominence, even though improvements in the performance of traditional duals may have slightly diminished the fuel economy advantage of single tires.

"If you took a non-fuel efficient dual setting and you went to a fuel-efficient - or SmartWay-approved - set of duals, you might get as much as a 5% improvement (in fuel economy)," Kramer explained. "If you went from non-fuel duals to wide-base, SmartWay-approved (tires), you could get as much as a 7% fuel economy improvement. So there's still a slight improvement (from duals to singles) but the gap has narrowed significantly."

While the performance of low rolling resistance duals can compete with that of singles, the real advantage of wide-base tires is the weight savings they provide - about 400 lbs.

"The big opportunity there is to increase revenue per load," said Jones. "That's why they're so popular with bulk haulers. If they can get several hundred pounds of (additional) revenue out of that truck, that's a big thing. I still don't see where it can be justified strictly on fuel economy."

Another concern with wide-base tires is that they can cause an enor-



Maintaining inflation pressures is especially important with wide-base tires, since a blow-out can cause considerable damage.

mous amount of damage when a blow-out occurs, Kramer noted, meaning maintaining proper inflation pressures becomes even more crucial when

running wide-base singles. Wide-base single tires, noted Jones, are still a young technology. He pointed out the tire industry has a century of experi-

ence with conventional tires and 40 years with radials.

"We only have about a decade with ultra-wide-base tires and that technology is advancing rapidly, so I think it will continue to gain share in the marketplace," Jones predicted.

The biggest barrier to the more widespread adoption of wide-base tires are regulatory in nature, said Michelin's Beaudoin. "In Canada, what's stopping us from having even more growth is the fact we can't run them with the same carrying capacity out west as we can with duals," she said. "That's the only thing that's keeping an explosion of the growth in Canada."

She said Michelin is hoping to make some headway with legislators sometime this year. The trucking industry is on-board and also lobbying decision-makers to approve full weights to be pulled by tractors running wide-base tires. **TW**



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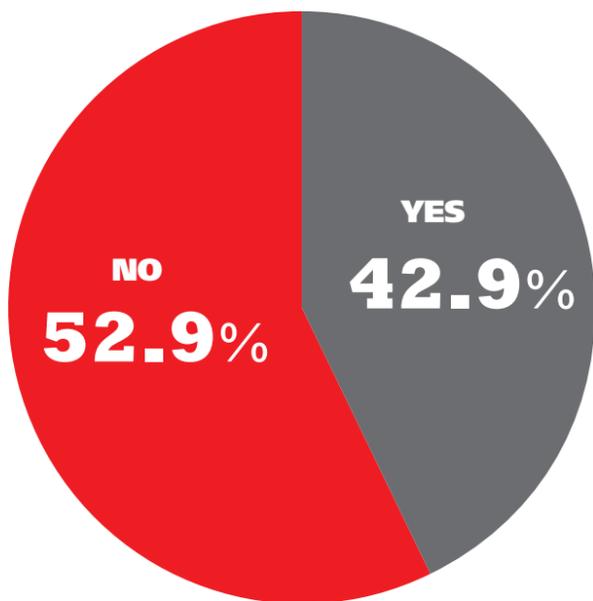


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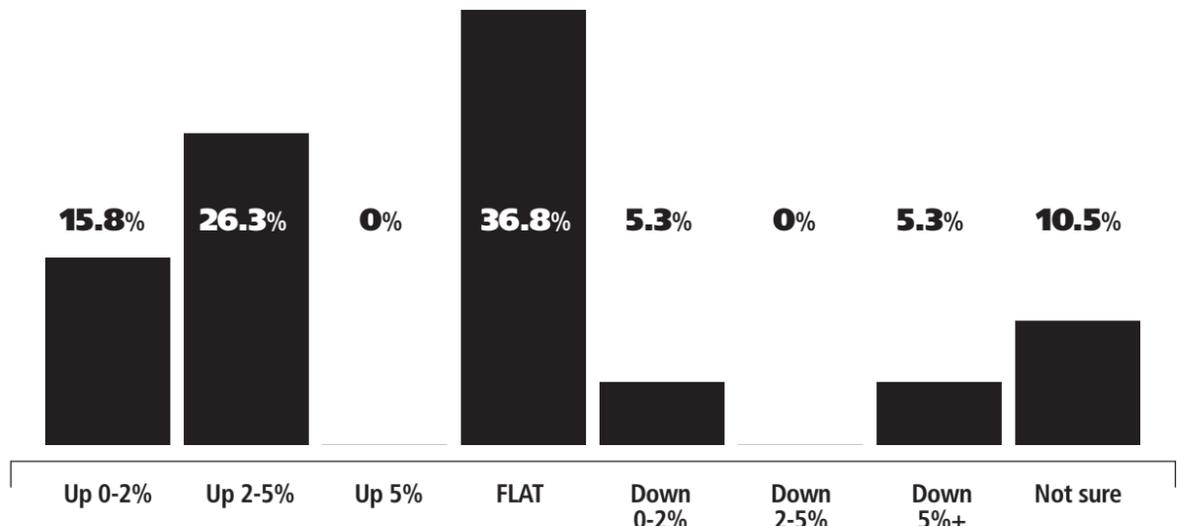
GETTING REAL ON RATES

WHAT WESTERN CANADIAN SHIPPERS EXPECT TO PAY FOR TRUCKING SERVICES IN 2014

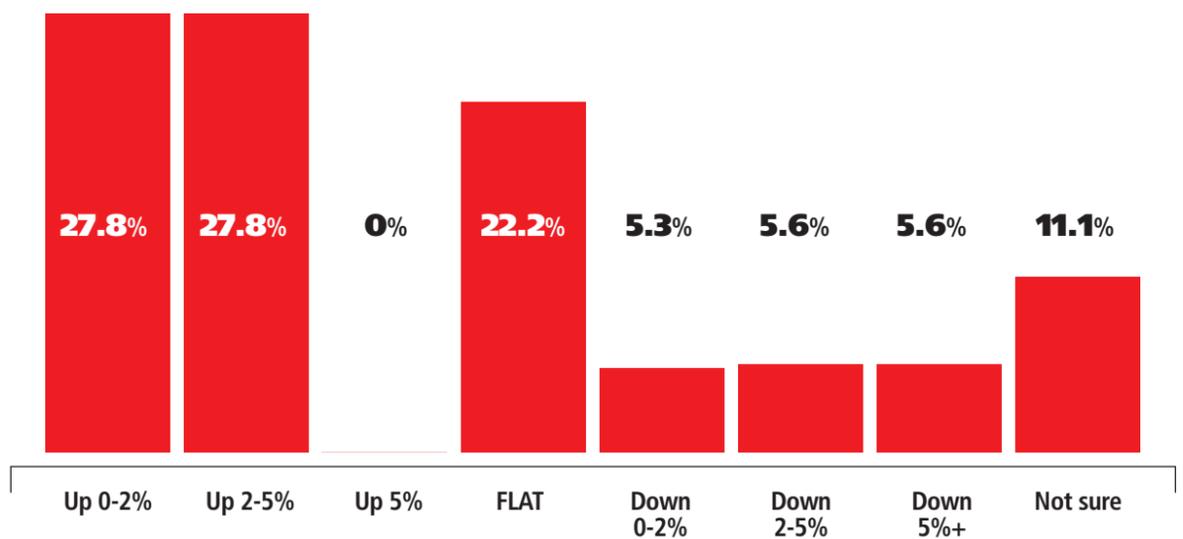
Have higher rates and/or surcharges affected decisions on modal mix?



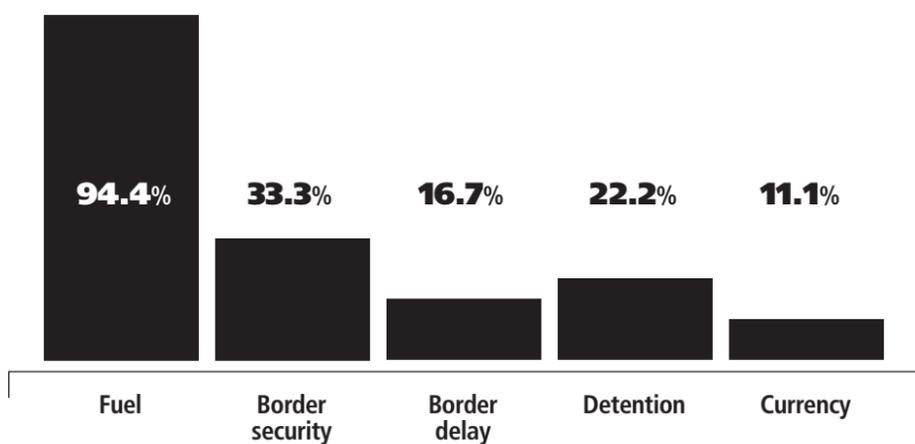
Western shipper expectations for TL core pricing in 2014



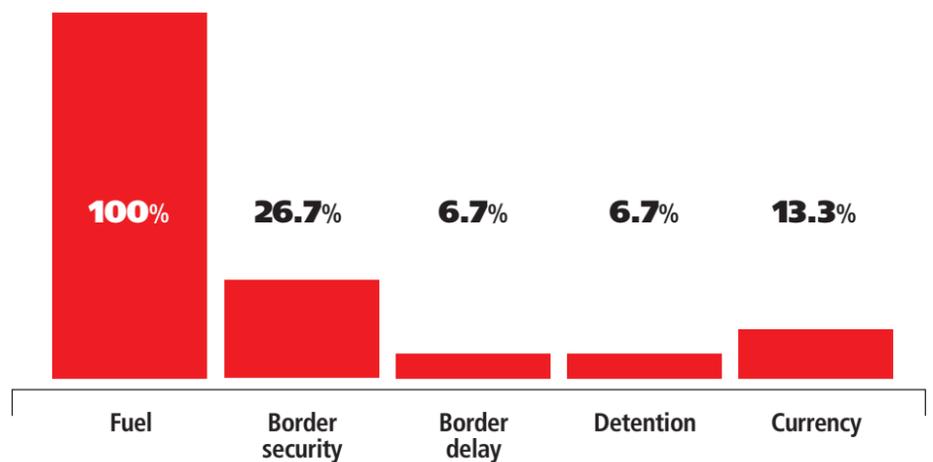
Western shipper expectations for LTL core pricing in 2014



Surcharges Western Canadian shippers currently paying on TL service



Surcharges Western Canadian shippers currently paying on LTL service



With Western Canadian shippers being quite optimistic with their freight volume projections for this year (see Inside the Numbers in your January issue of Truck West) should we expect to see upward pressure on rates? Shipper perceptions on available capacity has much to do with determining their willingness to accept higher rates and they see both TL and LTL getting close to balanced capacity but not being quite there yet, according to the results from our annual Transportation Buying Trends

research, conducted in partnership with CITA and CITT. The majority of shippers (42.1%) expect TL pricing to increase in 2014 but for the increase to be in the range of 5% or less. More (55.6%) expect increases in LTL service but again expect rate hikes to be in the range of 5% or less. Interestingly 43% of Canadian shippers indicate that higher rates and/or surcharges have affected at least some of their modal mix decisions in the past. In the next issue we will take a closer look at the circumstances under which trucking loses business to rail and vice versa. **TW**

By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR...

Mark is attending Truxpo Can, his favourite truck show of all. While he's at a booth he overhears two men talking. One tells a story about how a driver got him in trouble with the police, while the other says a driver put coloured diesel into his tanks. Both men would sure like to find the guy. Mark knows they are talking about him and slinks away.

Then, as Mark is having a bite at the food court, he overhears two other drivers talking about how some guy got him in trouble with the law, one with the Canada Border Services Agency, the other with police. Mark knows for sure they're talking about him because he knows one of them by name. He needs to get away and calls Bud for a load. Hoping to get away, Mark tries to get to Mother Load but there are a bunch of men hanging out by his truck waiting for him. He decides to wait them out and heads back into the show...

Mark flashed the show pass hanging from his lanyard at the front entrance. There were three security guards watching over the entrance and to be honest, none of them looked like they'd be much good in a fight. Two of them were elderly South Asian men who were probably excellent security guards but who would likely want no part of any rough stuff. The other was a middle-aged woman who was standing off to the side with a radio on her belt. Mark figured she was a supervisor and decided to ask her a question. "Hi there," he said.

"Hello. Are you enjoying the show?"

"It's been interesting."

"Better than boring."

"Sure. Uh, I'd like to ask you a question if I could."

"Go ahead."

Mark wondered how to phrase it, then decided there was no way to sugarcoat what he had to say. "There are a few men out in the parking lot hanging around my truck. My guess is that they want to do me some harm and I was wondering if I could get a security escort to walk me out to my truck?"

The woman looked at Mark a while, then shook her head slightly. "Do you owe money on your truck?"

"What? No."

"Been cheating with someone else's wife?"

"No. Not at all."

She smiled at Mark like she didn't believe him. Then she said, "We're responsible for the security of the show and its gate, as well as the assets of the exhibitors. If you've got a matter outside the show, I suggest you call the police." Mark nodded politely, "Thanks." He'd expected her to say as much, but thought there was no harm in asking. He hadn't expect to be judged, but then again, why on earth would men be waiting for him out in the lot with the intention of hurting him? Money and sex were the two things that came most easily to mind.

Mark left the security guard and moved trepidatiously onto the show floor. With each step his head swivelled left and right, front and back certain that someone was following him. Of course, no one was staring at him or following him around the show, but that was only because they were that sneaky. When it happened, when the beating finally came, there would be no warning, no fanfare, just a hand on his shoulder and a quick punch to the face. Then, after he'd fallen to the ground there would be a series of kicks to

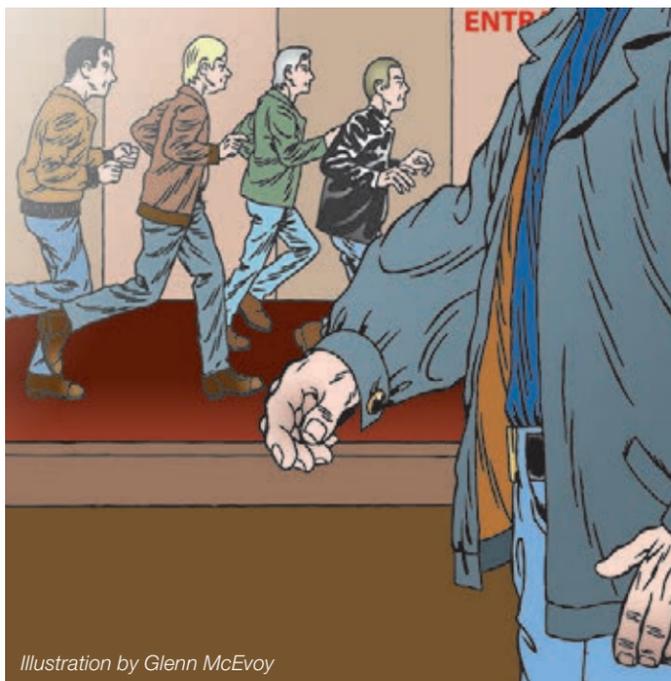


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

The Truxpo Gambit

PART 4

the gut and a final boot to the head.

Mark took a deep breath and another long look around. Unbelievably, there actually *was* someone staring at him. He looked away, took five, six steps down the aisle, then turned around to take another look. The young, blonde-haired man in a tan golf shirt and light brown pants was still behind him, keeping pace. And now he was waving, as if to say hello. Mark stepped it up and was almost powerwalking through the show. "Excuse me," he said. "Pardon. Pardon me." But people weren't moving aside fast enough and when he looked about again, the blonde-haired man was upon him.

"Mark," he said.

"Mark who?" Mark said.

"Mark you! Mark Dalton."

Mark stopped dead in his tracks. He felt almost as Rumpelstiltskin must have felt once his name was known to all. There was no more flight left in Mark's body. No more fight either. Whatever was going to happen was going to happen and Mark was just going to let things run their course.

"Man, you're a hard guy to track down."

"That's good to know," Mark said.

"Yeah, when we saw that you were registered for the show we were keeping an eye out for you. Luckily security let us know that you'd just come through the main entrance or we might never have caught up with you."

Mark grabbed the show pass at the end of the lanyard hanging from his neck. He turned it over and saw his name spelled out in big black lettering.

"Okay, so you found me. Now what?"

"What do you mean?"

"What did I ever do to you?"

"What? No, nothing," the man said, seeming genuinely

confused. "I'm working the show with my girlfriend. She's with the company that puts these shows together...she wants to meet you." Mark wondered what he'd ever done to turn a woman against him and all he could think of was an ex-wife and a few ex-girlfriends, all of them too old for a man this young. "Okay, so what did I ever do to her?"

"I'd rather she tell you. I'll bring you to her if you don't mind."

Mark was caught and there seemed no way out. He might as well go along with this and hope that he might catch a break along the way.

"This way," the man said. Mark followed. He led Mark past a barrier that read "Employees Only" and then into a room that was obviously an office for the company that ran the truck show.

"Here she is," he told Mark. Then he turned to the young woman and said, "I found him."

"Great," she said. "I'm so glad to meet you again."

"Again?"

"You probably don't recognize me," she said.

Mark looked more closely at her and saw something familiar in her face, but just couldn't place it.

"I'm a few years older now and in a lot better shape than when you found me."

"Found you?"

"It was a truck stop outside of Belleville. I was a lot lizard back then, stealing out of trucks and doing whatever I had to do to survive." She glanced over at her boyfriend. Obviously they'd discussed her past.

"I think I remember now," Mark said.

"When you caught me stealing out of your truck you didn't turn me over to the police. Instead you got me something to eat and called home." Mark remembered now. At the time he'd felt sneaky getting her back

in touch with her mom, but he knew it had been the right thing to do.

"Home life was better when I returned. I finished school, then studied communications in college. It's funny how I ended up with a company that puts on truck shows, but I think I was able to convince them in my interview that I knew a lot about trucks...inside and out." Mark slumped back in his seat. "Wow!" he said with a sigh. "This is fantastic. Unbelievable."

"It's a great story is what it is," the boyfriend said, an ear-to-ear grin on his face.

"Yeah, I suppose it is," Mark said. "But that's not what I mean." He then went on to explain what had been happening to him at the show and about his efforts to leave the place without a fight.

"Don't worry," she said. "I think I can help."

An hour later, Mark stepped out of the show office and headed for the exit. By the time he reached it, the public address system for the entire conference centre came on...just as they'd planned.

"Your attention please. Truxpo Can is proud to announce the grand prize winner in our show sweepstakes. The winner is Mr. Mark Dalton." A pause. "That's Mr. Mark Dalton our winner. If you kindly attend the show's main entrance to pick up your prize it will be held for you for the next 20 minutes."

Mark thrust his shoulders back and walked out of the truck show with his head held high. He could see several of the men who'd been waiting for him out in the parking lot running to the front entrance of the exhibit hall to meet him.

"Enjoy the show boys," he said under his breath. "I sure did." TW



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

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

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

CURRENT DRIVERS LICENSE: Do you have a Commercial License? Yes No

License# _____ Prov/State issued _____ Type _____ Exp Date _____

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

Last Employer _____

Name _____ Company City _____ Prov/State _____

Tel _____ Start/End Date _____

Job Description _____ Reason for Leaving _____

CERTIFICATION / TRAINING: Can you lift 50lbs? Yes No Doubles/Triples Air Brake Adjustment Over-Size Loads Hazmat Air Brake (Drive) Tankers

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JIM'S BRAYINGS



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...



Maxim president Doug Harvey is pictured with Red River College president and CEO Stephanie Forsyth as they celebrate the naming of a new classroom.

How are those new year's resolutions coming? I did the usual resolutions – you know, eat less, drink less, love more, the usual psychological panaceas that last till the first time a buddy wants to go for a beer. Yeah, in my case that was January 2nd.

I hope whatever you resolved, if anything, is easier for you to obtain than it is for a writer with a distinct lack of willpower. And even less "won't power!"

Still, it never hurts to strive to be better. Nothing wrong with that at all. Heck, the relentless pursuit of perfection is a worthwhile pastime, even though we know we'll never get there regardless of how hard we try. It's worthwhile because we not only improve our own selves, we make it more difficult for those kids coming up behind us, whining for us to get out of the way. Let them wait – and work – for their time.

But I digress....

I hope you all had some quality time off over the holidays and got to recharge your batteries a tad. Gosh knows, it's full speed ahead now into a challenging 2014! Good luck with whatever your challenges may be.

Maxim-um benefit to education

The first kudos of the New Year (though of course the event happened in late 2013), goes to Maxim Truck & Trailer. From Christine Payne of Red River College and Maxim's Harry Dornn comes news that

after the Winnipeg-based company donated the substantial sum of \$100,000 to the Red River College Training Centre, a classroom was named after the company and a plaque unveiled in honour of the gift, made in support of the College's Heavy Equipment Training Centre (HETC).

From the word according to Payne and Dornn: "the Maxim classroom signifies the long-standing partnership between Maxim Truck & Trailer and Red River College which includes support of Alumni and student success and a generous \$100,000 pledge to the Heavy Equipment Transportation Centre in 2012."

Maxim master Doug Harvey has been a driving force in the success of the activities related to the HETC's fundraising campaign that "will benefit apprentices and the industry for years to come." Harvey sat in the Capital Campaign Chair chair for the fundraising campaign and helped put together a group of industry reps to support the project.

His commitment brought praise from the president and CEO of Red River College as well. "Doug Harvey's contributions to Red River College and to various causes and organizations demonstrate what an incredible philanthropist and friend he is to the Manitoba community," said Stephanie Forsyth. "With his passion for the transportation industry (Doug) has been one of the most influential reasons for industry engagement in this monumental project that has allowed the realization of a 60,000 sq.-ft. state-of-the-

art technical training centre."

Harvey noted that the importance of heavy-duty technicians to our businesses cannot be overstated, and said "we are proud to support a first-class training centre at Red River College that helps promote, attract and train heavy duty technicians for the transportation industry."

Dancing the Cabinet shuffle

Just as Alberta's truckers were getting used to training Ric McIver as the province's new Transportation Minister, that pesky ragamuffin Alison Redford shuffled her ship of state's deck chairs and named Wayne Drysdale the new Minister of Transportation. McIver has been moved to Infrastructure.

Drysdale is the MLA for Grande Prairie-Wapiti, and his last gig in the Redford cabal was as Minister of Infrastructure, so he and McIver have basically switched offices and briefcases.

I hope the new blood listens to the AMTA and the rest of the industry. They could start with super-singles, skilled profession designation as well as fostering common sense rules and less BS.

You bet I'm holding my breath!

Alberta youth link up with trucking industry

From the AMTA comes news of some 20 young adults who spent a day exploring careers in the trucking industry by visiting Bison Transport. There, they toured the company's Calgary facility, talked to staffers about their jobs and even got behind the wheel of a truck driving simulator.

The program, called Linking Up, is a pilot project of the Van Horne Institute (see the piece on their report on natural gas adoption elsewhere in this issue). The purpose is to help get young adults interested in supply chain careers.

The AMTA worked closely with Bison Transport to deliver an experience that featured talks from Bison staff – from senior executives and managers to dispatchers, drivers and safety counsellors. Topics covered included issues such as the crucial role the trucking industry plays in the economy overall, as well as sustainability in trucking in general and at Bison in particular.

After that, AMTA Road Knight Reg Moulding (who just happens to be with Bison Transport) gave a look at the wide variety of careers available in trucking, both behind the wheel

and behind the scenes. A Bison dispatch supervisor later spoke about his career path and his job.

After the event, Kathryn Semcow, the Van Horne Institute's Linking Up project consultant, said "I like that the participants were exposed to different professions surrounding the industry, and that they were able to actually touch a truck and practice driving one. There are a few participants who are interested in trucking, and left the visit inspired."

Linking Up is a pilot project supported by the Government of Alberta in partnership with the feds. It's open to youth aged between 18 and 24 who are not currently in education, employment or training.

Maybe a blow has been struck against the personnel shortage!

PIC changes

As noted in a recent Brayings, Alberta's Partners In Compliance program saw the departure of Lorri Christensen recently. She was the dynamo who filled the program director's role for the last two years.

The move prompted some soul-searching at the AMTA, which said in its latest news blast that "we are taking the opportunity to review the administrative structure, policy and procedure and operations of the program. More important than the possibility that we might improve day-to-day operations, the review committee will focus on increased and sustainable funding as we build into the future. The program is growing as more excellent carriers come forward and even better, more carriers become excellent."

First up was to find someone to fill Lorri's shoes. And they did, hiring internally. Kim Hrushenski, who was coordinator, has been named the new manager of Partners In Compliance. Now they need to find someone to fill Kim's shoes and they'll be off to the races.

Anyone interested in applying for this or other opportunities with the AMTA is invited to check out its Web site www.amta.ca for further information. **TW**

That's it for another Brayings (hey, I can hear those cheers)! As always, please let me know of people, events or things you think your industry peers (assuming you have any!) should know about. We don't promise not to edit, nor do we claim we won't steal your words verbatim, but we will do our best to get your story out to our readers relatively intact. So drop me an email at jim@transportationmedia.ca and we can take it from there.

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