

TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989

April 2015 Volume 26, Issue 4

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Manitoba carriers can now run wide-base single tires at full RTAC weights. Will other provinces follow suit?



Reach us at our Western Canada news bureau

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Manitoba paves way for wide-base singles

Manitoba is the latest province to remove weight limits on wide-base single tires, allowing the province's trucking industry to be more competitive

WINNIPEG, Man. – Wide-base single tires are now allowed at full weights in Manitoba.

Economy Minister Kevin Chief and Transportation Minister Ron Kostyshyn announced in early March that the province's trucking industry can now take advantage of new regulations allowing the use of wide-base single tires to help reduce fuel consumption.

"We are listening to Manitoba companies that want to access more markets throughout Canada and the US," said Chief. "These rule changes will mean greater opportunities for companies that rely on tractor-trailers for shipping and capitalize on our geographic advantage being at the centre of the continent. This announcement means trucks travelling north from the US that use the new generation tires can enter Manitoba for destinations like Centre Port Canada. Research shows recent technology gives wide-base single truck tires improved characteristics and reduced fuel consumption with minimal effect on the road networks."

Kostyshyn added the new generation tires can be used at full RTAC weights on RTAC

highways.

"These changes will have a positive impact on the trucking industry," he said. "By lifting weight restrictions now placed on single-tire rigs and allowing full weights with either type of tire, these changes provide industry with the flexibility to choose the type of tire suited for their business with minimal impact on our roads and highways."

The benefits of the truck tires include: less weight than dual tires, decreased greenhouse gas emissions, reduced noise and improved comfort for operators.

The new rules came after many consultations with the trucking industry added Kostyshyn. Industry welcomed the news.

"We've been advocating for this change for many years so today's announcement is very welcome news," said Terry Shaw, executive director, Manitoba Trucking Association. "Trucking companies interested and able to utilize this technology can recognize significant cost savings through reduced fuel consumption," said Shaw.

The changes took effect Feb. 27. **TW**

Fed funds will help attract women to industry

The Government of Canada has committed \$421,720 to develop mentorship programs that will help further the careers of women in the nation's trucking industry, and identify best practices that can better support the hiring and retention of underrepresented demographic groups. The funding was announced March 5 by Dr. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, during Trucking HR Canada's inaugural Women with Drive Leadership Summit.

The financial support includes \$296,720 to develop mentorship programs that will advance the roles of women in Canada's trucking industry, and an additional \$125,000 to identify best practices for hiring members of underrepresented groups.

"Our government's number one priority is to create jobs and opportunities for all Canadians. One of the ways we do this is by supporting community-based projects that support economic security and prosperity for women. We know that when women succeed, our entire country prospers," Leitch said.

Addressing the conference, Leitch said that women enter roles they might not ordinarily be in because of someone showing them leadership.

After a funding announcement, Minister Leitch drove Joanne Mackenzie's pink Peterbilt on a celebratory lap around the Sheraton parking lot.

"I have been spending a lot of time on boards and we published a report last June about mentorship. It's about championing, and about having someone in your own industry who understands your career path from beginning to end. If you don't have an advocate at the table with you talking about what you are qualified for it's all the more challenging," Leitch said, noting that she had two important mentors, (one of which was the late MP Jim Flaherty) champion her and assist her in developing her career as a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and as a politician.

Leitch noted that she expects to **Continued on page 7**

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Women with Drive and the missing men

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



We knew we had an issue. Anyone who has spent any time at all in the trucking business knows women are vastly underrepresented in all facets of the industry. Women make up half the Canadian workforce, yet represent only 3% of drivers and technicians. Only 11% of trucking managers are women and 18% of dispatchers. We wonder why we can't find enough good people yet we've been unable or unwilling to draw from the 48% of the Canadian workforce comprised of women.

The Women with Drive Leadership Summit, held March 5 and covered in this issue of *Truck West*, explored the problem in great detail.

Intelligent discussions were held throughout the day and from those, I've assembled a list of five ways we can do a better job at attracting women to the trucking industry:

Reach out to them: Are your recruiting ads and materials inviting to women, or at the very least gender-neutral? Many women, we learned at the Summit, don't even consider a career in trucking because they don't know these opportunities exist. Other industries facing the same challenges (ie., mining and electrical) have done a better job reaching out specifically to women and young ladies, through their local schools or family events that are inclusive of spouses, daughters, nieces, etc.

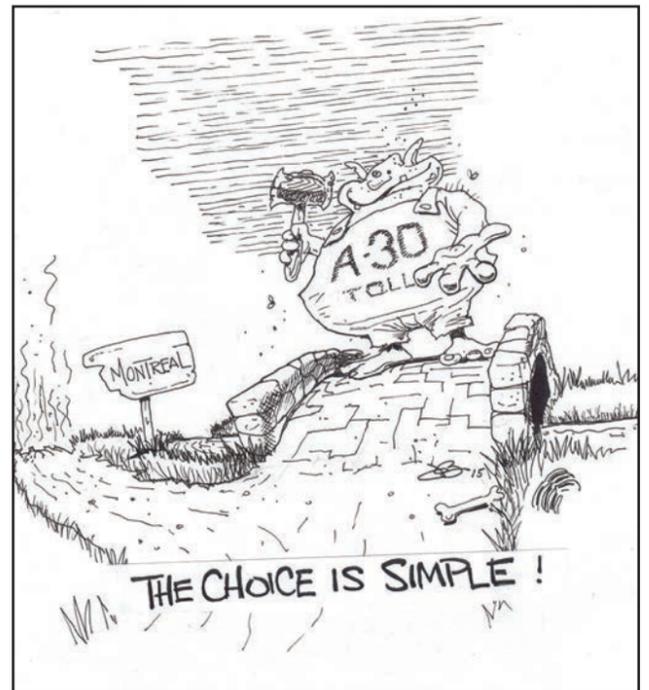
Accommodate them: Are your facilities female-friendly? We heard of a terminal built within the past few

years that didn't have women's washrooms installed, because there were no women on staff. They had to be retrofit once the first female driver came on-board.

Mentor them: Once you've brought a female driver on-board, what steps have you taken to ensure their success? We heard at the Summit of the importance of mentorship programs and how effective they can be in ensuring women stay on board and on the path to success.

Celebrate their successes: We learned many women don't consider careers in industries such as trucking because they don't know others who've achieved success in those industries. Are we doing enough to celebrate and highlight the successes and achievements of women in the industry? These accomplished women can serve as role models to others.

Create a workplace of equality: A survey by Trucking HR Canada indicated most women are satisfied with their careers in trucking, yet too many (nearly 10%) still felt they had to work harder than men to be respected. Some reported being harassed, especially by younger males in the workplace. Employers need to take a strong position in creating workplaces with zero-tolerance discrimination policies. Perhaps most interestingly, the Trucking HR Canada survey found men named 'physical limitations' as one of the



greatest barriers to entry for women drivers. Women, on the other hand, felt this was a non-issue.

The industry has come a long way towards being more inclusive of women but they're not yet knocking down the doors. The Women with Drive Summit provided an illuminating overview of the issues and offered practical solutions to address them. The only thing that was missing from the Summit? More men!

The women in the audience were all-too-familiar with the issues being discussed; where were the male employers? They could be counted on one hand. **TW**

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It's time to get real when it comes to RFQs

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



I was watching video of the Shipper Carrier Collaboration panel from our latest Surface Transportation Summit the other day – because that's what editors do on their time off. Collaboration with shippers – or lack of it – has been a growing issue with carrier executives, particularly since the increased use of RFQs in recent years.

Listening to the discussion, which I had moderated last fall in front of 400 shippers and carriers, I was struck, yet again, by the wisdom of Jacquie Meyers' comments. Jacquie of course is the president of Meyers Transportation Services and it was her observations from a previous Summit which prompted us to delve deeper into shipper-carrier collaboration. Jacquie, like many other trucking executives, had decried the lack of true partnerships between shippers and carriers and the fact that too many shippers seem to be RFQ and price driven.

Jacquie explained that her definition of shipper-carrier collaboration is actually very simple, as most good working relationships are: It's a shipper and carrier working together to improve service levels and drive cost out of the system. That requires honest communication, trust between the partners, information sharing and joint problem solving, according to Jacquie. The emphasis is on

working together. Yeah, it sounds like mom's apple pie type of talk, yet when you think about it, how many strong business relationships aren't based on exactly those characteristics?

Jacquie is not anti-RFQ. Instead she is pushing for a better thought out and run RFQ process, which includes reputable carriers and allows for legitimate discussions on how best to provide transportation solutions. She is pushing for an RFQ process where price is not the main determinant of who gets the contract.

And Jacquie is pushing for a bit more. She is pushing shippers for a real commitment beyond the usual one year. Our research shows that about two-thirds of truck transportation contracts are for a year or less. Yet for carriers to be eager to invest management time and energy into projects that deliver tailored solutions – IT integration, specialized equipment, specialized customer service solutions, etc. – shippers have to be willing to invest in contracts that are two to five years in length.

I've heard many carrier executives cast the blame for the deterioration in shipper-carrier collaboration in recent years on the RFQ process. This is usually followed by calls to do away with the process altogether and hopes that tighter capacity will force shippers away from the RFQ process. I don't think that's realistic.

Speak regularly to shippers and you quickly discover they have no plans to abandon the RFQ process for a variety of reasons – pressure from executive management, compatibility with the practices of their US parent company, greater documentation and visibility into the transportation purchasing decision, the belief the process helps reduce pricing, etc. Nor is the Canadian economy growing robustly enough to generate the freight volumes necessary to make capacity a significant pain point for shippers.

RFQs are not going away. So Jacquie's approach of working towards a better RFQ process is the more realistic approach. **TW**

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(L-R): Joanne Mackenzie, Labour Minister Kellie Leitch, Trucking HR Canada CEO Angela Splinter and Canadian Trucking Alliance CEO David Bradley.

Federal funding announced

Continued from page 1

be launching a program focusing on “championing” later this month.

It’s also about creating flexibility in the workforce, Leitch said.

There are career opportunities to be found. While the Conference Board of Canada has projected a shortage of 25,000 to 33,000 for-hire truck drivers as early as 2020, fleets and other industry employers have yet to effectively reach every demographic group of potential employees. Women account for 48% of the workers in Canada’s labour force, but just 3% of the nation’s truck drivers, mechanics, technicians and cargo workers. They are also underrepresented among industry managers (11%), parts technicians (13%), dispatchers (18%), and freight claims/safety and loss prevention specialists (25%).

“The funding announced today will play a key role in an action plan we have developed to address many of the challenges faced by women in Canada’s trucking industry,” said Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada. “This, combined with the steps to reach out to other underrepresented demographic groups, will help industry employers recruit and retain the skilled workers they need.”

In her speech opening the conference, Splinter said that it’s not about affirmative action or employment equity audits, it’s about “not overlooking” 50% of the potential workforce in Canada.

“CTA’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage identified the need for carriers to look at ways to recruit prospective drivers from non-traditional domestic sources,” said David Bradley, CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA). “This work led by Trucking HR Canada will create practical tools that will assist fleets in their efforts to address future labour needs.”

Bradley championed the partnership of Canadian Trucking Alliance and the Women with Drive project.

“It’s about having skin in the game,” he said. “The numbers don’t lie. The struggle for equality continues in the trucking industry. We are still very much a male-dominated industry. We have a shortage of drivers, managers, senior executives. We have the oldest workforce in the country. Why wouldn’t we look to fill those jobs with women?”

“On behalf of the association I represent we are committed to working with Trucking HR Canada and our governments,” Bradley said.

The Women with Drive action plan is guided by a national advisory committee that includes female managers, directors, presidents and C-level executives from across the trucking industry.

In addition to promoting trucking as a career of choice for women, the plan will also educate employers about the steps that help to create an inclusive workplace. **TW**

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Survey shows women mostly satisfied with trucking careers

TORONTO, Ont. – A recent survey by Trucking HR Canada's Women with Drive initiative, shows there's still a clear disconnect between what women want from the industry and what male managers think they want.

The survey of 317 people, including 227 women working in the trucking industry and 81 male managers, found that many of the female respondents cited flexible work hours as one of the top three things the industry could do to become more attractive to women. Male managers, on the other, felt that was one of the least important benefits to women. Men cited physical limitations as a barrier to entry for female drivers, while most women who responded felt that was a non-issue.

The survey results were shared by Trucking HR Canada's Tamara Miller during the organization's inaugural Women With Drive Leadership Summit. Women with Drive is one of Trucking HR Canada's initiatives, designed to raise awareness among women of careers in trucking, to raise employer awareness of how they can support the integration of women into the industry and to develop practical tools that can aid with this mission. The survey results weren't all bad. Miller said of the 227 women surveyed, 110 said their experience in the industry has been positive, while 51 said theirs has been mostly positive, with some challenges. Still, 21, nearly 10%, said they

felt they had to work harder than men to earn respect.

"On the whole, women like working in the trucking industry and that's something we should keep in mind," Miller pointed out.

Female drivers, however, were vastly underrepresented, with only about 20 drivers giving a perspective from behind the steering wheel. Miller acknowledged the sample size was too small to be statistically meaningful, but indicated those responses still provided some interesting insight and added Women with Drive will be working to solicit more opinions from female drivers in follow-up surveys.

An interesting revelation that arose from the survey was that there's a significant interest among drivers in mentoring programs, with 72% of responding drivers indicating they'd be interested in serving as mentors. Through its Top Fleet Employers program, Trucking HR Canada has already identified some effective mentoring programs that exist in the industry.

Linda Young, who handles human resources and people development at Bison Transport, shared details of Bison's formal "driver finishing program." Each new hire is paired with a suitable in-cab instructor for a period of about 13 weeks, depending on need. This year the company is looking to put 96 drivers through the program and thus far it has brought

on 18, three of which are women.

"We're trying to specifically target women into that driver finishing program," Young said. "We feel we've got some traction."

Also there to provide a fleet perspective was Evan MacKinnon, CEO of MacKinnon Transport. He said he was surprised there were so many barriers to women entering the industry.

"I heard today only 3% of our driving force is female, which is a shame, when 50% of the workforce is female," he said. "I see a huge opportunity there."

MacKinnon said the company made the terminal it built in 1989 female-friendly, with shower facilities specifically for women drivers and technicians, even before it had one on staff. It hired its first female driver in 1990 and since then has employed between one and five at any given time. As a flatdeck operator all MacKinnon drivers must meet certain reasonable strength requirements, MacKinnon said, but they don't discriminate against women. He said the bigger issue is not gender-based, but the inability of the trucking industry to attract new drivers of either sex.

"The issue is attracting people to the industry, not just female drivers," he said. "But the opportunity is obviously females."

Like Bison, MacKinnon has a mentoring program that pairs new hires with an experienced driver for their first 10-12 weeks on the road. While MacKinnon does not currently have any female driver-trainers, it will provide hotel rooms for the driver-trainer when training a female driver.

"At MacKinnon, we hire the very best," he said. "It doesn't matter to us whether they're male or female. We offer a gender-neutral driver education program. All of our promotional and marketing material is gender-neutral. Drivers are paid the same. Bonuses are the same. The worst thing we could do is to try to differentiate within our workforce."

MacKinnon suggested creating a more welcoming work environment for women would also help attract more male drivers, too.

"Much of what we do to attract women to the industry is what's going to attract men to the industry," he said. "I think it's up to the owners of trucking companies to make the change, to create environments where women are welcome and where women feel safe – where all employees feel safe and welcome."

Women with Drive is looking to build on its initial findings, and has developed a five-step action plan. While this plan is still a work in progress and will evolve as more data and insight are collected, Trucking HR Canada CEO Angela Splinter outlined these priorities: Developing mentoring, training and professional development opportunities for women in trucking; Developing a marketing and communications plan to promote career options and build awareness of workplace challenges for women; Developing workplace policies, procedures and best practices from the industry; Obtaining more insight from female drivers to get a better understanding of what they face on a daily basis; And to influence policy at multiple levels of government to affect systemic change. **TW**

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Mentorship pays

Joanne Mackenzie still remembers her first long-haul trip as a professional driver. Sent to New Jersey with a newly-minted licence and practically no on-the-job experience, and told to follow another driver who'd been on the job just a week longer than she herself had been, it culminated with time spent in the back of separate cop cars upon their arrival back into Ontario, their logbooks a mess.

"That trip took us almost two days to do," Mackenzie recalled, when speaking about mentoring programs at the Women with Drive Leadership Summit March 5. "We were totally lost. They had to come save us and guide us into the port. We got to the border and we were never so glad to see Canada once again."

That was until the OPP examined their logbooks and sat both drivers in the backs of separate cop cars, before finally releasing them with a warning.

"We both said, we're not doing this anymore," Mackenzie recalled.

However, Mackenzie persevered and went to work with a carrier that would invest the training needed to prepare her for a career as a professional driver. It has been a rewarding career since and she now spends part of her time mentoring new drivers for Highland Transport.

Mackenzie gave a stirring first-hand account of what it was like to learn the ropes in a male-dominated industry many years ago. She recalled her driver-trainer rapping her knuckles every time she grinded a gear. Still, she remembers him with fondness, if not his methods.

"He taught me the basics of what I needed to know to learn to survive in this industry," she said. "Not a day goes by where I don't remember something he taught me."

Mackenzie painted a realistic picture of what it's like to share a cab with a complete stranger 24 hours a day for weeks on end.

"You need to match yourself with proper mentors and make sure you're able to function together in that small surroundings," she said.

Cristina Falcone of UPS was also on the panel to share details of that company's extensive, formal mentoring program, which was initially established to help female employees reach their full potential. She said an effective mentoring program requires a lot of pre-work, to ensure prospective mentees will benefit from the experience and to ensure they're paired with a suitable mentor.

Potential mentees are surveyed to determine the areas in which they could benefit from some further skills development and then matched up with mentors who excel in those areas.

The meetings between mentor and mentee are structured, with specific assignments or challenges attached to them. "When they meet, it has to have purpose," Falcone said. The panelists agreed the success of any mentoring program hinges on the compatibility of the mentor and mentee. "Make sure that pairing is right," said Falcone. "Do that work up front to find the right matches. That's the magic ingredient to make things work."

Mackenzie added it's just as important to train the mentor as it is to train the mentee. "They need to know the role they're playing and the importance of that role, and I think we need to train our mentors just as much as we train our trainees to handle those situations." **TW**



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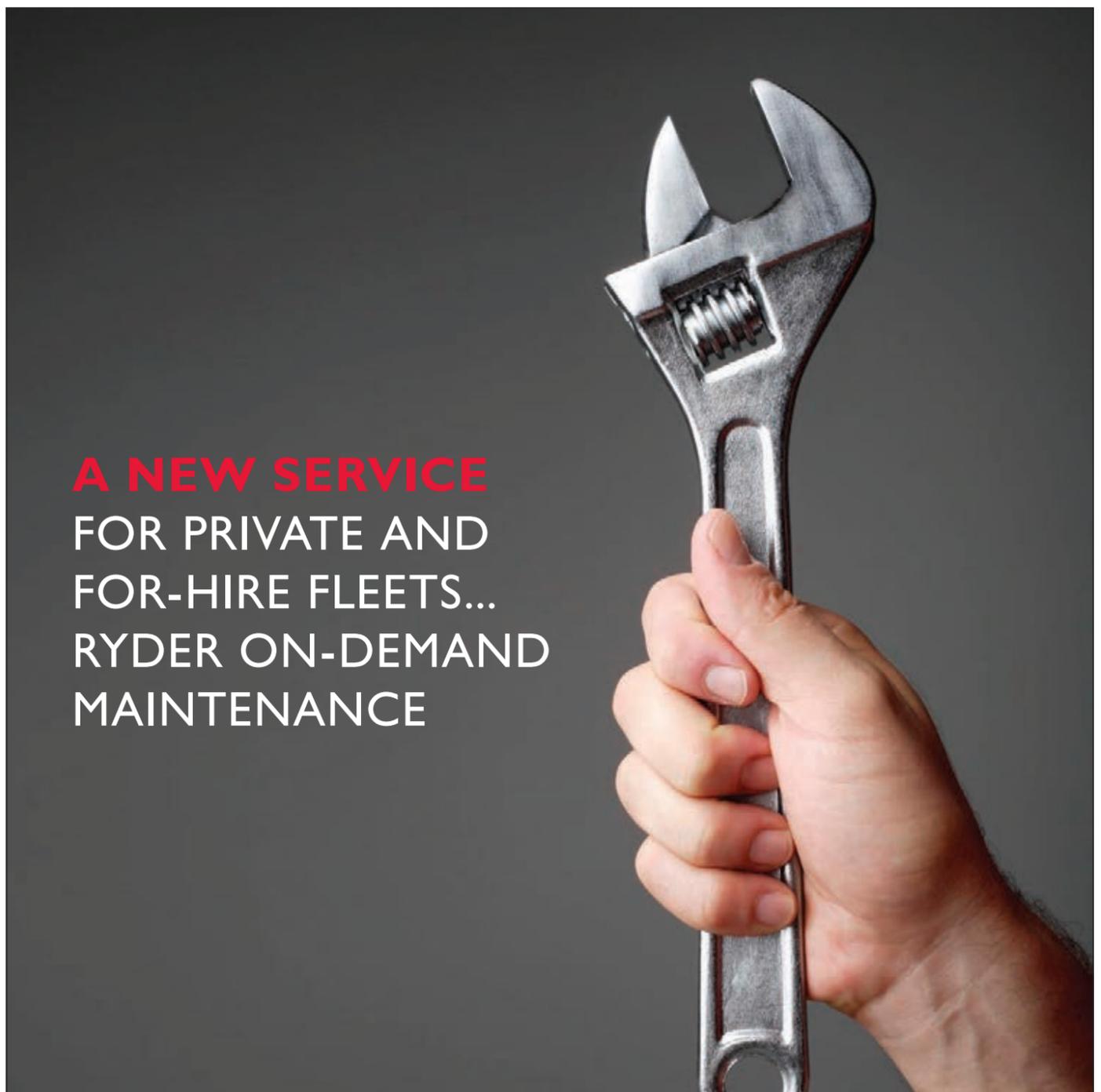
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How to avoid a 'lot' of collisions

Parking lots are supposed to provide a sanctuary. It's where drivers find the all-important spaces to stretch legs, inspect equipment, and log valuable downtime.

But these settings also introduce a common source of collisions. Most of the crunching fibreglass and metal can be traced to two situations: trucks that are hit while parked, or vehicles which run into stationary objects. The majority of the crashes that remain involve drivers who sideswipe each other as they head

Ask the Expert

Albert Zimbalatti



in and out of travel plazas or fuel islands.

Every parked vehicle in a parking area introduces what amounts to an intersection and the threat of a T-bone collision. To compound matters, the surrounding trucks are often moving in every direction and don't remain inside marked lanes. Vehicles cut across spaces at an

angle and travel at unsafe speeds.

But each of these threats can be minimized by following a few key practices.

The first practice involves looking for a parking space in the middle of a row rather than stopping at the end. This will ensure that a truck is not exposed to careless drivers who clip vehicles on the outer edge. The best spaces of all will line up on an angle and allow trucks to pull straight through, giving drivers the opportunity to continue their journeys without having to reverse. At the very least, a good spot will eliminate the need for backing manoeuvres.

Vehicles can be further protected by parking clearly inside any available markings. Those who are centred between the lines will send a clear message to fellow drivers. Stray over top of a line and other motorists might begin to question where their own spots begin and end. Valuable buffers will be eroded.

Some of the most dangerous areas of

all will be along the shoulders of lanes which reach into parking areas. When the sun sets and lights are turned off, many motorists can be surprised by trucks in these impromptu locations. When a spot like this can't be avoided, visibility will offer the most effective defence. It's yet another reason why conspicuity tape and other reflective markings need to be regularly maintained and cleaned.

Of course, the importance of visibility is not limited to the trucks alone. Many fleets require drivers to wear reflective vests when walking through terminal yards. The same personal protective apparel can be used to enhance visibility when walking through parking areas of every sort. Those drivers who do not have the purpose-made vests can opt for lighter clothing or jackets with other reflective markings. The strategies to remain visible do not end there. Like every other workplace, safety in a parking lot begins by assessing all potential hazards.

Another way for a driver to ensure they are seen is to maintain eye contact with all surrounding motorists, especially if wheels are turning or smoke is blowing out of an exhaust. When such visibility is questionable, a friendly tap of the horn can offer a gentle reminder that someone is nearby. Of course, the threats are not limited to motorists. This is where drivers are also exposed to the unpredictable actions of pedestrians who could step into a vehicle's path without looking.

The focus on safe procedures does not end there. Parking involves a step-by-step process. Once in position, drivers apply the parking brake, shift into the lowest forward gear, or park with automatic transmissions, shut down the engine and remove the keys from the ignition. Only after checking the mirrors for approaching hazards should someone step down from the cab. Using three points of contact will avoid a common source of slips and falls, and a securely locked door will reduce the potential for any thefts.

Once it is time to depart, after your circle check, looking into properly adjusted mirrors will offer a view of clearances available on both sides of the vehicle. All of the steps originally used to shut down are followed in reverse. The parking brake is the last thing to be released before the wheels begin to roll. And a careful eye on the mirrors will help to track the rear of a trailer.

The best speed will not be expressed as a number, either. The driver of a moving vehicle needs to ensure that they can see and assess every parked vehicle and hazard around them as they move through the parking area.

Anyone unable to do that is travelling too fast for conditions. But those who respect the conditions will be able to avoid a "lot" of problems. **TW**

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

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Don't just train drivers, train them effectively

Training drivers on efficient driving techniques but neglecting to provide ongoing feedback, usually results in them reverting back to their previous bad habits within two months.

That was the finding of a study conducted by Performance Innovation Transport (PIT), the results of which were shared at its second annual conference this week. Benoit Vincent, researcher with the PIT Group, said 75 drivers from two fleets (one of them a school bus fleet) were studied between October 2013 and March 2014. The trucking company was an LTL provider and the routes were mostly urban.

Drivers were divided into three groups: a control group, a group that was provided training with ongoing follow-up reviews and another group that received the same training but with no follow-up. Vehicle performance data was tracked for seven to eight weeks before training was conducted and then another 13-14 weeks afterwards.

Drivers who received ongoing reviews after their training showed an 8-15% improvement compared to those who did not. Those who received no follow-up reverted back

to their original driving behaviour within two months, Vincent explained.

Some of the benefits seen among the group of drivers who received training and subsequent reviews included: a 30-45% improvement in shifting at the correct rpm ; 59-89% reduction in harsh accelerations; 39-100% improvement in anticipation; 12-20% reduction in brake applications; 49-61% reduction in harsh braking.

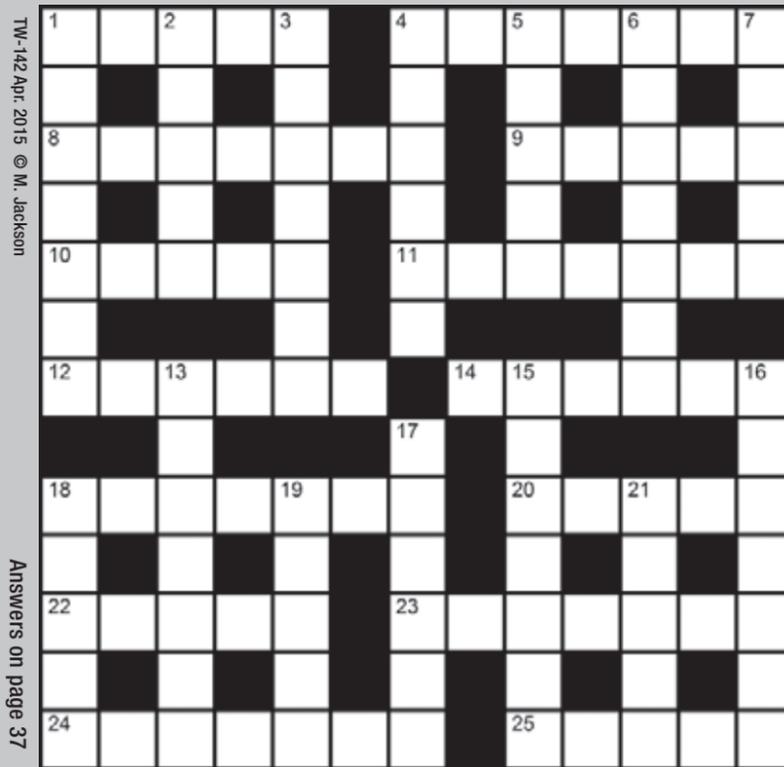
Some drivers, who before the training were on the gas pedal 400 or more times per 100 kilometres driven, dropped that to 25-27 times.

Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada, shared some tips on how fleets can improve efficiencies through better driver training.

"What can you do? Commit to developing and fostering a training culture, develop a plan of action. Lots of fleets do that," Splinter said. "We've seen it through our Top Fleet Employers program. There are a lot of fleets that do invest in training and it's working for them. These organizations have made a formal commitment to developing and fostering a training culture."

She then shared six steps on how to implement an effective training program. **TW**

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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Vocational Report: Focus on Construction



The construction trucking industry in Western Canada has benefited from a construction boom. But with falling oil prices, is a slowdown coming?

Western Canadian construction: More boom or will it bust?

By Jim Bray

Times have been quite good for western Canada's construction industry over the past few years as a robust economy has helped allow for plenty of building in all four western provinces. But with the price of oil now low and governments and corporations looking at ways to save some bucks for what looks like might be some very rainy days on the horizon, is this going to continue?

It appears so, but not without challenges. Western Canada's construction trade associations are forecasting there'll be enough work to keep just about everyone working. The problem, it appears, is finding enough people who want to work.

Truck West contacted all four provincial organizations who make up the Western Canada Roadbuilder & Heavy Construction Association (WCR&HCA) and obtained copies of some reports that predict continued good times. The reports were created by BuildForce Canada, a national industry-led organization "committed to working with the construction industry to provide information and resources to assist with its management of workforce requirements."

BuildForce's "Looking Forward" document focusing on Manitoba, blue skies the years 2014-2023, and begins with the claim that "for more than a

decade, Manitoba has been on a construction boom that has rivalled the other Western provinces and raised employment to record levels."

The report claims the boom exhausted the local workforce, leaving challenges in finding enough bodies to handle all the new construction work, which the document notes has been distributed across both residential and non-residential markets. The organization predicts this growth – and the worker shortage – will continue over the next several years.

Alberta's estimate noted Wild Rose Country continues to lead Canada in activity, adding jobs and "building the productive capacity of the provincial economy to new heights."

Alberta's economy is joined at the hip to oil sands development, of course, and despite a slowdown in 2009, things were back with a vengeance by 2013 and continue to look good, despite the crash in oil prices that's causing a lot of corporate and government navel-gazing.

"Construction employment growth continues in virtually every year of the new 2014-2023 forecast scenario," BuildForce said, "but year-to-year growth rates are lower than the past decade." Despite the slowdown, however, the document forecasts that "human resources challenges related to skills, training, mobility and competi-

tion will continue on nearly the same scale."

As for the oil sands, the organization said the economic recovery after 2008 doubled the number of employees who were left working after the crash, and noted that the demand for skilled trades and specialty occupations, has "exhausted the available labour force in Alberta" and set the pace for "a new wave of interprovincial mobility, immigration and human resources strategies to accommodate the change."

The Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association's report noted that the provincial budget for 2015 highways and infrastructure work totals \$664.5 million dollars, a 7% increase over last year's.

The 2015 expenditures will focus on municipal programs, maintenance and rehabilitation, and upgrades and enhancements to the transportation system, including some \$250 million to repair, rehabilitate and upgrade existing highways and structures as well as more than \$100 million for major projects such as continued work on Hwy. 39 north west of Estevan, the twinning of Hwy. 16 from Saskatoon to Clavet, and the preconstruction of the east Regina bypass project.

SHCA president Shantel Lipp praised the Brad Wall government for "making good on their commitment of spending \$2 billion over four years."

It's the same story in British Columbia. BuildForce noted that construction employment in the westernmost province is "poised to jump to a new record level by 2017 – passing the last peak in 2007."

The report claims that most of the growth comes in non-residential construction markets, noting that investments in "the major resource and infrastructure projects in the north are the biggest contributors."

Another document, released to *Truck West* by B.C. Road Builders & Heavy Construction Association president Jack Davidson, claimed the big news for 2015 is that "the value of all 'major' capital projects that are planned or underway (in the province) sits at \$344 billion."

About \$60 billion of that is residential, while "just over \$90 billion is estimated to be earmarked for LNG plants and related pipelines" with about \$40 billion earmarked for mining projects. The report also noted that there isn't much going on in the province when it comes to manufacturing projects, with the notable exception of the \$4.8 billion Rio Tinto Kitimat Smelter Project, which is already underway.

So it appears there's plenty of work to be had in construction across the west despite slumping energy prices. The trick may be finding people to do it. **TW**

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Truck Lines copes with family loss, changing landscape

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Ron Singer Truck Lines was started in 1973 when the late Ron Singer and his wife-to-be bought their first truck from his father. The business has remained in the family since then, built from the ground up by Singer, his brothers and, eventually, his kids.

But with the founder's death in late 2014, the business has had to move on with daughter Jennifer and son Ron Jr. sharing the centre seat and guiding the company into an uncertain future in which change is constant, and not necessarily for the better.

The company hauls everything from slag, glass and gypsum to salt, golf course sand and decorative rock, using everything, Jennifer Singer told *Truck West*, from tandems to Super-Bs.

"We have side dumps, we have end dumps, demo trailers – anything you can imagine, we can haul it," she said, noting that a large part of its current business consists of gypsum and road salt picked up in southeastern B.C. and delivered to a customer in Edmonton.

Singer predicts tough sledding moving the business forward – not because of any inherent flaws in the business plan but because of changing attitudes among companies, competitors, and potential recruits. "There's always somebody that will do (the job) cheaper," she noted, "and there's always people who will do the job unsafely and that's what I find now. The trucks just boom up and down the road and the equipment isn't taken care of. It's falling apart."

Combating the cut-rate carriers is a full-time job for Singer, but she said the company won't lower its standards just to get a gig.

Instead, she tries to educate customers.

"It's easy to point out things like how much product they're going to get at the end – how much actually makes it to the destination without getting blown off or dumped out or contaminated – because usually when you haul something out, you're hauling something different back. You need to open their eyes so they know what aspects of the job you are doing."

This tactic also applies to letting the customer know exactly what a

job entails.

"The majority don't have a clue how long it takes to get somewhere," she said. "They type it into Google Maps but they don't know about road closures, accidents, wildlife, weather. You need your customer to know and understand it."

Singer also expressed frustration with what she sees as the hypocrisy of some larger companies – in that they want the carrier's ducks to be aligned properly, via a Certificate of Recognition or whatever, "but how about their end? How about the product that's being loaded, or the consistency of the product, which could be soaking wet? How is that safe to haul? You can't just look at it as picking up here and taking it there, you need to look at when it can be loaded – do you want to be stuck in rush hour and be paying your driver to sit in traffic? Why would you do that?"

The idea is to help customers walk a kilometre in their carrier's shoes.

"If you can help them understand what you're going through, what your driver has to go through, it goes a long way. Sure the miles matter, but you have to take into account everything (when quoting a job)," Singer said. "What certifications do your drivers need to be able to load there?"

'There's always somebody that will do (the job) cheaper.'

Jennifer Singer

Can your driver operate the machinery that's there? Do they need their own keys? How does the paperwork work? Do you keep all your paperwork and then send it in or what?"

Singer said Ron Singer Truck Lines doesn't just haul product, it looks out for the customer. "We're not going to make a mess, we're not going to have dirty trucks coming into your site, and (the trucks will) be safe."

Singer cited a lack of quality driv-



Jennifer Singer (pictured) says Ron Singer Truck Lines has expanded its search for new drivers to include areas the company services, not just its hometown.

ers as another major challenge to doing business today.

"They don't teach drivers anything anymore," she said. "They teach them out of a book and the people that are teaching these guys how to drive trucks haven't ever been true truck drivers themselves. They give (recruits) a book and then if they can drive the truck and pass the tests, fine; you're out on your own. If you pass a test you get a licence."

To ensure that their people do a professional and proper job, the Singers often train their own drivers from the ground up.

"If the guy was willing to learn, even before he had a Class 1, Dad would (bring them aboard) because he taught them right and those (people) are always the best ones," Singer said, adding

that her father would team newbies with a senior team member "so he can learn the job from him, and that would let them see if the job is even for him, see if he's interested before he wastes his time and ours."

Recruiting continues to be a nearly full-time job for Singer – or at least a task that's never far from the top of her mind – because "every once in a while you'll find that pot of gold driver, the person who got sick and tired

of the B.S. where he works and is finally looking for a new job."

Singer said she also recruits by putting up flyers at truck stops in the area they serve, rather than only advertising at big city truck stops.

"You have to think about who you're trying to get," she said. "Sometimes your best new drivers don't live in the city you're from and if (a run consists of) driving through B.C., why would you hire some Calgary folk instead of someone who lives out near (the run) and who knows the roads?"

The Singers have no major expansion plans for the business, wanting instead to merely maintain its size and base. "We're not into being the biggest," Singer said. "I'm into doing a good job for my customers and having my team members happy to come to work. It's not just all about you and about the money; it's about being happy."

It's also about cooperation, something Singer thinks is sorely lacking these days. "One of the truly bad things about trucking is that people don't want to help each other because they're competitors," she said, noting that when she first started in the industry, it was more like a brotherhood where truckers would help each other on the side of the road. "That doesn't happen now," she said sadly. "If companies would get together and stand up for each other, things would be a lot better." **TW**

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New ownership gives KLS Earthworks a new lease on life

Falling oil prices, weak Canadian dollar among major challenges for KLS

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Kind of like a phoenix, a tired old business is of being reborn, maybe not in flames but with a healthy injection of new people and ideas. KLS Earthworks & Environmental was past its prime, according to current vice-president, Travis Powell who, with his brother Christopher and father Pat, bought the business from another family about three years ago. Purchasing an existing business can mean you're inheriting someone else's headaches, but for the Powells, the price of admission – Travis said they got into the company for "pretty well start-up costs" – was worth it, even though the company was in rough shape when they took over. "They were little bit top heavy," Powell said, "so we had to trim some fat."

That corporate diet plan included bringing their maintenance in-house.

"We hired a journeyman mechanic," Powell said, "and we have three mechanics now keeping our trucking fleet going and safe and I think in a lot better condition than what the third-party shop was doing."

They're also consolidating their operations, moving the office to southeast Calgary's Frontier business park, where their yard is located and where they're building a new shop.

"We never bought the shop off the old owner," Powell explained. "We just leased it off them and it's too small."

Powell said they added the "& Environmental" aspect to the Earthworks side of the business to reflect the new direction in which they're taking the company.

"I think that's a place we can grow," he said. "We already have the equipment and the employee base, we just have to train them up."

Besides wanting a piece of the reclamation business, Powell said they also want to expand beyond their Calgary roots and into new segments of the economy.



The Powell family bought KLS Earthworks three years ago and is looking to expand and diversify the fleet.

"We want to get more oilfield-based as well," he said, "and I think the environmental aspect is a good foothold to get in there."

They hired a person to help with that side of things last October, though Powell noted Murphy's Law raised its ugly head almost immediately.

"The day after we hired him the oil price dropped by half, so it definitely put a strain on him to grow us," he said. "But we're getting traction slowly. We've done an environmental job in Calgary, a water treatment plant, and we're on the verge of starting another one."

Despite having owned the company for three years now, Powell said the new ownership is still in a transition period. "We have the general manager (from the previous ownership) and he's kind of a mentor for my brother and I," he said. "He has a Master's degree and is teaching us the financial end on his way out."

Rather than getting him to train his replacements and then kick him out, however, Powell noted the manager is also in the process of growing another company with patriarch Pat Powell.

Powell noted the other major challenges to the business include a lack of labour, especially during the summer – the busiest part of the construction season – as well as the low Canadian dollar.

"We can't buy used equipment because the Americans are coming up

and getting it at a 20% discount," he said, "so we're getting beaten up on that a little bit."

The price of oil doesn't help, either. "It's kind of got Alberta at a standstill because nobody knows what's going to happen this year," he said. Then there's the challenge of keeping ahead of the other guys.

"We have some pretty strong competitors that keep us on our toes, which is nice," Powell said.

"Competition keeps everybody honest."

To help stay ahead of the pack, the company is focusing on ensuring their equipment is in top notch condition so, as Powell said, "our customers will see we're better than the other guys. We invest a lot of money in getting our fleet up to 'as good as new' standard as they can be. Being a leader in safety industry-wide was our biggest focus for this year and the last year, to turn our safety program around and I think we really have," he said, noting that the company was at "an industry minimum" when they took over, but that wasn't good enough for the Powell family.

"One thing my Dad always stressed was that it has to be safe, so we kind of bought into that our whole lives and we've gotten really good buy-in from our field guys, and we reward them for safe practices. We want to be an industry leader in safety and if we're safe and

ethical then our business will grow."

KLS also works hard to ensure its employees are competent and happy.

"We give them good training and a lot of room to grow and that goes a long way with them," Powell said. "We pay competitive wages – we're not on the high-end nor the low end – and the family feel of our business has really helped with retention."

Powell also stressed the importance of leading by example, even via such seemingly mundane things as going out into the yard and shoveling.

"They (the employees) know that you do it, so maybe they should start doing it too," he noted, adding that KLS is also looking at sponsoring a hockey team if there's enough interest.

And if there isn't enough interest in-house, "we'll start an industry team and have other companies' guys," he said. "It doesn't matter as long as the guys can go out and have fun."

KLS also has a profit-sharing program and Powell noted proudly that "last year we had a notably better year than our previous three, so we took every supervisor down to Mexico for fishing and golfing."

Powell said he'd like to see KLS get back to its glory days over the next five years and he also wants to be working more outside of the city limits of Calgary, with "an alternate branch in central and northern Alberta." **TW**

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Fleets frustrated by government regulations

By James Menzies

US and Canadian trucking companies have much in common, including their growing frustration over government interference in their businesses, with seemingly little thought given to the full implications of their decisions.

That was evidenced during a panel discussion on *The Impact of Rules and Legislations on Fleet Operating Costs*, hosted by Performance Innovation Transport at its second annual conference Feb. 26.

Providing a fleet perspective on the subject were Mike Kelley, vice-president, YRC Freight and Mark Irwin, director of maintenance, eastern region, Bison Transport. Among their shared frustrations was the idea that government does not hesitate to foist costly regulations on the industry, while it continues to prohibit the use of safe and proven systems such as larger pup trailers in the US and

6x2 axle configurations in Canada.

YRC's Kelley said the LTL trucking industry in the US would like to move from 28-ft. pup trailers to 33-footers, which would provide an 18% increase in capacity.

"The last time we've had any significant productivity increase was in 1982," he complained. "We can save four billion tonnes of CO₂ annually. But this will be anything but an engineering decision, it's going to be a political decision and we're in for a dogfight."

Closer to home, Irwin would like to see the latest generation 6x2 axles allowed in Canada, pointing to weight savings of several hundred pounds.

"We need to get into this," Irwin said. "This is something where we're seeing significant fuel savings. It has been tested by PIT and we have confidence in PIT and what they do. The restrictions or the limitations of operating in Ontario as a result of this actually impacts our ability to perform business in Ontario."

He noted US carriers are coming into Canada using 6x2s and gaining a com-

petitive advantage and that some Canadian fleets are also using the system, despite it being illegal. Geoff Wood, vice-president of operations and safety with the Ontario Trucking Association and Canadian Trucking Alliance warned they do so at their own peril.

"If you have technology that is not allowed and doesn't fit within the provincial framework and something happens, you might have a problem on your hands legally and civilly," he suggested. He noted the associations are discussing the issues related to 6x2s with government, but added a formal position has not yet been taken.

While governments in both countries seem bound on limiting productivity in some ways, they are not afraid to introduce new legislation that brings tremendous cost to the industry, Kelley pointed out, citing electronic logging devices as a timely example.

"We'll have two years to put ELDs in 8,000 trucks. This is ironic, because we've been talking about this since 1997 and we'll have a two-year implementation window and we can't act on it now because we don't know what the standards will be," Kelley said.

He is also worried about talk a Pigovian tax could be applied to the trucking industry as punishment for the carbon emissions it produces. Kelley would prefer to see a modest increase in fuel taxes, since only 2-4% of the money collected in this manner goes towards administrative costs. A Pigovian tax, which is an extreme tax intended to change behaviour, won't work in trucking, because the deliveries must still be made, Kelley pointed out. He would prefer the government shift its attention to helping the industry, through the elimination of barriers, including traffic congestion. He cited a stat that suggested traffic congestion at freight chokepoints in the US each year produce an outcome equivalent to 51,000 trucks and drivers sitting idle for an entire year.

"We should be able to align industry, environmentalists and the Administration to get a long-term comprehensive

plan to address freight chokepoints," he said.

Kelley also had concerns with how the latest emissions standards for heavy trucks have been implemented, driving up costs of new trucks by 45% while at the same time, cars have increased in price just 15%. While Kelley said he agrees with the importance of cleaning the air, the new standards have resulted in less reliable equipment that has been especially troubling in an LTL environment with ever-tightening delivery windows.

"The nation's commerce is on wheels," he said. "We have some of the biggest retailers in North America that we serve now and if we're late by three hours, they don't have product on their shelves and they get really upset with us and then they don't pay us."

Bison's Irwin agreed that customer expectations are constantly rising and that regulations that curtail productivity are a hindrance. He'd like to see Ontario's long combination vehicle (LCV) program expanded more rapidly, as one example.

The company has been running LCVs for 11 years and they now account for 26% of all its miles travelled, or 2.8 million miles per month. They average about 5.5 mpg compared to the single-trailer fleet's average of 6.5 mpg, but looked at another way, they nearly double trailer productivity to 11 mpg per trailer.

"That's pretty efficient and that's the world we want to live in," Irwin said.

He also has an issue with roadside enforcement being overly aggressive when inspecting LCV equipment. An ABS light out results in the loss of a permit for three to four months, even though the braking system is still functional. Irwin would like to see government trust the research done by organizations such as PIT and the OEMs and more quickly approve new technologies that can improve freight efficiency. He suggested conducting "rapid testing" on promising new technologies so that they can be put into service more quickly. **TW**

Phase 2 of GHG regs coming soon

By the time Phase 2 of the joint US EPA/NHTSA fuel economy standards for heavy trucks is implemented, a typical tractor-trailer should be 40% more fuel efficient than a 2010 baseline model. About half of this gain will have been achieved through the first phase, still underway through model year 2018 vehicles.

Getting there was relatively easy, since it involved the adoption of technologies already widely used in the industry, according to Glen Kedzie, vice-president, energy and environmental affairs counsel with the American Trucking Associations. He was speaking on the topic of rules and regulations and their effect on fleet operating costs at the second annual Performance Innovation Transport (PIT) Conference Feb. 26.

As Phase 2 is implemented, trailers will for the first time be regulated and some more advanced engine technologies such as waste heat recovery will need to be employed to meet the more aggressive targets, Kedzie explained. He added there is some urgency to rolling out the second phase, since the sun is setting on US President Barack Obama's second term and he wants these improvements to be counted among his environmental achievements.

"He wants this regulation completed under his tenure," Kedzie said. "He wants this as part of his climate change legacy."

The Phase 2 changes were first announced in June 2013 as part of the president's Climate Action Plan. A proposed rule is due this month, with a final rule to come a year later.

The ATA has formed an advisory committee to put forth recommendations on what the new rules should look like. As in the previous round, there will be separate standards for engines and vehicles, Kedzie said, but this time around trailers will also be affected.

"It's a done deal - trailers will be regulated for the first time," he confirmed.

New rules are expected to be implemented as early as on model year 2018

trailers, meaning the changes could be seen as soon as January 2017. Trailer side skirts and automatic tire inflation systems could eventually become requirements. On the vehicle side, expect to see technologies such as waste heat recovery, the electrification of underhood components, lightweighting, hybridization and further aerodynamics come into play.

The lawmakers and industry are both calling for the required changes to deliver an 18-month payback as a result of the improved fuel economy that should be achieved.

"That's what fleets are saying they want and what the agencies' messages are. We'll have to wait to see," Kedzie noted. It remains to be seen how the new standards will be phased in. While the industry awaits a formal rule, the ATA has some suggestions on how it should be rolled out.

"We've been doing a lot of data-gathering," Kedzie said. "We want decisions to be based on industry data, not unverified data from industry groups."

The association has also been emphasizing the need for harmonization with the US and Canada, though Canada, with its broader array of acceptable configurations and heavier payloads, may find it trickier than in the past to rubber-stamp whatever rule the US comes out with. The new rules could see a greater emphasis from the OEMs on selling their most fuel-efficient vehicles, which will earn them credits that can be applied towards the sale of non-conforming models. So while that longnose cowboy truck may still be on offer, the manufacturer will have to offset each one of those it sells by earning credits on the sale of its more efficient models.

"The manufacturers are going to try to get efficient equipment out there as early as they can, so they can stockpile these credits," Kedzie predicted.

Kedzie concluded the ATA is also urging the rulemakers to take a measured approach and to not hastily foist unproven technologies onto the industry. **TW**

NOTICE TO TRUCKERS 2015 SPRING LOAD RESTRICTIONS

Under the *Highway Traffic Act*, the province enforces reduced load restrictions on trucks to protect Ontario's highways during spring thaw, when road damage is most likely to occur.

RESTRICTION ON PERMITS ISSUED UNDER THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT:

All annual and project permits for moving of heavy vehicle loads, objects or structures, in excess of limits set out in the Act, unless otherwise specified are not valid on any highways during the months of March and April, in the southern portion of Ontario, and March, April and May in the northern portion.

For this restriction, the province is divided, west to east, by a line formed by the Severn River to Regional Rd. 169; Regional Rd. 169 from Washago to Hwy. 12; Hwy. 12, from Regional Rd. 169 to Hwy. 7, north of Sunderland; Hwy. 7, from Hwy. 12 to Regional Rd. 7B at Carleton Place; Regional Rd. 7B to Hwy. 15; and Regional Rd. 29 to Arnprior.

Single trip permits, for moving of overloads on highways not designated in Schedules 1, 2 and 3, may be issued, but are subject to axle controls established by the Ministry of Transportation.

Reduced load limits will be in effect where and when signs are posted depending on road and weather conditions.

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Tips about meal tax deductions

It's now been 15 years since Don Wilkinson, a truck driver from Winnipeg, won his meal-expense case in tax court. You don't remember Don Wilkinson? Well, you should, every time you order food at a truck stop.

On his 1997 tax return, Wilkinson claimed meal expenses using a "simplified" federal flat-rate calculation of \$40 a day instead of the customary \$33 a day at the time.

He got audited, penalized, and went to court arguing that \$33 didn't reflect the real cost of three square meals on the road.

In August 2000, a judge agreed. The ruling didn't establish what was "reasonable" for a truck driver to claim, it only meant that in Wilkinson's case, \$33 was not.

The decision opened the door for drivers to challenge the per diem amount on their tax returns and for the CRA to revise its standards on meal deductions, including raising the rate to \$17 a meal.

It also got owner/operators thinking about incorporating and drawing a reasonable meal allowance per diem and ditching the TL2 simplified method altogether. Fifteen years later, I'm still answering questions about meal expenses. Here are a few facts you should know:

Do I need receipts?

Like anyone else who works away from his employer's place of business and who does not receive an allowance for meals, a truck driver can claim his actual meal costs provided that each expense is reasonable, itemized, and verified by a receipt. Most truck drivers use the simplified method, which requires them to keep a travel record but not receipts for each meal.

How much can I claim?

Meals claimed using the simplified method are calculated at \$17 per meal. You can deduct 50% of that expense unless you qualify as a "long-haul truck driver," in which case you can claim 80%.

Am I a long-haul truck driver?

A long-haul truck driver is defined as an employee whose job is transporting goods in a long-haul truck that has a GVWR of more than 11,788 kg; is away from his home municipality or metro area for at least 24 hours; and travels at least 160 km from the establishment to which he regularly reports to work.

If you're back home within 24 hours of your departure, your meal expense deduction is 50%. And CRA expects you to eat at least breakfast and perhaps supper at home.

What if I eat more than three meals a day?

The old "every four hours is a meal" rule doesn't apply. If you're away for 12 hours you qualify for three meals;

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



for less than 12, zero meals.

What about food from the grocery store?

This deduction is supposed to compensate for the extra cost of having a restaurant prepare your meal.

Groceries bought on the road are

treated no differently than groceries you would have paid for and eaten at home.

Can I claim GST/HST on meals?

Great question. Here's a test to see if your tax-return preparer knows his stuff.

If you're an employee or incorporated owner/operator with a T4 from your company and claiming a meal deduction using a TL2 form, your claim is an employment expense.

Therefore you can be refunded the GST/HST part of your meal deduction that represents meals in Canada.

If you paid GST/HST and don't see anything on line 457 of your tax return, call me.

I don't have paper logs. Now what?

Canadian and US laws require truck drivers to keep their logbooks for six months. It's a safety record.

If you claim meals as a deduction on your tax return, your logbook is also a tax document that you have to keep for seven years like any other tax slip or receipt. There's an obvious conflict.

Talk to your EOBR supplier or your carrier and find out if you can indeed download your logbook data.

If you haven't been downloading or printing your logs regularly, your information may be gone.

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

Recently, I started exchanging e-mails with a driver who is in the process of establishing a non-profit organization targeting women entering our industry as drivers.

She is an experienced long-haul driver and spoke of her love and passion for the industry.

She wants to promote accomplishments and minimize obstacles faced by women working in the industry. She feels that if she stays silent on the issues women are facing then there is no room for her to complain.

The first question I asked myself was, how will this organization stand out from others with similar goals and objectives? So I started doing a little research and began chatting online in a couple of different forums.

I was surprised when I learned that only 3% of commercial driving jobs are held by women.

I thought that number was significantly higher. I did not contact our human resources department to gather any firm numbers but I am quite certain that here at J&R Hall Transport you would find a higher percentage of women behind the wheel than 3%.

I have run down the road with many women drivers over the years and never had reason to question their skills or abilities.

In fact, I have observed that many women perform at a higher level than their male counterparts in general.

Women seem to have a much calmer 'steady as she goes' approach to the workload that we face along with a stronger sensibility when it comes to planning and organizing.

That has been my experience. I am discovering that my employer appears to be considerably more progressive on women's issues than many in our industry.

I won't pretend that I have conducted some sort of scientific study, but from the few women drivers I have been able to talk to, the general feeling is that breaking into the trucking industry as a driver is difficult and it takes some time to earn the respect of fellow drivers.

Let's be clear, we're talking about fellow male drivers. But here is my take on the age old "respect is earned, not given" credo.

When I obtained my commercial driver's licence I was accepted into the industry with open arms. I still had to earn the respect of my peers but I was given that opportunity to prove myself.

But it seems to me that for women, that scenario is turned on its head. When a woman obtains her commercial driver's licence she has to prove herself simply to gain the opportunity for employment. Only then can she start to work at gaining the respect of her peers. The bar seems to be set so much higher.

Over the Road

Al Goodhall



Then I read about a survey conducted by Trucking HR Canada's Women with Drive initiative that found male managers cited physical limitations as a barrier to entry into the industry for women.

I was taken aback by this paternalistic attitude from our leadership. The

majority of women that responded to the survey did not find this to be an issue.

These findings were presented at the inaugural Women with Drive Leadership Summit held on March 5.

I believe men and women are different but equal in their potential to perform in any field. We are different biologically, physically, and yes, emotionally. We tackle problems and challenges in different ways. The trucking industry is lacking the perspective that women bring to the table.

We are in a time of great change on many fronts and we are lacking the diversity to face those challenges.

Men and women possess an incredible synergy when they work together. That's exactly what is needed right now, an effect that is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

It's time that men started opening doors for women in this industry, lis-

tening to what they have to say, and accepting what they have to offer.

So, what of the driver that is starting the non-profit organization for women drivers? She asked me to think about joining her as a board member to work with our fellow drivers.

At first I resisted, citing availability of time.

But that's an excuse.

Many of the obstacles women are facing as drivers today are not solely women's issues - they are also driver issues. Especially when we are talking about training and mentorship.

I think I can help, so I will. More to follow. **TW**

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

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APUs: Money-saver or pricey indulgence?

I mentioned some time ago that I felt an auxiliary power unit (APU) would be a wise investment that would hopefully save some money by reducing idling.

My problem is that I could not find any definitive data to help my decision. I'm sure it makes financial sense, but a five-figure purchase really needs a bit of evidence to support it, and I cannot find anything anywhere from a trusted source.

Internet trucking forums would seem to be a good place to ask questions, but that didn't help me at all. I received opinions, but I wanted cold hard facts, yet I got none. So I decided it was about time that somebody did a definitive test and got some numbers down for comparison. Does an APU make financial sense or is it just a luxury?

To do this I needed a whole year of running without one. Comparing January figures alone would surely skew the results in favour of an APU and the same applies to August.

But what about the milder months? There is no need for heating or cooling all year-round, even in Canada, so is the APU just an extravagance for half the year? And will the savings from the times when it is more cost-effective than idling outweigh the times when it just sits there hanging on the frame rails serving no purpose whatsoever?

My first anniversary of truck ownership in Canada coincides with this issue of the magazine and I'm finally getting an APU fitted. I now have a full year of data without one, which I can compare to the results I get over the next year.

I am getting a full ECM download, which will tell me idle times, the number of diesel particulate filter (DPF) re-gens that have occurred while idling overnight and the fuel used while idling. I have idled when I've needed heating or cooling and I have idled when temperatures dip-ped below -15 C (to ensure my truck would start in the morning) and I have idled when I've used my microwave.

For the next year I will do the same, but instead of using the 13-litre engine, I will use the little one on the frame rails. My new cut-off point for idling will be determined by an experiment in the yard. I was thinking -25 C, but I'm sure that -30 C will be okay.

However I don't want to take that chance out on the road, so doing it in the safety of the yard where I can plug in the block heater and warm it up a bit if it doesn't work at lower temperatures is the safest method. I know that using an APU will cut down on diesel particulate filter DPF re-gens as my truck does one every night it idles in winter. In summer it's different, but with colder temperatures or winter blend fuels it needs to re-gen after idling all night.

This is a real pain as it usually occurs just as I'm getting out of bed in the morning. I then have to let it do its thing for up to 40 minutes.

This increases the amount of fuel burned from idling significantly and

a monthly download of the ECM data to compare things on a like-for-like basis.

I'm pretty much convinced that the APU makes absolute sense during the winter months, the re-gens alone confirm that. The milder months and the summer will be the deciding factor in terms of whether there's an overall economic advantage.

Of course there is more to it than just money - convenience is another bonus. At present, when I get back to the yard and park the truck, I have to take out everything that will freeze or spoil. It may not seem like a big deal, but emptying the fridge and cupboards is an inconvenience. It's not the end of the world, but with an APU I can leave everything where it is and let the APU take care of maintaining a comfortable temperature inside the cab while I'm at home.

There are downsides, of course. The APU itself has a running cost and needs servicing. It also takes up space on the

frame and adds weight. I want mine mounted just in front of the drive axle on the passenger side, but this will require the fuel tank to be cut down. It will also mean the mounting brackets for my side skirts and my fuel tank straps will need modification.

I have determined that by moving things around a little I won't lose any fuel capacity and I will have the extra weight of the APU going on my drives, not my steer axle.

The whole process is quite complicated - certainly a lot more than it appears on the surface - and hopefully my efforts will be of use to anyone thinking about fitting an APU. **TW**

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



the fact that a re-gen is required at all is confirmation that idling is not good for my engine and all the stuff that's attached to it to save the world.

As this experiment is going to be conducted over a full year, the results are not going to be available until the end of the test. However I'm planning to get

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Life under IRP's Full Reciprocity Plan

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. That's how it is with the Full Reciprocity Plan, a new way to manage fleets under the International Registration Plan.

Nearly 20 years in the making, FRP grants full reciprocity to all apportioned vehicles in all IRP-member jurisdictions and eliminates any provisions related to estimated distance. FRP took effect on Jan. 1. Now, three months in, we're seeing that despite all the forethought and work that went into cooking up this new program, there's still room to improve the recipe.

New fleets

FRP for new fleets is pretty straightforward. When a fleet is "new," or it accumulated no actual distance during the previous IRP distance-reporting period (July 1 to June 30), the registration fees are calculated using the base jurisdiction's "average per-vehicle distance" chart. That's the new name for the old "estimated distance" chart.

Each jurisdiction has determined an average per-vehicle distance by taking the total of all the vehicles it licensed un-

Permits & Licensing

Sandy Johnson



der IRP and dividing that number by the total number of vehicles licensed in that jurisdiction. This is what new fleets should use to calculate their fees. No more estimating. No more guesswork.

Renewals

For carriers that are renewing their fleets under IRP, registration fees are based on actual mileage in the jurisdictions the fleet travelled to during the reporting period (from July 1 to June 30 of the preceding year). But what happens when a company moves to a different jurisdiction? Is it now a "new" fleet in Jurisdiction #2 or an existing fleet that should use distance accumulated when it was based in Jurisdiction #1?

What if a company shifts only part of its fleet to Jurisdiction #2? What distance does it use then? The new rules don't account for these situations but they're nonetheless real. With no track-

record to go on, it's hard to say how jurisdictions will interpret these and other unforeseen scenarios under FRP.

What to do

No one should take "it depends" as an answer. It can lead to some fuzzy math and serious audit exposure.

As always, understanding the principles of apportionment is the key to success under IRP, so ask for help. Here are some of the questions I'm getting about FRP:

Q: Why are all these jurisdictions on my cab card? We don't even go there.

When you register a fleet now, your base jurisdiction will issue a cab card that lists all IRP member jurisdictions. With every jurisdiction on the cab card, your apportioned vehicles are approved to travel in any IRP jurisdiction during the license year, which means you'll have the flexibility to go to travel to member states and provinces at any time without permits.

Q: Can I change my base jurisdiction?

It'd be great if you could set up shop in a jurisdiction that interprets the rules the way you need them. Most carriers don't have a choice because of the IRP definition of "established place of business."

If you're establishing a new IRP fleet and do have a choice, you may be able to save some money by making the right one. I have a client who needed to set up a fleet to run in Alberta, B.C., and Saskatchewan. She had some flexibility in where to base her trucks. Should she go with Alberta, B.C., or Saskatchewan?

In order to calculate registration fees,

you need a GVW, a purchase price in Canadian dollars (also converted to US dollars), and a model year. The purchase price and model year are used to calculate sales tax and the weight is used to calculate the license fee portion.

For illustrative purposes, I picked some average numbers in terms of weight (39,500 kg or 80,000 lbs) and purchase price (2015 model-year trucks at \$150,000 or \$187,500 US). Given her fleet's travel pattern, it would cost \$3,122.65 per truck in Alberta; \$3,869.84 in B.C.; and \$3,897.14 in Saskatchewan. Quite a difference.

Remember, this is for a new fleet. At renewal time, my client's fees may increase or decrease depending on the actual distance travelled from July 1 to June 30.

Q: What are you talking about? What's FRP?

If you have yet to renew your fleet in 2015 because your registrations are still valid, the old rules apply through your expiration date. Until then, check with your base jurisdiction and the IRP web site for general information about FRP and talk to a tax and license pro about how FRP will affect you and your fleet. **TW**

Sandy Johnson is the founder and managing director at North Star Fleet Solutions in Calgary. The company provides vehicle tax and license compliance services for trucking operations ranging from single vehicles to large fleets. She can be reached at 877-860-8025 or northstarfleet.com.

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Port wars

By Jim Bray

VANCOUVER, B.C. – Port Metro Vancouver received a bit of a blow in federal court late last month as the legal body dismissed its motion for a declaration that the court has no jurisdiction in the case brought against it by truckers whose TLS (Truck Licensing System) applications to the port were denied.

That doesn't end the case by any means, but it does give at least a temporary victory to the drivers. According to Gagan Singh, spokesperson for the United Truckers Association – many of whose members found themselves shut out after the port announced its new policies – the dismissal held good news for truckers because it keeps the process of getting redress going forward.

"The next step is that the judicial review will start either on the 20th or 23rd of March," he told *Truck West* in a phone interview, "so once that's started (the Port) will have to answer for why the companies didn't get their licenses back."

On the downside for truckers, Singh said the ruling also dismissed their motion for "interlocutory injunction extending for reinstating their licence and authorizations issued by PMV to allow them to access the port until the underlying judicial review application are determined." That would have let the truckers get back into the port facilities until the process plays out, so as it sits they will have to twist in the wind – and continue losing income – until the final decision is made.

Singh thinks the fact that the judicial review has been scheduled for the near future is a good sign, however.

"The Judge must have seen some urgency in the situation, because he said that while a judicial review would normally take six months or more, he has granted it in three weeks."

He said the review will look at both sides of the issue to hopefully get the situation cleared up in a fair manner. "They will find out which is true and the port will have to answer all the points our group has brought up," he said.

Port Metro Vancouver announced in early February which trucking companies would be approved to service its Lower Mainland facility, a move that left many truckers on the outside looking in. Some truckers have organized demonstrations and protests since then, as well as launching the current legal action aimed at restoring their port privileges.

Peter Xotta, vice-president of planning and operations for Port Metro Vancouver, said in an early February statement that the TLS is part of a Joint Action Plan that was agreed to last year by the driver representatives and the governments, both provincially and federally. He said the reforms included reducing the number of trucks approved to service the terminals because "there were previously too many trucks for the amount of available work," and he claimed the change was requested by "drivers, trucking companies and others during extensive consultation done in the fall because drivers stated they could not get enough work to make a decent living."

Singh said the truckers are looking not only to get back to business serving the port, but also for back pay for the time they've missed. **TW**

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Ford introduces quieter new F-750 in Tonka trim

By James Menzies

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – Ford’s new F-650/F-750 medium-duty truck is much quieter than its predecessor, but the company is making some noise with its introduction by showing it in Tonka trim.

The Tonka-inspired F-750 unveiled at the NTEA Work Truck Show will be hitting the road and appearing at other industry events throughout the year, including the Mid-America Trucking Show.

The medium-duty truck itself is much quieter than previous versions. Ford claims that at idle, it’s 45% quieter inside the cab and 35% quieter outside. At highway speeds it’s 25% quieter. This is due to a newly designed 6.7-litre V8 Power Stroke diesel engine.

“Our all-new F-650/F-750 medium-

duty trucks are purpose-built to give our hardworking vocational customers maximum capability,” said John Ruppert, general manager, Ford Commercial Vehicle Sales and Marketing. “While the truck is able to work harder, we also made life inside the cab easier. Lowering in-cab and exterior noise levels improves driver comfort and minimizes disturbances while idling at work sites.”

The new V8 diesel is mated to Ford’s own transmission, allowing for optimized performance. Ford says it’s the only medium-duty truck maker to produce its own fully integrated engine and transmission.

The truck will be offered in regular cab, super cab and crew cab styles and in a straight frame, dock-height and an all-new tractor configuration.

Ford also announced it’s renaming



Ford says its new F-650/F-750 is quieter but it made some noise with this paint scheme. The truck will tour industry events.

its telematics solution to Ford Telematics and will be rolling it out globally. It was previously known as Crew Chief. The system will continue to be pow-

ered by Telogis. New features and analytics have been added to the platform.

“Commercial trucks have to be more than delivery boxes on wheels, and innovations like Ford Telematics are critical to helping our fleet customers succeed,” said Raj Nair, chief technical officer and group vice-president, global product development with Ford. “Ford, in coordination with Telogis, is leading the development of smart solutions for hardworking fleets so they can maximize their operations to better serve their customers.”

Ford is the only manufacturer to offer a full line of Classes 1 through 7 commercial vehicles. Ruppert said it commanded 43.2% of this segment’s market share in 2014. He also said the new Ford Transit full-sized commercial van has been well received, with 23,000 units sold over the last three months. And the redesigned F-150 with aluminum body has come out of the gate strong. Ruppert said more than 1.5 million prospective customers have used the build-and-price feature on the company’s Web site, setting a new record and attracting more interest than even the Mustang. **TW**



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WINNIPEG, Man. – SmartTruck Systems has inked a deal with a new Canadian distributor. Maxim Truck & Trailer will now offer its trailer aero devices, through its 17 locations and online through www.MaximInc.com.

“We are delighted and proud to welcome Maxim, a company with its own fine heritage and superior reputation, to our North American dealer network,” said Stephen S. Ingham, Jr., CEO of SmartTruck Systems. “We are looking forward to a long and successful relationship with our neighbour to the north.”

SmartTruck manufactures a trailer undertray device and a TopKit rear drag fairing system.

“Maxim is excited to be offering SmartTruck’s line of drag-reducing, fuel-economy products to our customers across Canada,” said Steve Young, Maxim vice-president of parts. “Many of our Maxim customers are looking forward to the ability to add SmartTruck’s cutting-edge products to their vehicles.” **TW**

Mack makes mDrive HD standard in Titan heavy-hauler

By James Menzies

Mack Trucks officials came to Canada's National Heavy Equipment Show March 5 to announce the company's ultra-heavy-haul Titan by Mack will now come standard with the mDrive HD automated manual transmission.

Previously the Titan could only be had with a manual, but the company says the new HD version of its mDrive transmission has been engineered for extreme payloads.

It can handle gross combination weights of more than 140,000 lbs, Mack announced, as well as 2,060 lb.-ft. of torque.

The mDrive HD you'll find in the Titan has been programmed for heavy-haul applications and will perform differently than even the mDrive HD that was announced last month as standard on the Mack Granite.

"It won't skip-shift, it will go through all the gears," said Stu Russoli, product manager, construction segment with Mack. "It will get the load started and keep it moving by going through all the gears."

He noted different software has been developed for the mDrive HD for each of the applications into which it will be deployed. A construction version is available as well as an EZ Shift configuration for sensitive bulk hauling applications.

The mDrive HD offers ease of operation and broadens the potential driver pool. It also offers operational benefits: it's up to 237 lbs lighter than alternative options and uses less oil, about 17.8 quarts compared to nearly 50 in some other transmissions.

The cooler has been relocated to the gearbox, which simplifies maintenance and allows for greater control of operating temperatures, Russoli said.

While it's based on the same 12-speed mDrive first introduced on the Mack Pinnacle highway tractor, it has been reinforced with hardened gears and a stronger split synchronizer for increased durability in heavy-haul operations. It also requires a higher-viscosity transmission oil.

The mDrive HD comes with features such as Grade Gripper, Rock-Free and Power Launch. Grade Gripper works with the ABS system and will hold the truck on a hill, giving the driver time to transition their foot from the brake to the throttle without rolling backwards. Rock-Free enables the driver to rock the truck back and forth and escape from mud or a frozen surface simply by pumping the accelerator. If that doesn't work, Power Launch allows the operator to increase torque and engine rpm for an extra boost at launch.

The mDrive HD also allows the operator to choose Manual mode to override gear selections when necessary.

"We built on the success of the Mack mDrive, previously only available on our highway models, and engineered a heavier-duty version of the automated manual transmission, resulting in the mDrive HD, standard on the Mack Granite and now standard on the Titan," said

Stephen Roy, president of Mack Trucks North America. "When paired with the powerful heavy-haul Titan, it offers Mack customers unparalleled muscle to easily handle the most difficult of loads."

John Walsh, vice-president of marketing with Mack Trucks, gave a brief overview of Mack's standing in the marketplace. He projected North American Class 8 truck demand to total 310,000 units.

He said infrastructure investments in key Canadian markets such as Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto should help sales of its construction trucks, and noted the Granite remains the top-selling Class 8 conventional straight truck in the US.

"Where there's demanding work to be done, there's a Mack to get it done," Walsh said. **TW**



Mack's biggest truck – the Titan by Mack – is now available with the mDrive automated manual transmission, which will come standard.

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Looking for a smarter spec'

Kriska's five new International ProStars with Cummins-Eaton SmartAdvantage powertrain are delivering a fuel savings

By James Menzies

He used to spec' all the trucks himself. One truck for every job. But Marcel Boisvenue, fleet maintenance manager with Kriska Transportation, has recently changed all that. He now leans more heavily on the expertise of the OEMs – their wind tunnels, their laboratories, their engineers – to design the best truck for each specific route and application.

"Years ago when we spec'd a truck, one truck did everything," Boisvenue explained. "It did this job, did

that job. Did the hills, did the flats. It hauled 30,000-lb payloads and it hauled 110,000-lb payloads. We realized this last few years that we can't do that anymore."

This year, when it came time to replace several units hauling glass on an Indiana-Ontario/Quebec route, Boisvenue had just one request: 10 mpg.

"I said if I can't get 10 miles to the gallon (Imperial) then we're going to be talking," Boisvenue said.

No pressure.

This request landed five new International ProStars with Cummins-

Eaton SmartAdvantage powertrains in Kriska's yard. They're rated at 450 hp and 1,550/1,750 lb.-ft. of torque. They are among the first SmartAdvantage-powered trucks to be deployed in Ontario.

The trucks are being used to serve a customer whose payloads rarely exceed 30,000 lbs, delivering glass from a factory in Indiana to manufacturers in Ontario and Quebec. The trucks head back to Indiana even lighter, with empty racks going back to the glass plant.

The trucks are getting a full 3 mpg better fuel mileage than the ones they replaced – International ProStars with EGR-only MaxxForce engines.

It's easy to dismiss the SmartAdvantage as an American spec'. After all, it's limited to a GVW of 80,000 lbs. It's not the truck you bring into your fleet to do everything, but it has its place. The SmartAdvantage powertrain is a result of a heightened level of collaboration between Eaton and Cummins.

As independent component manufacturers, the two companies are kindred spirits of sorts, facing the same daunting challenges in an industry whose suppliers are regularly espousing the benefits of vertical integration. The hyper-collaboration between the two companies now even includes the exchange of trade secrets to better optimize their respective components for the greater collective good. It seems to be working out.

These ProStars are getting just shy of 10 mpg (Imperial). But how do they drive? I wanted to find out and with the help of Cummins and Kriska, I had the opportunity to take Unit 1500 for a four-hour drive the week before Christmas. This being a slip-seat truck running 20 hours a day, I wanted to get some drive time with the SmartAdvantage without disrupting Kriska's busy delivery schedules in any way. So I met up with driver Norm Conant around noon on Dec. 17 and we headed over to All Weather Windows to pick up a few dozen racks for delivery to Sarnia, where we'd pass it off to another driver who'd take the load to Indiana overnight and return early the next morning with another load of glass.

On the drive to Sarnia, the SmartAdvantage did everything I was told it would do. Prior to my drive, Christoph Horn, Ontario territory manager with Cummins, explained the downsped engine would cruise at about 1,259 rpm at 62 mph (100 km/h).

"When we were spec'ing this, we wanted this to run between 1,150 and 1,240 rpm, so we're on the high side of where we want it to run – we're about 19 rpm over where we'd like it to be," Horn acknowledged.

It's okay to drop a gear

Horn cautioned the transmission would readily downshift to ninth gear, but this was no cause for concern because the ISX15's broad sweet spot means the engine is still operating within that range – even in ninth. While engineers used to emphasize the importance of getting into top gear

and staying there as long as possible, the focus has since shifted to getting into the sweet spot and remaining there – even if that entails dropping a gear.

"For the first time, we're really okay with downshifting because we're still in the sweet spot when we downshift," Horn said. "And when we downshift, we have the advantage of being in direct drive and there's a 3% fuel economy benefit to be picked up on the transmission side when we're in direct drive as opposed to overdrive."

But this never happened on my drive, with just 16,000 lbs of racks in the wagon. It didn't happen on the return trip either, with 36,000 lbs of glass in the back. We held tenth gear the entire time, but the steepest grade we encountered was approaching Hwy. 8 eastbound on the 401 – not exactly the Roger's Pass. Normally an engine evaluation calls for some hill hunting and the pursuit of challenging terrains with heavy loads, but there was little reason to do so with this truck.

This truck was never built to haul heavy payloads over big hills. You wouldn't spec' the SmartAdvantage to run the West Coast with a 110,000-lb payload; it wouldn't be smart and there'd be no advantage.

This spec' is intended for gross loads of no more than 80,000 lbs and that's exactly what Kriska was looking for when it placed the order. That, and 10 mpg.

They're nearly there. By fall, the five SmartAdvantage-powered ProStars were averaging 9.42 mpg (Imperial) with about 43,000 miles of pavement having passed underneath their tires. But it's the consistency that really impresses Boisvenue.

"These things come in and every time I check them, there is less than a 0.1 mpg spread between the worst and the best (SmartAdvantage units)," he told me.

Where do the savings come from?

The work Cummins and Eaton have done to better integrate the engine and transmission are yielding improvements when it comes to fuel economy. One example of this is that the engine can now access the transmission's level sensor, allowing it to more quickly and accurately adjust torque based on the actual road grade rather than an estimate.

Better integration contributes about one third of the 3% fuel economy gain Cummins and Eaton say the SmartAdvantage can deliver over a non-optimized, but similar, engine/transmission combo.

Another 1% is derived from improvements to the design of the 10-speed Fuller Advantage Series automated manual transmission – the first to employ a precision lubrication system that eliminated the need for an oil cooler and shaved about 80 lbs from the transmission's weight.

The final piece of the puzzle is downspeeding, where another percentage point is gained by running the engine at lower rpm. But in addition to all this, both Cummins and Eaton have made significant improvements to their own respective products in recent years.

The Fuller Advantage Series employs small step gearing for better shifting



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The five SmartAdvantage trucks all perform within 0.1 mpg of each other.

performance and Cummins has continuously improved the fuel economy of its ISX15 as far back as 2007.

"If a customer is coming out of a 2007 product into a 2014 product, they'll see a 10% increase in fuel economy – and that's not with the SmartAdvantage, that's just the standard powertrain," Horn explained.

There are many reasons for this but one of the most impressive may be the reduction in diesel particulate filter (DPF) regenerations required today. The ISX15 typically requires a DPF regen once every 96 hours of operation – down from about once per eight hours in 2007 and every 20 hours in 2010.

When you consider that every regen burns about 1.5 gallons of diesel, you don't need a calculator to realize there's a lot of money to be saved simply through optimization of the after-

treatment system.

How it drove

The SmartAdvantage is a powertrain that doesn't have to be spectacular – it just has to be efficient. Several hours on Hwys. 401 and 402 at 100 km/h and mixing it up with a little bit of traffic was enough to experience the transmission's smooth shifting and the responsiveness you'd expect from an ISX15 engine. Vehicle Acceleration Management (VAM) is a key ingredient to the SmartAdvantage recipe, and it effectively limits the power available upon acceleration when lightly loaded. This, in turn, limits the fuel economy carnage a lead-footed driver can incur by treating every green light as though it's a green flag.

The end result is that even when you're lightly loaded, you'll feel like

you're grossing 70,000 lbs.

Drivers won't like this, but some may need it. The logic behind it is sound – there's significant fuel economy to be gained by forcing a more gradual acceleration when lightly loaded. But there were a couple instances where I felt we missed an advanced green because of VAM. Did any fuel we saved go out the stack while we sat there waiting for the traffic lights to cycle through?

Horn acknowledged VAM is still being fine-tuned in an attempt to strike the perfect balance between efficiency and performance. Even though VAM encourages more gradual acceleration, a truck with VAM enabled and one without, will both reach the same speed within 33 seconds.

Yet VAM provides a fuel savings of 1-2%, Horn claims, adding the fuel savings are greatest in regional haul applications. Aside from its controlled acceleration at launch, the SmartAdvantage never felt underpowered in any way.

SmartAdvantage engines also come with SmartTorque2, which provides a dual torque rating (1,550/1,750 lb.-ft. on the truck I drove) depending on how much is required at any given time. It seamlessly switches between the two torque ratings based on the gear the transmission is in, the weight of the load and the road grade, as dictated by the transmission's level sensor.

The ProStar itself provided a comfortable ride. My only complaint, and it's a small one, is with the design of the hood-mounted mirrors. I found them to be a touch large and I don't

love the tripod-style mount. Sure they provide great visibility down the side of the truck but they also obstruct what's ahead and they can't be good for aerodynamics.

For a fleet spec' day cab, this ProStar was very nice to drive. Visibility over the short, sloped hood was excellent, the heater kept the cab toasty and buttons and switches were logically arranged on the dash and the steering wheel.

Light loads. So what's with the 15L power?

Because these trucks rarely haul payloads greater than 30,000 lbs, I wondered if the trucks were overspec'd with 15-litre power. Cummins and Eaton do offer a SmartAdvantage package with the ISX12, which I thought might be sufficient in this application. When I posed that question to Cummins people it led to a long discussion that circled back to this one conclusion: the 15L is simply more fuel-efficient.

It's more fuel-efficient than the ISX12 and beyond that, it's more fuel-efficient than any 13-litre engine out there, according to Cummins. But this is counterintuitive and contradicts the messaging you will have heard from other OEMs about the benefits of 13-litre engines.

An unabashed proponent of the "there's no replacement for displacement" theory, Horn offered credible explanations as to why a 15L engine can still be the best option – even in

Continued on page 35



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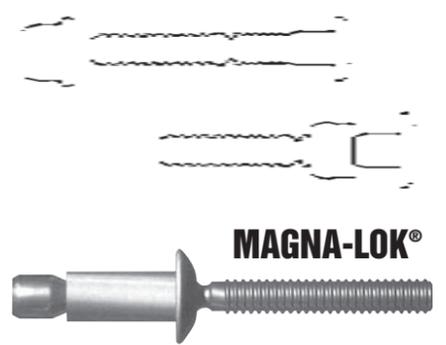
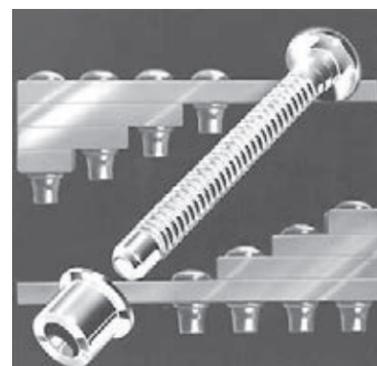
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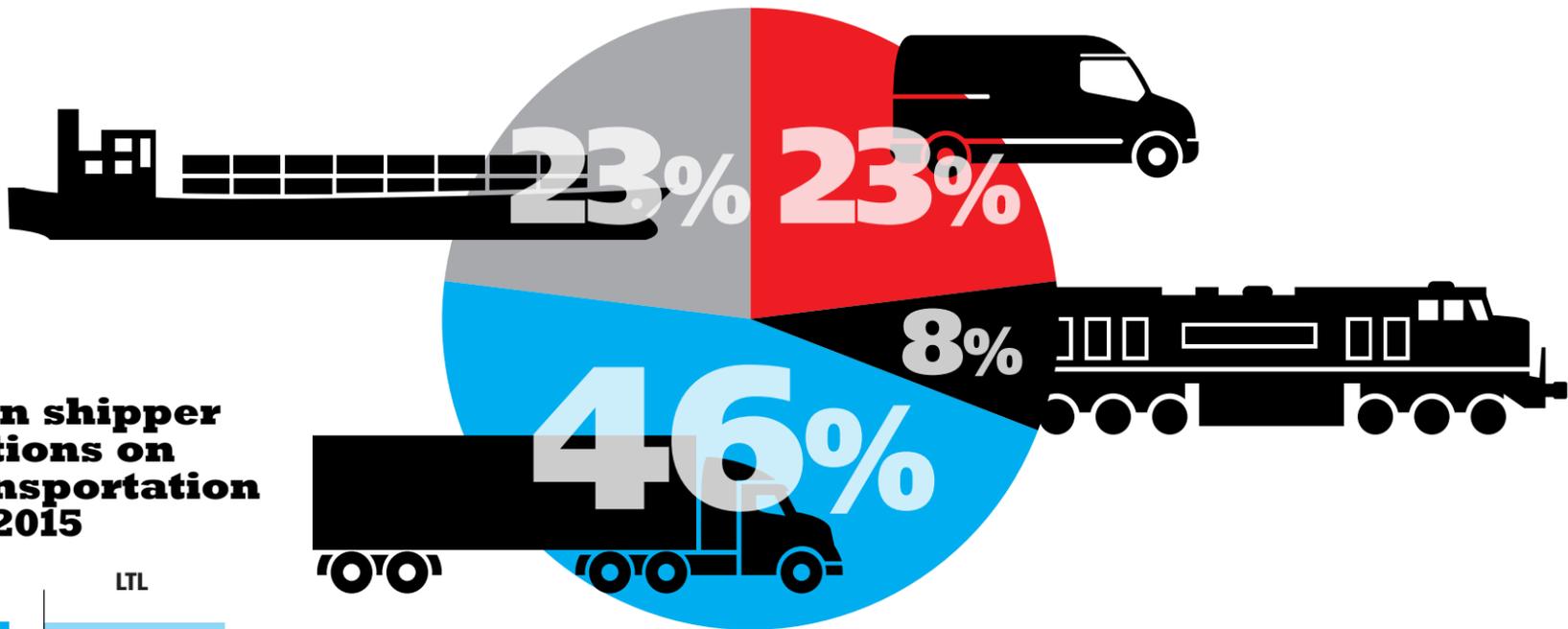
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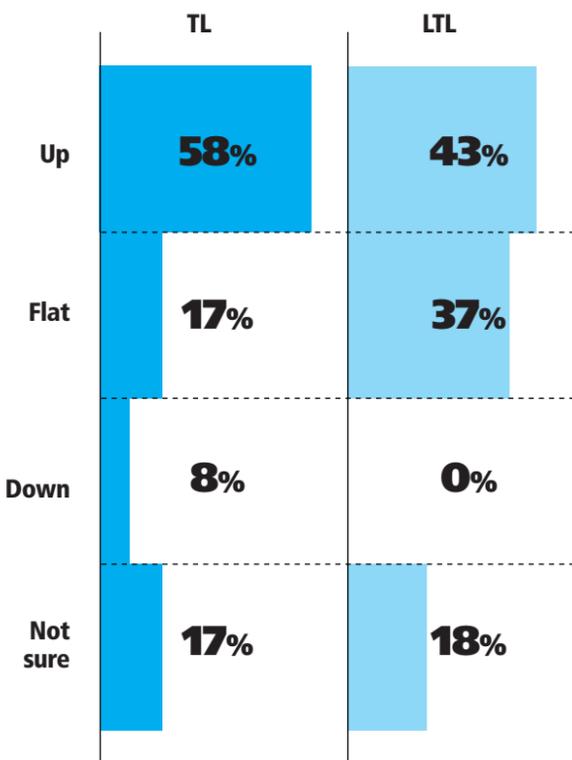
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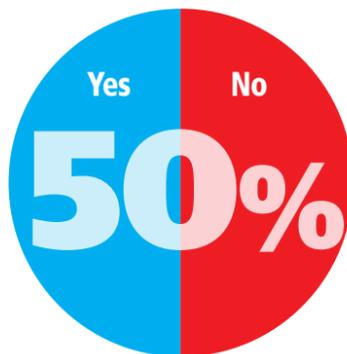
Mode expected to have greatest pricing power in 2015 (% of shippers)



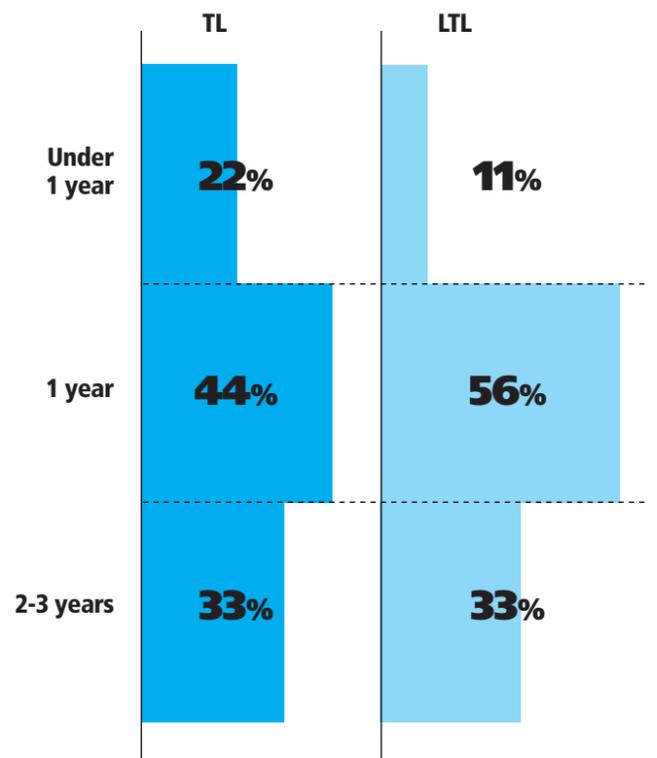
Western Canadian shipper expectations on core transportation pricing 2015



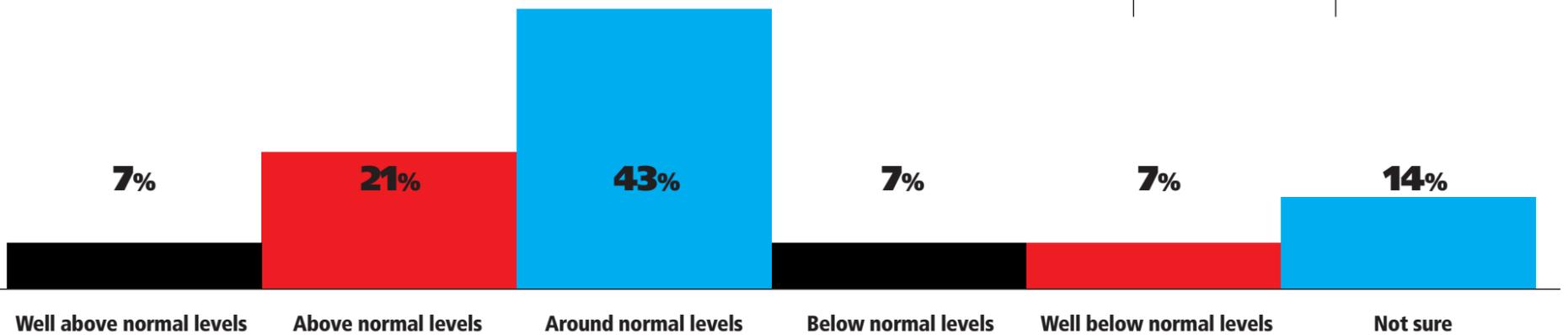
Higher rates and/or surcharges have affected use of transportation modes



Contract period most commonly used by Western Canadian shippers



Western Canadian shipper views on current level of competitive activity among the modes



Western Canadian shippers expect trucking to have the greatest pricing power of all the modes in 2015, according to our annual Transportation Buying Trends Survey. Almost 6 in 10 shippers expect higher TL core rate pricing and 4 in 10 expect higher LTL core pricing.

However, the vast majority expect rate increases to be modest - less than 5% (excluding the fuel surcharge). And half of the shippers indicate that higher rates and/or surcharges have caused them to shift at least some of their business to another mode in the past. **TW**

By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

With a storm coming, Mark pulls into the Husky in Dryden, Ont. He offers help to a woman driver struggling to install her chains, but she tells him to get lost. Some time later, she enters the restaurant and is teased by a group of men who'd been watching her. She confronts the biggest loudmouth of the group head on and shuts them down, gaining Mark's respect.

Mark ends up talking with the woman, Nancy McEvoy, and realizes she's smart and good at her job. But he also realizes that she's got it tough working in a male-dominated industry and gives her even more credit for being able to compete... and succeed against the men.

Hours later, after Mark had taken a nap and the storm looked as if it had passed, he decided it was time to finish this leg of his haul westward to Winnipeg. But before heading out, he turned up the radio and listened to the local forecast. Basically, the storm had run its course, but in the process had dumped close to a foot of snow. The road crews had been working steadily in both directions, but the roads were still pretty slick. Mark decided to chain up himself and get to Kenora before turning in for the night. By morning the rest of the highway would be cleared and he'd be able to make it into Winnipeg on time and without his chains.

As he worked on the chains, he realized he was having trouble of his own getting them all set up. They were in good shape, of course, and he'd installed them dozens of times before, but there was something about the cold and snow that just made putting on chains a dirty thankless job. And that's when he was struck by the thought: 'And here she was struggling like I am now, but with the eyes of the world on her just waiting for her to fail so they could tell her she wasn't good enough, or she couldn't hack it, or she should just go home to make dinner and babies full-time.'

No wonder she's got a chip on her shoulder, Mark thought. I'd have a brick, if it were me.

Eventually Mark had the chains wrapped tight around his drive wheels and was ready to head out. The ride with the chains was bumpy and noisy, but he could feel them bite into the ice and snow, and as long as he didn't get carried away and started driving too fast, he'd be safely at his destination in just a few hours.

Just then, Mark's phone rang.

He took a look and saw it was Bud.

"Hello," he said.

"Mark, is that you?"

'Who else would it be?,' Mark thought. "No," he said at last. "Who's Mark? This is Margaret."

"What?"

"Yeah, what if I were Margaret instead of Mark?" he said. "Would you still call me up and give me the good loads."

The line was silent for the longest time. "Mark, are you sick?"

"No, just wondering what it would be like working for you as a woman."

"I think you are sick," Bud said. "In the head...um, maybe you should just pull over for a bit." A pause. "When was the last time you took your temperature?"

"Relax," Mark said. "I'm just thinking out loud."



Just one of the guys PART 3

He went on to explain what had happened at the last truck stop and how it got him to thinking about women drivers and what it must be like dealing with the likes of guys like, well...Bud. Mark could hardly stand him, imagine what a woman would think of him.

"I'll have you know, Dalton, that I already have two women driving for me. One's part of a team, but the other one's an owner/operator just like you."

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

"And they put up with you?"

Bud didn't answer right away. "They didn't care too much for me at first and they told me so. They're good, reliable drivers so I've learned to tone it down with them. They've stayed on and one of them is even talking about bringing in a friend of hers."

"Then why are you so rough with me?"

"Because you're a pain in the ass, that's why."

"But you still love me, or else you wouldn't have called." Mark paused. "By the way, why did you call?"

"I've got drivers in Northern Ontario - including that woman driver - and I heard there's a storm passing through, so I'm checking up on them all. You got your chains on?"

"Of course," Mark said. "I might be a pain in the ass, but I'm careful."

"Good. Let me know when you reach Kenora. I'll see if I can have something for you by the time you get to Winnipeg."

"Will do." Mark was about to hang up the phone, when a thought popped into his head. "Hey, Bud, what's that woman's name...the one driving in Northern Ontario right now?"

"Nancy," he said. "Nancy McEvoy."

chains to the rig behind her in the hopes of helping to pull him out of the snow. Mark stopped on the highway, even if it meant that he might get stuck himself. "Look at you!" he said. "I would have thought you'd have just driven on by."

She climbed up onto the side of Mother Load and poked her head inside the open passenger window. "He needed help," she said. "And I was able to do something."

"I'm impressed."

Just then, the second driver, the one who was stuck behind Nancy climbed up onto Mother Load. When his face appeared in the window, Mark's jaw dropped and his mouth gaped open - the driver she was helping was one of the loudmouths from the truck stop. In fact, it was the one who'd been the ringleader.

"I thought I could make it without chains," was all he said.

Mark looked at Nancy and said, "You're a better person than I am."

She shrugged and climbed back down on the road, leaving Mark with the bigmouthed driver. It was such a perfect chance that Mark couldn't resist giving it to the guy, chiding him about how he had to be helped out by a girl. But then he was struck by a moment of clarity and realized to do that wouldn't be fair to Nancy. So in the end he said, "Lucky you...being helped by a..." He paused, then said. "By a fellow trucker who by all rights should have kept right on driving."

The man said nothing in response, but his lowered ball cap spoke volumes. **TW**

Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Just one of the guys.

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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Small business, big ambitions

First Partners in Compliance owner/operator member relishes being a role model

By Jim Bray

BEAUMONT, Alta. – It was an uphill battle, but one of Alberta's most recent Partners in Compliance members thinks his journey was worth it and he looks forward to using his new position as a way to build his business while leading others by example.

Mike Shopa, the 49-year-old owner of GRD Transport of Beaumont, Alta. – a community just south of Edmonton – was the first O/O to qualify for Alberta's Partners in Compliance program, but to him it was just a logical next step in the growth of his business and career.

"I grew up in an era where the old-school guys didn't believe in safety," he told *Truck West* in a recent interview. "If

safety was mentioned, you were black-balled: don't go there, don't even talk about it, just get your job done. I've seen a lot of guys die, I've seen a lot of useless accidents, I've seen families die because of trucks, because of safety."

And that was one of the reasons he found the PIC program compelling.

Shopa's career started in Victoria, B.C., where he was bitten by the trucking bug while still a kid.

"My uncle had an old Peterbilt," he said "I was probably 10, 11 years old, and that was it. I love the trucks and (driving) was always in the back of my head to do at some point."

That point arrived when he was 17 – still too young to drive legally, but it appears that where there was a will there



Mike Shopa (inset) is the first one-truck operator to become a PIC member.

was a way.

"I kind of lied...to get my learner's," he admitted. But it got him into the cab, even if in an unpaid capacity, and soon he and a friend were hired by a Vancouver company. "We were just a couple young kids trying to make money," he said, noting that he was working for free so he could learn. That led to a few paid years behind the wheel – paying his dues and paying his bills.

Eventually, Shopa became a father and decided he didn't want to be on the road as much. So, nearly 20 years ago, he went into the construction business – and when the economy in British Columbia took a nosedive, he pulled up stakes and moved to Wild Rose Country. He was still in construction, but driving was never far from his mind, and he eventually got back behind the wheel by snagging a gig with Ace Courier.

"A run came open from Edmonton to Red Deer," he said. "I wasn't sure I wanted to get back into the big stuff so we bought a little five-tonne and that expanded to a day cab – a 2011 Mack – and a 36-ft. trailer, that's how much the run had built up."

That gig put the bug back into him for running the highway, but his independent streak wouldn't let him be just a company driver.

"I tried at that point to be my own boss," he said, noting that working for himself had been his dream since he first sneaked into the business. "I'd had opportunities to buy guys out but the rates were starting to drop like crazy so there was no real point risking it in the early days. I was doing well so I just hung on, driving someone else's truck."

This time, however, the economy was good enough that he decided to go for it – and he's never looked back. He currently drives a 2014 Mack under the banner of his GRD Transport company, started about five years ago. The initials carry a special meaning: "Get'R Done, no excuses," he said. "I learned that in the construction field and it's worked."

His journey to Partners in Compliance began about two years ago, after a visit to the Leduc scale.

"I'd always seen this PIC thing and wondered what the heck it meant," he said, "so I pulled in and talked to the scale guy and he explained that you don't have to pull into the scale, and that it's about safety and he said it wouldn't be any advantage to me, that it's just for the big companies."

Shopa grabbed a brochure anyway, finding the focus on safety right up his alley, not so much as merely a benefit for him and his truck, but also as a way to help him succeed in any expansion plans he might entertain in the future.

"The whole thing is about your safe-

ty policy, it's about your maintenance, it's about looking after your equipment," he said. Shopa uses three-ring binders to keep track of his documentation, including daily inspections, etc. "Every month I make two copies of my documents, one for me and one for Ace Courier," he said. He also keeps his logbooks on his iPhone. Today, Shopa runs from Edmonton to the B.C. border in Jasper, where he swaps trailers with a driver from Vancouver and then turns around and goes home.

While Shopa thinks becoming certified for PIC was worth it, he noted that the process was also accompanied by certain frustrations, some of which had to do with different provincial and national standards.

"There a lot of gray areas," he said. "I can do something that's acceptable to NSC but might not be acceptable to Alberta and vice-versa. So I said screw it."

The people at PIC, however, wanted him to try again. "Lorri (Christensen, former PIC director) was really excited about me being the only single owner/operator in Alberta to do this and she wanted to know if I'd be a poster boy for the program. I said absolutely."

Shopa figured that, with his experience, he could show other smaller companies the advantages of doing the due diligence required for PIC membership.

"It's good for their name, for their safety policy, for their guys. I believe in it 100%."

So he kept at it until it all came together. "I resubmitted my safety manual, got my COR again because it had expired, and got 100% on that and nearly 100% on the NSC audit as well."

Shopa thinks his status as a PIC carrier will pay off in getting new business as well, and said he's thinking of buying a converter and maybe doing some work with other PIC members in the future.

"They're looking for guys to fill in runs and...they know what it took for you to get there," he said. "You're in a brotherhood, right?"

To Shopa, the yellow PIC plate on the front of his truck is a badge of honour.

"It's the mark of guys who really care to look after their stuff," he said. And while not having to stop at scales is really just gravy to him, he still appreciates the perk. "It's nice to go through a scale and the scale guy waves at you. It's a whole different world and I feel very proud that he knows that I know what I'm doing and why I'm here."

Shopa's message to others is that their road is sure to be winding and bumpy at times, but they should ignore that and "just persevere. Keep driving forward. Be committed to your end results and (success) will happen. But that's advice for anything, not just trucking." **TW**

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**ON TIME.
AT TEMPERATURE.**



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