

# TRUCK WEST

May 2012 Volume 23, Issue 5

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at [www.trucknews.com](http://www.trucknews.com)

## Just cold enough

*Manitoba winter roads survive mild winter weather*

By Jim Bray

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – The window was short, but it appears that it was open long enough for Manitoba's version of 'Ice Road Truckers' to have gone off as hoped for this year, despite Mother Nature's best attempts not to cooperate.

"All things considered for how warm a winter it was, we had a good year," said Larry Halayko, director of contract services for Manitoba Infrastructure. "We experienced one of the warmest winters on record in Manitoba, however we did get some opportune periods of cold weather which is what we need for building winter roads."

Cost of the winter roads, of which there are some 25 in all, is split right down the middle between Manitoba and the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. They're rebuilt each winter to take a year's worth supplies to a number of remote communities, most of which are homes to aboriginal people – hence the federal involvement.

"It's very time sensitive," Halayko said shortly after the roads closed for the 2012 season. "You only have a certain period of time to build the roads, get them open, keep them open and maintained, and get them closed – and

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**THE TIME IS RIGHT:** You don't hear of many successful trucking start-ups anymore, which is part of what makes Saskatoon's TimeLine Logistic so unique.

## Starting from scratch

TimeLine Logistic is less than two years old. So why's it already getting noticed?

By Jim Bray

**SASKATOON, Sask.** – They've been in business barely a year-and-a-half, yet Saskatoon's TimeLine Logistic is already making a name for itself.

TimeLine was born in September

2010, after Troy Stimpson, Bob Grunow and Murray Schumacher left another trucking company to strike out on their own. Grunow took on the mantle of president, Schumacher became director of operations and St-

impson donned the director of safety and compliance hat. The trio, who claim over 100 years' experience between them, also brought in industry veteran Donovan Swinnerton as director of business development.

According to Stimpson, TimeLine's goal is to get into the nuclear industry, the same business served by the trio's previous employer.

"We'd learned a lot about the industry and enjoyed it and figured it's a good niche to get into because the nuclear industry in North America is

Continued on page 6

## Three new trucks highlight MATS

Plus, we take the new T680 on one of its first drives

Mid-America Report, pgs. 26-36



### Inside This Issue...

- **In the shop:** How to streamline your repair processes to improve efficiencies in the shop. Page 17
- **A really long LCV:** Saskatchewan and Loblaws have teamed up to run a pilot program, pulling three 53-ft. trailers behind a single tractor. We talk to the driver. Page 19
- **Oil 101:** Engine oil is one of the most misunderstood items we work with. We bring some clarity to the subject. Page 24
- **On the road:** We review the brand new Kenworth T680, fresh off the assembly line. Page 31

### Mark Dalton O/O



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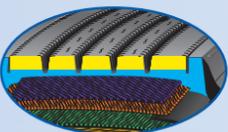
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# Why you should care about social media

Having entrenched itself into the lives of so many, it's now abundantly clear that social media isn't just a passing fad. It may take on new platforms over the years, but in one form or another, an ever-larger segment of the folks in the trucking industry will be using technology to exchange ideas, learn and share information.

Colleague Adam Ledlow and I recently gave a presentation on social media to the Toronto Trucking Association and we'll be following it up with a similar talk at the Private Motor Truck Council conference in June.

Interest in this subject is growing, but why? I think it's quite simple: Social media allows you to engage, to inform and to be informed on a continuous basis.

Another reason to be interested in social media is that your customers are interested, and so too are your competitors. How are your competitors engaging your customers? Are they making overtures at your drivers? Don't get left out of the conversation.

Mike McCarron, managing partner of MSM Transportation, columnist for *Motortruck Fleet Executive* and blogger on Trucknews.com, has written and spoken about his a-ha moment in relation to social media, what he cleverly describes as "this generation's version of the cocktail party."

During a presentation on the subject at last year's Ontario Trucking Association convention, he explained why he's decided to get involved. "When I saw the stats and did some reading, I found out that our customers were making big decisions using social media," McCarron said. "We were using an old-fashioned relationship model. It scared me a little bit; the power equation has shifted. I don't control the perception anymore – that's controlled



by the engagement that I have out there."

Others are coming to that realization as well. Last year, a handful of Canadian trucking companies had a presence on the social networking site Twitter. That list is growing each week.

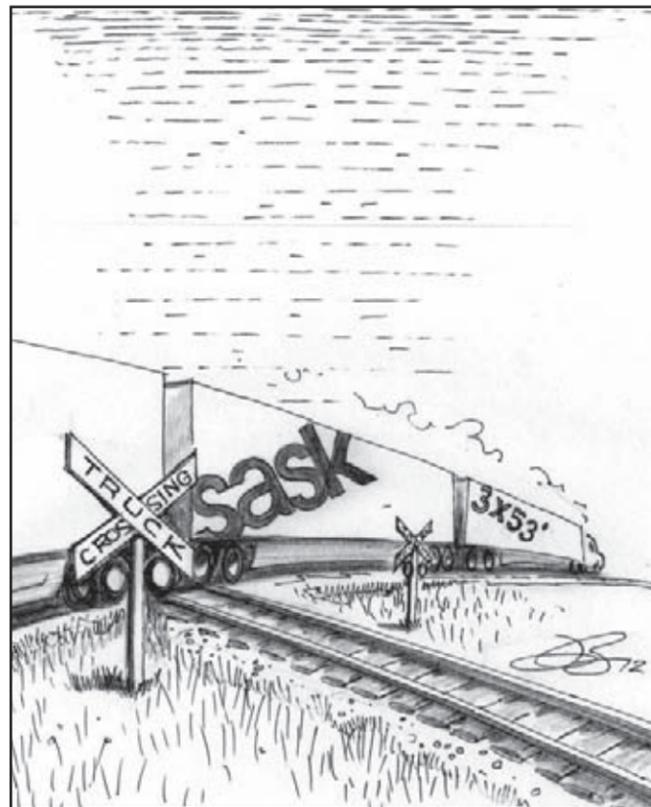
And then there's Facebook, which is increasingly being used by companies to create an online community for their drivers. Think of the isolation a driver feels while on the road. How often do drivers change companies because they feel they have nobody to call when faced with challenges while far away from home? Progressive carriers are creating Facebook pages that serve as online communities that are never more than a click away.

Paramount Freight Systems, Best Fleet to Drive For contest winner in the Owner/Operator category for two years running has a fantastic Facebook site for its drivers. It's home to contests, birthday greetings, truck pictures and much more. Members feel a sense of pride and belonging. Prospective hires can visit the page and get a feel for the company's

culture. It's working. "Believe it, drivers are using Facebook. As of Jan. 16, we have recruited 25 owner/operators off of Facebook," the company admitted during its Best Fleets to Drive For competition evaluation process.

As a trucking company, if you don't have a presence on any of the popular social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn, you're simply not as connected as you could be. It may even be indirectly costing you customers and drivers, in ways you don't even understand. The good news is, there's no last call at this cocktail party and everyone's invited. □

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# Three people you need to fire

If the success of Apple bears any relevance to the transportation industry it's this: companies that place a premium on innovation succeed.

For-hire trucking is an industry of more than 10,000 carriers each needing to differentiate itself in a very crowded marketplace. At the same time, research shows shippers are besieged by growing supply chain complexity and rising customer demands.

Clearly, trucking companies who come to market with the kind of innovative transportation offerings shippers need, stand to benefit.

But innovation doesn't just happen; it's created by people. In the hands of the right people it flowers; in the hands of the wrong people it withers.

This column is about the latter. It is about the people you need to fire if you want to spark innovation in your company and it's inspired by the writings of G. Michael Maddock and Raphael Louis Viton, authors of *Free the Idea Monkey*.

There are three types of people in your company you need to fire immediately, according to Maddock and Viton. Hanging onto them just sucks the energy out of your company.



First is the type of person Maddock and Viton, refer to as "the victim." They're the ones always complaining, feeling the company is out to screw them, fighting the latest technology, company strategy, whatever. Victims don't see problems as challenges to overcome; they see problems as opportunities to complain. And they sure love to complain. Make your company happier and more innovative; get rid of "the victims."

The second type of person you don't want on your team is "the non-believer." The difference between the winning team that makes industry-changing innovation happen and the losing one that comes up short is a lack of willpower, Maddock and Viton argue. Said differently, the winners really believed they could do it, while the losers doubted it was possible.

Effective leaders find and promote believers within their organizations. They also understand the

cancerous effect that non-believers have on a team and cut them out of the organization quickly and without regret

The last type of person you need to throw out of your company is "the know-it-all." These may be very smart folks who somewhere along the way decided to use their knowledge to block change rather than lead it; to focus their energies explaining why things are impossible rather than possible. Maddock and Viton argue that the best innovators are learners, not knowers.

The same can be said about innovative cultures; they are learning cultures. In order to innovate, employees must be encouraged to go beyond their comfort zone; they must not be afraid to fail and learn from their mistakes. Know-it-alls, in part because their experience demands respect, block this from happening.

The staff at innovative companies, such as Apple, believe they are part of something big. That's the kind of employees you need in your company. The rest should be shown the door. □

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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

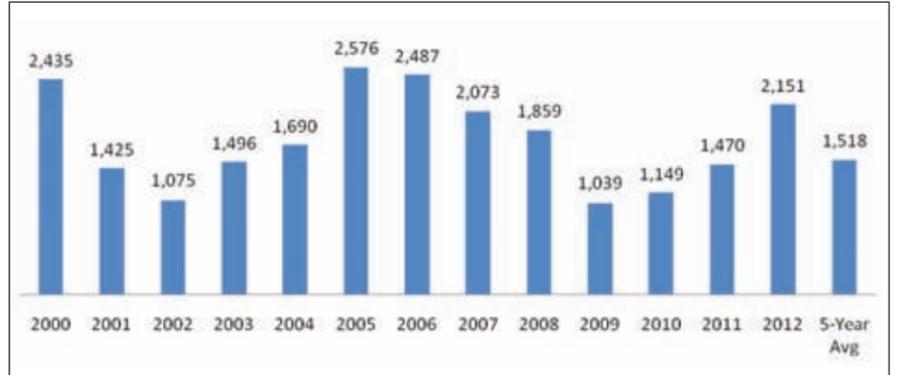
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Class 8 truck sales were off to a booming start in January. February's sales totals are also strong. The 2,151 Class 8 trucks sold in the Canadian market this February is considerably higher than the monthly totals for the previous five years and in the range of the totals posted during the boom years of 2005 and 2006. This February turned out to be the fourth best in sales since the year 2000. The sales total was also about 600 trucks over of the five-year average, another improvement over the past year.

### Monthly Class 8 Sales – Feb 12

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	598	512
International	314	280
Kenworth	450	199
Mack	152	73
Peterbilt	329	151
Volvo	157	170
Western Star	151	85
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>1470</b>

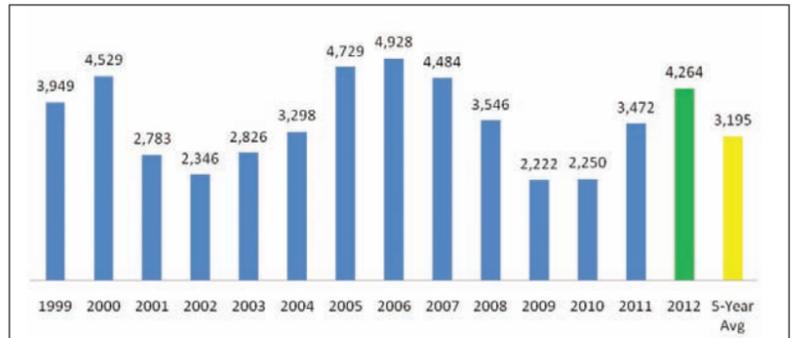
### Historical Comparison – Feb 12 Sales



### Class 8 Sales (YTD Feb 12) by Province and OEM

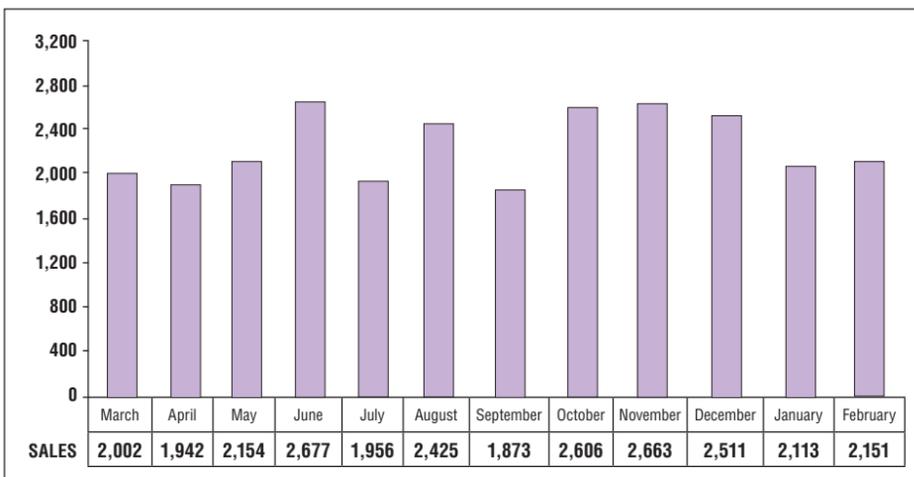
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	77	99	18	93	680	176	29	48	0	3	1,223
Kenworth	106	431	25	29	127	157	14	0	0	0	889
Mack	17	54	26	17	101	42	8	2	0	3	270
International	39	92	18	36	265	156	38	10	1	14	669
Peterbilt	64	201	30	64	100	88	11	0	0	0	558
Volvo	18	27	15	27	150	81	15	2	0	1	336
Western Star	78	113	12	9	45	28	12	22	0	0	319
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>1,017</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>1,468</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4,254</b>

### Historical Comparison – YTD Feb 12

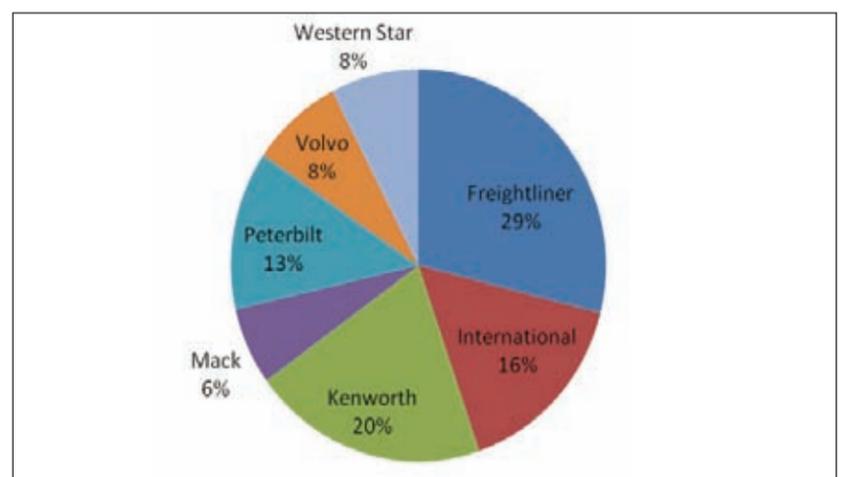


Truck manufacturers are expecting heavy duty truck sales for North America to come in around 250,000 units in 2012, a significant increase from the 216,000 mark hit the previous year. The Canadian market is off to a strong start with more than 4,200 Class 8 trucks sold in the first two months. That's about 800 ahead of last year's pace and more than 1,000 units above the five-year average. The Western provinces accounted for 43% of Class 8 sales YTD in February, with Alberta leading the way. Ontario accounted for 34% of the sales to date.

### 12 – Month Sales Trend



### Market Share Class 8 – Feb 12 YTD



February marked the fifth straight month of sales above the 2,000 mark, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007. Our Transportation Buying Trends Survey found that 46% of Canadian carriers expect to purchase new Class 8 trucks in 2012.

Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, has jumped out to an early lead once again with 29% market share. Kenworth wrestled the number two spot away from International last year and has started the year off with a solid lead in that spot. International's market share is at 16%, followed by Peterbilt, Volvo and Western Star.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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**IN BRIEF**

**Truck West wins eight TWNA awards**

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – *Truck West* editors walked out with an armful of awards at last month’s Communication Awards banquet, held during the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, Ky., winning eight total. The awards, organized by the Truck Writers of North America, recognize excellence in trucking industry journalism in the trade press.

Executive editor James Menzies earned four of eight awards. In the Magazine Writing division, Menzies won a trio of awards: a gold award in the Business category for “Anatomy of an Acquisition,” a silver award in the Feature category for “Beware the Wreckhouse Winds,” and a silver award in the Company Profile category for “Winds of Change.”

Menzies also shared a silver award with managing editor Adam Ledlow and video production manager Brad Ling in the Video Series category for TruckNews.com’s weekly WebTV show, *Transportation Matters*. Ledlow also picked up a writing award, winning a silver award in the Feature category for his social media-themed article, “The (new) Social Network.”

Contributor Joanne Ritchie took home a gold award for her column “Voice of the Owner/Operator.” And on-road editor Harry Rudolfs picked up a pair of bronzes for: “Taking it to the Maxx” in the Road Test category and “Load Securement in a CSA World” in the News category. □

**BCTA welcomes provincial spending**

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – The B.C. Trucking Association (BCTA) is lauding a \$25-billion provincial strategy to expand markets and infrastructure for B.C. goods. The province announced an ambitious plan to expand the Asian markets for B.C. products and will bolster infrastructure to help get those products to those markets.

The BCTA says the initiative marks the province’s commitment to “the most significant economic expansion opportunity in a generation.”

The association says the province’s trucking industry will benefit from the boost to B.C.’s economy.

“BCTA applauds the province’s vision in pursuing opportunities in the Asia Pacific and providing support for the necessary infrastructure here,” BCTA president and CEO Louise Yako said. “The strategies that the province announced today – including a \$700-million investment in increased capacity for key highways, additional investments in road and rail capacity, and increased container terminal capacity at B.C. ports – all open doors for B.C. carriers ready and willing to take part in this exciting opportunity.”

On May 2, the association will be hosting a one-day conference in Surrey for motor carriers, featuring speakers from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Transport Canada, Port Metro Vancouver, local terminal operators, the Asia-Pacific Gateway Skills Table and others. Information on the conference is available at [www.BCTrucking.com](http://www.BCTrucking.com). □

**Trucking Safety Council of B.C. appoints new leader**

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – The Trucking Safety Council of B.C. (TSCBC) has appointed John McMahon as its new executive director.

Formerly the director of operations and marketing at FIOSA-MIOSA Safety Alliance of B.C., McMahon is a senior environmental health and safety practitioner with international experience working across a range of industry sectors, including transportation and trucking.

He has held a variety of senior safety and risk management advisory roles within organizations that have logistics and distribution operations, including a career as a government inspector in food safety, environmental protection, and health and safety enforcement in the U.K. McMahon has also worked as head adviser and consultant to a number of multinational blue chip companies in sectors that include aviation,

retail, logistics and leisure and hospitality.

McMahon has a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of Glasgow.

He is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Occupational Safety and

Health and a Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP).

“The TSCBC welcomes John and looks forward to benefiting from his expertise and leadership as the organization continues to grow,” the organization said in a release. □

**Safety Council produces free safety videos**

**RICHMOND, B.C.** – The Trucking Safety Council of B.C. (TSCBC) has developed a moving and lifting safety campaign, which was kicked off with the launch of a video on ‘Preparing for Work.’

The video provides tips on safe work practices for drivers who will be required to handle goods after periods of driving. The video is the first in a six-part series and can be watched at [www.youtube.com/user/SafetyDrivenBC](http://www.youtube.com/user/SafetyDrivenBC).

The videos have been created in partnership with the Association of Canadian Ergonomists and the project is supported by the B.C. Chiropractic Association. The series addresses some of the most common risks associated with back and neck injuries, the organizations claim.

Musculoskeletal injuries account for about one-third of all medical office visits and hundreds of thousands of dollars in provincial compensation claims and lost productivity annually, officials say. □

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## PROFILE

# TimeLine was founded to serve the nuclear energy sector

Continued from page 1

growing exponentially,” Stimpson says, noting there’s a new uranium enricher moving into North America and “we want all that business.”

Filling that niche will require a substantial commitment, however, because, “They (the nuclear companies) don’t want you to do anything else. So you pick up at Point A and deliver to Point B and you go back to Point A empty to pick up again. You don’t run freight in between.” Stimpson estimates the potential business they’re chasing could require dedicating 40-50 trucks to that single gig.

Not surprisingly, a number of hoops need to be jumped through before a new company can start moving nuclear material around the continent.

“You need insurance first,” Stimpson says, “and we have more insurance than just about anyone else except those who already haul nuclear material. We’re ISO-certified, so we have a quality management system in place and we’re looking to become COR-certified for the oil and gas industry.”

TimeLine is also C-TPAT-certified (Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, a voluntary program led by US Customs and Border Protection) and has the blessings of a variety of other government and industry groups. Stimpson says ISO is probably the most important distinction, however. “All the uranium companies want to see that.”

Fortunately for TimeLine, not much special equipment – other than steel cradles – is needed to transport nuclear material.

“We’re going to be hauling cylinders that are about four feet wide and 20 feet long and weigh about 40,000 lbs,” Stimpson notes, “and we’ll just put them on a flatbed trailer and take it from Ontario to Kentucky and from Kentucky into New Mexico and we’ll drop it off at a dock and it’ll go anywhere else in the world that wants it.”

This shuttling around is necessary, Stimpson says, because it takes multiple steps to get uranium from the ground to the market.

“The whole nuclear fuel cycle – you mine the ore and then it has to be converted and then enriched and then it has to be turned back into a powder and then compressed into pellets and put in rods before going to a nuclear power plant, so there’s four or five processes there.”

Besides TimeLine’s world headquarters in Saskatoon, the also company has a small operation in Paducah, Ky. – because that’s the where the nuclear action is.

“Metropolis, Ill. is right across the Ohio River from Paducah, Ky. and it’s the hub of the nuclear industry,” Stimpson says. “Everything comes into and goes out of there. Honeywell’s converter is in Metropolis and the enrichment is done in Paducah, so if you want to be dealing with the nuclear industry, that’s where you have to be.”

Despite his bullishness on things nuclear, however, Stimpson doesn’t think TimeLine will ever be able to concentrate only on the nuclear sector because it just isn’t large enough.

“You’ll never be able to get out of general freight,” he says, noting that the company is making its name currently working mostly for the oil and gas industry, hauling pumpjack and pipe from Alberta and Saskatchewan



**ON A ROLL:** A TimeLine Logistic truck heads down the highway just outside Saskatoon, Sask.

into Texas and hauling pipe back up to Canada. The company currently runs 25 trucks – a combination of Kenworths, Freightliners and Peterbilts they bought new – with a staff of 25. Stimpson says they’ve been drumming up business the old-fashioned way, by “Just getting on the phone and calling. A lot of people know us from other companies – we’ve been in the business long enough – so we know a lot of people in the industry. And we provide a better product.”

That better product comes from pushing the technological envelope, Stimpson says, and by maintaining high standards.

“We’ve done everything right,” he says. “We’ve embraced technology

‘We’ve embraced technology to its fullest, and we’ve been audited more times in the last year-and-a-half than most companies get in their entire life,’

Troy Stimpson, TimeLine Logistic

to its fullest, and we’ve been audited more times in the last year-and-a-half than most companies get in their entire life.” Stimpson says they’ve been audited by some of the biggest players in the nuclear industry, they’ve been audited for HazMat and compliance and have undergone two audits by the US Department of Transport.

“Everyone just walks away shaking their heads and saying they don’t believe we built this,” he says. “Most of it is just embracing technology and staying on the cutting edge. We embrace change, so our company is constantly evolving.”

Among TimeLine’s technological tools are Shaw Tracking’s platform.

“We have everything,” Stimpson says, pointing out that not only can they track all their trucks by satellite, but “we have the electronic logbooks, the drivers can scan all their paperwork right from the truck to us and it’ll come right into our office by e-mail – there’s no having to go find fax machines which, at two dollars a page, gets really expensive.”

Stimpson estimates that they’ll have printers in all TimeLine’s trucks by this fall, so they can send their drivers PDFs they can print out in the cab.

The company also uses Axon’s enterprise software.

“I love their programs,” Stimpson says. “Our old company was a beta test site for Axon and my computer is one of the first that had the program on it. I was told to break it, so every time I do break something I phone and tell them what happened.” There have obviously been growing pains, but “The program is so intuitive – and it’s all done in real time with no ‘save’ button, so you never have to worry about your information,” Stimpson says. TimeLine’s also working with Axon to see if Shaw tracking can be better integrated.

All this technology also helps TimeLine communicate with clients. Stimpson says they can set up Shaw Track-



**A ‘FLEET TO WATCH’:** TimeLine driver Oleksandr Anosov stands beside his rig. The company has been recognized for its driver programs.

TimeLine’s penchant for high standards means its drivers are also expected to measure up. “We met with CarriersEdge last May and decided we want to be part of that,” Stimpson says, crediting that decision with changing their entire philosophy for hiring and working with drivers. And it has paid off. “In eight months we went from being nobody to one of the top seven fleets in Canada to drive for,” he says.

As evidence, TimeLine’s Web site displays its listing as a ‘Fleet to Watch’ in the 2012 Best Fleets to Drive For survey contest, an “honourable mention” citation they were gunning for.

“I wanted to get that that honourable mention because next year we’ll be even better,” Stimpson says. “We’re already revising everything to make it better.”

TimeLine’s driver orientation program takes about three days, the first of which is spent mostly in the truck, working with the satellite system.

“We’ll take them for a drive and make sure they can drive and we’ll play around with the satellite and take them through a typical day so they get the feel of the system,” Stimpson says, noting that “the electronic logbooks are so intuitive – the truck knows when you’re driving and when you’re not and the drivers catch onto it very quickly.”

Stimpson says some drivers are intimidated by the system when first faced with it but, after dealing with it for a week, they wonder how they ever lived without it.

“It takes the guesswork of your logbook 100%,” he says. “When that thing says you’ve got hours, you’ve got hours and when it says you don’t have hours you don’t. It’s just that plain and simple. You just drive when it tells you to drive.”

Online training consists of some 15 modules, mostly from CarriersEdge but augmented by some developed in-house and uploaded onto the CarriersEdge system.

“We have a pretty comprehensive program which includes defensive driving, hours-of-service, all the HazMat training,” Stimpson says, “as well as living right – exercise, sleep and all that. We take it very seriously.”

Such commitments of equipment, technology and techniques don’t come cheap, a fact Stimpson is quick to acknowledge.

“We spent a lot more than most trucking companies do, that’s for sure,” he says. “But what we’ve built is starting to bloom and customers are coming to us now. Our name is getting out there, we’re starting to get bids on nuclear business, we’re growing lots in the oil and gas industry.” □

OPINION

# The truck show: There's nothing else quite like it

It's that time of year again: truck show time. And having joined up with the rest of the *Truck West* gang at the biggest of them all in Louisville, I'm very pleased to say that it would appear that our industry is showing genuine signs of an upturn in fortunes. It's been long overdue, but it's here at last.

Most manufacturers had new products to unveil, some had complete trucks, and some had major component upgrades, all of which are good for us, whether we drive, operate, own or just have a fascination with trucks.

You can read all about the trucks and the rest of the new products elsewhere in the magazine, I want to focus on the people who attend these shows.

No other industry has an event like a truck show. They may have conferences – usually at a fancy country club or in Las Vegas – but those are more about getting together with old friends and having a good time. Most of the good times come after the work part of the day ends, too.

Yet at a truck show, the trucks and trucking itself are the main reasons people go.

For the same reasons people visit other trade shows, like boat shows for example, they come to see all the new things on show and to dream a little about what they would spend their money on if they struck gold. While people play on boats as a hobby, we truck to earn a living.

Of the estimated 70,000 people who visited MATS this year, the overwhelming majority of them were there as fans, the majority of those work in the industry, and many of them, as I did, stopped off while under a load.

The parking lots were overflowing with trucks. Some were staying for the duration of the show, and some were making a mad dash around as they only had a few hours there.

Every single one of them was excited to be there, and they had all taken time off work, just to be around trucks.

I took some time to visit with my fellow show-goers and some were there to see the show'n'shine, others to keep on top of the new technologies, others still had no reason to be there other than just being there, and each and every one of them had a smile on their face that you could only remove with surgical instruments. I know, I was one of them!

One thing that made me smile more than any other thing was the show'n'shine section; there were over a hundred trucks and every single one of them was a work of art. Many were there from the manufacturers of such exotic machines, to showcase the talents of the builders, but the majority of them were working trucks.

The standard of finish and the attention to detail was breathtaking; this is a very dedicated group of people. Again, no other industry does this. There may be people who take pride in their jobs and their tools, but I've yet to see a



construction worker with a chrome shovel, or an office worker with a drop visor on their monitor. If such people do exist they would be very quiet about it, but in trucking we celebrate it.

As I said earlier, I was under a load while at the show. The organizers had wisely provided ample parking for big trucks and the parking lots were soon reaching bursting point. I arrived mid-morning on the first day and only just squeezed into a spot.

My neighbours had been there since the night before and were planning on staying until the show

finished at the end of the week-end. What really stuck in my mind about this was that even though we weren't in marked bays, everyone was parked nice and neat and there were no bags of trash dumped out of windows, a stark contrast to most truck stops.

Many people came with their families; it gave them a chance to show the important people in their lives some of the best parts of the industry. Little kids were walking around wide-eyed, just as I had when I was a kid, wishing they could be like Dad.

Now that's a wonderful thing to see. There were also business reasons to be there. There were many conferences, some about new products, some were educational, with respected members of the industry speaking.

There really was something

there for everyone and I would bet good money that not one person came away from the show unhappy with what they'd seen.

This is a worldwide phenomenon. I've attended truck shows all over the world. Some are big arena deals like MATS, some are more 'Mom and Pop' and focus on the custom trucks, but each and every one of them has the same atmosphere. For once in our lives we can walk around with our heads held high, proud that we are truck drivers. □

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

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## OVER THE ROAD

# Striving for a better work-life balance

*Good times with family are often followed by feelings of isolation when back on the road*

Our daughter was married on St. Patrick's Day and she certainly had the luck of the Irish on her side. We enjoyed record-breaking temperatures, sunny days and everything came off without a hitch. Our house was filled with joyful merrymaking from morning till night for the better part of a week. It was beautiful, now a memory that will be one of the highlights of my life.

On the last Tuesday of March my day ended at the TA truck stop in Hudson, Wisconsin. It was my fourth day back on the road after the high of my holiday and I felt mentally drained and at an emotional low.



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

The solitude of the trucking life that I enjoy seemed, on this day, more like solitary confinement. I was missing the simple pleasure of a morning coffee with my wife and an afternoon walk with my grandson. The greatest job hazard we face as truck drivers is the free time our mind has to play with as we travel down the road.

When our minds latch on to

thoughts of family times that we all pass up on a daily basis, we're in trouble. After squeezing my truck into one of the remaining parking spaces at the Hudson truck stop, I found my mind had squeezed itself into a tight space of its own.

Looking for a distraction I grabbed the April edition of *Truck West* that was sitting on my passenger seat untouched since I picked it up in Thunder Bay two days before. As always I turned first to the editorial page to get a take on our industry from James and Lou.

James Menzies was asking if we have seen the end of the trucking tycoon. The fact the industry is moving towards consolidation of ownership by large companies as a result of the financial stresses of the day is something I don't find comforting. I'm reminded of

a quote from the Dali Lama, "We need money to live, but we don't need to live for money."

I'm not aware of any of these big companies today that don't live for money. James noted that so many trucking companies today were built on the same foundation of "one guy with a truck, a vision and a truckload of ambition." I work for one of those guys and his family. Like me, he doesn't live for money either.

Lou Smyrlis tackled the issue of obesity and driver health, asking the question, "Does it make sense to continue ignoring this issue when the answer is so simple?"

The topic of health and wellness is close to my heart and I have written much in this space about the great strides I have made in improving my own health over the past decade. Lou's commentary reminded me that it was one of my 'run days' and I needed to get off my butt and get out of the truck. A workout always improves my outlook on life and helps to pull me out of the doldrums.

These reflections reminded me that I am blessed with a loving wife and family, I work for a group of people that embody the same family values as myself, I have come to grips with the challenges drivers face when it comes to making healthy lifestyle choices on the road, and my profession provides me with ample money with which to live in comfort and provide for my family.

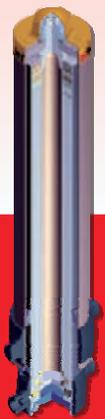
You would think this is a recipe that brings a great deal of ease into my daily life, yet I seem to be experiencing increasing amounts of anxiety and frustration each time I head out on the road. After much soul searching I can only attribute this feeling to the lack of balance I face each day.

You only need to look at one of the hot topics facing the trucking industry today to understand what I'm talking about. Many trucking organizations (and drivers) advocate extending available driving time, or to put it another way, allow flexibility in the rules to allow more hours of driving per week. Really?

How does extending my workweek make it easier for me to spend time with my family? How does extending my workweek make it easier for me to care for my own health and wellbeing? How does extending my workweek reduce the stress and anxiety in my daily life? The answer, on all counts is, it doesn't.

The beauty of this industry in the past was that it always put people first. As consolidation of ownership moves forward the focus has shifted to the bottom line. As long as we are forced to do more with less, the daily frustration and anxiety will continue to build and the issues of the day will remain unresolved. Our personal and work lives are out of balance. □

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



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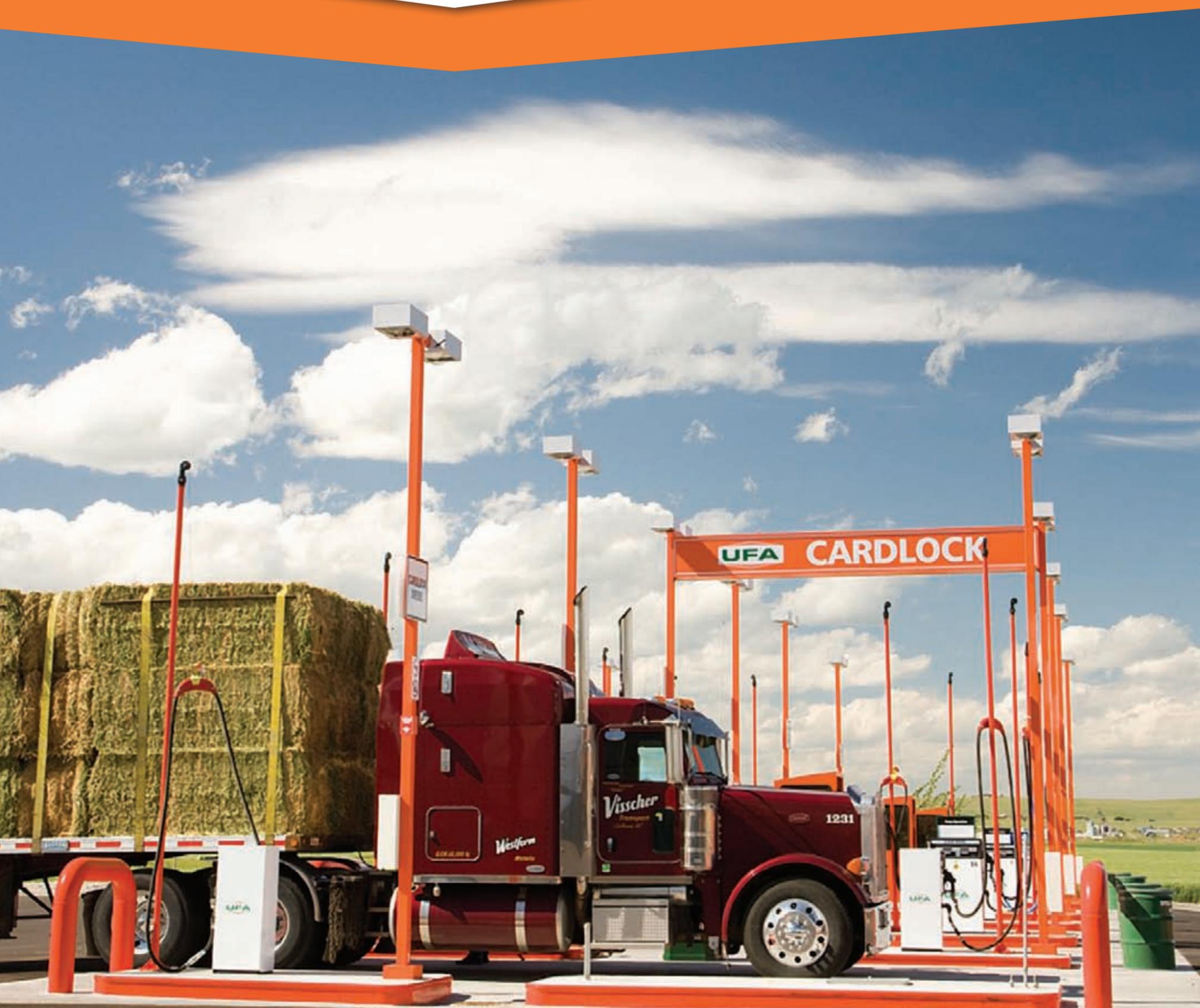
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## SAFETY

# Point, click and monitor the CSA report cards

The US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) keeps a watchful eye on every truck that crosses the Canada-US border, and is quick to post every observation online.

That means fleets are only a mouse click away from in-depth insight that can be applied to safety programs of every sort.

The Comprehensive Safety Analysis (CSA) program now generates scores in seven Behaviour Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories (BASICS), covering unsafe driving, fatigued driving, driver fitness, controlled substances and alcohol, vehicle maintenance, cargo related, and the crash indicator. Rather than relying on benchmarks pulled out of thin air, the numbers even compare a fleet's results to industry peers. These can all be accessed with no more than an In-



ternet connection, a DoT number and a password.

But fleets that commit to regular and ongoing reviews of the all-revealing CSA reports can also tap into the information needed to identify shifting trends before serious problems emerge, and even spot errors in the reports before related audits are scheduled. Carriers can challenge and submit these reports to Data Q's for review.

There is no question that the difference between a positive and negative ranking can be traced to outdated mileage. Consider the role that mileage figures can play in a CSA rating. A fleet that adds

additional trucks to its US fleet or begins to travel more miles on US highways will likely face more roadside inspections, and there is a good chance that a higher number of inspections will lead to an increase in the number of violations. If the CSA system is using the outdated (and lower) mileage figures, this will skew the Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) equation when the ranking is calculated.

This problem can be addressed by simply ensuring the system offers an accurate look at the number of miles annually travelled on US roads. For its part, the FMCSA requires fleets to update the mileage every two years, and it clearly flags any outdated mileage when viewing the CSA home page of a carrier.

Meanwhile, regular reviews of CSA also give fleets the chance to compare the recorded number of roadside inspections to the in-

spection reports that are provided by drivers themselves.

This can dramatically influence the final ranking since the number of "passed" inspections will offset the number of roadside violations. In fact, the number is so important that many fleets are offering incentives in the form of gift cards or financial bonuses to drivers who can report a clean roadside inspection.

But as important as individual rankings can be, those who take the time to dig a little deeper into CSA reports will also learn exactly how the unwanted points are accumulated, and identify the specific activities that need to be improved. A few clicks of the mouse to explore the fatigued driving points for example, will show whether the violations involve exceeding allowable hours, falsifying a logbook, or form and manner. This information can help a carrier add focus training on specific issues.

The FMCSA will be looking for this kind of change. Fleets exposed to an audit are expected to show that they understand why individual problems emerged, demonstrate action like training programs to address these challenges, offer proof that the lessons of these programs are being absorbed and why the violations are occurring. This provides the opportunity for the carrier to take meaningful action and identify and focus training on specific areas.

The DoT or auditors can also scrutinize drivers who have had "red flag violations" for drug and alcohol use, not having the proper class of licence, or even moving a commercial vehicle when already placed out-of-service, and these "red flags" can be traced to when the driver worked at another fleet. Subsequently these can be added to audits to see if the driver has improved their behaviour.

Fleets don't need to be surprised about a driver's past. Issues like these can be spotted by obtaining the Pre-employment Screening Program (PSP), which will provide details about any crashes the driver had in the past five years, and any roadside inspections that were recorded in the last three years.

Each \$10 report can only be ordered before a driver is hired, but it will offer valuable information for any recruiter who wants to compare the contents of a job application to a driver's record. At the very least, it offers the details that can be used to help identify a high-risk driver, and identify the additional training that should be in place to encourage safe activities.

CSA can validate a fleet's safety management program or show areas to focus training. □

– This month's expert is Evelyn Cartmill, risk services specialist, CHRP, CRM. Evelyn has served the trucking industry for over 15 years in the areas of human resources, safety and compliance. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a long-standing history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at [www.nbfc.com](http://www.nbfc.com).



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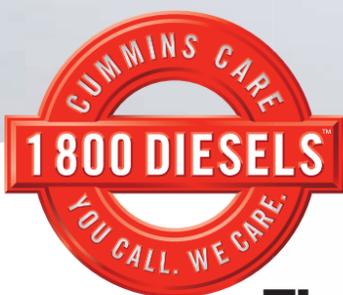
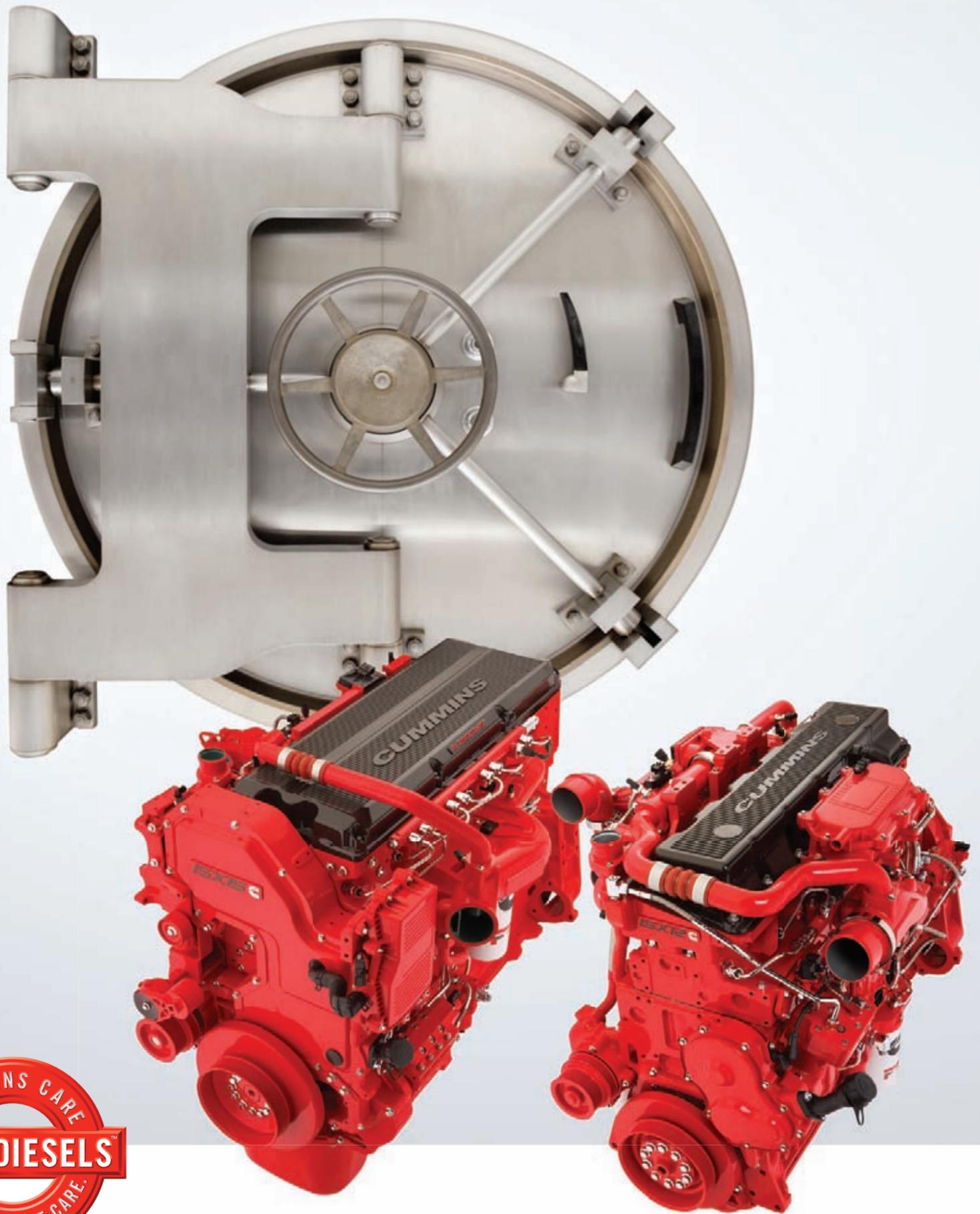
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## OPINION

# Wellness news you can use

Truck shows – love'em or hate'em – are a good place to take stock of what's on the minds of the steering wheel crowd. After we shoot the breeze about what's on the show floor, especially the glitzy iron and cool new gear and gadgets, and share stories about some of the weird and wonderful things that have happened since the last show, we settle down for some serious discussion about issues that really matter.

As we celebrate the 10-year anniversary of OBAC's launch at Truck World 2002, I've spent a reflective moment or two recalling some of those conversations. Not surprisingly, some issues make the list every year: costs (ever-escalating), rates (and the struggle to have them cover costs), regulatory burden (and related cost- and hassle-factor of compliance), lack of truck parking (chronic and critical) have never left us. Li-



Voice of  
the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

censing standards, business smarts, emerging technologies, fuel economy, and of course, green-everything, have also prompted many lively debates and discussions over the decade.

But if there's one top-of-mind issue for drivers today that almost no one was talking about 10 years ago, it's driver wellness.

It's not like we didn't know that the sedentary life of an over-the-road driver is a litany of compromises in diet and sleep routines, and some downright bad habits. It's often tough to eat well, to stay physically active and to get proper rest out on the road. And keeping regular medical appointments

is just a pipe dream for many drivers, whose personal priorities are almost always trumped by compliance and operational realities.

Call it age and wisdom, or perhaps just plain fed up-ness, but many drivers are adding healthy lifestyle and good life-work balance to things like a safe workplace and a decent wage when it comes to "must-haves" in their job.

As a result, there's a solid core of truck drivers out there – small, but growing – who are bent on making their own health and wellbeing a priority. They're learning, sharing, and doing whatever it takes to raise awareness and focus attention on the importance of driver health and wellness.

When you visit the OBAC booth at Truck World in Toronto this month, you'll see what I mean. We've got a number of activities going on to highlight some of the wellness issues drivers are talking about.

A big one is diabetes. While it's always been on the radar screen,

because diagnosis and treatment of the disease are closely scrutinized by commercial vehicle licensing authorities, drivers themselves are becoming more aware of the lifestyle factors that may trigger Type 2 diabetes, and how many of the risk factors can be controlled or eliminated.

With support from the Canadian Diabetes Association, we'll have nurses on site all three days doing blood sugar testing, checking blood pressure, and measuring BMI. They're also armed with a wealth of practical tips and information on nutrition that show how it's possible to steer away from a long-haul lifestyle of poor food, weight gain and deteriorating health.

We'll also have demonstrations by drivers of their on-road fitness equipment and routines, including Kitchen-based owner/operator (and OBAC life member) Alfie Meyer, a remarkable example of how it's possible to stay fit on the road.

This guy uses his bunk in ways one wouldn't have thought possible, for calisthenics and back exercises. And he's got a portable gym and folding stepper tucked away in his cab, too.

At the other end of the spectrum, you'll see drivers who stay fit with nothing more than a good pair of walking shoes, resolve to get their butt in gear (and in shape), and a pedometer to track their progress.

You'll also be able to load up with a ton of helpful information and cool hand-outs from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and Prostate Cancer Canada, and we'll give you the skinny on a number of online sites where drivers support each other in their shared desire to develop habits that will help them get – and stay – healthy.

And if you're interested in running or cycling (yes, from the road), there are Facebook groups – Truckin' Runners and Ride and Roll – started by drivers to exchange information and encourage each other. I met a couple of the group members during the Health Awareness Walk at the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, and boy, are these guys keen!

OBAC is celebrating another special anniversary at the truck show; it's the fifth birthday of Canada Calling, our twice-weekly gig on the Dave Nemo show. Besides giving ourselves a big thumbs-up for bringing the only regular Canadian content to SiriusXM's trucking channel, I want to give a shout out to a couple of our good Road Dog friends.

Thanks to hosts like Dave Nemo and Evan Lockridge, thousands of drivers across Canada and the US have regular access to health professionals who bring them relevant and practical support and advice.

That's another thing that's changed dramatically in the past decade: social media and satellite radio are playing a significant role in promoting wellness, as we use the technology to keep the conversations going long after we leave the truck shows.

So if you make it to Truck World, stop by our booth to enjoy the wellness activities and help us celebrate our anniversaries. And if you can't make it to the truck show, jump on the radio or the laptop and start talking. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Still lazy after all these years? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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TAX TALK

# Serious business

## Understand the benefits of incorporating

I recently met an owner/operator named Max who was leasing on with a new carrier. He'd been a sole proprietor for almost six years and during that time had built up a reputation as a skilled, dependable truck driver.

Max was paying a visit because he wants to incorporate. Rather, the company he's signing on with has strongly encouraged it. He told me the process is so daunting that he's having second thoughts about whether he should jump at this new opportunity.

I've worked with plenty of owner/operators who feel totally competent and comfortable guiding 120,000 lbs through rush hour traffic but shudder at the idea of shifting from sole proprietorship to incorporation.

I've also seen just as many successfully make the transition.

Over the next few columns I'll talk about what a corporation is, the pros and cons of incorporating a business, and help make sense of it all. Think of these articles as an extension of the "Tax Talk" videos I did with James Menzies at TruckNews.com/videos (be sure to check those out).

### A separate entity

As a sole proprietor operating as an individual ("Scott Taylor") or as a registered, unincorporated business ("Scott Taylor Trucking"), you're fully responsible for your profits, losses, expenses, and legal obligations. Your personal and business lives are intertwined. To settle business debts or lawsuits, claims may be made against your personal assets.

For tax purposes, no business structure is simpler. To file your income taxes, you submit an income statement (form T2125) showing your gross business income less expenses and add this net income figure to any other personal income or losses you have. Your federal and provincial taxes as well as your CPP are based on this amount.

A corporation is a distinct entity for tax and legal purposes. You're still doing the work, of course, but the company signs the contracts to haul freight or buy equipment. It earns income and incurs expenses. It has a tax obligation. If there's work to be done, it hires someone (you, presumably) and in doing so conveys all the benefits that go along with being an employee.

If the company goes bankrupt, you may be out of a job but you probably won't lose your house to cover the debts of the business.

### Registering the business

Corporations are created by registering with either your provincial government or with the federal government. The governing body will issue a certificate of incorporation (registering a trade name is not the same thing as incorporating).

A qualified accountant or business advisor can discuss the pros and cons of incorporating federally and provincially so you can choose what's best for you. Don't decide based on cost alone. It's probably cheaper up-front to incorporate federally (\$200



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

versus \$350 for most provinces) but will be more expensive in the long run because of additional filing fees and other requirements.

### Taxes

The corporation will get its own business number (BN) to file GST/HST returns, make payroll deductions to, and to use as an account number for filing its tax return. If you're a sole proprietor now and converting to a corporation, you would close your GST/HST account and, if you have

one, your payroll account as well.

### Shareholders

A corporation is controlled by its shareholders. Typically, with each share comes one vote. If your company has 100 common shares and you own 51 of them, then you have more voting power and can control the company.

Once a year, the shareholders need to have a meeting to review the business and elect directors. The directors hire the president, secretary, and treasurer.

If that sounds too formal and structured for you, think of it this way: You get to have a meeting with yourself, decide whether or not you're doing a good job, and then reappoint yourself as director (personally, I'd meet at a nice restaurant; the company can pick up the tab). The next tough decision is whether to hire yourself again as president.

### Paperwork

Business taxes, contracts, lawsuits,

and loans are for the corporation to deal with, but as the owner, you're responsible for making sure the business meets its obligations in addition to managing your personal finances. But really, you're already doing this as a sole proprietor anyway.

The corporation is your baby, and it requires extra attention in the form of paperwork, bookkeeping fees, and compliance with tax and employment laws.

Generally, all that work pays off in the long run. Incorporating can help you protect personal assets, reduce your tax obligation, and kick-start a real strategy for managing and growing your business. I'll talk more about incorporation next time. □

– Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that specializes in accounting, fuel tax reporting, and other business services for truck fleets and owner/operators. For help or information, please visit [www.tfsgroup.com](http://www.tfsgroup.com) or call 800-461-5970.

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**INDUSTRY**

# Core values behind new CTA effort to deal with the driver shortage

The trucking industry in Canada is facing a long-term, chronic shortage of qualified drivers. In some regions of the country (ie., western Canada) and some sectors of the industry (ie., long-haul, irregular route truckload) this is already in evidence.

A number of systemic issues underpin the shortage: the aging demographic of the driver population, public perceptions of the industry and the truck driving job, the fact that truck driving is not considered a skilled occupation outside the industry, the traditional 'piece-work' pay system that it can be argued shifts inefficiencies created by others onto the backs of drivers, an unpopular lifestyle, increasing regulatory barriers and constraints, etc.

Most Canadian carriers say the driver shortage is their number one challenge and Canadian economic activity could stall if the industry is unable to keep the supply chains flowing.

However, industry consensus on how to address the shortage has been elusive, reflecting the fragmented nature of the business and the ultra-competitive market. Enter CTA which last year formed a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage to try and provide the leadership needed to develop a coherent direction and plan for moving forward.

One of the first issues the task force had to grapple with is the argument "the driver shortage is your friend" by creating tightness in capacity leading to upward pressure on freight rates. The underlying economic argument is undeniable. But, the risk is the combination of a shrinking labour pool and economic growth may eventually mean the industry will not be able to meet the standards of service that have been the basis for its market dominance. Without truck drivers there is no industry.

There will be no quick fixes, no silver bullets that will easily solve the industry's human resources challenges. In the short- to medium-term, the situation is unlikely to change. A long, multi-year effort is required. The starting point for the Blue Ribbon Task Force is to establish from the outset, the fundamental core values to guide the industry's efforts.

First and foremost and while perhaps it goes without saying, it warrants repeating that:

- Truck drivers are our most important asset, the face of the industry – to our customers and to the public. They are deserving of respect and their welfare is at the core of the industry's success. People of all ages, genders, religions, and races are welcome to work in the industry so long as they meet our standards of safe driving, performance and professional conduct.

Compensation is an unavoidable part of the long-term solution to the driver shortage. While it is recognized the industry are at the mercy of the market:

- Truck drivers should have an improved ability to predict what their weekly pay is going to be;



**Industry Issues**

DAVID BRADLEY

their compensation packages need to be competitive with or better than alternative employment options and more transparent. Truck drivers should be paid for all the work that they do and earn enough to cover all reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred while on the road for extended periods.

Quality of life issues are also an extremely important consideration:

Truck drivers should be able to plan their lives like most other employees and predict or anticipate their time away from work. Their time at work should not be wasted – at shipper/consignee premises, or waiting for their trucks in the shop, or for a response to a question of

their carrier. They should be able to rely on their carrier not to interfere with their personal time by (for example) calling them back to work early. Driver wellness should be a top priority for employers and given the rise in cargo crime driver security while on the road should also be a priority.

The qualifications of truck drivers will increase in importance in the future and it is in this area that the CTA Blue Ribbon Task Force is perhaps most bold and innovative setting the following core values:

- A minimum standard of entry level, apprenticeship or apprenticeship-like truck driver training should be mandatory. Truck driving should be considered a skilled trade and be recognized as such by the various levels and branches of government, standards councils, etc., who certify such things. There should be a program of mandatory ongoing training and/or re-

certification (ie., TDG Act, pre-trip inspection, load securement, hours-of-service, etc.) throughout a driver's career.

While associations, governments and others have roles to play, the Task Force concluded it is the carriers – the entities that hire, fire, determine what and how to pay their drivers, who price their service and deal with their customers – who are ultimately responsible for their businesses and therefore for having enough people to do the work. Trucking is a tough business, in a difficult market, with many challenges. But, it is also an industry of problem-solvers and innovators. Those abilities will be tested in resolving the driver shortage. □

– David Bradley is president of the Ontario Trucking Association and chief executive officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

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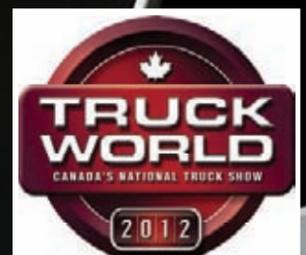


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MAINTENANCE

# Go with the flow

## Efficient truck repairs depend on a smooth flow of information from purchase orders to invoices

**TAMPA, Fla.** – Trucks may be powered by diesel, but the repair procedures are powered by information. That becomes clear when Gary Cummings describes the process at FleetNet America, which manages 75,000 service events a year.

An average truck repair involves 9.4 conversations by phone, e-mail or another communication method, the company president and CEO said during the annual meeting of the Technology & Maintenance Council. Most discussions take 2.4 minutes.

Simple multiplication can translate that into the hours and days that are added to the time spent on the repairs themselves.

Consider the steps for a shop looking to secure a single Purchase Order. There's the initial conversation with the customer, the time to understand requirements for the repair, determining the final charges, delivering the invoice, and securing payment. The Repair Order itself involves detecting a problem, assessing the problem, directing the truck to a shop, authorizing the diagnostics, authorizing the repair, orchestrating the repair, and summarizing the invoice.

Many of the steps overlap. The first two steps in the process for a Purchase Order can easily match five of the steps in the Repair Order, Cummings noted. "We still need that data interaction, and in some cases I would argue we even need more conversations."

But there are opportunities to streamline the procedures.

### Step 1: Assess the problem

Cellular technology and remote diagnostics could be better used to create a Repair Order as soon as a truck arrives at a shop, said Bruce Love, president of DP Solutions, which develops an array of hardware and software for heavy-duty dealerships. "Before (a technician) turns a wrench on the unit he's got an opportunity to reduce his downtime."

But Brian Mulshine, Navistar director, field service, warns there are some limitations. "Does the fault code always tell you what part to change on the engine?" he asked the crowd of maintenance managers at this seminar. The fault code could identify a problem, but it can also be a red herring created by a power spike during charging. "You can do remote diagnostics... but we also have to be careful that you have the right information at your fingertips."

Another source of valuable information can come in the form of Internet access in a service bay, giving mechanics instant access to everything from fault codes to parts catalogues and wiring diagrams, Love said. Those who order parts from that location will also be less likely



Technical Correspondent

JOHN G. SMITH

to waste 10 minutes an hour talking to the guy at the parts counter.

### Step 2: Direct to the shop

Fleets have traditionally chosen specific repair facilities based on rates, proximity and reputation, said Mike Delaney, president and CEO of Wheel Time Network. But the right data can lead to more informed choices, particularly when shops have access to information about unique needs. "There's no decision that can be faster or better than the one you make in advance," he said.

The right information is not limited to the truck alone. A shop should be able to tap into specific fleet requirements, such as the need to authorize repairs over \$1,000, preferred oils, or pre-defined procedures, said Dick Hyatt, president and CEO of Decisiv, which provides "cloud-based" service management platforms to 150 fleets.

It is the type of information that can avoid a number of conflicts.

Still, as much as information like this can improve the flow of communication, fleets need to commit to the process. "The investments are for naught if the customer does not want to use technology," Mulshine said.

### Step 3: Authorize diagnostics

According to Delaney, the most important step in a smooth repair process will involve the diagnostic work. In most cases, this task should be completed in a mere two hours, he said. And if done correctly, it will create a firm estimate and a firm time for the repair to be completed.

The real conflicts emerge when the invoice doesn't match the original discussions about these diagnostics.

"If it's all done verbally, you're going to get in trouble," Mulshine added.

### Step 4: Authorize the repair

Love it or hate it, the telephone still plays a big role in the repair process – even in the days when data can be swapped in real time. "The worst of all is when you connect and get to hear two minutes of promotions about why they care about customer service," Hyatt said.

Delaney stresses the limitations of a phone call by asking whether kids answer a text or voicemail more quickly. Text messages are simply more efficient, he said. "It may not be good grammar but it's a helluva way to communicate quickly." One of his customers will now ap-

prove repairs in five or 10 minutes using a text message, while the process traditionally took one or two days when trying to reach people by phone.

"The phone is the enemy," he stressed. "Fully documented and time-stamped communications mean faster and better (repairs)."

Maybe he's being too hasty. Voice-Over-IP (VOIP) systems give shops the chance to track who was on a call and how long a conversation lasted, Love said. Voicemails can even be attached to electronic Repair Orders along with text messages and e-mail. That way, all the related details can be tracked, and include the time stamps that let a shop see how long the fleet took to provide a Purchase Order.

### Step 5: Orchestrate the repair

Let's not lose sight of the real task at hand.

"The most important step in the process is to fix the truck," Love stressed. The challenge is that Standard Repair Times (SRTs) are not always standard. "This is a very dynamic environment. It's a manufacturing environment. Bolts are going to break," he said of work in a modern shop. An initial diagnosis might be wrong, a technician might be ill, or the facility can be overloaded on a particular day.

Better software makes it possible to build a standardized workflow based on a shop's actual experience.

The best systems even offer more "visibility" into the related transactions, Mulshine said. Someone in

the shop may note that a part needs to be ordered, but the fleet may be able to respond that it already has a spare part in stock. "That's where we can hit home runs," he said.

### Step 6: Summarize the invoice

One of the biggest steps to avoiding problems with an invoice will involve the better sharing of information. Love foresees a day in the near future when Web-based computer platforms will eliminate the need to re-key in the same information over and over again.

But fleets, manufacturers, technology providers and service providers often use different standards and platforms. "This is where I feel sorry for a fleet," Mulshine said. "We've got to prevent creating more Web sites."

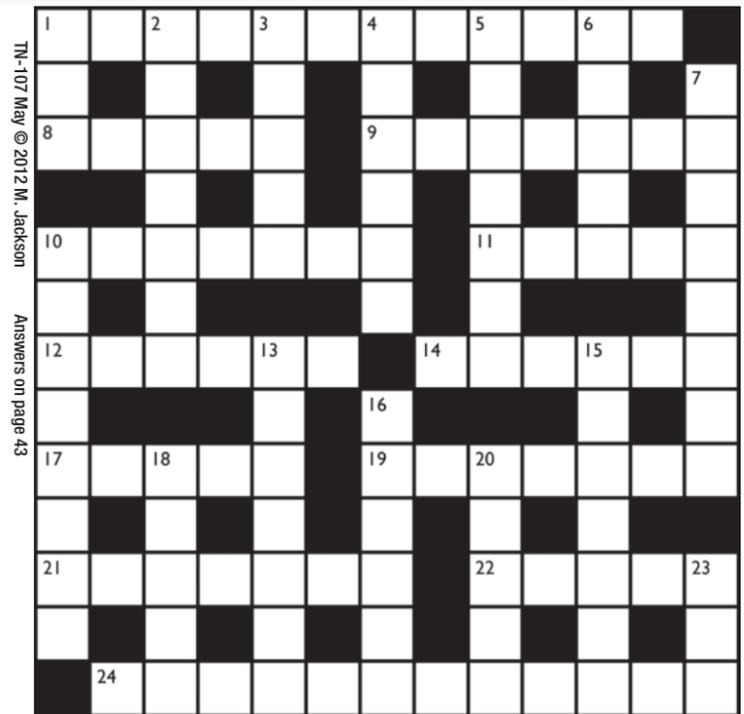
"We are asking too much work," he said, stressing that there needs to be a better sharing of information. "That's where we've got to focus."

Hyatt suggests that cloud-based computing models make it possible to link a long list of data. A simple unit number could connect to information about the truck, warranties, parts, and fleet profiles. "History is captured and maintained," he added. Then the information can be used to measure, track and analyze every step in the process.

Much of that could be accessed through a QR code printed on a truck's door.

The good news is that the capability exists, Hyatt stressed. "Data can be shared and it can be exchanged and it can be exchanged effectively." □

## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### Across

1. Protective barrier behind cab (8,4)
8. Cargo-restraint type
9. Battery specification, \_\_\_\_ capacity
10. Accelerators, slangily
11. Word on NS plates
12. Canada Revenue Agency agent (3,3)
14. Petro-products brand with star emblem
17. "Put the \_\_\_\_ to the metal"
19. Farmer's truck, perhaps (4,3)
21. City with 407 toll road
22. Roadside "EATS" edifice
24. Rural routes, sometimes (7,5)

### Down

1. ATime on the road, briefly (1,1,1)
2. '90s Ford heavy-duty model
3. Doctor-detering snack
4. International sleeper type (2,4)
5. Rejuvenate a classic truck
6. Road bend
7. Boston, slangily (4,4)
10. WiFi-equipped truck stops (3,5)
13. I-20, I-75 and I-85 junction city
15. CB-radio adjunct
16. Air horns flashy finish
18. Petro-Can diesel-engine oil
20. Radar's laser-based cousin
23. Certain thoroughfares, briefly

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## MANITOBA



**WINTER ROAD TRAFFIC JAM:** It may not be Deerfoot Trail at rush hour, but Manitoba's winter roads get busy when the weather cooperates. Permanent roads could lessen the urgency and provide goods to northern communities throughout the year, but they come at a substantial cost.

## Is it time to replace Manitoba's winter roads?

*Year-round access could benefit communities as well as the province's trucking providers*

### Continued from page 1

there's fairly significant consequences if there is a failure."

Each year is different, so there's no cookie cutter solution, either, no "road in a box," as it were. "They're each a little bit different depending on the terrain they're going through," Halayko explained, "but typically, crews will start once there's some frost on the ground and we get some cold temperatures. They'll start packing any snow that's down on them – typically this is in December – and between (then) and the end of January, early February they'll get them open."

The budding roads aren't a beehive of activity all that time, Halayko says; instead it's more a process of packing down the snow as it comes, to take away its insulating properties so the frost can build up enough to support the trucks.

"You'll pack it and leave it and then you go back in later on once there's more frost and with larger equipment to remove any snow," Halayko said.

Likewise, there's no set "starting date" at which supplies start heading northward.

"Every road opens when it's ready," Halayko said. "We had some that opened around the third week of January and one of the last ones to open was around the middle of February." Closings vary, too, with the shutdowns spread out this year during the period between March 13 and 18.

The amount of stuff carried also varies each year, though Halayko says a typical year would see about 2,500 loads hauled over the 2,500 kilometres of winter road – only about 10% of which is actually on rivers or over ice.

Some communities have airstrips that could facilitate deliveries, but Ha-

layko said the winter roads are more cost-effective than flying stuff in, even though rebuilding the roads each year is labour- and expense-intensive. That doesn't mean the temporary roads will always be the best answer, though.

"Our provincial government created a road authority for the east side of Lake Winnipeg to start looking toward building all-weather roads," Halayko said, noting the province is already working on roads to connect with the communities of Bloodvein and Berens River, but "as you can imagine it's very expensive to build the all-weather roads because they have to go through swamp and muskeg and that kind of stuff. It's going to take some time."

Such permanent roads could end up being more cost-effective than the \$10 million Manitoba spends on temporary roads each year, but that doesn't mean they're a free ride once built.

"With an all-weather road you still have maintenance costs," Halayko

pointed out. "With an all-weather road system, which would be gravel, you still have to blade it and maintain it and put new gravel down – whether it would be every year or every second year, it doesn't come without a cost."

This year's successful season was a welcome change compared to some. Manitoba Trucking Association executive director Bob Dolyniuk remembers recent years in which "they ended up flying supplies in where there were airports." That's not only more expensive, however, it's only a partial solution. "If there are no airports and the only access to a community is winter roads you have a serious issue if you don't get the supplies in."

Over the years, the stakeholders have come up with a variety of ways to make the best of an uncertain situation, but it remains a tough balancing act.

"You know what to expect (weather wise)," Dolyniuk said, "but that doesn't mean you'll get it, so if you've budgeted for November through March then all of a sudden a thaw comes in February you could have a lot of stuff just sitting up there waiting to go."

Dolyniuk said shippers also pre-

stage some of the stuff ahead of time because "you've got a very small window and you have to get it up there." Otherwise, "You either fly it in or you do without – and again that depends on if there's an airport."

So how about putting in an airstrip by each community? "Assuming that the topography allows for it," Dolyniuk said, pointing out "if you have to start plowing and bulldozing, you have to get all that equipment up there during the winter, too. It will probably take a couple seasons to get the stuff up there, and then get the job done and then get it out of there again."

Other solutions are possible, though perhaps a little bit of "blue sky dreaming" right now. Industrial strength hovercraft, perhaps? Or, in what would be a real life 'Back to the Future,' perhaps new generations of lighter-than-air airships could help.

"I know there is a group that has been looking into the feasibility of airships to service the communities," Halayko said. "The issue with that is, maybe you can use it to resupply freight and maybe passengers as well, but community members typically still like to have the opportunity to drive out at times and come down to the city, so there's that balance to consider as well."

And while using modern airships may be an interesting idea, Dolyniuk said he doesn't think the technology is anywhere near mature enough for the job at hand and probably won't be for a long time.

"Conceptually, if you could do it with dirigibles that might make more sense than building an airport – depending on what you need for a tower or other buildings and the technology to support the landing and take-off of these aircraft," he said. "But compared with building roads all the way up there, you wonder if there's some merit."

Dolyniuk, however, agrees with Halayko that whatever high- or low-tech options there may be, the people living in those remote communities would undoubtedly choose the freedom offered by an all-weather road.

"I keep thinking that if I were up there I would want something more dependable and more reliable than winter roads," he said, noting that one community served by the roads was so concerned about the lateness of the season's beginning this year that the Chief tried to declare a state of emergency because he didn't think they'd get their supplies for the season. "You're talking about getting everything from food, heating oil, and the like to these communities," Dolyniuk added. "Quite frankly, we're fortunate this year that it looks like everything got through."

The successful outcome doesn't mean everything was completely sweetness and light for the season, however – though it was apparently pretty close to that. Dolyniuk reported that a couple of pieces of equipment "got wet" during the winter roads' construction, but said that there were no other major issues, which makes 2012 better than the previous year.

"Because the season was so short and they hadn't gotten all their goods up there," Dolyniuk said of the 2011 winter road season, "there were some companies trying to go up there after the roads were officially closed and some trucks actually got stranded up there. People were taking chances when they shouldn't have." □



**THE LONELY ROAD:** A truck travels over one of Manitoba's frozen roads.

## SASKATCHEWAN

# Loblaws testing extra long combination vehicle

## Triple-53 runs between Regina, Saskatoon only at night



**IS LONGER BETTER?:** Driver Larry Boyle stands beside the extra long combination vehicle he's piloting with Loblaws in Saskatchewan. He says the triple-53 handles well, but he parks it in bad weather and when it's windy. It also helps to have flat, straight roads.

By Jim Bray

**REGINA, Sask.** – A pilot project in Saskatchewan could redefine the term “long haul” as it applies in the province. The experiment, currently under way on a single run between Regina and Saskatoon, allows for a third 53-ft. trailer to be added to an LCV, creating a kind of “turnpike triple” that’s hoped to help up the efficiency ante when it comes to moving goods in Saskatchewan.

It’s a part of what’s referred to as a Transportation Partnership between government and industry, an arrangement the province says is designed to enhance truck safety, support economic development through the use of larger, more efficient vehicles with higher payloads, as well as to promote the use of efficient, “road friendly” vehicles while minimizing the impact on the road infrastructure.

“We’ve always been looking to get longer and heavier,” says Mike Burnett, director of logistics, central region, Saskatchewan Department of Highways and Infrastructure. “That’s just the nature of what the program is about.” The LCV program has been in operation in Saskatchewan for many years now, Burnett notes, so “this was next up, to look at something longer – as long as we could accomplish it safely.”

This particular pilot project had been in the works for a couple of years before things actually got moving along the highways, and relates directly to the province’s attempts to become more competitive in the global marketplace.

“Saskatchewan’s a landlocked province,” Burnett says, “and our problem is that we’ve always got a lot of bulk commodities but we’re a long way away from port. This puts us at a competitive disadvantage.”

The project dovetails nicely with the province’s 2,000-acre Global Transportation Hub (GTH), located at the west end of Regina on the Canadian Pacific main line between Highways 1 and 11.

“As the Global Transportation Hub was starting to be developed,” Burnett says, “the (triple trailer) idea was being thrown around and since there was interest from occupants there, we thought this would be a good opportunity to try it out.”

Currently, the project sees a single company – Loblaws – running a triple “Road Train” (as its driver calls it) from the Hub to the outskirts of Saskatoon, where the third trailer is uncoupled and taken into the city by itself – undoubtedly saving some interesting urban turns in the process. Burnett says Loblaws was chosen because it “expressed an interest in pursuing it. They’re the anchor company in the GTH, so it made sense for them to take the lead.”

Andrew Cipywnyk, director, trucking policy and regulation, says that as part of the pilot project, “We’re looking at things like the operation of the vehicle and the whole issue of whether it fits in Saskatchewan.” Cipywnyk says the project is designed as a one-year test, after which “it will be evaluated to determine whether it’s a viable alternative for Loblaws operationally, but also to see whether there are any operational issues for the vehicle itself.”

Before the inaugural runs were completed, Cipywnyk says there was a lot of planning done.

“Anytime we enter into something like this there’s a lot of work done,” he says. “You have to look at the safety of the vehicle and the Ministry wouldn’t have even entered into the pilot if there wasn’t some level of comfort with the vehicle being safe for the road. But because it’s such a new configuration, we wanted to make sure there’s nothing that was missed in the analysis.”

Burnett says the project consists of a maximum of one trip a night, the triple heading to Saskatoon loaded but returning to Regina empty. “They have two sets of triples,” he says. “They drop off the loaded ones and pick up the empty ones for the return trip.”

Or perhaps not quite empty. The driver tasked with taking the triple to

the ’Toon, Larry Boyle, says he hauls empty pallets or milk trays back to the Hub after dropping off his load. Still, compared with the 177-ft. long triple’s gross weight of 90,000 kgs, it probably feels empty.

Boyle, a 36-year veteran of the trucking business, may have been the perfect choice as a guinea pig for the road trains. He’s been involved with Saskatchewan’s LCV program for many years and his experience includes time as an owner/operator with various companies; he also drove for Bison before moving to Loblaws in January of 2011. Boyle says he’s tickled pink to have been chosen for the pilot project and really enjoys the challenge – as well as the triple train experience itself.

“I actually prefer to drive them rather than the turnpikes,” he says, “because they’re on a slide-out system, like a fifth wheel – kind of like a long B-train – so it’s more stable because there’s no swing to it like with a converter (dolly).”

This leads to the road train being more “wind-friendly” than one might think, though Boyle admits that if the winds get really strong they uncouple the third trailer anyway.

“The winds were 90 km/h the other night,” he says, “and we didn’t run because of that. There are a lot of safety considerations in terms of being on the highway.”

The run is made five days a week, weather permitting, with the train allowed to operate only between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. and at a maximum speed of 90 km/h. It appears that so far, things have been going well.

“We haven’t really had any negative feedback,” Burnett says. “Loblaws has certainly been very conscientious making sure they err on the side of caution, and they’ve been a very good partner through this.”

Weather worries go beyond wind, of course. Boyle says snow and ice are other considerations, though he also notes that the system is set up to ensure they don’t run into problems in

the first place. “I get a weather report issued to me saying whether it’s good to go or what the chances are of rain or snow or whatever – and if there’s any snow flurries at all they don’t let me go.”

It doesn’t even have to be actual snow, either. Boyle says if the weather report says there’s even a 60% chance of flurries they won’t let him go that night. “They don’t want anything to happen, so they’re being extra careful,” he says.

That matches the government’s position. “We’ve been very conscientious of the weather,” Burnett says. “Obviously, starting in the middle of winter as we did, we had some concerns in regards to road conditions but safety is paramount to both sides (government and Loblaws) so if there’s any concerns with the weather, then they’ll call off the triple run and just take it up as a turnpike and a single.”

The route along the four-lane highway minimizes turns, obviously, but the road infrastructure is so far incapable of allowing the triple unit to make it right to the destination terminal.

“We can leave the transportation hub,” Boyle says, “because the roadways are wide enough and you can make the turns there. But we have to split them up at an Esso just outside of Saskatoon and then another driver comes out to meet me and he takes the one trailer in and I take the two into the Great West yard in Saskatoon.”

Boyle says the additional weight doesn’t put much extra strain on the truck, at least on the flats. He admits, however, that when going up the Lumsden Hill, about 30 kms north of Regina, his speed is down to about 20 km/h. Boyle thinks the project will be successful and will lead to a permanent presence of the “really long combination vehicles” on the province’s multi-lane roads. “It’s the way of the future, I think,” he says, noting that there’s already talk of “breaking off to go to Calgary and Winnipeg directly, along the Trans-Canada on the four-lane highways.”

The Ministry isn’t speaking as confidently, and notes that any plans to expand the program to companies other than Loblaws will have to be looked at on an individual basis. Concerns go beyond the fact that cities aren’t built to handle the longer configuration; Burnett also notes the individual companies and their drivers are also potential issues of concern.

“On one side we’re looking for different combination vehicles to get greater efficiencies,” Burnett says, “but the other side is safety. We look at the driver’s history and the company’s history, we look at the vehicle itself, the configuration, to ensure that they meet stability requirements.”

As for the skill of the truckers, Burnett says a driver needs to display a certain level of experience driving LCV combinations, but “Currently we haven’t looked at any additional training requirements beyond a long combination vehicle training course, the same thing they need for running turnpikes.”

Meanwhile, the driver is thrilled at the feather in his cap that being the first to drive the self-described “Road Trains” gives him. “I’m honoured that my manager picked me,” Boyle says, “and I’m really enjoying it.” He claims his triple is the longest train in North America on record right now, so “it’s kind of exciting to be in something like that. It’s awesome.” □

## PROFILE

# The man with the 'cool moves'

Wendell Erb, president and CEO of Erb Group, talks about his management style, the company's growth and the challenges of running a family business.

By Julia Kuzeljevich

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – In 1959, Vernon Erb was a dump truck operator who purchased a reefer some six years later and never looked back. Today, the Erb Group of Companies boasts a fleet of over 600 power units, more than 800 refrigerated trailers and some 1,000 employees and owner/operators, with eldest son Wendell Erb at the helm.

"We're in our 52nd year and we've had steady growth. We've just been growing with the customers. We got our refrigerated license in 1971 and we still have customers shipping with us today that shipped with us then and we've grown with them," Erb said during an interview with *Truck West* editorial director Lou Smyrlis during the most recent Driving for Profit seminar.

Erb officially began his career at the company in 1980. But his on-the-job training began much earlier.

The way Erb describes it, right after Grade 8 his mother told him he would be working the loading dock over the summer, to help out his father.

The "foreman's shift" on the loading docks, which began in the evenings and could last until early the next morning, was the first of many roles Erb would learn and perform at the company.

"I've done virtually everything within the company from driving the trucks to working the docks to washing the trucks. To this day, I like to get behind the wheel of a truck. It's some of the best learning experience or therapy you could have. If (the job's) not good enough for me, it's not good enough for anybody. You can't teach that. It's something I'm always aware of," said Erb of the various tasks he performed on his way to CEO.

"Because it was a family business there was never a thought that I'd do something else."

He agrees that this experience probably translates into a certain degree of respect from employees.

"The experience of working through those things in the company is definitely an asset. But I don't do it for that reason. I can recall meeting a driver. When he finds out my Dad owns the company and I'm on the shipping dock, he said 'What are you doing driving a truck?' I said 'It's because it's what I want to do,'" said Erb. "When going through the different roles, like dispatch, there were times when you had four loads and three drivers and you had to do some pretty creative things to get the loads covered. You don't get the work covered by lying to a driver – you get the load accomplished by working together with the driver. At the



**SECOND GENERATION:** Wendell Erb (pictured) inherited the role of CEO from his father and company founder Vernon last year.

same time, now, we're not asking our dispatchers to do the impossible but we're asking them to work with the drivers."

The world of trucking permeated Erb's home life. There was always company talk around the supper table, he recalled, especially with regard to the various red tape issues Vernon Erb faced as he established and ramped up the business.

"With a family-owned company, it's our equity on the line, so you've got that pressure. If you're working for a corporate entity, there are all the same pressures, but it's a little bit different. We have barbecues and we travel around to all the different terminals and I encourage my Dad to accompany me as much as possible."

Today, the younger Erb's management style echoes, in some ways, that of his father.

"We had a customer who was treating our drivers really poorly. As I'm hearing about this my blood was starting to boil a little bit and as I'm driving up to see the customer I thought to myself, 'How would Dad handle this?' I thought a bit more and when I went into the customer instead of giving him a piece of my mind I introduced myself and said 'I understand that you have a problem with Erb drivers.' This customer lit into me like he lit into my drivers, and in the end we made the decision that we weren't delivering there anymore."

But Erb has a certain advantage as CEO today that his father did not have.

"One word that is not in my father's vocabulary is 'no.' To this day when his cell phone starts ringing, he answers it. From my perspective one of the advantages we have is access to information, data and spreadsheets. I'm probably more apt to look at the opportunities and say 'no' based on better information. It's a more selective management," he said. But one philosophy that has re-

mained steady through the transition from Vernon Erb's leadership to Wendell's tenure is the importance of treating people with respect.

"We strive to have an open door-type management style. It is challenging to do that. There are times when one portion of the organization maybe isn't in that mode," Erb admitted.

"Sometimes I'll get a complaint about a manager in a particular terminal and he becomes the face for what we're asking him to do, and it's easier to blame that person. But ultimately we do need to listen to our drivers. Sometimes you can't make the change that they're asking for, but I try to follow what my Dad always did in terms of returning their phone calls."

In the refrigerated business, the keys to success are really knowing what your costs are and pricing accordingly.

"We do a lot of activity-based costing. On truckload it's a whole lot easier. All you can do there is get better freight rates, or reduce your inputs. On LTL you've got handling costs, windows of deliveries getting smaller, delivery appointments made to streamline the efficiency of the inbound warehouse but no thought to what it takes to have a truck there at 3 a.m. with 5,000 lbs on it. This makes for some interesting conversations with shippers on pricing," said Erb.

He expects that the 2013 emissions standards for refrigeration units are going to become an issue.

"I hope that the refrigeration units' reliability is better than what the trucking units' has been the last few years. Right now, they are generally reliable pieces of equipment attached to the trailers and running a lot of hours. If they are going to start giving us hiccups the way the tractors have, we're going to have some issues there," said Erb.

Another potential issue is the

growth of the grocery side of the business.

"These guys are getting bigger and it's getting more difficult. Shippers might have been shipping a load of LTL on an Erb truck. When it was a shipper sending freight pre-paid they could be very demanding and if I didn't perform, they'd find someone else. When it's your customer coming to pick it up you don't have a whole lot of clout in dealing with them on the pick-up, payment, and scheduling side," he noted.

The dispatcher-driver relationship, frequently a contentious one, is another area where Erb can boast of having some personal experience, having done a stint as a dispatcher for the company.

"When we first got the satellites it took some of the dispatcher-driver interactions away. When I was driving, we had a CB and it had a range of about three to four miles. Today everyone's got cell phones and are talking on their wireless. I had one driver who used to call in every morning about 8:30 and complain about things for 15 minutes and I used to take these things personally until I realized he was just talking and needed someone to talk to, and I was the one available at that time each day," Erb recalled.

Erb Group has committed to improving driver health with its Highway to Health Fitness Tracker.

"All of us can be in better physical condition. We came up with this program where you wear a pedometer and track your progress on a daily basis. We've had a lot of people join into it, not as many of the drivers as we'd like," he noted.

Erb has also committed to making safety an integral part of company culture.

"Backing up a few years, we got a conditional audit from US DoT. So we decided to clamp down and one of the biggest things (we learned) was we didn't even know what all the proper hours-of-service (rules) were," Erb admitted. "So we had to teach ourselves and at the time there were things we were doing around not filling in the logbooks correctly. You don't just flick a switch and everything is where you want it to be. It took five to six years. But with our program the way it is today everything we do is based on safety."

"At night I never lie awake thinking about unsafe drivers or trucks because it's part of our maintenance programs, our dispatchers and drivers being trained, and our customers who have come a long way in the safety respect. When you put it all together you end up with a good safety record," Erb added. "We enjoy very good insurance pricing."

Looking ahead, if and when it comes time to hand over the reins of the company, Erb said "I guess my vision would be handing something over that is well managed and that has good people in place. I should mention that this is not just Vernon or Wendell Erb but an executive team that does a great job for us," he said. □

# 110%

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## CANADA

# Best Fleets to Drive For

How an idea hatched by a small Canadian tech firm has evolved into one of the most prestigious awards in the industry.

By James Menzies

**MARKHAM, Ont.** – Having completed its fourth year, the Best Fleets to Drive For competition has already become one of the most sought after awards a North American trucking company can win.

Visit a trade show, peruse the recruitment ads in a trucking magazine or listen to satellite radio programming and you'll find many instances of the winners of this prestigious award proudly proclaiming their status as a "Best Fleet."

The program itself has grown from a concept that some in the industry initially discouraged, to a contest companies are now actively engaging in and promoting, all in just four years. The story behind the Best Fleets to Drive For program is as interesting as the program itself, and it began right here in Canada as the brainchild of Jane Jazrawy, vice-president of product development of the small, Markham, Ont.-based online training firm CarriersEdge. Jazrawy, and company president Mark Murrell, founded their online training firm in 2000 and brought it to the trucking industry in 2005.

They were soon hearing all about the industry's problems, such as its high driver turnover and an inability to attract young workers. They heard very little about what the industry had to offer as a profession and the a-ha moment came in 2008 when *Fortune* magazine posted a list of the 100 Best Companies to Work For, with Google coming in at number one.

"I realized there were no trucking companies of any sort on that list," Jazrawy recalled in an interview with *Truck West*.

"We thought it doesn't add up," Murrell added. "There has to be good stuff. There has to be people who are passionate about what they're doing. There has to be good stuff out there that needs to be shown to the world."

From there, Jazrawy developed the concept of a survey that would seek out the most positive driver-oriented initiatives being offered by trucking companies and then reward the companies that are involved while sharing their best practices with the industry as a whole.

"We wanted to find out what companies were doing to make drivers stick around," she recalled.

When Jazrawy and Murrell floated the idea of a competition to industry, they met with some resistance.

"There was certainly opposition to it and people who thought it was a crazy idea," Murrell admitted. "There were people who thought it was wrong and that we shouldn't be pitting fleets against their peers."

"But that was never the intention," Jazrawy hastened to add.

"The idea was to celebrate the good stuff."

Undeterred, the duo designed a program that relied heavily on driver input. "One of the things we thought was extremely important was getting the drivers to voice their opinions," Jazrawy said.

To get the program off the ground, Murrell said a strong partner was needed. Several organizations were approached with lukewarm response. Finally, everything came together when Murrell attended a Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) event and with the encouragement of a friend from the industry, approached the TCA for feedback. At the time, fellow Canadian Ray Haight served as its chair, and he immediately fell in love with the idea. Before long, TCA endorsed the program and offered to help administer it, bringing the Best Fleets to Drive For competition to life.

It was around this time that the bottom fell out from under the economy and the trucking industry in particular.

"We launched it at the worst time," Murrell admitted. "For the first couple of years, there was largely indifference. We always had good interest from drivers nominating their fleets. But for the first couple of years, companies were really having a hard time just trying to keep the lights on."

To be considered for the award, a fleet must first be nominated by one of its drivers. From there, the carrier must go through an exhaustive evaluation process consisting of questionnaires, driver surveys and a lengthy phone interview. Those first couple years, many fleets balked at the program because they hadn't heard of it and they figured there was a catch. With each passing year, the level of participation among the nominated fleets has increased, organizers point out. As awareness of the program has grown, carriers have seen benefits of taking part, including the ability to fly their flag as a 'Best Fleet to Drive For' in their recruitment literature and also an in-depth report on their own operations that's produced for them as part of the evaluation process.

"They go through this interview process and it is a real exercise in becoming self-aware," Murrell said. "They learn a lot about themselves and they also get all these driver surveys done. There's no charge to them and they typically get a report that's 30 pages or so."

"It gives them a sense of where they're strong and where they can use a little bit more work," Jazrawy added. "It has become a useful exercise for a lot of them."

In 2011, close to 90 carriers were nominated and evaluated as part of the program. It has created a boatload of work for CarriersEdge staffers, who run the program with-

out outside help. What they affectionately refer to as "Best Fleets Season" now runs nearly 11 months of the year, from the time the program is organized until a seminar series that shares the best practices of the winners concludes in June.

"It has become a lot of work," Murrell admitted. "It starts in August when we plan the opening with the TCA and ends in the beginning of June when the tour is done."

In between, there's promotion to be done, phone interviews and evaluations, the collection and tabulation of driver surveys and literature to be assembled. It culminates with the presentation of the awards at the TCA's annual convention in the spring followed by the 11-city Canadian seminar series.

"One of the things we're looking at now is, how do we streamline that?" Murrell said. "It becomes unsustainable for a free program, so we're looking at streamlining it and automating it. How can we build a system that does a lot of this for us?"

With their roots as a technology company, that kind of project is right up their alleys. Jazrawy said the program was never intended to be revenue generating, but as it grows, they may have to charge a

nominal fee for the reports to help offset the costs of producing them.

The skepticism and indifference the organizers initially faced seems to have given way to enthusiasm, especially as the economy has bounced back and the driver shortage has again reared its head. Companies are now calling the TCA and CarriersEdge out of the blue and asking how they can get involved. There have even been instances of carriers submitting fake nominations, which are easily spotted. Despite taking on a life of its own and demanding an unforeseen amount of their time, Murrell and Jazrawy agree the program has been worthwhile, even if it hasn't contributed to the bottom line of CarriersEdge.

"We just really wanted to start the conversation and I think we've done that," Jazrawy said.

While it's difficult to measure how the program has improved the public's perception of the industry, or for that matter, the industry's perception of itself, both Jazrawy and Murrell have seen anecdotal evidence that good things have come from identifying the companies that do the best job at treating their drivers right. And that was the goal all along. □

## Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series to visit 11 Canadian cities

**MARKHAM, Ont.** – The 2012 Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series is back again this year, with a full line-up of dates announced for its cross-Canada tour. The series of half-day seminars, organized by CarriersEdge and sponsored in part by *Truck West*, provides tips and tricks from Canadian and US fleets identified as this year's Best Fleets to Drive For.

Best Fleets to Drive For is an annual survey and contest conducted by the Truckload Carriers Association and CarriersEdge. It identifies the North American for-hire trucking companies that provide the best workplace experiences for company drivers and owner/operators. Nominated fleets are evaluated on the range and depth of programs being offered, the overall effectiveness of those programs across key metrics, and the responses of surveyed drivers. Fleets with the best overall scores are named Best Fleets to Drive For. The Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series presents data collected during that process, including industry trends, innovative programs, and case studies of winning fleets.

The 2012 edition of Best Fleets to Drive For saw dramatic results from smaller fleets, according to survey organizers, with both the Best Overall Fleet for Company Drivers and Best Overall Fleet for Owner/Operators awards going to fleets with less than 200 drivers. A detailed look at programs from those winning fleets will be a central focus of the seminars.

Other notable trends that will be explored further in the seminars include: the increase in companies offering education assistance programs for their drivers; the evolution of bonus programs from a focus on safety and fuel efficiency to comprehensive multi-metric performance bonuses; the increasing use of in-cab technology for communication, performance management, and driver development; and changes in approach to driver wellness as a key element of overall retention strategies.

"The 2012 Best Fleets to Drive For program found some really interesting developments across the North American trucking industry, and some real innovation in the smaller fleets," said Mark Murrell, president of CarriersEdge. "With more and more fleets finding novel ways to support their drivers, and some great feedback from the drivers themselves, there will be a lot to discuss in the seminars this year."

The 2012 Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series will again be presented by Marsh Canada.

"The Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series gives fleet operators a chance to learn how winning fleets operate safely and efficiently," said Scott Cober, national transportation practice leader for Marsh Canada. "This program has consistently afforded participants with valuable learning opportunities, and we're proud to be a sponsor for the third year."

The dates and locations for this year's tour are as follows: May 1, Regina, Sask.; May 2, Saskatoon, Sask.; May 3, Winnipeg, Man.; May 9, Moncton, N.B.; May 10, Montreal, Que.; May 15, Windsor, Ont.; May 16, Toronto, Ont.; May 17, Ottawa, Ont.; May 30, Calgary, Alta.; May 31, Edmonton, Alta.; and June 5, London, Ont.

All seminars will run from 9 a.m. to noon, with refreshments provided. Admission is free, but advance registration is required. To register, contact Judi at 905-530-2430, or visit [www.BestFleetsToDriveFor.com](http://www.BestFleetsToDriveFor.com). □

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## ENGINE OIL

# A heavy-duty engine oil primer

Using engine oil is simple. The oil itself, is anything but.

By Mark Lee

Trucking is like a skeleton; there are many important components that go together to make up our industry. Just like the human body, we need all the pieces to fit together to make it work properly. Nowhere is this more important than in the trucks we use to do our trucking.

The manufacturers do a pretty good job of building the trucks that we use, but one precious commodity is needed to make them work: oil. We all know the primary use of oil; it is sucked out of the ground and refined to become the food the truck needs to go to work, but it is also used as the lifeblood of the truck and this is an area that is often overlooked.

There are probably more misconceptions about oil than any other thing in our industry. To most people, it's an expensive, thick liquid that goes in a yellowish brown colour and comes out black a few thousand miles later. But it actually goes way beyond that.

Let's start with the basics. Oil companies stick a pipe in the ground and oil comes out. Pretty simple really, if only that were true. Many millions of dollars are spent on geographical surveys and test drilling before the first drop of 'Dinosaur Juice' comes out of the spout.

Then, once a successful well has been established, it needs transporting to a refinery that has more technology and scientists than you can shake a stick at. Then it goes through a refining process that is continually evolving, after which it is put into containers and shipped out to workshops and retail outlets, before we finally get to pour it into our trucks.

We asked Mark Pagnanelli, national sales manager, commercial lubricants with Castrol distributor

Wakefield Canada, to explain the advances made in oil to combat the conditions imposed on our engines today.

"As the industry evolved, so did the oils of today," he said. "So yes, it is true that today's mineral 15W-40 is far advanced when compared to older versions. There are a number of basics that must be met. We aim to improve sludge protection and reduce piston deposits, to keep the

that we use our oil. That is that we need to change our engine oil at a specified interval. Now that is not true. Oil doesn't go off, what happens is that it gets overwhelmed by the contaminants from the combustion process and no longer does its job of protecting our engine as it does when it's fresh out of the jug.

The main purpose of oil, besides lubricating, cleaning, cooling, preventing wear, reducing friction,

'Mineral engine oils continue to dominate the diesel engine lubricant market, with over 90% of customers opting for SAE 15W-40,'

Jim Gambill, Chevron

engine clean so that it can continue to perform at peak level and reduce oil consumption, this also helps to protect against filter plugging.

"Because of the acidic environment in the engine, we also have to decrease corrosion. Very important is improved soot management and low ash technology, which reduces soot-related oil thickening and helps reduce engine wear, specifically in the valve train and piston rings. This both reduces oil consumption and protects an engine's performance and compression and by decreasing oil consumption it diminishes the need for top-up and reduces emissions. We also have to have durable shear stability – this protects against excessive viscosity loss. Oil also needs to give protection from the first turn of the key to protect the engine during start-up in cold weather."

So, we can safely assume that we're getting good value for money when we purchase our oil, but are we getting as much value as we can from it? A common misconception guides many of us in the way

transferring heat and preventing corrosion, is to hold the contaminants in suspension so that they do not become abrasive and wear out our engines.

So, a 20,000-km interval may be fine for a clean burning engine, but as we now have to contend with EGR, DPFs and SCR, there is, due to the extra backpressure these processes produce, a lot more combustion gases and the associated soot rattling around inside our cylinders.

Some of this is forced down past the piston rings and into our oil.

The biofuel blends that we have in some Canadian provinces and US States add another dimension to the workload we put our oil through.

Soy is the main bio component in Canadian biofuel; this does not evaporate like diesel so when it gets introduced into our oil through combustion blow-by, it agglomerates into soot more easily.

This is why Dan Arcy, global OEM technical manager with Shell Lubricants, recommends using synthetic oil if you use biofuel. Arcy

said "Our oils are blended to take into account the extra soot concentrations created from using biofuel. As far as it impacts the consumer, a 5% blend (as in B-5 biodiesel), would not typically cause concerns, but in higher concentrations combined with extended drain intervals we recommend that you use synthetic oil and also take part in an oil analysis program."

## Mineral oils dominate

Jim Gambill North American Delo brand manager with Chevron, said there's a time and place for synthetic oils, especially in Canada.

"The operating conditions in Canada are very different than elsewhere. Extremely low temperatures in winter can challenge an oil's ability to provide protection during starting and we recommend that you use a synthetic oil during winter, at least," Gambill said. "Our mineral oils will provide more than adequate protection during the warmer months and can easily cope with winter too, but the synthetics, with their lighter film will help prolong engine life under extreme conditions."

Gambill also said "manufacturers have their own requirements from oils, so it's advisable to follow their recommendations. Although I would recommend using Delo, a particular brand isn't critical, as most brands have an oil that suits every engine, but the performance criteria for a particular engine must be met in order to gain maximum life expectancy."

Gambill went on to say "mineral engine oils continue to dominate the diesel engine lubricant market, with over 90% of customers opting for SAE 15W-40.

"In the 15W-40 viscosity grade, synthetics and synthetic blends do not necessarily impart improved performance or value. Premium conventional oils have a track record of providing proven performance and delivering the best overall value. Products in this category deliver excellent durability when used in conjunction with OEM drain recommendations. Excellent extended drain performance is also possible when done with a comprehensive oil analysis program. In fact, we have examples of customers achieving 110,000-km drain intervals using 15W-40 and also going 2.4 million kilometres before a teardown, only to find the key components of the engine were in great shape."

As well as better cold start protection, synthetics can be used to compensate for the higher oil viscosities produced in today's engines.

The lower the viscosity, the easier it is to push around the engine and that can bring small fuel consumption benefits, usually around the 1% mark.

## Modest fuel economy gains possible

Although that isn't much, as fuel prices continue to rise, that 1% becomes more important.

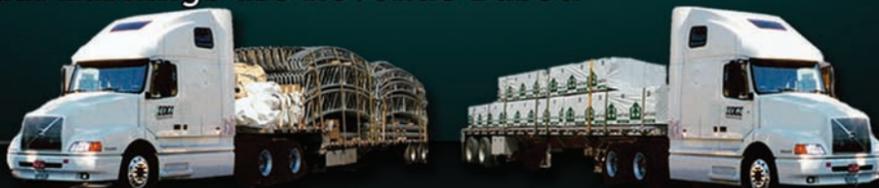
In reality, many premium conventional oils deliver performance very similar to synthetics, so if oil drains and engine durability are your motivation, you don't necessarily require synthetics.

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If low temperature starting protection and fuel economy are your driving forces, then synthetics are worth considering.

Another possible outcome of high soot levels in the oil is that it can possibly leave the engine underlubricated.

This is particularly dangerous during cold weather start-ups, when oil flow is reduced by low ambient temperatures. Soot levels also affect the high temperature high shear (HTHS) properties of a lubricant, which will result in a loss of fuel economy over the drain interval.

There are differences in the molecular structure of the base oil, Jane Li from Petro-Canada says.

“The CJ-4 oils required to meet EPA regulations regarding soot control need a more robust oil, the newer engines all produce more soot and combating this is where we have focused our efforts,” she explained.

“We have an advanced refining process which, by severe hydrocracking and hydroisomerization, develops crude oil into 99.99% pure base oils. Dated base oil technologies retain impurities that hinder finished product performance. Our process removes these impurities which result in our base oils having improved oxidation stability, better low temperature fluidity, and superior environmental benefits. As a result, your equipment is protected longer, reducing downtime and operating costs.”

This is backed up by recent research and testing that has also shown that dispersant performance is enhanced by the purity of the base oil used, Li pointed out.

Ultra-pure base oils can improve soot dispersion efficiency, allowing the engine oil to disperse more soot for the same amount of dispersant additive. Shell’s Arcy describes the individual components within oil.

“In both mineral and synthetic oil, 75% is base oil and the other 25% is made up of additives,” he explained. “These performance additives not only protect the base oil, but also the components within an engine. There are detergents that keep both clean, dispersants to encapsulate contaminants (mainly soot) and keep them in suspension. Additives also create the stickiness in oil that allows it to cling to moving parts and protect them. There are corrosion and oxidation inhibitors to reduce the acidic environment caused by combustion and there are seal conditioners to minimize oil consumption and maximize engine life.”

To get the best from our oil – and therefore our engines – we can, and should, use another service the oil companies provide: oil analysis. This will tell us if our drain intervals are too long or too short, and it will also give us a lot more information about the health of our engines.

For example, oxidation and nitration, which cause an acidic environment and coolant or fuel intrusion, all of which are extremely bad for our oil and our engines, can be identified through oil analysis.

Fuel intrusion can, if left too long, actually cause an explosive condition inside the crankcase. Even a small amount can cause bearing wear issues.



**ALL ABOUT OIL:** To many of us, engine oil is a thick fluid that goes in golden brown and comes out black months later. However, engine oils play a vital role in how effectively and efficiently your engine runs.

Fuel dilution also indicates that your injection system is not functioning properly, which in 99.9% of cases means that you will be putting a lot more of that other by-product of crude oil into your fuel tanks.

Coolant intrusion will strip the bearings of their zinc coating and then it’s only a matter of time before the whole thing goes bang. So your oil can lead you to maintenance issues that you would otherwise be unaware of.

An oil sample will also tell you if the soot levels are within the capability of the oil.

Having this knowledge will allow you to tailor your oil drain intervals to your specific requirements and clean oil will not only protect your engine better, it also has an impact on fuel consumption. So by choosing high quality engine oil and using an oil analysis program, operators should be able to make each dollar go a little further, both in reduced maintenance costs and improved fuel economy.

All that from a jug of oil, who would’ve thought?

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Weight:	<b>220lbs / 100kg</b>
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Hair Colour:	<b>Dark brown</b>
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## MID-AMERICA REPORT

# Three new trucks highlight Mid-America product introductions

By James Menzies

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Kenworth, Peterbilt and Navistar all introduced new truck models at this year's Mid-America trucking Show.

## Kenworth T680

Kenworth came out with a new T680, which the company boldly claimed is 10% more aerodynamic than the current best-in-class truck model, resulting in a 5% fuel economy improvement. The truck was designed to last 1.5 million miles.

Kenworth officials said the new truck, with an 83-inch wide cab, can provide an operational savings of up to \$4,000 per year over its existing models, which it already claims to be the best when it comes to fuel economy.

"Simply put, the Kenworth T680 is Kenworth's most aerodynamic truck ever," said Preston Feight, Kenworth chief engineer. "The T680 is designed to smoothly slice through the air, set-

ting an industry standard for aerodynamics and fuel efficiency."

Other features include: excellent forward lighting; a 30% larger door; a cab that's 40% quieter compared to today's offerings; and 65% more interior storage.



**KENWORTH T680**

On first glance, the entry into the sleeper cab has been noticeably widened. The passenger seat swivels a full 180-degrees and can be used as a comfortable place from which to

work on the fold-out desk. The dash has been reconfigured to accommodate a 'Driver Performance Centre' with a five-inch configurable display, visible through the steering wheel.

Kenworth says it will issue performance alerts, not through fault codes, but rather "statements in English about what is wrong with the truck and what to do with it."

The new truck, Feight says, will "change the way people will use the inside of the truck," from a driving, working and living perspective. The sleeper cab has a full-length wardrobe closet and boasts eight feet of headroom. The new model will commence production on May 21.

## Peterbilt Model 579

Also new at MATS was the Peterbilt Model 579, an "all-new" model that the company says was five years in the making and one of its most momentous new product introductions ever.

"The all-new 579 goes beyond meeting a market demand for an exceptional vehicle that satisfies both the bottom line and operator expectations," said Bill Kozek, Peterbilt general manager and Paccar vice-president. "The 579 integrates legendary Peterbilt quality and innovation with a product platform that delivers in every aspect of vehicle performance, productivity and safety. From optimized cab dimensions to an enhanced chassis design, and from driver amenities to a revamped electrical system – every design element of the 579 was analyzed and engineered to provide real-world benefits and business solutions that exceed industry trends."



**PETERBILT MODEL 579**

The new truck boasts a 2.1-metre wide aluminum cab and three-piece bumper for cost-effective repairs. The hood is comprised of three parts for simple repairs, and Peterbilt said it incorporates the company's most efficient tilt assist system that requires only 25 lbs of effort to lift. Production of the new model will start in May.

## International LoadStar

On the more specialized end of the scale, Navistar introduced a new Class 8 severe-service low cab forward International LoadStar.

The market represents only 6,000 to 8,000 units in North America, Jim Hebe, senior vice-president of sales operations said during a press conference. However, he said Navistar is dedicated to the market and designed the LoadStar from the ground up, including the industry's first stainless steel cab installed at the factory level.



**INTERNATIONAL LOADSTAR**

The stainless steel cab will minimize corrosion and increase durability, the company claims, and variable depth frame rails will result in greater durability, lighter weight, lower frame rail heights and better ride characteristics, the company says.

"We talked to drivers to better understand their needs and what is missing from the trucks they drive," said Hebe. "To fit driver needs, we optimized the space in the cab, increased seat and steering wheel movement, and adjusted joystick placement to deliver an outstanding ergonomic and customizable work environment."

The LoadStar will be available for orders in October. □

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TRUCKWEST

MID-AMERICA REPORT

# Bendix says valve problem resolved

By James Menzies

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Bendix announced at the Mid-America Trucking Show that it has developed a permanent fix for trucks with its faulty ATR-6 brake valve and that the solution will be widely available through truck dealers shortly, as soon as enough units are available to meet the demand.

Truck OEMs aren't likely to announce availability of a replacement for the faulty part until there are enough to go around, Bendix officials revealed. However, the company and its suppliers are ramping up production so that the permanent fix will soon be available to all affected customers.

Bendix officials also said it's possible that truck OEMs will make the solution available sooner to fleets operating in northern climates, where unintentional brake applications are possible on vehicles equipped with the ATR-6 traction relay valve.

Bendix has already made available a short-term solution, which eliminates the risk of unintentional brake appli-

cations but also disables traction control and the Bendix stability system.

Scott Burkhart, vice-president of general engineering, controls group, said Bendix has been in close contact with OEMs and has been able to allow uninterrupted production of new Class 8 trucks.

"We have worked very closely with the OEMs and have had daily conversations with them," he said today. "We have come up with a permanent fix to keep their lines going in production. Those vehicles do not need to be touched again and we did not shut down any of our OEM customers."

Burkhart admitted some trucks that were already built with the faulty part could not be delivered to customers once the flaw was discovered, however those trucks have since remedied with the permanent fix and won't need further attention.

Under NHTSA rules, Bendix is limited as to what it can say about the recall and will instead rely on the OEMs to inform customers when a perma-

nent fix is available for their vehicles, Burkhart said. The repair is relatively simple, he noted, requiring only the removal of four screws and the replacement of an o-ring. The challenge is producing enough replacement parts to begin widespread upgrades.

Burkhart said Bendix and its suppliers are ramping up production to expedite the resolution to the widespread problem. The urgency, however, could be diminished somewhat by unseasonably warm weather. The faulty valve was only problematic in temperatures below freezing, temperatures that have abated through most of Canada, not to mention the US.

Still, the problem needs to be resolved, and Burkhart said OEMs will begin announcing availability of the permanent fix shortly, when there are enough repair kits available to fix about 50% of the afflicted vehicles.

"Some OEMs may start (announcing a fix) earlier in the northern regions because that's where the occurrences were," he said. □



**NANOTECHNOLOGY:** By using nanotechnology, new Cummins Fleetguard fuel filters can trap particles smaller than what the human eye can see.

## New Fleetguard fuel filter uses nanotechnology

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Cummins has tapped into the surreal science of nanotechnology to develop a fuel filter that can trap particles 12 times smaller than what the human eye can detect.

The company revealed its new line of Fleetguard fuel filters at a press conference preceding the Mid-America Trucking Show. The FF5782 fuel filter uses a nanotechnology-based filtration method, which Cummins says was developed specifically for high-horsepower Cummins engines.

The new filter, field-tested already for three years, can trap 98.7% of all particles as small as four microns, the company claims. It also exhibits 13 times greater retention of particles during fuel surge and engine vibration than its nearest competitor, Cummins announced. The end result is a fuel filter that provides longer life and less downtime due to failed injectors. Joseph Saoud, president of the Cummins filtration business, said one test showed the nearest competitors' filter failed after 37 hours' use, while the new Cummins fuel filter ran for 190 hours without a failure before the test was halted.

He also said more Cummins Fleetguard filters using the same nanotechnology will be released in the coming months.

Cummins Filtration also announced the launch of a new filter recycling program, dubbed Filtering Change. The program will initially be rolled out to American fleets and service centres, and eventually global providers, to encourage the recycling of metal filter cans and used media elements.

In just three months, Cummins says the program has seen more than 50 metric tonnes of previously junked material diverted to recycling programs.

"As service providers, our customers are already required by government regulations to manage waste oil and filters," said Matthew Tullai, executive director, marketing and sales, Cummins Filtration. "This program is built around helping them take it to the next level, to rethink how they manage that waste for the future."

Participating companies will be able to track their conservation accomplishments through an online calculator set up by Cummins. □

# Chevron offers new natural gas engine oil

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Chevron has announced the availability of a new engine oil for mobile natural gas engine applications.

Chevron Delo 400 NG SAE 15W-40 engine oil is formulated specifically for medium- and heavy-duty CNG- and LNG-fueled vehicles, Chevron announced at the Mid-America Trucking Show.

"There are numerous factors driving the adoption of natural gas vehicles, including significant domestic supply availability, lower fueling costs, reduced environmental impact, and growing CNG/LNG refueling support infrastructure," said Jim Gambill, North America Delo brand manager. "As more fleets look to alternative fuel solutions to help reduce their carbon footprint and boost their bottom line, we felt it was important to offer an engine oil specifically designed to meet their needs. With Delo 400 NG, there is now a premium oil, designed specifically for heavy-duty natural gas vehicle engines, that will

deliver the engine durability and reliability, extended oil drain performance, and long life protection our customers require to successfully operate today."

Benefits include: improved performance; better engine cleanliness; enhanced oil oxidation and nitration control; and low wear performance, the company claims.

In an interview with *Truck West*, Gambill said many fleets transitioning to natural gas fail to realize they need a new engine oil for those vehicles. The drain intervals are also significantly shorter – about 7,500 miles – because of the higher heat generation, Gambill said.

"It's definitely something that gets overlooked," he told *Truck West*. He also advised fleets converting to natu-



ral gas to ensure they take the transition into account when they run their oil analysis programs. If the provider isn't aware the oil sample came from a natural gas engine, they could provide misleading information, Gambill said.

"They need to make sure the supplier knows it's in natural gas service," he said. If fleets continue running their traditional motor oil through natural gas engines, he said they could see excessive deposits and all the related problems.

Gambill said Chevron has much experience providing oil for stationary natural gas-powered engines and has adapted that knowledge to the mobile market. While the company advises against extending drain intervals in natural gas applications without the consent of the OEM, Gambill said the new Chevron oil has doubled the recommended drain interval without problems. The new natural gas oil will be available through traditional Chevron distribution channels beginning in June. □

# Cummins promises fuel economy gains in 2013 engine line

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Cummins has vowed to improve fuel economy over its existing engines by a further 2% this year.

The 2% gain is attributed to reduced parasitic losses and comes on top of a 2% gain achieved this year due to combustion and system optimization and a 3-5% gain in 2010 as a result of the use of selective catalytic reduction (SCR), the company announced. The 2013 engine line will use Cummins' existing high-pressure common rail fuel system, its variable geometry turbocharger and its integrated electronics.

Cummins also announced its 2013 engine line will meet the EPA/NHTSA 2014 greenhouse gas/fuel economy standards one year earlier than required.

"Our engines are meeting the 2014 fuel efficiency and GHG standards a full year early," announced Rich Freeland, Cummins vice-president



**MORE EFFICIENT:** Cummins says its 2013 engines will be about 2% more fuel efficient than today's.

and president of the engine business during a press conference preceding the Mid-America Trucking Show.

Cummins' 2013 engine line will continue to rely on SCR, combined with an integrated diesel particulate filter (DPF) in a package the company now calls its Cummins Emissions Solutions EcoFit Ultra-Low Emis-

sions exhaust aftertreatment system.

Cummins also announced it is expanding its natural gas line with an ISX15 G. The newest natural gas offering will be targeted towards heavy-duty, over-the-road customers.

The ISX15 G comes on the heels of the ISX12 G, which was recently announced and will begin production in 2013. The ISX12 G tops out at 400 hp and 1,450 lb.-ft. of torque, which Cummins acknowledged isn't sufficient for some customers, including those in Canada that regularly traverse the Rocky Mountains.

"We know we have customers today that would like to have more horsepower and more torque in a natural gas over-the-road engine," acknowledged Ed Pence, general manager of the heavy-duty engine business.

The engine will enter the field-test phase in early 2013, Pence said, and will be in full production by 2015. □

## MID-AMERICA REPORT

# New automated transmission completes Detroit's integrated powertrain

## Detroit's much anticipated automated transmission coming to North America

By Lou Smyrlis

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Citing the need to have powertrain components optimized to work together, Daimler Trucks North America has now added a transmission to its Detroit lineup, completing Detroit's integrated powertrain offerings.

The 12-speed, direct- or over-drive automated transmission combines a traditional clutch-actuated manual gearbox with high-speed, computer-controlled shift and clutch actuators, which automatically selects the right shift pattern for fuel economy and engine power. It will be matched with the Detroit 15 engine in Freightliner Cascadia trucks initially.

Boasting that Detroit is now the only OEM that can offer a complete powertrain package (axles were previously added to Detroit's well-known heavy-duty engine offerings), Andreas Renschler, head of Daimler Trucks, commented that he views the powertrain as central to the future generation of its products.

"It's not just the heart of the truck, it's the heart of the truck

value chain. It's worth more than 50% of the truck's value," Renschler said. "We are working to optimize the complete powertrain not just the separate powertrain components. We believe that's what customers want and we believe we understand their needs better than providers of separate components."

The development of Detroit's powertrain products has been an international effort, with resources being drawn from all of Daimler's global capabilities. Daimler's transmission technology has been tested in series production in select European markets since 2005.

Renschler added that when powertrain components are optimized to work together they deliver better fuel economy, performance and reliability.

The direct drive transmission, which will go into customer demos this year and start production next year, combines improved slow speed maneuvering capabilities with high road speed efficiency. It employs fuel efficiency technologies including skip shifting, enabling drivers to run through lower gears faster to achieve cruising

speed sooner; and EcoRoll, which helps the vehicle coast more efficiently. The transmission's aluminum design results in up to 300 lbs of weight savings (vs. cast iron designs), benefitting fuel economy or increasing bulk payload.

Features such as active driveline protection, which anticipates torque windup; and torque limiting, also enhance reliability and driver comfort.

Daimler will continue to offer Eaton UltraShift and Allison transmissions for its trucks but Mark Lampert, senior vice president, sales and marketing Daimler Trucks North America, believes they can get to 25% penetration with the integrated powertrain package within two or three years.

There are no plans to follow up with a manual transmission.

Daimler officials say their new transmission is ideal for drivers of all skill levels because it's equipped with driver-friendly features such as a two-pedal system for ease of operation; helical gears that reduce noise; a control module that communicates with the entire powertrain; and a kick-down feature that

improves vehicle acceleration. In combination, these features make for a transmission that is more intuitive and requires less training for new drivers, the company claims.

Additional features of the Detroit transmission include: a Hill-Start Aid option to prevent roll-back after standing still on a hill; enhanced cruise control and improved dash display; shift lever with gear, auto/manual mode and brake selection, improving ergonomics; and driver-selectable shift modes for performance or economy.

Company officials also commented on the growing interest in the industry in switching to natural gas, which Daimler has been experimenting with for about seven years, initially with the Sterling brand.

"It looks like the infrastructure is growing quickly. We see natural gas growing significantly over the next few years," Lampert said.

But there are no plans at the moment to bring European natural gas engines to the North American market. □

# Mack leans on further powertrain integration to squeeze more fuel savings

By Lou Smyrlis

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Arguing that integration is critical to optimizing fuel economy, Mack Trucks is elevating its focus on providing an integrated powertrain package.

At the Mid-America Trucking Show the company unveiled its Super Econodyne powertrain, which Mack claims capitalizes on its Pedigree powertrain expertise to squeeze 3.5% improvement in fuel economy over similarly spec'd vehicles. The Super Econodyne powertrain system is designed with all-Mack proprietary components for a complete Mack Pedigree Pow-

ertrain. The Mack MP8-445SE engine, Mack mDrive automated manual transmission, Mack C125 proprietary drive axles and Mack's custom software are combined to offer a system designed for fuel efficiency.

The powertrain system is not for everyone, emphasized David McKenna, Mack director of powertrain sales. It is, however, ideal for dry van, refrigerated, liquid and dry bulk and flatbed operations.

Super Econodyne is available on all Mack Pinnacle models, rated up to a 88,000-lb GCWR. McKenna said with some tweaking the Super

Econodyne could work for applications up to 110,00 lbs, but that is in the future.

Contributing to the fuel-efficiency improvement is the Super Econodyne's "downspeed" feature. Super Econodyne is engineered to "downspeed" more than 200 rpm at a highway speed of 65 mph, cruising at 1,160 rpm versus 1,380 rpm. This reduces fuel consumption by up to 2% compared with previous engine models, with a corresponding reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The Mack proprietary C125 drive axles deliver an additional 1.5% fuel economy improvement.

"We've designed a completely integrated system to run efficiently at 450 rpm above idle speed when before it was 700 to 800 rpm above idle speed," McKenna said.

The Mack MP8-445SE offers 445 hp and up to 1,760 lb-ft of torque. The C125 axles have a 2.66:1 ratio. All powertrain components communicate with each other via Mack software, and it's critical that they share data at the same time and in the same manner, McKenna explained.

"It's the ultimate in complete powertrain integration," McKenna said. "The engine seamlessly communicates with the transmission, which seamlessly communicates with the vehicle, resulting in instantaneous decisions. Add the Mack C125 drive axle, and we're talking about fuel-efficiency benefits never before realized in a powertrain system."

Also key to the fuel efficiency delivered with the Super Econodyne powertrain package is the Mack mDrive transmission. The 12-speed automated manual has no clutch pedal, and the gearshift is operated by an intelligent shift pad module and managed by sophisticated electronics.

mDrive continuously monitors changes in grade (both up and down), vehicle speed, throttle position, acceleration, torque demand and combined vehicle weight. The mDRIVE transmission features Mack's two-speed reverse functionality that better controls road speed and engine speed.

So popular is the mDrive that Mack's Kevin Flaherty figured that penetration of the transmission in 2011 US sales of Mack trucks could reach as high as 40%. It's already above that in Canada. □

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**READY TO ROLL:** James Menzies gets ready to hit the road in one of the very first Kenworth T680s to be built.

# First impressions of the new Kenworth T680

By James Menzies

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – While in Louisville for the Mid-America Trucking Show, I was fortunate to be among the very first to take Kenworth’s newly introduced T680 for a drive. The odometer read 208 miles, precisely the distance from the Chillicothe, Ohio assembly plant where it was constructed.

The T680 is Kenworth’s “most aerodynamic truck ever,” with engineers somehow improving airflow by 10% over the T660, which Kenworth considers to be the incumbent best-in-class model by which to compare. A 10% improvement in aerodynamics translates to a 5% fuel savings. You have to take a close, hard look to see how and where Kenworth improved on the already slippery T660, while expanding the cab width to 83 inches (2.1 metres). In terms of cab width, the T680 fills a space between the narrow T660 and the ultra-wide T700 and won’t replace any existing offerings, Kenworth announced.

Company officials attribute its aerodynamic improvements to things like: an optimized bumper and hood, full-height side extenders, close-out fairings between the cab/sleeper and fairings, chassis fairings extenders and flush-mounted lighting.

The cab is constructed of stamped aluminum and the 76-inch sleeper is integrated into the body. The T680 I drove featured that same 76-inch sleeper, but it’s also available in a day cab configuration. The new truck comes standard with the 12.9-litre Paccar MX engine, but a Cummins ISX15 is optional and was the engine under the hood of the truck I drove. Interestingly, the T680 I drove was equipped with an Eaton UltraShift Plus transmission labeled ‘Paccar by Eaton.’ I’m told the transmission I was given is exactly the same as Eaton versions I’ve driven before, but over time Paccar will work with Eaton to tune it specifically to the requirements of the Paccar MX engine to fully optimize performance. I should point out, the truck I was driving was a prototype, which could explain the curious combination of a Paccar-labeled transmission paired with a Cummins engine.

It begs the question though, will we one day see a Cummins-branded UltraShift?

It’s unclear to me whether the Paccar-labeled transmission is purely a branding initiative or whether Eaton – clearly under pressure with the introduction of a Detroit-branded automated manual transmission – is taking aggressive steps to further improve the integration of its UltraShift Plus with specific engine designs? To do so requires a certain level of trust, as both the transmission and engine manufacturer must be willing to share sensitive details about how their respective products function. And as an independent supplier, Eaton must also carefully manage its relationships to ensure all its partners are treated fairly. It will be interesting to see where this goes.

At any rate, the UltraShift Plus is a fine transmission and I’m always pleased to see one when I climb into the cab, because it allows me to focus on what the truck itself has to offer rather than the location of the rpm needle.

‘The acclimatization period that typically occurs when setting out in an unfamiliar truck was practically non-existent.’

In the case of the T680, there was much to enjoy. The fit and finish of the interior was pure luxury, whether judged by the eye or the fingertips. Kenworth has located the five-inch driver performance centre display on the primary gauge cluster behind the steering wheel, yet clearly visible through the wheel. This is a sensible move, as it makes it easy to read the display without diverting your eyes from the road ahead. In fact, you can glance at any messages without turning your head whatsoever.

The truck came equipped with Kenworth’s NavPlus ‘infotainment’ system, which can be used for navigation, satellite radio control or as a digital display of secondary gauges. Using the NavPlus system does require

the driver to divert his eyes from the road, but it’s an intuitive system that can be enjoyed with little driver input.

Behind me, the sleeper cab offered amenities that long-haul drivers will appreciate during their off-duty periods, and is easy to enter through a 22-inch, unencumbered entranceway, assuming there’s no shifter in the way. The T680 comes with a rugged, fold-out work desk that is as heavy-duty as any you’ll find in a sleeper cab.

You can spec’ an optional rotating passenger seat that, when coupled with the desk, provides an office-like workstation that sure beats working from bed.

Unused space has been cleverly converted to useful storage, which officials say results in 65% more storage capacity than the current best-in-class offering. That figure almost seems too substantial to believe, but a closer inspection reveals no wasted space and plenty of options for stowing clothes and gear.

Back up front, the windshield is 50% larger than competitive models, Kenworth claims. Again, that number seems almost unbelievable, but the visibility from the driver’s seat is excellent. Perhaps some of the 50% in extra glass comes from above; I did notice it was easy to read traffic lights without bending down to peer out from underneath a sun visor or the roof lining. The windshield also seems to let in an extraordinary amount of ambient light.

By the way, I had plenty of opportunities to look at signal lights on my drive. I took my passengers on an unplanned detour through some tight city streets amidst busy afternoon traffic after prematurely exiting the Interstate. That’s alright, though, I can attest to the truck’s maneuverability in tight quarters; I didn’t jump a curb or cause any damage to Louisville’s infrastructure – not to mention the truck – even as an admitted novice when it comes to city driving. And of course, this was with a full-sized sleeper cab and pulling a 53-ft trailer.

When it comes to drivability, I find many of today’s trucks have a seemingly loose steering system that takes some getting used to. They’re simply not as responsive as the passenger vehicles I’m used to driving on a daily basis. The same can’t be said of the T680 and this was the most resonating



**ON-ROAD OFFICE:** The T680 features a rugged, fold-out desk and optional rotating passenger seat that provide an office-like work area.

say I have the body composition of your typical trucker, so it should come as no surprise that I found the driver environment to be comfortable, since most trucks are designed for guys like me. But Kenworth also said the cab was designed to suit everyone from a woman in the fifth percentile to a 95th percentile man.

“This is a major leap forward in accommodating drivers,” said Wally Peltola, design instructor with Kenworth.

The other thing I noticed during my drive was the quietness of the interior. Now, it’s difficult to write about any new truck model without commenting on the lack of interior noise; all truck OEMs have made great strides in this area. Still, even with that in mind, the T680 seemed exceptionally quiet and three of us were able to chat comfortably without raising our voices. All these little things add up to a driving experience that’s less fatiguing over the course of a day.

With a 5% fuel economy improvement over the Kenworth T660, operators could save as much as \$4,000 per year, the company claims. Kenworth announced Kansas-based TransAm Trucking placed a staggering order for some 1,000 T680s. Not a bad way to launch a new model, Kenworth.

Any owner/operator that can afford a new T680 will surely be the envy of his peers, however the sad reality is emissions requirements have made premium trucks like the T680 an elusive dream for a lot of owner/operators.

I expect it will find more of a market with image-conscious fleets, including private fleets and those who want a new tool in their arsenal with which to attract and retain drivers.

Having finished my drive, I climbed from the truck and noticed one more interesting characteristic when I closed the door. The door closed so easily and soundlessly that I assumed the passenger door was open, which it was not. Upon unveiling the truck for the first time the day before, Preston Feight, Kenworth’s chief engineer waxed poetic about the door, like only an engineer can.

“This is an incredibly capable door,” he insisted. “Just the sound of it is beautiful.”

Certainly, the door provides a car-like closing experience – as much as the closing of a door can be characterized as an experience – thanks to a pressure relief valve that equalizes interior and exterior pressure.

The door is also triple-sealed against the elements and road noise, which surely contributed to the quiet ride I previously alluded to. □

impression the new truck left upon me. The steering was incredibly responsive and I was comfortable with its handling almost immediately.

In fact, the acclimatization period that typically occurs when setting out in an unfamiliar truck was practically non-existent. Everything about the Kenworth T680 was slick, from its exterior design to the attention to detail afforded its interior.

Little things like backlit gauges that will no doubt produce a pleasing appearance during nighttime driving and allow a driver to know at a glance whether a switch is turned on, to a seat that’s ultra-comfortable and automatically adjusts to the driver’s weight, make this truck a pleasure to operate in every possible way. I would

**MID-AMERICA REPORT**

# Highway Hero award winner saved woman from gun-wielding attacker

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – The winner of Goodyear’s 29th North America Highway Hero award literally put himself in the line of fire, rescuing a woman from a gun-wielding attacker.

Chosen from among four finalists, Mike Schiotis of Spring Hill, Tenn., was presented with the 2011 Goodyear North America Highway Hero Award during the Mid-America Trucking Show in Louisville, Ky. March 23.

Schiotis, who works for Seville, Ohio-based Panther Expedited Services, was driving to his destination in Pennsylvania on Nov. 1, when he saw a woman walking with a man close behind her.

Thinking they were injured, he slowed down and noticed that the man was pointing a gun at the woman.

Schiotis stopped his truck and the woman began pounding on his



**TRULY HEROIC:** An emotional Mike Schiotis recounted the traumatic incident at an awards dinner at the Mid-America Trucking Show.

door, screaming “Help me! He’s going to kill me!”

Schiotis jumped out of his truck

and positioned himself between the woman, who was bleeding from the head, and her assail-



**FINALIST:** Melville Farnell (left) of Shelburne, Ont. was a finalist for the Goodyear Highway Hero award.

ant. He helped the woman into his rig and decided to take her to the next truck stop.

The gun-carrying man got back in his car and began to follow Schiotis’ truck.

Schiotis pulled into a truck stop, but decided it was safer to continue down the highway.

Meanwhile, he notified the Pennsylvania State Highway Patrol, then used his CB radio to tell other truckers in the area about what was transpiring.

Another truck driver, who was behind Schiotis’ 18-wheeler, heard him and took action.

Together, they drove side-by-side, weaving back and forth to prevent the gunman from closing in on Schiotis’ tractor.

This gave troopers time to catch up with the man and apprehend him.

“We are grateful to Mike Schiotis for his quick thinking and brave actions,” said Phillip Kane, vice-president of Goodyear Commercial Tire Systems.

“He literally put himself ‘in the line of fire,’ and in all probability, prevented a tragedy from taking place. Mike’s decision to interject himself into this dangerous situation is a powerful example of the selflessness and professionalism exhibited by many of today’s professional truck drivers. Because of his action, a life was saved. For this, Mike Schiotis has earned the right to be called a hero.”

Schiotis and three other truck drivers were selected as finalists for the 2011 North America Highway Hero Award.

Other finalists included: John Crozman of Black Hawk, S.D., a driver for Long Haul Trucking in Albertville, Minn.; Melville Farnell of Shelburne, Ont., a driver for Tupling Farms Produce, also based in Shelburne; and John Neumeier of Russia, Ohio, a driver for Bohman Trucking, also based in Russia.

“Each of these finalists is a Highway Hero in his own right,” said Kane. “Each man rescued someone who was in life-threatening peril. We are honoured to recognize these selfless gentlemen for their acts of courage and compassion.”

For more information on Goodyear’s Highway Hero program, visit [www.goodyear.com](http://www.goodyear.com). □

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 8,846-11,793 kg. (19,501-26,000 lbs.).....  YES  NO  
 4,536-8,845 kg. (10,000-19,500 lbs.).....  YES  NO  
 Under 4,536 kg. (10,000 lbs.).....  YES  NO

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MID-AMERICA REPORT



**CANADIAN CONNECTION:** Western Star announced a new graphics package developed by B.C. company IRON/graphix.

## Western Star plays off movie theme to create impression at MATS

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Louisville ain't Hollywood, but Western Star showed up at the Mid-America Trucking Show with a display worthy of the red carpet treatment. The company showcased a 4900 FE package, which the company says rivals even the most fuel-efficient trucks on the market for fuel economy supremacy while retaining a classic-styled truck appearance.

The 4900 set-back axle with fuel-efficiency package, combined with the Detroit Diesel DD15 engine with SCR is proving to be the most fuel efficient Western Star ever, the com-

pany announced.

"The initial fuel results we're seeing clearly indicate that the 4900SB FE package equipped with the DD15 engine competes head-on with what are considered the most fuel efficient trucks on the road," said Guy Lemieux, marketing manager, highway segment, Western Star.

"The FE package not only enhances fuel economy, but provides our dry van, liquid bulk and dry bulk customers aerodynamic benefits without sacrificing many of the suspension and powertrain ratings they need."

Western Star also announced it's offering lightweight components for weight-sensitive applications, particularly liquid and dry bulk applications.

Lightweight options include: various sizes of DEF tanks; aluminum clutch housings; aluminum air

tanks; an aluminum fifth wheel; aluminum front drop castings; and air ride front suspensions with a tubular axle.

"This array of lightweight components, combined with standard Western Star features, truly offer our customers the best of everything, and we look forward to continuing to provide our customers added weight-saving options," said John Tomlinson, product manager, Western Star.

In addition to offering new efficiencies, Western Star also built upon its reputation as a stylish truck by offering a new custom graphics package.

The new package is available through Western Star's complete product line and consists of vinyl graphics in a variety of colours. Five design themes are offered, including: torch; smoke; flare; razor; and ripped.

"Western Star customers value the highly customizable nature of our trucks, and these new graphics packages not only bring that reputation to life in a very visual way, but also allow our customers to make their trucks truly one-of-a-kind," said Tomlinson.

The Torch design was featured at Western Star's booth at the Mid-America Trucking Show and there's a Canadian connection. Kelowna, B.C.-based IRON/graphix developed the graphics in partnership with Western Star. □

## Navistar launches new customer support program

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Customers choosing International ProStar+ trucks with MaxxForce engines will soon have improved support in the field. Navistar announced OnCommand Connection at the Mid-America Trucking Show, a new support program that provides truck operators with visibility to important vehicle information while the truck is on the road.

OnCommand Connection uses truck performance data to proactively identify and anticipate issues requiring maintenance, officials announced.

"We created OnCommand Connection to help convert unscheduled maintenance into scheduled maintenance so customers can keep trucks on the road," said Phyllis Cochran, president, Navistar Parts.

OnCommand Connection consists of a device mounted onto the vehicle, which detects engine events and service requirements and notifies the Navistar OnCommand Customer Support Center. The owner is then alerted to the problem and advised on where the required parts are available.

"OnCommand Connection will give our repair advocates a jump start by proactively detecting maintenance and service needs," said Vaughn Allen, vice-president, Navistar Global Service.

"Ultimately, this service will

lead to greater support and vehicle uptime for International customers."

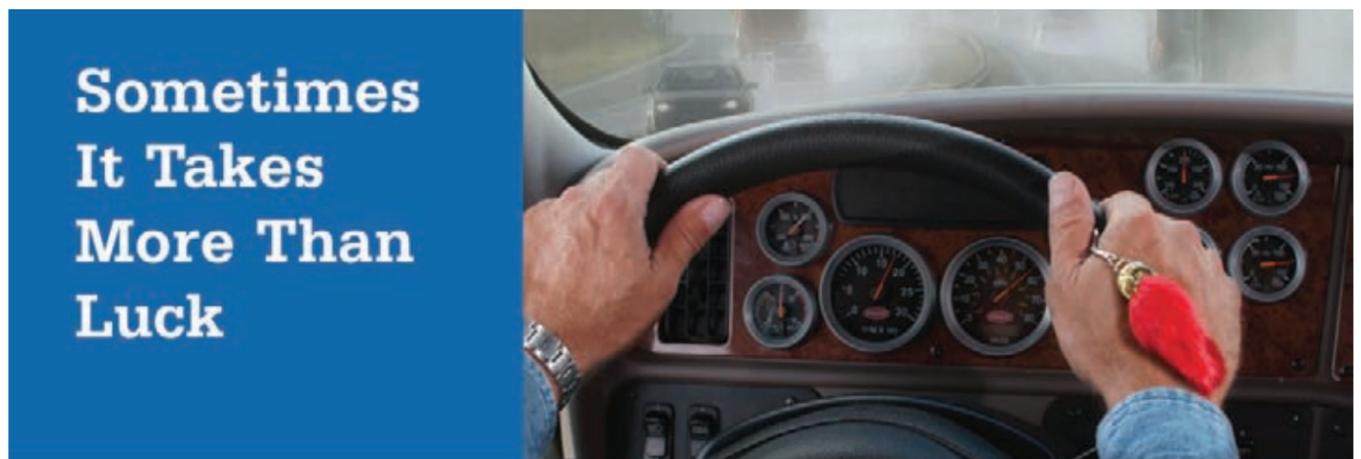
The new system is being tested by fleets and will be rolled out with 2013 model year International ProStar+s. □

## Hankook to supply tires to Freightliner

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** – Hankook Tire has been selected as the new original equipment tire manufacturer for the Freightliner Cascadia and Coronado model trucks by parent company Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA). The announcement was made at the Mid-America Trucking Show.

Under the terms of the agreement, Hankook will be supplying its AL11 steer and DL11 drive tires to Freightliner starting in May.

"An OE agreement like this one, with a leader such as DTNA, is yet another critical proof point of our strong brand, investment in R&D, and leading technology here in the United States," said Bryan Woo, vice-president of Hankook Tire's Global OE Division. "As our growth continues throughout 2012 and in the years ahead, we look forward to extending not only this relationship but also expanding further in the premium truck tire market." □



### Protect Your Fleet From Rollovers

Protect your fleet from costly and damaging rollovers with the new Haldex Trailer Rollover Stability System (TRS). The trailer-based TRS reduces the potential for combination vehicle rollovers by constantly monitoring the trailer's speed and lateral force 100 times per second. If a rollover is imminent, the TRS applies the trailer brakes to slow and stabilize the tractor/trailer. Controlling the potential for rollovers at the trailer is the most effective and economical choice.

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MID-AMERICA REPORT

# Michelin releases 'super regional' drive tire; new X One retread

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Michelin has come out with a new drive tire for what it describes as “super regional” applications where fuel economy is as important as longevity and durability.



**'SUPER' REGIONAL:** Michelin's new X Multi Energy D drive tire is coming to Canada this month.

The Michelin X Multi Energy D drive tire was designed for applications involving highway driving with frequent inner city deliveries. It is SmartWay-verified and created to reflect the trend towards shorter routes.

“This super regional application is the result of the continued trend to shorter routes in the trucking industry,” said Ted Becker, vice-president of marketing for Michelin Americas Truck Tires. “The application is demanding. Our customers are looking for the fuel efficiency of a linehaul product with the mileage and traction of a regional product. We deliver both to give our customers the ad-

vantage in this emerging industry segment.”

The X Multi Energy D is especially well suited for fleets that run about 100,000 miles per year and often within a 500-mile radius, Michelin officials said at the Mid-America Trucking Show. The

tire employs Michelin's Matrix Siping Technology for improved traction and even wear. The new tire will be available in Canada beginning in April.

Also new from Michelin is an X One XDN2 Pre-Mold retread for fleets and owner/operators using wide-base single tires. The retread is available immediately and comes with the company's Michelin on Michelin Guarantee, promising 30% more mileage than competitive retreads. The program also guarantees a second X One trailer retread on a Michelin casing.

“X One wide single tires continue to offer huge benefits to the trucking industry,” said Becker. “The Michelin X One XDN2 retread combined with the weight and fuel savings of the Michelin X One casing offers even better grip and fuel efficiency.”

The X One XDN2 retread features an all-weather drive tread design, delivering both traction and mileage, the company says. X One wide-base singles have proven to deliver fuel savings of up to 10%. □



**LONGER LASTING:** The new Airide Integrative Air-Damping System, offered by Firestone Industrial, is designed to improve ride and last longer.

## Firestone offers lightweight, long lasting air spring

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Firestone Industrial Products has launched a new air spring with integrated air-damping system, which the company says is lighter weight and longer lasting than traditional air springs while also providing a smoother ride and eliminating the need to dispose of hydraulic fluid.

The Firestone Airide Integrative Air-Damping System was showcased at the Mid-America Trucking Show, after being tested in Freightliner and Paccar vehicles, Graham Brookes, division manager, technology with Firestone Industrial Products said in an interview with *Truck West*.

He said the new air spring was designed with the driver in mind and built with new materials that better dampen road inputs into the cab.

“We changed a lot of the materials and lowered the stress on some of the elements within the construction,” Brookes said. The materials used to create the Firestone Airide Integrative Air-Damping System are more resistant to heat, which is important since today's aerodynamic cabs deflect air flow away from components while emissions reducing technologies create a hotter environment for components.

By improving the materials, Brookes said the new air spring now lasts twice as long as traditional designs. It was tested to 50 million cycles, while the industry norm is one million, Brookes said, and it was still going strong when testing was halted.

“We thought 50 million was a good achievement and it still wasn't completely worn out,” he said.

The weight savings translate to about 2.5-3.5 lbs per module, he added, since the integrated design does away with the mounting hardware required for separate hydraulic dampers. Initially available on Freightliner and Paccar trucks, the new system will come at a slight cost premium, Brookes admitted, but with its long life and weight savings he said the cost will be negated. □

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**FLEET NEWS**

# Yanke Group celebrates its first three million miler

**SASKATOON, Sask.** – Yanke Group has announced professional transport operator Wes Nelson has become the first ever driver to rack up three million miles with the company.

Nelson was recognized at Yanke's recent Key Business Indicators ceremonies and presented with a \$6,000 award, a custom decal, a model truck mount and jacket crests as well as a Super Bowl-inspired ring.

Yanke crunched some numbers and figured that Nelson has made the equivalent of: 120.47 trips around the world; 12.56 trips to the moon; or 642.03 trips from Victoria, B.C. to St. John's, Nfld. Nelson joined Yanke Group in 1988.

"The ability to attain three million miles is quite the achievement and with Wes being the first PTO to achieve these miles, it is a proud moment in Yanke's his-



**A NEW MILESTONE:** Pictured from L-R: Bryan Richards (vice-president), Wes Nelson, Russel Marcoux (president and CEO), Craig Bailey (vice-president).

tory," said Russel Marcoux, CEO and president of Yanke Group. "It shows the dedication of Yanke's

professional transport operators and their continued commitment to master their craft." □

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## Bison expands B.C. presence with terminal purchase

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – Bison Transport has acquired a "turn-key" trucking terminal in Langley, B.C., the company announced. The centrally-located 20,310 sq.-ft. facility is located on 6.15 acres in the northwest Langley industrial area and adjoins Port Kells and Surrey. The size and nature of the purchase will see Bison share the facility with another trucking operation for at least the first 12 months, with room for other potential tenancy arrangements ongoing, the company said.

"This purchase represents a leap forward in Bison's presence in the B.C. region and most importantly, a strong base by which to better serve and grow with our clients, as well as our driving and non-driving staff alike," says Trevor Fridfinnson, Bison's vice-president of western operations.

The acquisition includes a two-storey 12,000 sq.-ft. office building, five trailer service bays and a cross-dock bay. □

## Trimac inks deal to haul natural gas

**CALGARY, Alta.** – Trimac Transportation has entered into a new contract to haul a "significant" new volume of NGLs (Natural Gas Liquids) on behalf of Provident Energy in northeastern B.C., the company announced. Trimac has an existing relationship with Provident that dates back to August 2003. The hauling will be operated out of Trimac's Dawson Creek, B.C. facility and is expected to commence in the second quarter of 2012 and run through to March 2014.

"The addition of the new hauling for Provident further solidifies Trimac's presence in British Columbia. I am pleased to announce this new opportunity with a company that is as well-established and respected as Provident," said Ed Malysa, Trimac's President and COO. "This opportunity will strengthen our capabilities to service our oil and gas customers in northeastern British Columbia."

The contract is expected to generate \$16 million in revenue over the term of the agreement. □

## Atlas Van Lines celebrates drivers

**EVANSVILLE, Ind.** – Atlas Van Lines will be hosting its annual driver appreciation event, BRAVO (Boosting Recognition of Atlas Van Operators), from April 16-20.

BRAVO activities will be taking place at participating Atlas agencies throughout Canada and the US, including catered lunches and free truck washes. Organizers say van operators from other carriers are also invited to attend BRAVO events to discuss possible career opportunities. This year marks Atlas's 25th driver appreciation event and the second installation of BRAVO week.

For Canadian activities, visit [www.atlasvanlines.com/bravo](http://www.atlasvanlines.com/bravo). □

# HOW DO YOU SPELL TIRES WITH HIGH VALUE?

## H-A-N-K-O-O-K

**In the age of unlimited competition, we can agree that having the right parts is the first step in providing quality services. Therefore, many owner-operators and fleet managers turn to well-recognized brands that provide high quality products with high price tags. In the tire industry, it is no different. Many companies purchase tires manufactured by the top three companies despite high prices without considering purchasing other brands, simply because of the perception that the other brands are manufactured by overseas companies with low technology to make them cheap. Certainly, the perception is justifiable to some brands, but not to Hankook. Here is why:**

**Fact : Hankook Tire is a global company, not an overseas company.**

Maybe you did not know this, but Hankook Tire is one of the largest tire manufacturers in the world. In fact, Hankook Tire is the 7th largest tire manufacturer in the world with one of the fastest growth rates in the industry\*. With great success and satisfied customers all around the world, the company has grown and transformed itself over the years. Hankook Tire now has more than 20 offices globally, multiple state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and several technical centres on every major continent including in the U.S., Germany, Korea, Japan and China. With a global network that stretches from Seoul to Toronto to Moscow, it is true that Hankook is a global company, not an off-shore tire company. Hankook products are premium imports developed to exceed the expectations of consumers.

\* Modern Tire Dealer, 2008

**Fact : Hankook Tires are produced with innovative technology.**

Grouped with energetic, smart and consumer-oriented engineers, Hankook Tire continuously re-invests approximately 5% of its revenue into Research and Development. At the Akron Technical Center of Ohio, energetic and dedicated engineers develop tires that reflect the weather, road and drivers of North America. The dedication and effort in advancing tires has been noticed from several highly respected organizations.

First, Hankook Tire is the original equipment tire supplier to Daimler Truck North America on drive and steer positions. The tires meet and exceed the requirements of the highly respected company and continue to satisfy drivers and fleets in North America. Secondly, Hankook Tire has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and received EPA SmartWay certification on three truck and bus tires for reduced rolling resistance that creates a smaller carbon footprint. The recently launched AL07+ steer tire, top-seller Z35a drive tire and advanced TL01 trailer tire provide reduced rolling resistance of 3% or more to meet SmartWay standards. The certified Hankook tires provide improved fuel economy and reduced costs to drivers and fleet managers.

In addition, Hankook focuses on improving fuel efficiency and lowering the rolling resistance of current and future products with an annual investment of \$19 million on R&D to make more environmentally-friendly products that reduce the operating costs of O-Os and fleets. Certainly, you will hear about additional Hankook products being certified for the SmartWay Program.

**Fact : Hankook Tires provide tremendous value to the consumer.**

You now know the Hankook products are made by a global company that

focuses on providing innovative products that are high in quality. And the company's effort has been recognized and certified. But did you know the tires provide excellent value to consumers? Hankook tires are very cost effective in comparison with comparable quality products and have been well-recognized for their value. Call your local dealer today to find out how much you can save with Hankook products and how they can deliver better value. The news you hear about the price, quality and value of Hankook Tires will be some of the best news you will hear in 2012.

**Fact : Hankook medium truck tires are available at your local dealer.**

With thousands of dealers across Canada, Hankook truck and bus tires are available at your local dealer to help you earn more value for your purchase. From the ports of Vancouver to the lumber mills in the Maritimes, the dealers are proud to sell Hankook products and they are widely available. In addition, the new large distribution centre in Ontario can service Ontario fleets directly and help you to reduce costs, which will help your fleet in the current economic downturn. For further information, please contact Hankook Tire Canada Corp., at 1 800 843 7709.

**So, how do you spell tires with high value? H-A-N-K-O-O-K**



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OPINION

# Why seniors should talk to their bank

We all know Canadian banks report huge profits every year. Even during that nasty recession a few years ago, our banks flew through it mostly unscathed. And they just keep rolling along. In fact, in the first quarter of this year alone most of them reported a billion (note the B) dollars in profit.

I've always reasoned that a good portion of the banks profits can be attributed to the outlandish service fees we are forced to pay. I know I'm dinged with at least \$20 in fees every month, and I'm sure that's not unusual. So when I give you this little bit of advice, don't feel guilty about taking advantage of it. If you're over 60 and bank at Toronto Dominion or CIBC, there could be a lot of cash sitting on the table, that by rights is yours.

If you fit into this age demographic and are still paying full pop on these nasty service charges, make a point of calling or dropping by your branch. It's a little known fact, but most banks offer either free or substantial discounts on their service fees for Canadian seniors over 60. Problem is, most banks don't volunteer this information.

Once you turn 60 you probably won't see any changes to your statement and unless you make the inquiry, don't assume it will automatically be extended to you.

What's even better, they may rebate you your fees retroactive to you turning 60. My brother in-law who is 67 found out about this little deal

## Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



few months ago. He made the call, and received an \$1,100 dollar credit (seven years of service charges).

After hearing of his windfall, another sister who is turning 62 made the phone call and received over \$200 in her pocket (two years of service charges) while another brother-in-law who deals with RBC started receiving a 20% discount automatically when he turned 60 (RBC goes to the head of the class, they were the only bank to automatically give this discount without being prodded).

Unfortunately, during the conversation my sister had with her bank manager, she was told that the bank is going to stop giving these types of retroactive refunds.

No wonder. Over \$1,300 was paid out...and that's just between two people! I suppose there's always the chance that my family is the exception, and the vast majority of Canadians over 60 are benefiting from free or discounted service fees, but I doubt it. E-mail me and let me know how you made out. I'm planning on a follow-up column next month. □

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

PEOPLE

# CTA elects Bison's Don Streuber as chairman

OTTAWA, Ont. – The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) has elected Bison Transport CEO Don Streuber as its new chair.

As incoming chairman, Streuber says he will continue the work of those who preceded him in pursuing programs and policies which demonstrate integrity within the industry and which confirm safety, environmental stewardship and respect for professional truck drivers and other industry employees as core values of the alliance.

“CTA has pursued an aggressive agenda in recent years aimed at improving compliance and reducing the industry's carbon footprint,” he says. “We have adopted these as core values at Bison Transport and I believe they serve the entire industry well. As the pre-eminent voice of the trucking industry in Canada, I strongly believe that CTA should continue on this path. It is our responsibility to the communities we live in. We must lead in this area.”

Streuber says he also believes that the single most important challenge the industry faces going forward is a chronic shortage of qualified drivers.

As a member of the CTA Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage, Streuber says there is no quick fix to the problem and carriers will have to be innovative. But, “at the core of the issue will be to promote respect and regard for professional drivers within all our companies and within the public domain.”

With Bison as a member of most of the provincial trucking associations, Streuber also noted that, “strong provincial associations make for a strong CTA. Part of our success has been in finding synergies between the associations; something that will become even more important in the years ahead.”

The CTA also filled other officer positions, including: Mark Seymour, Kriska Transportation, first vice-chair; Gene Orlick, Orlicks Transport, second vice-chair; Scott Smith, J.D. Smith and Sons, treasurer; and Ed Malysa, Trimac Transportation, secretary.

Serving as at-large members of the executive committee are: Gord Peddle, Altantica Diversified Transportation Systems; Jean-Claude Fortin, J.E. Fortin; Gord Smith, Manitoulin Transport; and Murray Scadeng, Tri-

ton Transport.

CTA president and CEO David Bradley also serves as an officer on the board. □

Kinedyne has bolstered its management team with three additions, including **Ralph Abato**, a longtime industry veteran. Abato will fill the newly-created position of vice-president, strategic initiatives for the company. Also joining Kinedyne is **Paul Wolford**, who was named director of engineered solutions, overseeing the Canadian and US markets. Also joining Kinedyne is **Mark Arnold**, formerly of Conway Freight and FedEx Freight. He'll work with management to seek operational efficiencies through detailed analysis, will implement training programs and incorporate customer feedback into the company's operations.

Trailer Wizards has named **Craig McConnell** vice-president of its B.C. region. McConnell joins Trailer Wizards from the trucking industry, where he spent 18 years in the transportation business. Most recently, he worked for Quik X Group, where he served as the general manager of the truckload division and helped launch the QX Logistics Division in western Canada.

He'll be charged with increasing sales and efficiency in Trailer Wizards' B.C. operations.

The Manitoba Trucking Association has elected **Norm Blagden** of Bison Transport as its new president. First vice-president for the 2012/2013 term will be **Greg Arndt** of Jade Transport, while **Gary Arnold** of Arnold Bros. Transport will serve as second vice-president.

**Tom Payne** of Payne Transportation will assume the role of past president, the association announced following its 80th annual general meeting. Executive committee members at large include: **John Erik Albrechtsen**, Paul's Hauling; **Paul Hildebrand**, YRC Reimer; and **Doug Witt**, Gardewine North. □

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NEW PRODUCTS



Indel B North America has released its second-generation high-output **battery-powered no-idle system**, dubbed the Sleeping Well Arctic Plus. The company claims there are more than 30 upgrades to the new system. Less electrical components result in a 30% reduction in power consumption, resulting in longer run time for overnight driver comfort, the company announced. Also new is a driver display with on-board diagnostics and a remote control. The new unit is smaller and more compact for easier installation on most truck sleeper units. For info, visit [www.sleepingwell-ac.com](http://www.sleepingwell-ac.com).

Kingtec Canada has come out with a new line of **diesel-powered refrigeration units** for 18- to 30-ft. straight trucks. The newest Reefervan/Reefertuck units are powered by Kubota engines producing 18,000-30,000 BTUs of cooling power. They'll be on display at Truck World this month. Suitable applications include small urban delivery vans and larger commercial cube vans as well as larger straight trucks and mid-sized trailers and containers. For more information, call 905-362-2112.

Ontario-based Ingersoll Axles has introduced a new **suspension**



line for the heavy-duty trucking industry. The Ingersoll Suspension System (ISS) has been designed for durability, strength and customization, the company announced, with the result being a suspension designed for the trailer it's intended for. Features include: an optimum I-beam trailing beam design, a fully-wrapped axle connection, industry-standard parts and strong customer support, the company announced. Ingersoll traditionally offered only axles, and now boasts of a one-stop shop for anyone wishing to purchase an Ingersoll axle along with one of its 15 new suspension designs. For info, visit [www.ingersollaxles.com](http://www.ingersollaxles.com) or call 800-663-AXLES.

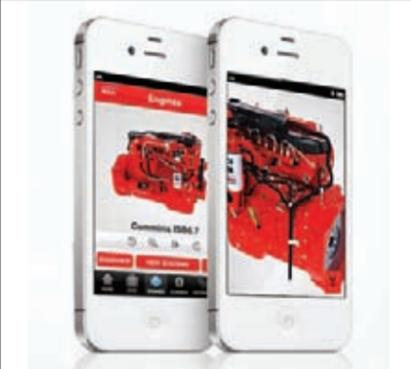
Reyco Granning has added to its line of fixed axle air-ride **trailer suspensions** with the introduction of its new RideMaster family. The RideMaster family allows customers to spec' suspensions for any load from 20,000- to 30,000-lbs, the company announced. They're designed for heavy-duty, fixed-axle applications where durability and long service life are key, the company announced. For details, visit [www.reycogranning.com](http://www.reycogranning.com).



Aerofficient has come out with a new **slider fairing for trailers**, which the company says expands or contracts when the trailer's axles are moved, increasing fuel savings by 80% compared to fixed trailer fairings. The new system eliminates the gap between the trailing edge of the fairing and the front tire when a trailer's tandems are set rearward of their maximum forward position, the company explains. The Aerofficient Slider is affixed to the trailer's sliding axles and moves with the axles. No driver involvement is required to adjust the fairing, according to the company. For more information, visit [www.aerofficient.com](http://www.aerofficient.com).



Yokohama has debuted a **new drive tire**, the 709ZL, available in 295/75R22.5 and 11R22.5 sizes. The tire incorporates Yokohama's Zenvironment technology, combining the latest improvements in casing design, rubber compounding and tread design, the company announced. The tire was showcased at the Mid-America Trucking Show and will be rolled out later this year. For more info, visit [www.yokohamatire.com](http://www.yokohamatire.com).



Cummins has developed a **3D engine app** for smartphones that allows users to navigate through engine sub-systems, zoom in and rotate around popular Cummins engines. The app also provides career opportunities for its US operations, but Canadian job postings aren't presently included. Cummins says the virtual engine is the first of its kind. You can download it via the Apple App Store and Android Marketplace or at <http://cumminscaresapp.com>.

ALK Technologies has introduced a new version of its **CoPilot Truck truck-specific GPS navigation app** for professional drivers. The new version brings updated truck-specific, turn-by-turn guidance and routing technology to iPhones, iPads, Android-powered devices as well as laptops and Windows Mobile rugged devices, the company announced. For details, visit [www.copilotlive.com/truck](http://www.copilotlive.com/truck). □

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OEM/DEALER NEWS

# Glasvan introduces industry to Autocar Xspotter shunt trucks

By James Menzies

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – Fleet operators and equipment aficionados got their first up-close look at Autocar’s Xspotter terminal tractor April 3, at a customer event hosted by dealer Glasvan Great Dane.

Glasvan had several units on display, which represent the first Autocar shunt trucks built for the Ontario market. A longtime shunt truck dealer, Glasvan announced a deal with Autocar late last year to become its first Ontario dis-

tributor. Autocar has a storied history as a heavy vehicle manufacturer, but has been producing terminal tractors for only the past four years or so.

George Cobham Jr., vice-president of sales and marketing with Glasvan, said his company has worked closely with Autocar to develop a Canadian spec’.

“We spent a lot of time working directly with Autocar’s engineer,” he told *Truck West* in an interview at the event. “It took many months

of going back and forth and many conference calls. We needed to incorporate our Canadian harsh climate package, our safety package and our driver comfort package, which included about 25-30 items. They’d done a lot of those items before, but not all together on one truck, so they had to get this all done for us to meet the Glasvan spec’.”

The end result is a truck that’s “spec’d for what our customers are used to and for the Canadian environment,” Cobham added.

Glasvan has already sold about four units and Cobham said customer are showing interest in the new offering.

“We’re getting lots of enquiries about it,” he said. “People have heard the name, but they’ve never seen one before. Hopefully this event will fill in a lot of those blanks. We have sold equipment and we have a lot coming in for stock.”

The Xspotter offers a roomy cab, which a 6-ft. tall operator can enter without bending thanks to an oversized door. It also boasts excellent forward visibility, with a windshield Cobham said is 30-35% larger than industry norms and a set-forward cab that allows for improved visibility of the ground directly in front of the unit.

“It’s all about the cab,” Cobham said of the new yard tractor. “The comment that’s made by opera-

tors is that this truck was designed by somebody who drives a shunt truck.”

The cab is constructed by a company that supplies cabs to John Deere, and it goes through a 15-step e-coat paint process.

“In the past, after a few years a shunt truck was looking rough and rusty,” Cobham says. “This should keep the rust away and keep the equipment looking good. When an operator gets into a truck and the thing is covered in rust, he’s not going to treat the truck as well as if it looks good.”

DoT models come with a 200-hp Cummins ISB-10 engine while off-road versions are powered by a Cummins QSB engine. They engines produce 520 lb.-ft. of torque and are matched with a heavy-duty spec’ Allison transmission. The Xspotter cab is supported by an air-ride suspension with standard air-ride seat for a smooth ride.

The trucks have been equipped with a 44,000 BTU heater for winter operations and the cab features footwell vents to provide lower body warmth. Rear-facing LED lights provide excellent visibility during nighttime operations, the company says, and operators can check fluid levels from the ground without tilting the cab.

Cobham said the industry’s newest yard tractor is priced competitively with existing vehicles and they’re available now for sale or lease. □



**MAXIM’S LOSS, FOOD BANK’S GAIN:** Harry Dornn (right), marketing director with Maxim Truck and Trailer, presents David Northcott, executive director of the Winnipeg Harvest food bank, with a cheque good for 30,000 lbs of food.

## Maxim and friends donate 30,000 lbs of food

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Maxim Truck and Trailer has donated enough money to buy 30,000 lbs of food to a Winnipeg area food bank after completing its inaugural weight loss challenge: the Maxim 500 Pound Challenge.

The company recently presented the cheque to Winnipeg Harvest, Manitoba’s largest food bank. Additional donations were made to food banks in Toronto, Regina, Carnduff, Sask., Edmonton, and Killarney, Man. The donations are the result of Maxim’s inaugural Maxim 500 Pound Challenge, a weight loss challenge created for Maxim employees, customers, suppliers, partners, and friends. The challenge ran from Jan. 7 to Feb. 27, with teams from across western Canada weighing in weekly. For every pound lost during the challenge, Maxim is donating to a food bank in the team’s community.

“We were glad to help out. We

all shed a few pounds to put a few pounds of food on the tables of people who need it more than we do,” said Doug Melnychuk, Maxim 500 Pound Challenge team captain from Ken Palson Transport in Winnipeg.

Organizers say the idea for the Maxim 500 Pound Challenge came from the desire to highlight the benefits of the MaxxForce line of engines from International Trucks.

“We started the Maxim 500 Pound Challenge to highlight the weight advantage of the MaxxForce engine,” said Harry Dornn, marketing director at Maxim. “We ended up with more than 1,200 lbs lost by nearly 200 participants – and were able to donate more than 30,000 lbs of food to food banks across Canada. We want to say a very special thank you to all our employees, customers, and suppliers who helped create healthier workplaces and give back to their communities.” □

## Hino offering truck financing through Roynat

**MISSISSAUGA, Ont.** – Hino Motors Canada has partnered with Roynat Lease Finance to provide truck leasing and financing solutions, the company announced.

Roynat is a division of Scotiabank, and will be able to provide Hino customers across Canada with low-rate financing options on most new Hino truck models, according to the company.

“Roynat is a great fit for Hino because of its nationwide presence with representatives in every province,” said Eric Smith, vice-president, sales and marketing for Hino Canada. “Roynat Lease Finance offers industry leading hands-on service that can be tailored to the customer’s unique requirements.” □

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

# Taxes can be so taxing

By Edo van Belkom

**The Story So Far...**

*Mark visits his post-office box and finds another letter from the Canada Revenue Agency. He's been receiving more and more of these in the mail, but has ignored them all. He's had bad experiences in the past and didn't want to hear any bad news. Reluctantly he opens the letter and finds the government has done an audit and he owes more than \$20,000 in back taxes.*

Mark closed up his PO Box and put in a call to his accountant, Dan McCluskey, a certified general accountant who had been doing Mark's taxes out of his home office for years.

"Hello?"

"Hey, this is Mark."

"Mark who?"

"Mark, the truck driver."

"Oh, hey, Dalton how's it going?"

"Terrible. I just found out the government reassessed my taxes for the past five years and says I owe \$20,000 and change in back taxes."

There was a pause. "You haven't dealt with that yet?"

"What's that supposed to mean? You know about this?"

"Of course. They called me months ago and I told them that I prepared your taxes according to the information you supplied me. The guy on the phone told me the returns were actually very well prepared. I don't understand, they should have been done with you ages ago."

Mark sighed, knowing full well that it was his own fault it had come to this. "I've been getting their letters for a while."

"And you ignored them?"

"Not really. I uh...I didn't open them."

Dan groaned. "Then of course they audited you. You could have taken care of this months ago if you'd just worked with them and explained your situation. If you had done that, then probably nothing would have happened. But now they've done the audit, they've done all that work and they're expecting to get paid. You're going to have to prove everything now."

"Everything?"

"Every expense. Every receipt."

"So I'm screwed?"

Dan laughed, which was probably easy for him to do because he wasn't the one on the hot seat. "You shouldn't be," he said. "It is a lot of money, so they must

have disallowed a lot of your expense claims. It'll probably take a long time to go through everything, but as long as you can prove you incurred every one of your expenses, you'll be fine. I mean, you do have your tax records for the past five years safely stored somewhere, right?"

"Yeah, I do," Mark said, feeling a weight come off his shoulders. "Bud gave me a few feet of shelf space in a back room at his office. There's probably more than five years of records there."

"Then you should be fine." A pause, then: "Why on earth wouldn't you open the letters?"

"I didn't want to."

"The government doesn't go away if you act like they're not there, you know."

"I know. It's just...I haven't had much luck with the government and taxes in the past."

"And your luck continues it seems."

Mark sighed. "What do I have to do?"

"Set up a meeting with the adjuster and show him all your records. They're all in order so you shouldn't have a problem."

"You really think so?"

"Yes, unless you lied to me."

Mark thought about that. Like most people he might have fudged his numbers a bit over the years, but nothing more than a few dollars here or there. "No."

"Then you'll be fine."

"I thought maybe you could be there with me."

"You don't need me. As long as you have your records you'll be all right."

Mark hung up the phone and called the number in Ottawa that was on the letter.

"Hello?"

"Hi, this is Mark Dalton calling?"

"Who?"

"Mark Dalton. You've been sending me letters for the past few months."

"Oh yes, that Mark Dalton. I was afraid you might be dead."

"No, very much alive."

"The Government of Canada is very happy to hear that."

"That's good to know," Mark said. They talked for a short while longer to arrange a time and place where they could meet and sort this whole mess out.

Mark suggested a coffee shop.

"Well," the man said. "I was hoping for your home, perhaps your home office where you keep all of your records."



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

Mark explained he basically lives out of his truck and there was no home office, or even a home for that matter.

The agent laughed. "That was one of the problems we had with your return," he said. "Your expense claims in some categories were extremely high, as if you were living out of your truck...which we found highly improbable."

"But I do live out of my truck."

"Of course you do."

After a few more times back and forth the agent finally said, "Alright, Mr. Dalton why don't you just bring your records to my office? We'll have our meeting here." Mark agreed.

"Good. See you then, Mr. Dalton."

"Should I bring my chequebook?" Mark asked, but by then the man on the other end had hung up.

One more phone call to make.

He dialed up Bud.

"Hello?"

"Hi Bud it's me, Mark."

"Mark who?"

"A marked man," Mark said. "The government's got me in its sights and they're about to pull the trigger."

"What's going on?" Bud wanted to know. Mark explained – giving Bud plenty of time to laugh when he told him he hadn't opened the government's letters for months – then asked about records he had stored in Bud's back room. "They're still there, right?" Bud hesitated, then said: "They should be."

"What do you mean, 'Should be'?"

"Uh, I haven't been back there in a while."

"Yeah, but the stuff should be there, right?"

"We did some remodeling here a couple months ago. I just hope no one moved your stuff into another room or..."

"Or what?"

"Or...threw it out."

"You did not just say that!"

Bud began to explain but Mark cut him off.

"I'm on my way over," he said and hung up the phone.

Mark didn't break any speed limits getting to Bud's office, but he might have ran a few red lights...or at least amber lights on their way to being red.

By the time he got to Bud's, Bud was in the back room that normally stored Mark's tax records. There were boxes all over the place, but none of them were open and tax records – Mark's or anyone else's – were nowhere to be seen.

"You don't have a clue where they are, do you?" Mark said, his voice as flat as a road-ravaged retreat.

"They have to be here somewhere."

"You've lost them, haven't you?" Mark was surprised at how flat and defeated his voice sounded.

Bud kept digging through the scattered papers. "They're not lost until I stop looking for them." Mark sat down on a couple of piled boxes and said, "Twenty grand... and that's just for starters. They're still looking into my GST filings. You know how much GST I get back each month on my truck payments?"

"I've got an idea."

"Well times that by 12 and then by five..."

"Don't worry. I know your records are here and I'm not going to stop looking until I find them." But Mark wasn't listening any more. "Maybe if I go somewhere far away for a while...like South America. You got any loads coming up to Brazil, or maybe Argentina."

"I'm still looking," Bud said. □

– Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Taxes can be so taxing.

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



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TSQ

**BRADFORD, Ont.** – In the old days of long-haul trucking – some would say the “good” old days – solitude was part of the job description, with only the camaraderie of fellow CB radio users to keep drivers company until the next truck stop pay phone. Cell phones changed all that, and with smartphones and in-cab laptops fast becoming the norm, on-road Internet access is allowing truckers to stay connected like never before.

With news, weather and road reports available at the touch of a button, not to mention the ability to keep in touch with family and friends via outlets like e-mail, Facebook and Skype, the Internet is helping to reshape and modernize the job of professional driver in new and interesting ways. To find out how drivers are making use of the technology on the road – if at all – we went to the Husky Truck Stop in Bradford, Ont.

**Stephen Taylor**, an owner/operator with Earl Hardy Trucking out of Woodstock, Ont., uses his smartphone



**Truck Stop Question** *How do you use the Internet when you're on the road?*  
ADAM LEDLOW



**Stephen Taylor**

to access the latest news and weather, but admits he's more likely to use the phone for calling dispatch than surfing the Net.

“I just use the phone part of it. I have an American plan so it's a lot cheaper to use it for now. I guess if you're sit-

ting still and you have time to type (I would use the Internet more),” he says.



**Rob Archibald**

**Rob Archibald**, a recently graduated driver from Barrie, Ont., says that, once hired, he'll likely only use the In-

ternet for GPS while on the road and for entertainment in the evenings, but says he doesn't find the value in social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

“I don't even touch that stuff,” he says. “I don't need to tell people every five minutes that I'm blowing my nose or that I'm reading such-and-such book. It's just not me.”



**Kurt Ackerman**

**Kurt Ackerman**, a driver with Barrie, Ont.-based Classic Towing, says he uses the Internet for maps on the road and occasionally calls for a tow truck are e-mailed or texted to drivers' phones. Ackerman also uses Facebook, not just to keep in touch with family, but also to connect with other tow truck drivers.

“I belong to a towing and recovery group (on Facebook) and we are forever messaging each other – different techniques and incidents and different stuff we tow, sending each other pictures.”

Ackerman also notes that some companies are using the Internet as a selling point to get new drivers, advertising that drivers can receive e-mails in their trucks from family.



**John Peters**

**John Peters**, a driver with Neil Transport out of Winnipeg, Man., doesn't use the Internet at all on the road – though he says he'd like to.

“I would love to have a laptop in my truck, but I find it too expensive, so I keep it simple,” he says. “When I'm home, my wife always tells me that I am on the computer way too much. Because I surf right before I leave the house, I look over my trip – where I am going what I am doing. If I was able to have something like that in the truck – if the company would help pay for it – I would use it, absolutely.”

**Gerry Costigan**, a driver with South Simcoe Freight out of Bradford, Ont., says he doesn't use the Internet, period – whether at home or on the road.

“Fifty years old, I've never touched a mouse,” he says. “I have a wind-up alarm clock. I've got a cell phone, but I don't even know how to text. It's a choice I've made.” □

– Do you have a topic idea for the Truck Stop Question? Contact Adam Ledlow on Twitter at [Twitter.com/adamledlow](https://twitter.com/adamledlow) or by e-mail at [adam@transportationmedia.ca](mailto:adam@transportationmedia.ca) and we may feature your question in an upcoming issue of Truck West.



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