

# TRUCK WEST

July 2012 Volume 23, Issue 7

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

## Looking to the future

*B.C. conference looks at what 'Gateway' means to trucking industry*

By Jim Bray

**SURREY, B.C.** – Canada's west coast is a definite beehive of activity as the region gears up for what's thought to be the coming boom in global trade. And it means a lot of changes are happening, many of which will affect the trucking industry directly.

It all has to do with the Asia-Pacific Gateway, an amalgam of land-and-sea-based facilities designed to get Canada's imports and exports in and out of the True North Strong and Free as smoothly as possible. And it doesn't take a lot of rubbernecking to see the action unfolding; there are infrastructure projects galore all over the Lower Mainland as road and rail routes and various port facilities are being upgraded and expanded.

Not only that, and perhaps not as visible, but new methodologies are being planned and/or implemented to best exploit all the new business. And a lot of folks are concerned about how they can help ensure all this development is managed to benefit everyone with a vested interest in it.

That's one of the reasons why the B.C. Trucking Association hosted its 'Asia-Pacific Gateway Growth:

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**REASON TO CELEBRATE:** Carl Rosenau sets a flame to the AMTA's mortgage on its Calgary Centre of Excellence. New AMTA president Dan Duckering (right) said it's time to focus on a similar facility in Edmonton.

## AMTA holds mortgage burning ceremony at annual meeting

Association changes venues, but remains focused on key industry issues

By Jim Bray

**BANFF, Alta.** – Maybe they didn't want to be accused of being "over the hill."

That's because, for 2012, the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) kicked its Annual Man-

agement Conference down the hill, from previous years' higher altitude Rimrock Resort venue to the Fairmont Banff Springs, the famous, world-class destination that also happens to be quite a bit more up-market than the Rimrock.

Not that the Rimrock was a shack, or the years there a failure, but according to AMTA executive director Don Wilson, it was time for a change – even though it was pricier and some compromises had to be made to pull it off.

"My understanding was (attendance) was a little bit less than last year," said Wilson, noting that the 2012 nose count was about 150,

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## The Cascadia evolves

Ten mpg no longer out of reach, Daimler chief says **Page 30**



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- **But does it work?:** A new study shows the true fuel-saving potential of certain trailer technologies. **Page 16**
- **Becoming a best fleet:** What's it take to become a best fleet to drive for? Thanks to the popular competition, there's now a road map on how to get there. **Page 22**
- **Big believers:** Some trucking execs are investing personally in the products that most impress them. **Page 24**
- **Road test:** We take the Kenworth T440 with ISL G natural gas engine for a drive. Was it up to the task? **Page 31**

### Mark Dalton O/O



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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

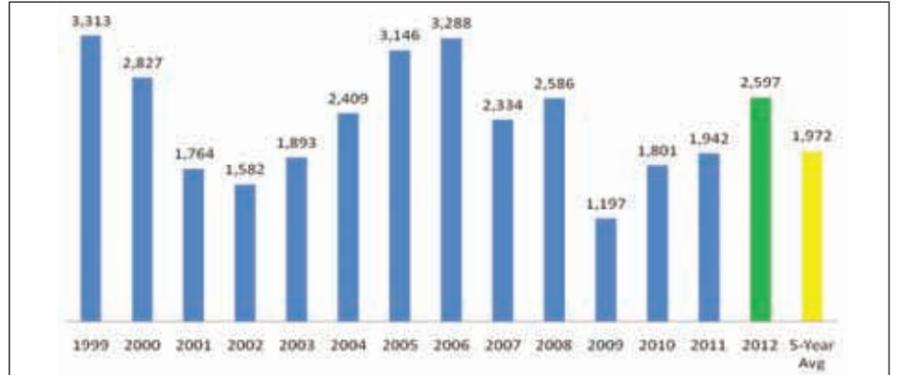
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Every Class 8 truck manufacturer increased its sales this April compared to the previous year, with Navistar being the only exception. In total, the 2,597 Class 8 trucks sold in the Canadian market in April was more than 600 above last year's totals and continued the strong start to this year's sales. It also surpassed the five-year average by more than 600 units. The Canadian market had not seen an April this strong since the record-breaking years of 2005 and 2006.

### Monthly Class 8 Sales – Apr 12

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	556	513
International	400	411
Kenworth	550	342
Mack	228	164
Peterbilt	425	219
Volvo	273	191
Western Star	165	102
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2597</b>	<b>1942</b>

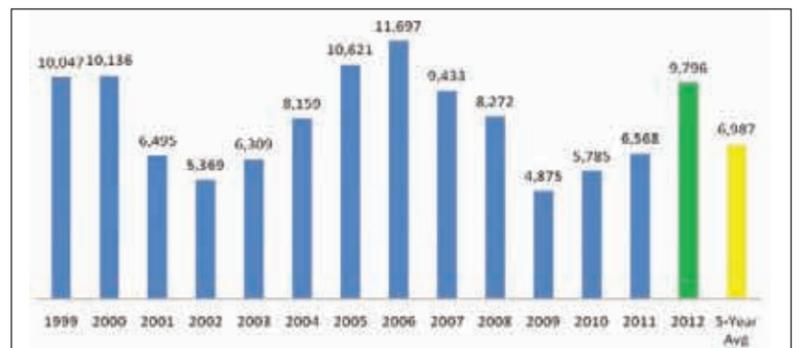
### Historical Comparison – Apr 12 Sales



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

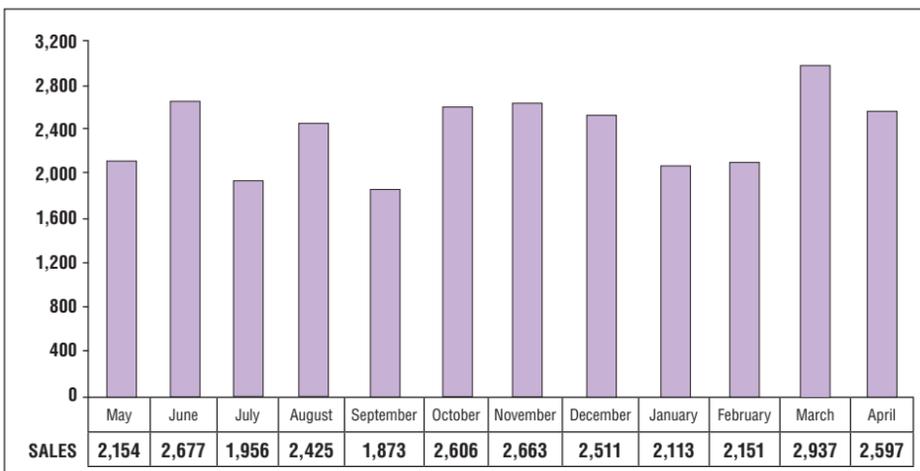
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	160	219	80	215	1,359	377	78	63	1	6	2,558
Kenworth	205	875	101	81	360	362	36	0	0	0	2,020
Mack	28	108	68	45	271	112	20	13	0	4	669
International	56	205	33	99	676	340	68	26	2	26	1,531
Peterbilt	134	449	77	220	224	176	24	9	0	0	1,313
Volvo	72	90	41	92	501	206	27	8	0	1	1,038
Western Star	138	248	34	13	84	90	16	44	0	0	667
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>2,194</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>3,475</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>9,796</b>

### Historical Comparison – YTD Apr 12

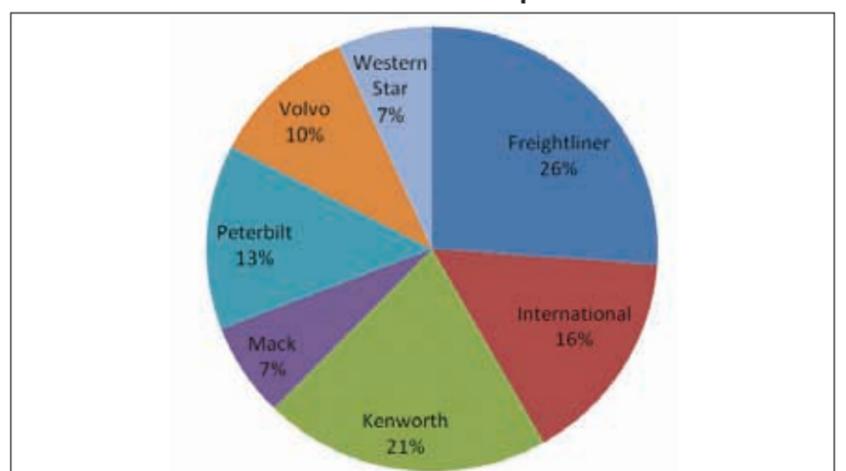


The 9,796 trucks sold so far in the Canadian market in the midst of a slowing North American economy and economic uncertainty indicates the importance of not falling prey to the daily fears of the stock market. Although not growing by leaps and bounds, there is significant growth in the Canadian truck market. The YTD totals are almost 3,000 better than the five-year average and more than 3,000 above last year's totals. To date, 2012 is shaping up as the 5th best year since 1999.

### 12 – Month Sales Trend



### Market Share Class 8 – Apr 12 YTD



For the seventh straight month, sales climbed 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. Question is, if most carriers are looking to simply replace older equipment rather than add capacity, how long will the buying spree continue?

Western Star, Volvo, Peterbilt, Mack and Kenworth all made small gains to their market share with April's Class 8 sales. Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, saw its share nipped but it still retains a commanding 26% share of Class 8 sales so far this year. Navistar International is now down to 16% of the market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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# TRUCK WEST

July 2012, Volume 23, Issue 7  
 Canada Post Canadian Publications  
 ISSN 0700-5016 – Truck West (Print)  
 ISSN 1923-3531 – Truck West (Online)  
 Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 40069240  
 "Return Postage Guaranteed"  
 80 Valleybrook Drive, Toronto, ON M3B 2S9  
 Sales: 416-510-6892 / Editorial: 416-510-6896  
 Fax: 416-510-5143

Truck West, USPS 017-178 is published monthly by BIG Magazines L.P., a div. of Glacier BIG Holdings Company Ltd., a leading Canadian information company with interests in daily and community newspapers and B-2-B information services. US office of publication: 2424 Niagara Falls Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY 14304-5709. Periodicals Postage Paid at Niagara Falls, NY. US postmaster: Send address changes to Truck West, PO Box 1118, Niagara Falls, NY 14304.  
 SENIOR PUBLISHER – Rob Wilkins  
 ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER – Kathy Penner  
 EXECUTIVE EDITOR – James Menzies  
 MANAGING EDITOR – Adam Ledlow  
 CIRCULATION MANAGER – Mary Garufi  
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 CREATIVE – Carolyn Brimer, Beverley Richards  
 V.P. PUBLISHING – Alex Papanou  
 PRESIDENT – Bruce Creighton  
 Circulation inquiries: 416-442-5600 ext. 3553  
 Change of address: Please include subscription number from mailing label.  
 Subscription rates: Canada (Includes GST) – One year \$40.60; U.S. – one year \$66.95; foreign – one year \$66.95  
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We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Periodical Fund (CPF) for our publishing activities.



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# Reaching my limit with speed limiter debate

Oh, look what's back in the news. It's everyone's favourite debate topic: speed limiters. I visibly cringed when I first heard about a ruling by an Ontario court in which the Justice of the Peace found the controversial '105 Law' to be unconstitutional.

I'm neither for, nor against the law. My feelings haven't changed. I think it was an unnecessary law and that the arguments both for and against the legislation are grossly exaggerated and lack substance.

What I do know is in the three years since the law was first put on the books, the sky hasn't fallen. Road safety doesn't appear to have been compromised, though manners may have suffered as drivers now spend several kilometres at a time trying to complete a pass. For the most part I think four-wheelers understand the limitations of these trucks and have adapted their own driving to accommodate speed-limited truck traffic.

Frankly, I don't care if the law stays or if it goes. What induced my cringe was the thought of spending months on end debating the merits of the law and rehashing every tired argument both for and against.

As an editor covering the Canadian trucking industry, there is no shortage of compelling stories for me to write about. I don't want it to be all about the speed limiters. Been there, done that. I'm not getting into it anymore.

Of course as your dutiful editor, I'll continue covering the court cases and will report on the implications as necessary. But that's it. I'm not getting emotionally invested in the matter this time. Nope, no way.



I'm pulling a Switzerland and staying neutral. Just try me. Not even Lou can goad me into a debate on this subject despite his thinly veiled attempt below. You want to talk speed limiters? Give Lou a call. And do it quick, before he changes his phone number.

In all seriousness, not much has changed since this issue was debated ad nauseum from late 2005 when OTA first floated the idea to 2009, when the maligned law finally went into effect. I still feel the law was unnecessary and that speeding trucks weren't a huge issue; soaring diesel prices saw to that.

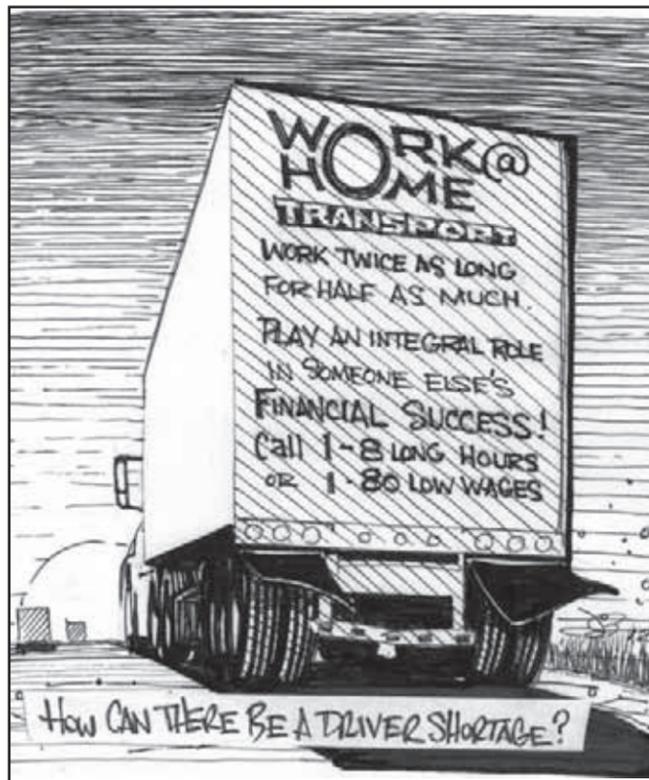
I think the claim that the speed limiter law resulted in an immediate 24% reduction in truck-related fatalities in 2009, as the Ministry of Transport has stated, is highly debatable. I think the arguments that road safety has been somehow compromised by the speed limiter requirement is equally disingenuous – maybe even more so.

Those who hate the speed limiter requirement are buoyed by the judgment and who

can blame them? My personal feeling is that the judgment doesn't spell the end of the law; it just assures a longer, costlier legal battle.

In one corner you have OOIDA with its deep pockets, bankrolling the case against speed limiters. In the other you have the province of Ontario, flat broke, but governed by hardheaded Liberals who'll defend this thing to the end. It may sound like a compelling battle, but to me it's just two shot fighters, well past their prime, who don't know when to hang'em up. Whichever side wins, may the decision come quickly. □

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# The real case on truck speed limiters

If you drive truck for a living in Ontario or Quebec, should you be enthused about the dismissal in an Ontario court this month of a speed limiter ticket given to driver Gene Michaud because the Justice of the Peace ruled the province's speed limiter law for heavy trucks is unconstitutional?

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), which funded the legal challenge, and the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada (OBAC) certainly are enthused about what they see as "the first nail in the coffin of this useless law." The MTO thinks otherwise and plans to keep on enforcing the law and Canadian Trucking Alliance CEO David Bradley, whose association pushed for the legislation, says he's not worried this decision will set a precedent.

I'm not so sure about that. I think it can only lead to more court challenges every time a trucker is caught without a speed limiter in Ontario or Quebec.

What I am sure about is that fighting the speed limiter law is NOT in the best interests of our industry. I don't have to tell you about the negative impact high diesel costs have on fleets and owner/operators alike. Nor do I have to tell you that truck-



ing has a big X on its back because of its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. (The commercial highway freight sector has the fastest growing energy demand of any economic sector in Canada).

Reducing speed is a proven way to significantly reduce both fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. And it actually leaves more money in your pocket at the end of the day. Why fight such a law?

You may argue that fuel costs are a pass-through expense – the shipper pays a fuel surcharge. Well, shippers are getting wiser and starting to question what exactly they are paying for. They may not mind helping carriers survive the volatility of fuel pricing but they sure as heck are not going to pay fuel surcharges to carriers who are not serious about fuel conservation. Why should they?

You may argue, as do OBAC and OOIDA, that speed limiters are not safe. Justice of the Peace Brett Kelly raised that issue in his decision.

Okay, in that case OBAC and OOI-

DA need to outline the situations that would require a driver to accelerate above 105 km/h in order to be safe and how common such circumstances would be. Based on everything I've read from the two associations on this issue over the past few years, their claims on the negative safety impacts are much ado about nothing. What happened to all the traffic mayhem we were guaranteed we would see if this legislation came into effect? Could it be that it didn't materialize because it was just fear mongering masquerading as valid concern?

I won't even bother to mention that Ontario road fatalities reached their lowest levels in the past 68 years, making the province the safest jurisdiction in North America, the year the legislation was brought into effect.

Maybe it was just a good year, even though large truck fatalities dropped by 24%. I will ask you to consider this, however: If speed limiters are so unsafe why is the insurance industry, which ultimately pays for the cost of accidents, not speaking out against speed limiters? □

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

## IN BRIEF

## Expect a quantum shift in fuel efficiency and emissions: Manitoba Transport Minister

**By Lou Smyrlis**  
**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Regulation is absolutely critical to dealing with reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and past successes in dealing with dire environmental situations show that regulation can make a difference, Steve Ashton Manitoba Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation told a heavy-duty truck emissions conference hosted by the University of Manitoba Transport Institute.

“Clearly climate change is here to stay. The question is, do we continue to debate the problem or focus on solutions? It’s important to recognize that setting emissions

standards is going to be absolutely critical to getting any kind of progress,” Ashton said. “We’ve proven internationally that regulations can make a difference. We used to have as much discussion about acid rain. When was the last time you read about acid rain in the newspaper? A few decades ago the challenge was the hole in the ozone layer. How often do you read about that now?”

He also challenged the federal government, which recently released its plans to reduce heavy-duty truck emissions, to reach higher.

“Most of the public is ahead of the government on the issue. Talk

to people and you see that most assume that development has to be sustainable. That was a revolutionary idea in the ’90s,” Ashton said.

Manitoba, Ashton added, is well positioned to see its transportation industry grow as the province evolves into a true hub for North American activity. But that growth will also place pressure on the province’s GHG emissions.

Ashton said it’s important to use regulations to drive a structural shift in the industry, which in turn

will drive technological advances.

“Over the next 20 years I believe we will see a quantum shift in fuel efficiency and emissions,” he said.

Ashton also preached patience with first generation green products, which may not be delivering the kind of performance truck owners would expect.

“We can’t give up on the first generation products and assume they are the best we can do. The early diesels had numerous problems too,” he pointed out. □

### Truxpo organizers say booth space filling up

**ABBOTSFORD, B.C.** – Master Promotions is promising to bring “big rigs, big names and new developments” to Truxpo this year, as it prepares for its first year running the popular trucking trade show.

The event will be held at the Tradex Centre in Abbotsford Sept. 20-22. The show promises to bring together fleet executives, truck buyers, operators, service personnel and distributors.

“Preparations are well underway and booth space is filling up quickly for Truxpo,” Master Promotions announced in a release. “Local, national, international exhibitors and visitors will be at Truxpo, which is one of Canada’s largest shows of Classes 5-8 trucks and equipment.”

Organizers are planning a recruitment campaign and educational program as well as other new features. They’ll also be offering complimentary pre-registration for the guests of exhibitors.

“All the leaders in the trucking and logistics industry will be on-site for the largest and only major Western Canadian motor transport industry show,” organizers say.

The current floor plan can be viewed at [www.Truxpo.ca](http://www.Truxpo.ca). □

### Our trucks are clean: BCTA to province

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – The British Columbia Trucking Association (BCTA) says Ministry of Environment’s decision to end its AirCare program for passenger cars and light trucks in the Lower Mainland shouldn’t cause heavy-duty trucks to become a new emissions target.

The AirCare program – launched in 1992 to address the deteriorating air quality of the Lower Fraser Valley – will be phased out by December 2014.

“Shifting AirCare to target heavy trucks is unnecessary. There are already checks and balances in place for diesel engines and fuel that are achieving impressive results in reducing emissions on their own,” says Louise Yako, BCTA’s president and CEO.

BCTA officials point to the con-

tinuously improved emissions standards and testing for diesel engines over the past two decades.

“In fact,” Yako says, “testing of emissions from the newest engine is so precise that even a fingerprint on the filter paper placed over the exhaust pipe causes the test to be rejected.”

BCTA says it, “Welcomes the opportunity to consult on any changes to the AirCare program that apply to the trucking industry,” but says the provincial government should “weigh the costs of imposing additional fees on an industry that is already toeing the line on air quality issues via technological advancements, stringent standards, and existing regulations.” □

### TMTV reaches YouTube milestone

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Trucknews.com’s weekly WebTV show *Transportation Matters* (TMTV) has garnered more than 200,000 views on its YouTube channel.

The award-winning show is North America’s premiere online WebTV show with a focus on the trucking industry.

The weekly show combines humour, information and insightfulness to provide a thought-provoking and entertaining addition to the print product.

Since its launch in 2008, *Transportation Matters* has earned a slew of industry awards, including: Best Video (Gold) at the 2009 Canadian Online Publishing Awards; Multi-Media – Series (Best of Division) at the 2010 TWNA Communication Awards; Multi-Media – Series (Gold) at the 2010 TWNA Communication Awards; Best Video (Gold) at the 2010 Canadian Online Publishing Awards; Best Video or Multimedia Feature (Silver) at the 2011 Canadian Online Publishing Awards.

“This YouTube milestone is yet another notch in our belt for both *Truck West* and *Transportation Matters*,” said *Truck West* publisher Rob Wilkins. “Our editorial team has been producing high-quality video content for more than four years now, and the attention we receive via both our own Web site and YouTube is a testament to the show’s widespread popularity and appeal.”

To view *Transportation Matters’* video archive on [TruckNews.com](http://TruckNews.com), visit [www.trucknews.com/videos](http://www.trucknews.com/videos). □

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# US issues NPRM mandating electronic stability control systems

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has issued a long-awaited notice of proposed rulemaking that will mandate the use of electronic stability control (ESC) systems on heavy vehicles. The rule would require full-stability systems on tractors with a gross vehicle weight rating of greater than 26,000 lbs (11,793 kgs).

The announcement was welcomed by suppliers of the systems, including Bendix, which had been pushing hard for a full-stability requirement rather than a roll-only stability mandate, which would protect against rollovers but do little to prevent loss-of-control incidents such as jackknives.

“The government’s notice makes a clear statement, underscoring the advantages of full-stability technology, as opposed to roll-only technology,” said Fred Andersky, Bendix director of government and industry affairs. “While our preference is always to let the overall market drive choice, we support NHTSA’s selection of full-stability technology to mandate. We believe full-stability technology on tractor-trailers, highway motorcoaches and other large buses is critical to the safety of today’s highways. Bendix produces both roll-only and full-stability systems, but in our view, full stability is the superior technology, and the cost it adds is minimal.”

Meritor Wabco, which also produces electronic stability systems in addition to roll-only stability systems, is also on-board with the proposed rule.

“At Meritor Wabco, we take extreme pride in putting safety first and have long been at the forefront of ESC technology in North America,” said Jon Morrison, president and general manager, Meritor Wabco. “We continue to develop leading technology that will help our customers save lives, save property, and make our highways safer. We agree with NHTSA’s recognition of the benefits of ESC technology.”

Many fleets are already using stability systems.

Several OEMs, including Volvo and Mack, have made stability standard for several years.

Bendix says it has sold more than 175,000 units to date while Meritor claims to have placed 150,000 of its SmarTrac electronic stability control units into the field.

Still, Bendix estimates 70-75% of Classes 6-8 trucks are built and delivered without electronic stability systems every year.

NHTSA has conducted detailed research on both full- and roll-only stability systems and found that full-stability technology could prevent up to 56% of rollovers each year as well as 14% of loss-of-control crashes. It’s estimated that the new requirement could prevent up to 2,329 crashes in the US each year while saving 49-60 lives per year.

“When implemented, the proposed NHTSA ruling will help save lives on our roadways,” Andersky said. “The ruling reinforces our belief that full-stability technology offers the best choice to help prevent heavy truck accidents. And it demonstrates the importance of full stability as the platform for tomorrow’s active safety systems.”



**MANDATE COMING:** A law requiring the use of electronic stability control systems on heavy trucks is on its way.

The news was welcomed here in Canada as well, where the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) has been pushing for a similar requirement.

“For years now CTA has been call-

ing for stability control systems such as electronic stability control (ESC) to become non-optional standard equipment on all new tractors,” said David Bradley, president and CEO

of the CTA. “It will probably take a couple of years to become law, but the fact is the technology works and for the growing proportion of carriers that are spec’ing new tractors with ESC, it’s cheap insurance.”

(For more thoughts from the CTA, see Bradley’s column on pg. 20).

The American Trucking Association’s, too, welcomed the announcement upon first glance.

“Safety is, and always has been, ATA’s highest calling,” association president and CEO Bill Graves said. “We’re encouraged that NHTSA is looking at this important area of truck safety. Technology, whether it is ESC, roll stability control or electronic on-board recorders, can help our industry improve on its already impressive safety record.”

Graves said ATA will examine the NHTSA proposal in detail and provide “strong, substantive” comments to the agency’s docket later this year. □

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**STUNNING GENEROSITY:** Todd and Beth Roccapiore, owners of the Best in Show winner Low Life immediately signed their \$10,000 winnings over to the local YMCA, which was destroyed by last year's tornadoes. The truck was entered and shown by its driver John O'Keefe.

## Shell SuperRigs winners donate \$10K top prize to local YMCA

**JOPLIN, Mo.** – A 2007 Peterbilt 379 EXHD Legacy shown by driver John O'Keefe won Best in Show honours at this year's Shell Rotella SuperRigs competition.

The truck, called 'Low Life,' also finished first in the Best Interior, Best Theme, Best Chrome, Best Lights and Best Engines categories.

Several Canadians were among the entrants at this year's SuperRigs competition, which saw working trucks from across Canada and the US compete for about \$25,000 in prizes and a chance to appear in the popular SuperRigs calendar.

The event also raised \$100,000 for the All Roads Lead to Joplin initiative, which aims to rebuild the local YMCA after it was destroyed by a tornado last year. Todd and Beth Roccapiore, owners of the Best in Show-winning Low Life, donated their \$10,000 cash prize to the cause.

Paul Rissler of California, Mo. won Best in Show first runner-up with his 1996 Peterbilt 379 and TJ Timblin of West Bend, Wis. was awarded Best of Show second runner-up for his 2005 Kenworth 900L.

Other first place category winners included: Wayne Vogt of Hesston, Kan. in the Tractor-Trailer Division;



**LOW LIFE:** The winning Peterbilt 379.

Pat Eilen of Hampton, Minn. in the Tractor Division; and Travis Headley of Lebanon, Mo. in the Classic Division.

The 2012 Peterbilt 389 of Shane Price of Lebo, Kan. won the People's Choice Award, which is voted on throughout the event by all contestants and spectators.

New categories included the Hardworking Award, won by Ronald Millsap of Statesville, N.C., while Paul McMasters of Bristow, Okla. won the first Shell Rotella Virtual SuperRigs award.

As for the Canadians, Randy and Jona Rebillard of Gimli, Man. finished third in the Tractor Division; Brent Greer took fifth place honours in the Classic Division; and Larry and Kim Dyck of Winnipeg, Man. won the Best Show Truck category. □

## OOIDA slams Teamsters for reversing stance on electronic on-board recorders

**GRAIN VALLEY, Mo.** – The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) has condemned the International Brotherhood of Teamsters' recent decision to support the US Senate's proposed bill that would mandate electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs) for heavy trucks.

OOIDA says it views support of EOBRs by organized labour as a change of heart driven by their desire to ban owner/operators and replace them with employee drivers.

"Support coming from the Teamsters, who filed comments to the government in 2007 opposing EOBRs, proves that this is more about attacking independent contractors and small businesses than safety," said OOIDA executive vice-president Todd Spencer. "It could open up a huge Pandora's box with the IRS on misclassification of colossal proportions."

OOIDA officials also noted that the current EOBR rulemaking has been estimated by the Obama administration to cost the industry \$2 billion, as one of the seven most expensive regulations pursued by the administration.

"EOBRs are no more reliable than paper logbooks for tracking hours-of-service and are actually a possible danger to our highways," Spencer said. □

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TAX TALK

# Starting a business?

## Do some sole searching

Choosing a structure for your business is a very big deal, and your decision will have a significant effect on how you report your income, the type of returns you file each year, and how you support expenses.

In the last few columns I talked about the pros and cons of incorporating (also check out the *Tax Talk* videos I did with James Menzies at [Trucknews.com/videos](http://Trucknews.com/videos)). It's not hard to establish a corporation in Canada, and more owner/operators recognize the tax and legal advantages of doing so. That said, most start out as sole proprietors.

A sole proprietorship is owned by one person operating either as an individual ("Scott Taylor") or as a registered, unincorporated business ("Scott Taylor Cartage").

This type of structure is quick, cheap, easy to set up, and there's no mistaking who's in charge. As the owner, you're fully responsible for the profits, losses, expenses, and legal obligations of the company. You also assume any risks. That means claims may be made against you personally in order to settle debts and lawsuits associated with the business.

Because there's no legal distinction between you as an individual and your company, it's a good idea to sit down with an accountant to outline how to keep the two separate. This conver-



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

sation should go beyond basic strategies – separate bank accounts, separate credit cards – and deal with areas where the lines will naturally blur.

### Paying taxes

One example: income tax reporting. As a sole proprietor, you report your business revenue as taxable income on your T1 personal income tax return. You submit a statement of business activities (form T2125) showing your gross business income less expenses (Canada Revenue Agency will accept other types of financial statements, but encourages you to use the T2125), and then 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.

Unlike an employee who has tax, CPP, and other payroll-related deductions shaved off a regular paycheque, you may have to pay your income tax and CPP contributions by installments. (The process is pretty straightforward; what trips up most new sole proprietors is budgeting for the payments).

Even GST/HST is easy for sole proprietors because registering is optional until you reach \$30,000 in sales. Typically, you should register immediately when you start the business.

### Taking on partners

When two or more people own and operate a business together, they form a partnership. Like a sole proprietorship, a partnership is easy to form. Most partnerships are governed by a written agreement setting out rules for the partners, but in fact a simple verbal agreement is all it takes. You don't have to file anything with the government until you hit that \$30,000 sales threshold and register for a GST/HST number. The business itself pays no income tax; instead, each individual partner is responsible for the tax on his or her share of the partnership's income or loss.

While they're simple in structure, what makes partnerships complicated are the personalities that emerge when there's money and property at stake. Partners are personally liable for the company's debts and obligations, and for the actions of the other partners. A legal or financial burden created by one partner will be borne by all. Likewise, if one partner walks away, the partnership is effectively dead. You will have to start over and will have to re-register for a new GST number and perhaps get new bank accounts and re-sign any contracts.

The number one concern with partnerships is the sharing of partnership income. If you and your partners agree to pay one another based on your individual contributions to the business during the year, how do you determine

what that amount should be? Who's to say whether each partner is pulling his weight? When times get tough, and there's not a lot of money in the pot, whose mortgage payment gets paid first? Even with written agreements, I can't tell you how many partnerships I've seen blow up over money, ripping families and friendships apart.

The most common partnership structure I see involves owner/operators and their spouse. They hope to pay less tax by splitting or sharing the business income on their individual tax returns.

It's not a bad idea. CRA is looking for a consistent approach: If your spouse is listed as a 10% partner one year, he or she should remain at that ownership percentage every year. You can't arbitrarily change the profit-splitting formula to suit your needs. In fact, CRA can revise a partner's share of the income (or loss) of the partnership to an amount that it deems reasonable.

In my opinion, the bigger issue is, do you really want to expose your spouse to the liabilities of the business? With your spouse as your partner, your entire family's personal assets may be on the line. If you're starting a business, sole proprietorships and partnerships can get you up and running fast, and they may be the best choice for you. Just beware of the pitfalls, like personal liability or conflicts with a partner. They may make incorporation worth the trouble. □

– Scott Taylor is v.p. of TFS Group, providing accounting, bookkeeping, tax return preparation, and other business services for O/Os. Learn more at [www.tfsgroup.com](http://www.tfsgroup.com).

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## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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- Truck-eating highway coating (4,4)
- Fixer-upper truck-ad words (2,2)
- Truckmaker with Swedish HQ
- One-way-out street (4,3)
- Transport-company type, \_\_\_ carrier
- Single or twin \_\_\_ axle types
- Temporary traffic diverters
- Truck-loan APR is \_\_\_ percentage rate
- Flexible cooling-system components
- Extra-cost item on new truck
- "Ten \_\_\_ gears and a Georgia overdrive"
- Toddler's dump-truck brand
- Terrain for 25-Across vehicle
- Driver's seat features, sometimes

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- It measures 8,891 km.
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FLEET NEWS

# Challenger rejuvenates fleet, modernizes paint scheme

By James Menzies

**CAMBRIDGE, Ont.** – Challenger Motor Freight has embarked on an aggressive strategy to rejuvenate its fleet, and by year's end will have replaced more than 400 tractors – or nearly a third of its entire fleet.

By the end of the year, Challenger's oldest highway tractor will be of a 2010 vintage, president Dan Einwechter told *Truck West* during a recent interview at Challenger headquarters.

This investment comes after the company replaced its entire trailer fleet with 600 Stoughton and 400 Wabash trailers, all configured for long combination vehicle (LCV) applications.

The new trailer purchases were part of a "right-sizing" strategy, which saw the 1,000 new units brought in to replace 1,400 aging trailers, Einwechter explained.

The new tractors – more than 200 of which have already arrived – will look a little different than those flying the Challenger colours in the past.

The company has decided on a more modern paint scheme, which offers both practical and stylistic benefits.

"We've had these stripes for 30 years, as of next year," Einwechter said of the company's tradi-



**REDESIGN WITH A PURPOSE:** Challenger's new look is more modern, and makes for easier repairs to the hood or cab extender. *Photo by James Menzies*

tional red, yellow and blue paint scheme.

The colours will remain the same, but the logo has been updated to give it a more modern look.

And because the decals now begin on the doors rather than the hood, there are cost savings as well.

Einwechter said less decaling material is required, resulting in a savings of about \$400 per truck.

And since the decals no longer extend to the hood, any repairs requiring a hood replacement will be more cost-effective.

"The moment it touches the hood, if you have to change the hood out you have to re-detail it," Einwechter noted.

Towards the rear of the cab, only a small piece of decaling covers the cab extender, another piece of the truck that's susceptible to damage. The tail end

of the red stripe can easily be replaced by an amateur, at no significant cost.

Challenger's rebranding initiative is being implemented in stages, and as recently as a few weeks ago new trucks were still arriving with the traditional decaling.

The company has now adopted the new logo on its internal communications and all new tractors.

Most of the 1,000 new trailers Challenger has taken delivery of are rather bare, and that's because the company hadn't yet decided on a final design.

"Only 300 of them have any decaling on the side of the trailer, the rest we deliberately left clean because we weren't sure what we were going to do going forward," Einwechter said.

In a more subtle move, the company is also changing the location of its truck identification numbers from the side of the bunk and the bumper (where it was often rendered nearly invisible by road debris) to a cleaner spot above the visor and high on the back of the cab.

The new tractors include a mix of Volvo VNs, Freightliner Cascadias and Kenworth T700s. Nearly all have automated transmissions and every one is equipped with stability systems and X One wide-base tires. □

## Trimac lands major limestone deal, buys Liquid Cargo Lines

LCL acquisition adds 23 trucks, 45 drivers

**FORT MCMURRAY, Alta.** – Trimac Transportation has inked a deal to transport a "significant volume" of limestone aggregate for Hammerstone Corp. in Fort McMurray, Alta.

"The Hammerstone contract enhances Trimac's market presence in the Fort McMurray region. As a result of this award and the existing products and services we perform in this key economic hub of Alberta, we anticipate additional growth opportunities and employment for our professional drivers," said Ed Malysa, president and COO of Trimac.

Trimac expects the new deal to generate about \$36 million in revenue over the length of the three-year contract.

The agreement marks the beginning of a new strategic partnership with Hammerstone, Trimac said in a release.

It anticipates its limestone aggregate hauling operations will reach full capacity in the third quarter of 2012.

Hammerstone owns and operates a limestone quarry with more than 750 million tonnes of reserves in the heart of Alberta's oil sands.

Meanwhile, Trimac has announced its intention to purchase Ontario-based Liquid Cargo Lines (LCL).

Trimac plans to purchase all issued and outstanding shares in the company and take over its 13-acre

property which will then be sold to a party related to Trimac and leased back to Liquid Cargo Lines.

The closing is expected to occur in the third quarter of this year, Trimac announced.

Liquid Cargo Lines has been in business since 1953, providing specialized bulk transport through Ontario, Quebec and the US with a focus on chemicals and asphalt.

Its assets include its 13 acres of real estate, 50 trailers and 23 company-owned power units. Fifteen owner/operators also work for the company.

"Trimac is extremely pleased to have the employees of LCL join the Trimac team," said Trimac's Malysa.

"Liquid Cargo Lines is a very strategic acquisition on several fronts. LCL's team of approximately 45 professional drivers will allow Trimac to grow its chemical and asphalt bunker product offering in central and eastern Canada. In addition, we gain 10 professional mechanics to grow our National Tank Services (NTS) segment.

"The 13-acre property includes mechanical shop facilities, commercial tank washing (currently leased and operated by NTS), administrative offices and parking. The property is strategically located and will facilitate Trimac's future growth requirements in this key geographic market." □



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# BEAT the HEAT

## Conquering the challenges of summer driving. By Harry Rudolfs

Canada might be known as the Great White North but the summer months can be equally challenging for our nation's truckers. This is a land of vast distances, diverse geographies, and consuming landscapes. Quirky and rapidly changing weather patterns can transform a minor squall into a violent event. On any given summer day, drivers from coast to coast might experience sleet, cutting winds, floods, extreme heat, hail, mudslides, deluges or pea soup fog.

Summer also brings increased traffic demands. Cottage-bound traffic, including inexperienced recreational drivers, snarl the highways. Just getting into and out of metropolitan areas on weekends can be a nightmare. And as summer road construction season ramps up, hard-working truck drivers have to deal with longer travel times, stopped traffic, crimped lanes, overheated drivers and four-wheelers looking to sneak around your bumper at the merest hint of an opening between lanes.

We wanted to find out how truck drivers deal with the stresses of summer driving. On-road editor Harry Rudolfs, with Shell's support, consulted blogs, email, Twitter, Facebook, and the good old-fashioned CB radio to find out how other drivers survive the dog days of summer.

### Preparedness, defensive driving your best strategy

Edgar Murdoch drives for C & E Driver Services of Enderby, B.C., and is a proponent of defensive driving. "In a tight spot it is always in your best interest to give the other driver the benefit of the doubt. No one in another vehicle has the ability to make you angry. Relax. Driving aggressively is tiring, both mentally and physically."

Above all, Murdoch adds, "Never initiate the middle-finger salute, and by the same token, ignore it when directed towards you...enjoy the scenery or listen to a talk show. Do anything to avoid frustration, which is self-induced."

Daniel Brown of Moncton N.B., thinks that preparedness is the ticket to a successful run. "My best tip is to lay off the Red Bulls, get your proper rest. Get prepared before you hit the road while you're on your off-duty cycle. Do your paperwork, faxes, phone calls, etc. Make a little lunch, be sure you have drinking water and snacks handy. Then you're going down the road with peace of mind."

Brown also advises backing off a few km/h in congested stretches. "When the traffic is heavy, slow down 5-8 km/h, let the traffic go. It will ease up in a little bit, then you can pick up your pace."

Kevin Weston of Stayner, Ont. has been an owner/operator for 20 years. He's learned how to navigate intense driving conditions. "After going through a time of stress, I will stop at the next or nearest rest area or truck stop and get out and walk around the vehicle and get a drink of juice or coffee, then get in and go again," he says.

*Most frustrating are the people who are behind me and seem to feel they need to pass in some of the worst situations - blowing snow, blind corners, up hills and on solid centre lines - all when they can't see far enough to do so safely. My way of dealing with this is to say out loud as they pass my window, "Excuuuuuuuuuuuse meeeeeee!! So sorry to hold you up!" I think this helps me because I seem to get it out of my system by verbalizing it out loud, instead of bottling it up inside.*

*Henry van Ramshorst  
Rosslyn, ON*

### Sharing the road with campers and RVs

Summer is also the time when flotillas of camper vans, recreational trailers and RVs take to the highways. Professional drivers suddenly have to share space with a legion of inexperienced recreational users, some of them pulling trailers as long as their own.

These days, J D McCallum of Hudson, Que., delivers tankers of compressed gas around Quebec. But he got much of his highway experience running Montreal to Vancouver as a team driver. "We'd be running a set of trains with a nine-speed 350 and with maybe 110,000 lbs on the back. Every hill we slowed up, and 10 or 15 RVs or trailers would get by and then put on the brakes on the next downgrade. The very next hill, another 10 would get around. It would drive you crazy. Three-and-a-half days of this, all the way to Vancouver. There were six weeks of the year that were particularly bad."

Bruce Rutledge, a driver trainer for Ontario Truck Safety of Gloucester, Ont., agrees that some recreational vehicles do cause a problem.

"Some don't know how or haven't had to pull a camping trailer before. A GPS could have saved everyone a lot of stress because they seem to be lost or just don't know where they're going," he claims.

Stephen Large, an owner/operator and heavy hauler from Czar, Alta. and a two-time Shell Rotella Haul of Fame member, errs on the side of caution around RVs and campers. "I tend to expect the unexpected with those guys. I give them lots of room because they're capable of anything."

### It's getting hot out there

All truck drivers have to spend some time working outside their truck every day. Whether shunting trailers or doing P&D work, ramping cars, securing deck loads or unloading tankers, trucking is partly done outdoors and always will be.



**"I run the engine between 1,500 and 1,800 rpm religiously and watch the exhaust temperature and try to keep it under 1,000 degrees. Any higher and I drop a gear."**

**Stephen Large**

Trevor Croft of Smithville, Ont., believes that the arrival of air-conditioning has been a boon to drivers. "After 18 years of driving, I have found that the best way of dealing with summer driving is air-conditioning," he says. "I drove many, many years without it, and now as equipment gets more efficient it does not have that old stigma as fuel burning, unnecessary equipment."

But widespread use of A/C is only a relatively new phenomenon in the trucking community. Bill Weatherstone drove B-61 Macks right up until the 1970s, and '22 Model Whites back in the day before this option was heard of. He remembers trying to sleep on the bench seats on a hot afternoon after driving all night and getting unloaded.

"The temperatures would be in the high 80s and 90s in the early afternoon. I would be soaking wet from sweating. Both windows would be open on the B-61 (no sleeper), head down under the steering wheel on my back with my feet out on the mirror arms," Weatherstone recalls. "When you stop and shut the engine off, the heat would come up through the floor and make it well over 100 degrees F the cab. Before laying down I would open the hood on both sides and let the heat out. In a '22 White I would tie a piece of wood to the steel throttle peddle with wire because the floor of the cab was so hot it would burn right through your boot."

My personal baptism under fire came several years ago while delivering freight under contract for a national auto parts tire retailer around southern Ontario. At that time, most of those stores used rollers rather than forklifts. Every piece had to be lifted by hand onto rollers and fed into the receiving dock. Needless to say, the job got hotter as the sun beat down on the unvented trailer.

You had to look after yourself and bring some water into the trailer. When the rollers got backed up, I'd take the opportunity to squat beside the rear door and suck in some fresh air. Heat exhaustion wasn't an issue in those days. If there was another load in the yard when you got back, you did that one too.

## Keeping your cool with APUs

APUs (Auxiliary Power Units) are auxiliary generators that usually run directly off a truck's fuel supply but only burn a fraction of the fuel required to keep an engine running. These are robust units that offer plenty of juice to operate heating, air-conditioning and in-cab electrical demands while the driver is sleeping or off duty. APUs come in a variety of configurations and models. Most run on diesel fuel, but propane and electrical models are also available.

Despite the fact that many jurisdictions now have anti-idling laws that prohibit engine idling over five minutes, studies have shown that some drivers continue to idle their machines for long periods. Many do so just to keep the air conditioning running during a layover.

All idling, with the exception of trucks using PTOs, is unnecessary. Despite the extra expense in fuel costs, it also creates unwanted emissions and greenhouse gases, as well as increased maintenance costs and unwanted wear on the motor.

Idling a diesel engine can burn up to 4.5 litres per hour, depending on its size. Conceivably, a driver running the engine to keep cool all night can waste up to 45 litres of fuel during a ten hour layover. However, a driver running an APU during the same period can drastically cut fuel consumption by 75-90%!

**Beating the heat**

"I learned from watching the folks who work in the fields in California to work steady, but not too fast and drink LOTS of water or Gatorade," says Large. "They knew how hard and fast to do things so that they could keep going. If I was going to load where I knew it was going to be really hot, like Houston or Laredo, Texas, or Phoenix or Albuquerque, I would stop at Wal-Mart the night before and buy those one-gallon jugs of Gatorade and sometimes drink a couple of them by the time I was loaded and chained down, especially if I was loading equipment onto a rail trailer."

Watching a good shunt driver work a trailer into a tight spot is like watching a performance artist. Mike MacLellan, a top shunter for National Shunt Service of Cobourg, Ont., calls it "dancing with the 53." He prides himself in squeezing 50 trailers into a yard designed to hold 40.

"Hot humid days are very hard on shunters," he says. "Your body feels 50 lbs heavier. Dust is another problem, as a lot of yards aren't paved. The best thing is to keep hydrated. Some places will let you wear shorts, so take advantage of that. Most shunt trucks these days have air-conditioning but I rarely use it, though I usually have the auxiliary fan on. I don't like to get suddenly hot and cold."



**"Hot humid days are very hard on shunters. Your body feels 50 lbs heavier."**

Mike MacLellan

**Be kind to your ride**

MacLellan is not the only driver I talked to who wasn't a big fan of air-conditioning. Sandy Cooper is a 38-year-old trucker with a blemish-free driving record. She works 10- to 14-hour days in her 2011 Kenworth T800 (18-speed, 500-hp Cummins) drawing aggregates in a set of side unloading Super B-trains. Currently, she's working on the Port Mann bridge project on Hwy. 1, just east of Vancouver.

So why does she so seldom use A/C? "It uses too much energy output, and overheats on long uphill grades. Turning the A/C off before the grade and putting the engine fan on 'til the top, keeps it below 200 degrees F."

Cooper goes on to explain more about her working conditions. "My tarps are self-loading, but I do have to push a shovel to clean out the boxes. I usually just give'er, and take a drink of juice after to replace the things lost with a good work-out. Funny how you just get'er done when you've got no choice, eh?"

Large is another driver who's gentle with his motor on hot days. He has three trucks in his heavy-haul operation but his favourite is a 1990 Kenworth W900L. In 22 years, Large has put 3.5 million kilometres on the truck and over 60,000 hours.

"I run the engine between 1,500 and 1,800 rpm religiously and watch the exhaust temperature and try to keep it under 1,000 degrees. Any higher and I drop a gear. Take your time and drive steady and allow the truck to cool off a bit after climbing a big pull before working the crap out of it again."

Large also pays special attention to the rad. "Each spring, I steam out the radiator and about once a month during summer," he says. "Every couple years, I drain the coolant and remove the radiator and take it to a rad shop and have it dipped in their tank to clean it and check it and reseal the tanks. Then I replace the coolant."

**Attitude is key**

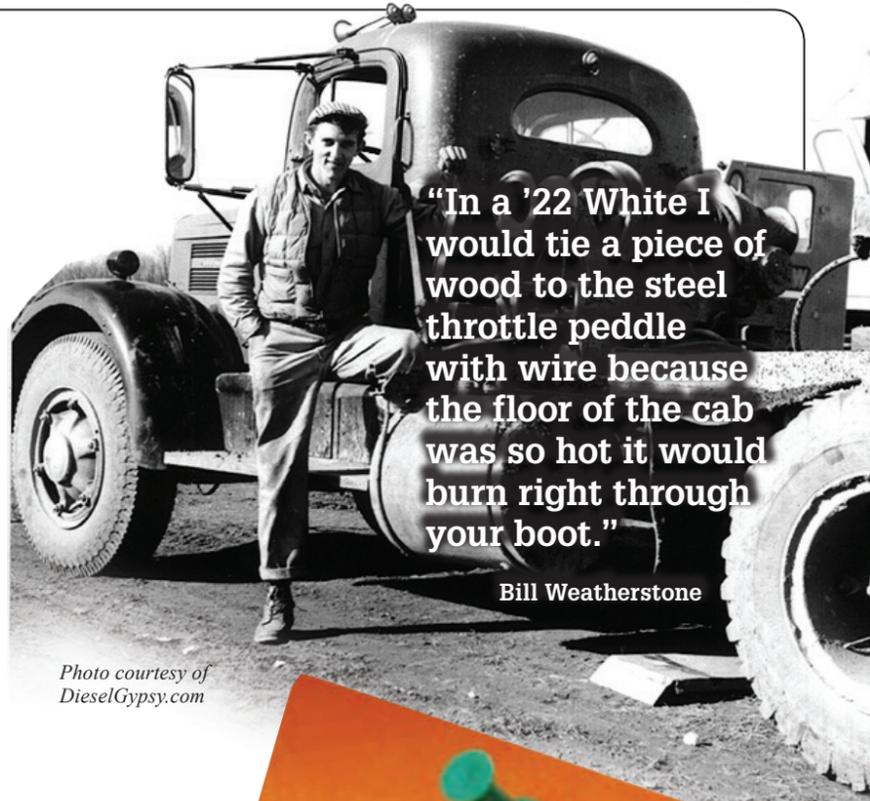
A few years ago, Robert W. Elliot of Wingham, Ont. had an epiphany: "I realized that the majority of my stress came from not being able to manage my time, my way, to meet delivery schedules. Highway closures by police, road construction, detours, border issues and congestion made my life miserable. When I finally acknowledged that I didn't have full control, I controlled what I could," Elliot explains.

"I allowed more time for trips, ran 90% of my highway miles in the 'granny' lane following the flow, never hit a speed zone more than 10 km/h over the posted limit, and stopped listening to the CBC and talk radio. It probably took me a year to complete the transition, but when I did, the enjoyment of trucking returned to displace the negative stuff."

**A great job in a great country**

*Observers of cities, solitary toilers... Journeyers over consecutive seasons, over the years... They are the swift and majestic men - they are the greatest women.* (Walt Whitman, Song of the Open Road)

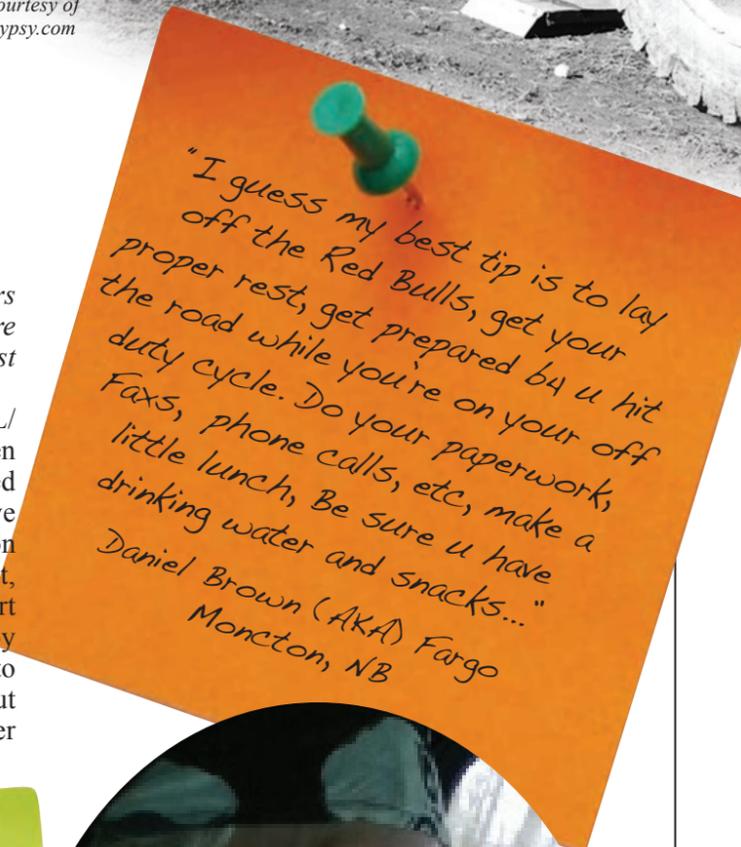
Mark Murray loves his job hauling for RTL/Westcan. "For the past year and a bit I have been driving north of 60. My stress level has dropped dramatically from driving south of 60. I would have to say the biggest stress of the day is dodging bison on Hwy. 3 north to Yellowknife. Other than that, summer in the Northwest Territories is nothing short of amazing, with endless hours of daylight to enjoy in June, July and most of August. Fast forward to winter, however, and it is endless hours of dark, but you take the good with the bad and I enjoy summer to its fullest."



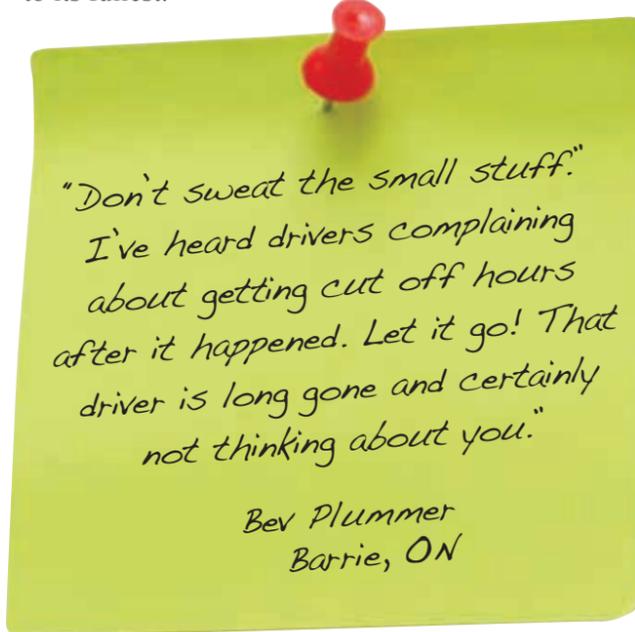
**"In a '22 White I would tie a piece of wood to the steel throttle peddle with wire because the floor of the cab was so hot it would burn right through your boot."**

Bill Weatherstone

Photo courtesy of DieselGypsy.com

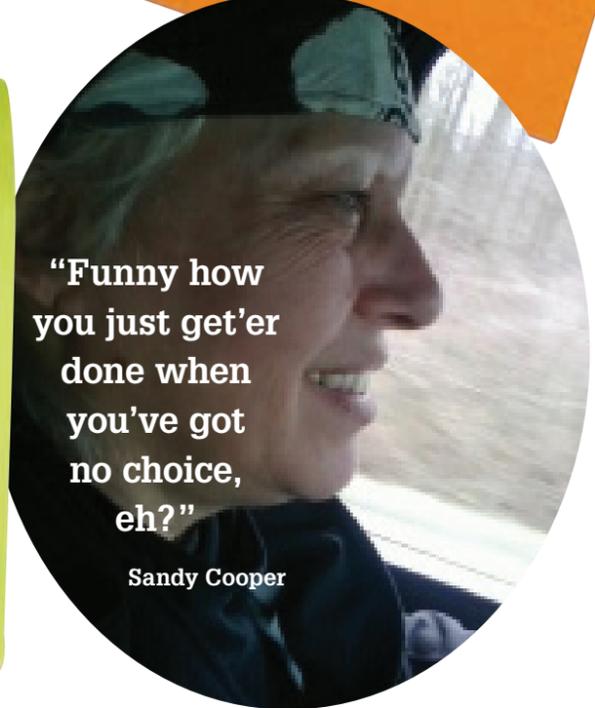


*"I guess my best tip is to lay off the Red Bulls, get your proper rest, get prepared b4 u hit the road while you're on your off duty cycle. Do your paperwork, Faxes, phone calls, etc, make a little lunch, Be sure u have drinking water and snacks..."*  
Daniel Brown (AKA) Fargo  
Moncton, NB



*"Don't sweat the small stuff." I've heard drivers complaining about getting cut off hours after it happened. Let it go! That driver is long gone and certainly not thinking about you."*

Bev Plummer  
Barrie, ON



**"Funny how you just get'er done when you've got no choice, eh?"**

Sandy Cooper

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**THE ENGINE OIL THAT WORKS AS HARD AS YOU.**



# Transport officials position Gateway for success

Continued from page 1

Implications for the Trucking Industry' conference in Surrey in early May. The event saw participants from across the province get to hang out for a while with voices from non-trucking industry groups that are heavily involved in the Gateway initiative. It was a chance for them to learn about 'the road ahead.'

Bringing all these people together in this way made a lot of sense, said BCTA president and CEO Louise Yako, who's involved with a variety of organizations that support the Asia-Pacific Gateway in one way or another. Yako told *Truck West* after the May 2 event that the rationale behind the bash was to help get everyone paddling in the same direction and focused on the same goals.

"BCTA members have raised many issues with respect to the Gateway, especially as it relates to marine container terminals," Yako said, "but their concerns were focused mostly on day-to-day and operational concerns." And while she acknowledged that those concerns are completely legitimate, she said the BCTA wanted to help broaden the focus to include looking ahead, to help prevent inevitable growing pains from becoming major headaches.

"I was getting the sense that the industry didn't have information about the opportunities coming," she said, "and my concern was if there wasn't a good understanding about what the future was going to bring in terms of the expansion of trade, then people wouldn't be in a position to begin planning how they were going to deal with those sorts of issues."

Yako said they also wanted to get as many links in the supply chain as possible together in one room to talk about problems that may already exist that are having an adverse affect on smooth operations between

truckers and the ports.

"One of the historic problems has been lack of communication between all of the participants," Yako said, "and over the past several months, BCTA has been focused on trying to improve communications through those different partners. We were finding that everyone was trying to maximize their own efficiency but in doing that, they were sometimes inadvertently affecting the efficiency of their supply chain partners."

Ah, the law of unintended consequences – probably as annoying at times as Murphy's Law.

"It's like anything," Yako said. "You tweak something in one area and it affects others. But if everyone had the same understanding and vision for the future then there would be a lot of impetus towards working together and trying to improve the entire supply chain."

It isn't just about efficiency for efficiency's sake, of course. It's also competitive. "If we don't all pull in the same direction, customers from overseas and at home would look at other options," Yako said, "because let's face it, the Vancouver Gateway is really well placed – but if we aren't the most efficient, the most productive (of the ports), then there are lots of different places for customers to go."

In other words, to paraphrase a couple of old saws, "any (other) port in a storm," and if the Vancouver area drops the ball, plenty of others are interested in picking it up and running with it.

Yako was referring mostly to American terminals when she referred to competitors, though Prince Rupert is obviously a going concern and will undoubtedly expand its role in coming years. Yako sees that particular outlet as more complementary to Port Metro Vancouver than competitor, however.



GLOBAL VISION: B.C.'s Gateway is important to all Canadians, proponents claim.

"Rupert plays a very important role," she noted, "so even though most of the conference was focused on the Vancouver Gateway, it wasn't designed to denigrate or reduce the importance of Rupert; it was just that a lot of the people we knew we could attract to a conference in the Lower Mainland were going to be more interested in Vancouver."

Besides, there are only so many hours in a one-day session, a fact that also came into consideration when deciding who to hit up for the expert panel. To make the meeting as meaningful as possible in the limited time available, Yako said. The presenters represented organizations that had "put in a lot of work and time and effort and investment in the Gateway."

Ottawa and Victoria were both there, of course, represented by Transport Canada's Mike Henderson and B.C. Transport and Infrastructure's Dave Byng, both of whose governments have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the Gateway. But Yako said it wasn't just the fact that they ponied up the dough that brought them there: it was that they also had the vision.

"They recognized that Canada's future is going to be focused on trade," she pointed out. "It's just a matter of recognizing that most of the growth is going to be in the Asia-Pacific region and Canada is well placed to be a source of natural resources."

Also on-hand for the chinwag were Peter Xotta of Port Metro Vancouver, which Yako said is "basically the landlord and controls the waterways," Matthew Hoag of terminal operator DP World Canada, Mike McLellan of TSI Terminals, Jeff Scott of Fraser Surrey Docks and Dan Smith of freight transportation consultants the Tioga Group. Greater Vancouver Gateway Council director Bob Wilds was the moderator for the afternoon panel session.

The idea, Yako said, was to get these guests to provide the trucking industry with background information into what it can expect in terms of how the organizations are approaching this growth and "the impact on the trucking industry of the decisions that the marine terminals can and will be making."

As a bonus, Tioga's Smith spoke to the best practices in other large, US marine ports. "His insight was mostly about what's happening among our competitors and what is it that they are doing that we can potentially learn from," Yako said.

Smith had glowing words for the Canadian Gateway, saying it's miles (or at least kilometres) ahead of the American competition. Not sur-

prisingly, Smith's sentiments were well received by those assembled, though Yako was quick to caution that they should be viewed in context. "Notwithstanding Dan Smith's comment that we have the best system in North America, potentially," she said, "there's always room for improvement. And as the environment changes, the issues change."

And the competition doesn't sleep.

While a major part of the presentations were concerned with the multitude of infrastructure upgrades that are either finished or well underway, Yako said the meat of the conference was talking about finding ways that the parties can work together better, making the best use possible of their various resources – including human resources.

"The questions that our customers in the Asia-Pacific (market) have had," she said, "have been about the stability of the supply chain and the stability of labour. They don't want to see any disruptions."

It's all about showing customers they can depend on the Gateway and its people, that it'll all be there for them when they need it. "The relationship between the marine container terminals and the trucking industry is key to ensuring we have a stable and working and efficient Gateway," Yako said, noting that there have been labour issues in the past, including some involving owner/operators supporting container movements.

Yako also pointed out that, since the trucking industry is responsible for about half of the container movements in and out of the port and exponential growth is expected in container imports and exports, "the trucking industry will have to be there." So will the trains. "Rail also needs to be as efficient as possible because when they aren't, it affects trucks," she said. "Everything needs to be moving and everything needs to be efficient because we're only as efficient as our weakest link."

Response from the conference so far has been positive, Yako said. "We don't have the results of our survey yet, but I probably heard from eight, 10 people who were there and who spontaneously contacted me afterwards, and I spoke to several people during the day who seemed really pleased that they were able to get the big picture, all the way down to the details, and have an opportunity to have some one-on-ones with the speakers."

That doesn't mean there won't be challenges ahead, of course, but the conference at least gave industry participants a leg up on what's in store for them. □

## Why should people outside B.C. care about the Asia-Pacific Gateway?

Looking at all the activity that relates to the Asia-Pacific Gateway, one could wonder at the taxpayer bucks being drawn from "the rest of Canada" to help one particular region – and a comparatively small one at that.

But Louise Yako, president and CEO of the B.C. Trucking Association, said that's only looking at the small picture. She thinks there'll be plenty of opportunities and challenges ahead, not only for all the Gateway's stakeholders – from foreign shippers to local haulers – but for the Canadian economy as a whole.

This is because the Gateway is about more than just new and improved road, railway and port facilities: it's really about it being a conduit between Canada's producers and the huge market opportunities overseas, as well as being a pipeline to bring in stuff Canadians want to buy.

Yako told *Truck West* that "Readers outside B.C. may not realize that the Asia-Pacific Gateway is important for them as well," and stressed the importance of diversifying the nation's trading partners. She noted the US will always be an important trading partner for Canadians, based on geography alone, "but this is a global economy now and it needs to be recognized that for Canada to grow and continue to prosper and be a country that can take care of its own and provide a strong social network, jobs and prosperity, we need to make sure that we are part of that global economy."

She also pointed out that the federal government "is working very hard on signing free trade agreements with more and more countries in Asia" as well as broadening the trade opportunities in South America and Europe.

Still, with other Gateways opening up – the Regina Global Transportation Hub and Manitoba's Centreport, for example – is it fair for Vancouver to get all these tax dollars when other competitors have a stake in the game?

It appears to be a matter of perspective. "I don't see it as competition," Yako said. "It's an integrated system. I'm not saying that (the Asia-Pacific Gateway) is all there is, but it is very important and the others will help feed into it. They support one another, and all the participants in the supply chain need to work together." □

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## SUSTAINABILITY

# Worth the investment?

## New study investigates whether fuel-saving technologies are worth the up-front cost

By Lou Smyrlis

Is the cost saving potential of fuel-efficient technologies worth the up-front investment? Answering that critical question, based on real-world trials, is at the heart of a new study just released by Natural Resources Canada, entitled *Results from the Road*.

Commercial highway freight has the fastest growing energy demand of any economic sector in Canada. It's responsible for nearly 10% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. Rising fuel costs are also placing downward pressure on profit margins as an increasing number of shippers push back on the magnitude of fuel surcharges and demand to know what carriers are doing to reduce their fuel consumption. So carriers need to improve on the fuel performance of their vehicles not only for the sake of the environment but also for their bottom lines. The challenge, as the *Results from the Road* study points out in its opening paragraph, is that achieving cost-saving initiatives requires up-front investment in new technology. And given that their goal is to save money, transport companies need reassurance that any investment they make is likely to deliver a positive return.

Towards that goal, Natural Re-

sources Canada, back in September 2009, launched the SmartWay Certified Technology Fund (SCTF) to prove out the cost-saving potential of fuel-efficient technologies by helping freight companies purchase, install and test fuel-efficient tires and aerodynamic skirts in a variety of real-world driving conditions. The goal was to learn about the performance of energy-efficient devices and equipment in a variety of real-world operating conditions on as many vehicles as possible. Twelve companies qualified for up to \$100,000 in funding and entered into contribution agreements which required them to collect and report fuel-usage data when using their new fuel-efficient technologies.

After a full year of pre-trial baseline fuel usage gathering followed by six months of trials, including both summer and winter driving conditions, Natural Resources is releasing the findings through the *Results from the Road* report. It says the results are clear: The more often companies use these fuel-efficient technologies, the more fuel they save. Key findings from the research project include: a 5% average reduction in fuel consumption; and an eight-month/110,000-km payback period.

After installation, fuel usage data was collected over two periods to satisfy the need to include both summer and winter driving conditions.

Data was collected from August to October 2010 and again from December 2010 to February 2011. (To supplement the

fuel-usage data, participants were also required to administer surveys among drivers, maintenance staff and fleet managers directly involved in the project).

For the three-month summer/fall period from August to October 2010, usable data were collected from 371 tractors across the 12 qualifying companies. In the three-month winter period from December 2010 to February 2011, usable data were collected from 392 tractors.

According to the pre-trial baseline data, over the course of six months, these tractors drove more than 37 million kilometres while using nearly 15 million litres of fuel. That works out to an average fuel consumption of 39.7 L/100 km (5.92 mpg). During the six trial months in which the tractors were equipped with aerodynamic skirts and low rolling resistance tires, the same amount of fuel was used, but the total distance driven climbed to nearly 39 million kilometres, making the average fuel consumption 38.9 L/100 km (6.05 mpg).

"While this amounts to a 2% reduction in average fuel consumption during the trial period, it is not perfectly reflective of the fuel-saving potential of the SmartWay-certified technologies," the report explains. "On average, the tractors pulled SCTF-equipped trailers only 33% of the time – meaning that for two-thirds of their trips, they were not experiencing the benefits that come from using the tires and skirts."

The report stresses that the more often a tractor pulls a trailer equipped with fuel-saving technologies, the more closely the full potential of the equipment is achieved. For a more precise analysis of the data, the tractors were grouped into five "quintiles" according to how much time they spent pulling trailers equipped with fuel-saving technology. The study then focused on the 80-100% quintile – that is, the group of tractors that pulled SCTF-equipped trailers at all times. And that's when the true potential of the fuel-efficient technologies shone through.

It was found that for both the summer/fall and winter trial periods, the high-usage group experienced a 5% reduction in average fuel consumption rates compared to the pre-trial baseline period. (The low-usage groups saw only a 2% reduction in fuel consumption – clear proof that greater fuel savings can be experienced by using SmartWay-certified technologies more often).

"Considering that the average commercial transport truck gets approximately 40 L/100 km (5.88 mpg), based on SCTF pre-trial baseline data, this 5% reduction in fuel consumption could save transportation companies two litres of fuel for every 100 kilometres travelled," the report states.

The data were also analyzed to determine how many tractors recorded a noticeable improvement in their fuel efficiency. Of those in the 80-100% usage quintile, 71% reduced their fuel consumption. Of those that pulled SCTF-equipped trailers less than 80% of the time, only 51% noted fuel savings.

The report calculates payback on the initial investment to within eight months or 110,000 kilometres.

"As the price of fuel increases, this payback period will become even shorter," it notes.

This is how the payback was worked out: To be SmartWay-certified, a trailer must include both an aerodynamic skirt and a set of fuel-efficient tires.

It costs approximately \$2,300 to purchase and install the skirts and \$10,800 to purchase 18 tires – for a total cost of \$13,100. However, the report points out that tires need to be regarded as a "sunk cost" – something transportation companies must buy, regardless of type – and so the net equipment costs need only to consider the difference in cost between fuel-efficient and regular tires. Of the initial calculation, \$10,260 (18 regular tires at \$570 per tire) is a sunk cost, bringing the actual price of SmartWay upgrades to just \$2,840.

The average truck has a fuel economy of approximately 39 L/100 km (6.03 mpg) and drives about 180,000 kilometres per year. Assuming a diesel fuel cost of \$1.30 per litre, the average annual fuel cost is \$91,260.

The study established that using SmartWay-certified technologies can cut fuel usage by 5%, bringing fuel consumption down to 37 L/100 km (6.34 mpg). At that rate, the annual fuel cost when using SmartWay-certified technology is \$86,580 – amounting to an expected annual fuel savings of \$4,680. So the initial investment of \$2,840 will be repaid in 0.6 years (just over seven months).

It should be noted that if all tires were installed immediately (in other words, all at once, regardless of the condition of the existing tires), the total equipment costs would increase by \$540 to \$3,380. This increases the payback period to about eight-and-one-half months, "still making tire replacement an affordable and sensible choice," according to the report.

To learn more about SmartWay-verified technologies – or how to adopt these energy-efficient technologies in your company's fleet – contact Natural Resources Canada's FleetSmart program online at [www.fleetSMART.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.fleetSMART.nrcan.gc.ca) or by telephone at 613-960-7427. □

### COMBINED SUMMER/WINTER TRIAL RESULTS

Quintile (SCTF trailer use)	Number of Trucks	Average Fuel Consumption
0-20%	319	-1.5%
20-40%	280	-2.9%
40-60%	24	-0.3%
60-80%	37	-2.8%
80-100%	103	-5.1%
All trucks (0-100%)	763	-2.6%

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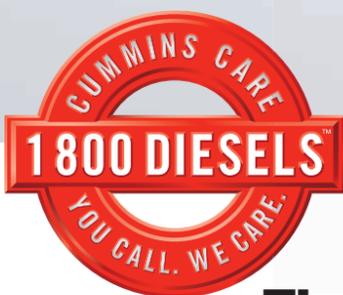
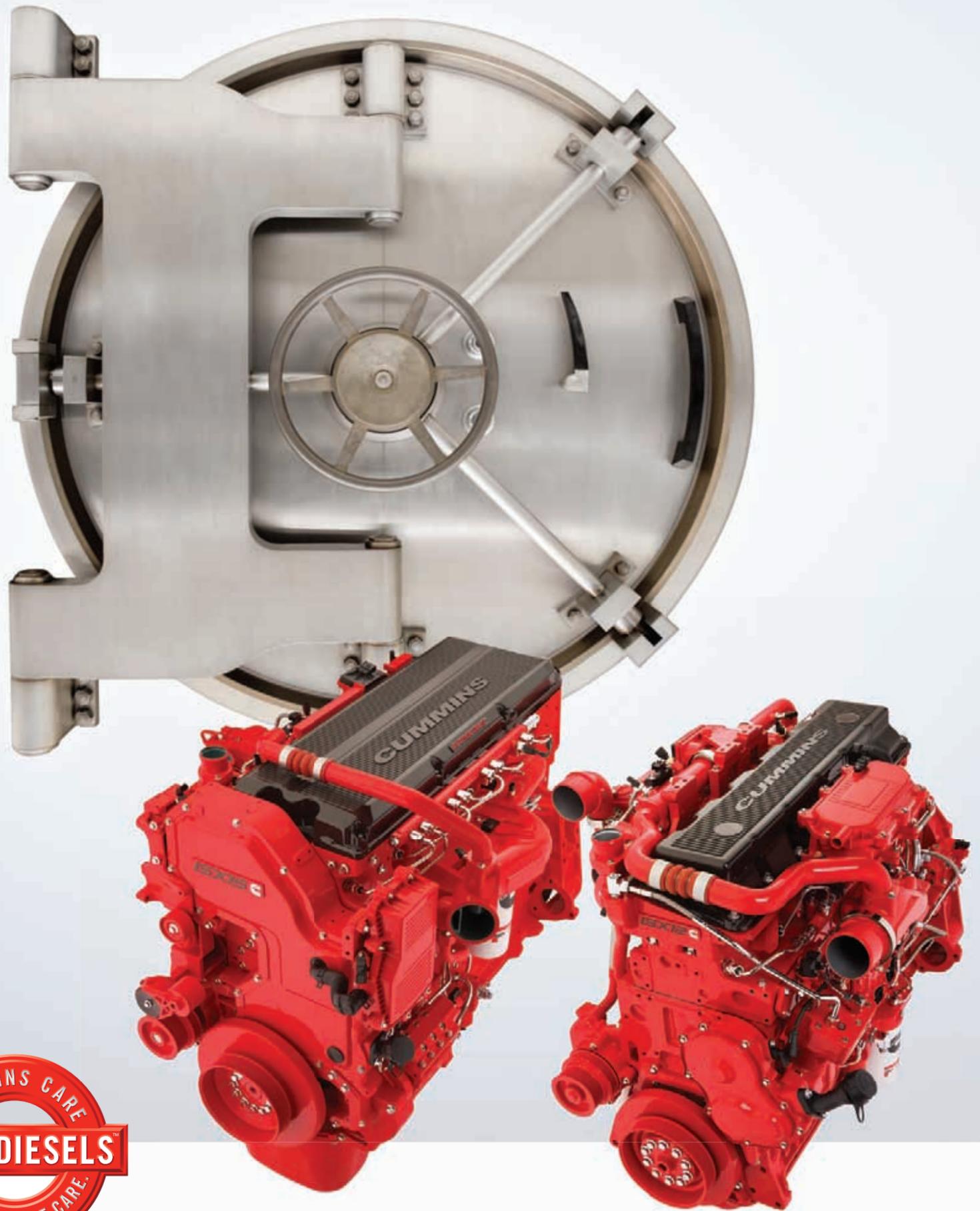
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## OVER THE ROAD

## Why profit-sharing may be the ultimate incentive program for owners and drivers

A few months ago I was asked by the Central Ontario chapter of the Fleet Safety Council if I would like to participate in an upcoming panel discussion about driver incentive programs. I accepted, always eager to offer my two cents from a driver's perspective.

As thoughts about this topic percolated in my mind over the months, I've had quite some difficulty coming to any type of concrete opinion on what a driver incentive program should look like. The best place to start is to gain some understanding of what is meant when we talk about driver incentives.

If you look up a dictionary definition of the word 'incentive' you will find something to this effect: *A reward offered for increased productivity.*

Increasing productivity is usually associated with an increase in the volume of work performed (usually accomplished by investing more time in the job), performing the same volume of work at a lower cost (fuel savings, accident-free miles), or meeting a higher standard of performance (improving CSA scores or carrier ratings). The reward to the driver is most often a financial one.

What I find interesting is that an increase in productivity requires an investment of additional time by the driver. Yet in recent years, changes to hours-of-service legislation (HoS) and the use of electronic on-board record-



### Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

ers (EOBRs) have tightened control over a driver's time.

At the same time, most of us are still paid by the mile and by the drop. This system was put into place to encourage productivity also. Run more miles, do more drops, and you get paid more.

But that system was put into place when HoS rules were loosely enforced or non-existent.

So what we have now is the operations side of our business still paying drivers by the mile, encouraging them to work as quickly as possible in the name of productivity and incentive programs that are designed to slow us down and work more efficiently and safely.

This presents somewhat of a paradox for drivers. It's no wonder that drivers often express the feeling that they are stuck between a rock and a hard place, because the expectations of the operations side of the business and the safety and compliance side of the business clash.

As a driver are you going to place your efforts on the operations side that pays you 40 cents a mile every week or on the safety and compliance side that

presents you with the potential to earn up to another two to six cents per mile each quarter, if you meet the criteria?

It's no surprise that many drivers feel it's just not worth the effort. Maybe we're well past the time of looking for a new means of paying drivers for their efforts as well as developing new incentive programs?

What if I'm more interested in earning the same money but doing it in less time, allowing me more personal time? Is there an incentive program out there that will do that? Perhaps.

Some companies are implementing profit-sharing programs. These programs present the opportunity to involve all employees – not just drivers – in the incentive program. They have the potential to foster greater teamwork and break down communication barriers between departments.

A profit-sharing program fixes the cost of an incentive program as a percentage of net profit for the company, so it aids in financial forecasting and planning. But it requires diligent and consistent messaging from all levels of management to front-line employees. Everyone has to be working towards the same goal. I've learned over the years as a driver that communication with front-line employees is not a strength this industry possesses.

That's not a criticism; it's simply recognition of the difficulty we all face in developing relationships with one an-

other when we rarely see each other.

That lack of social interaction is difficult to overcome in an industry that keeps managers and workers thousands of kilometres apart most of the time.

A successful profit-sharing program depends on constant interaction between all employees if there is to be a payoff. That payoff has the potential to be no less than a satisfactory set of HoS rules that recognizes the need for flexibility in a driver's daily routine and an end to downloading inefficiencies such as dock delays to the driver.

As an aging driver I find that I am increasingly frustrated by the lack of time I can spend with my family and invest in my own personal wellbeing. Issues of driver health and wellness are coming to the forefront and facing up to this reality is what incentive programs also have to address.

It does not seem reasonable to me to ask an aging driver pool to invest even more time in the name of productivity while also expecting them to take more time to care for themselves. You just can't have it both ways. □

– 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).

## OPINION

## Why doesn't anyone want to be a trucker anymore?

It is amazing how few people – even those from within the trucking industry – understand the realities of life behind the wheel.

For those of you who aren't living it every day, here's an example of a day in the life of a truck driver: I set off from my yard south of Winnipeg with a trailer going out to Lethbridge, Alta.

Once there I was to swap for a trailer going back to Winnipeg. An easy enough two days – plenty of miles and no concern over appointments at the shipper/receiver. I just had to get there, drop and hook, park for my break and then put her into the wind again.

### Another day at the office

My trip went like this: I got into the yard, loaded my stuff into the truck, did my pre-trip checks, hooked onto my trailer, checked the paperwork and set off.

I have what I consider to be a very nice truck. The ride was far from smooth though, as the winter and lack of maintenance have turned the roads into a shocking state.

In some sections warning signs for bumps have been erected, in others patches have had new asphalt laid over the worst of the holes. Either way, I had to keep my mouth closed to avoid losing my fillings on some stretches.

After a few hours I made Brandon and pulled in at the first truck stop I encountered.

The lot was overflowing with trucks and it was also overflowing with puddles, as the ground was anything but smooth.

I had to lock my differentials to exit, as one pothole was so deep it lifted my



### You say tomato, I say tomahto

MARK LEE

drives clear off the ground.

Having not yet found a space to park, I ventured out onto the service road with the intention of walking back for coffee and a snack, however this was not a viable option as the service road was full of turnpike doubles unable, because of their length, to park anywhere else. So I put her into the wind again, thirsty and a little puckish.

Virden was up next, so I thought I'd stop there. Again it was impossible.

The service road on the south side of TC1 was full of other trucks with the same idea and the northern service road was full of turnpike doubles switching trailers and generally making a nuisance of themselves to a hungry driver like me, who just wanted a place to park for a few minutes.

Again, I carry on.

Next stop, Moosomin. There's a new gas station there with a Timmies next door. I make it there and find a place to park and set off in the direction of refreshment.

Now I'm faced with another problem: I almost have to duck to get through the doorway. It's a standard size doorway and I'm only a little over 6-ft., so what's the problem? The amount of mud that had collected on the soles of my shoes had turned them into platform soles! Frustrating, to say the least.

Lucky for me I managed to get in

here as there were no other options before Regina.

The few places that do exist have been taken over as marshalling yards for turnpike doubles to do their relay switch.

Now I find myself in Regina, previous experience of trying to find somewhere to stop and get a coffee or a bite to eat here means I don't even bother.

It's next to impossible unless you're one of the lucky 50 or so drivers who manage to find a parking spot.

Seven hundred kilometres are under my bumper so far and I'm in Moose Jaw now and this time the truck needs some food.

I drive very slowly and carefully through the minefield of a parking lot and pull into the pumps, get out of the truck into another puddle only to find that the keypad on the card reader doesn't work properly.

So I try the place next door. I have better luck with the keypad, but the minefield of a parking lot is just the same.

Knowing what is ahead of me, I stop off and grab a burger and fries before I leave town; the next possible stopping places are in Swift Current and the last time I stopped to eat there it wasn't a pleasant experience.

From Swift Current to Medicine Hat there's nowhere to stop at all anymore. Sure there are gas stations and a couple of restaurants, but each one has been taken over by the turnpike doubles as a place to switch trailers. From the Hat it's only a reasonably short ride to my destination. Lucky, really, as again there is absolutely nowhere to stop. Well, nowhere with any facilities, decent or otherwise.

### All in a day's work

Finally I arrive in Lethbridge, do my thing and pull into a quiet spot to park for the night.

A normal day's work down and in the books, a bit of messing around trying to get a coffee, a bit of messing around to get fuel, the truck and I got a little beaten up on the bumpy roads, but no real drama.

Just another day's trucking when you think about it. I've had many like it and I'm sure I'll have many more the same. I read for an hour or so and turn in for the night, ready to do it all again the next day.

Now look at this through the eyes of someone who doesn't drive truck and try to be honest about it. Do you see any part that would make you want to become a truck driver?

Throw a tight schedule or some weather into the mix and it would look even worse. Now don't get me wrong, I love trucking and always will.

But like many others, I've been through a lot worse than the worst of today's problems.

From our perspective as veterans of the road, the job has improved beyond recognition, but for someone looking at becoming a truck driver, they'd have to *really* want it to put up with what we put up with on a daily basis. □

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



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**INDUSTRY**

# We can't continue to roll over and play dead

Over the past few months there have been a spate of truck roll-over incidents all within about 20 kilometres of the Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) head office in Toronto. Invariably these have occurred at on- or off-ramps to one of the 400-series highways and have led to long traffic snarl-ups – the cost of which is visited upon the trucking industry as much as it is other motorists.

Luckily, no one has been fatally injured, but the visuals of a truck hanging off an overpass or a woman's car crushed within an inch of her life have been all over the media and have exacted a toll on the industry's image.

As usual, because of a lack of data, we are unable to put our finger on the precise cause of each of these crashes or determine whether there are any trends. Maybe the



truck was cut off. Maybe the shipper improperly loaded the trailer. Maybe the weather had something to do with it (one incident did occur during a very windy day).

But, while we know these things can happen, we also know that in most cases driver error is the cause with excessive speed a primary factor. The ramps where most of the recent incidents occurred are well known to most truckers. Police have also pointed to a lack of skill on the part of some of the drivers.

As an industry, we need to address the problem.

Technology will be part of the

solution. For years now CTA has been calling for stability control systems such as electronic stability control (ESC) to become non-optional standard equipment on all new tractors.

This could be done voluntarily as three of the OEMs have already done or, more likely, via regulation. Indeed, the US National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration have published a notice of proposed rulemaking to do just that (*see pg. 7*). Canada will have little choice but to follow.

It will probably take a couple of years to become law, but the fact is the technology works and for the growing proportion of carriers that are spec'ing new tractors with ESC, it's cheap insurance.

It is estimated that about 20-

25% of the new heavy trucks sold in North America are equipped with ESC. Research conducted for NHTSA by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) estimated that if all existing five-axle tractor-trailers operating in the US were equipped with ESC, the expected annual combined rollover and directional (yaw) instability relevant safety benefit would be a reduction of 4,659 crashes, 126 fatalities and 5,909 injuries – representing annual savings of more than \$1.5 billion annually.

Additional net savings from loss-of-control crashes prevented were estimated at more than \$200 million annually. In Canada, where the industry is approximately 10% the size of the US, the combined annual savings from ESC could exceed \$170 million.

Tackling the skill issue could be more of a challenge. I don't think it's fair to paint any segment of the industry or of society with a broad brush and overall truck drivers, as a class, are the safest drivers on the road. There are relatively new drivers who are very skilled at what they do just as I am sure there are some "experienced" drivers whose skill and judgment leaves something to be desired.

Still, I don't think many would disagree with the assertion that it is a much bigger challenge finding qualified and skilled drivers today than it was 30 years ago.

I hear this from a lot of carriers and there are lots of reasons for it. The subject is too complex to get into now, but suffice it to say part of the solution lies with better training.

CTA has taken the first step in this direction by endorsing a recommendation from the *CTA Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Driver Shortage* calling for mandatory entry-level training and ongoing professional development and training throughout a driver's career.

This will drive the need for industry-endorsed training standards, certification of training schools and instructors and a tougher licence test.

It is also the only way that truck driving will ever be deemed a skilled occupation. It is astonishing that to become a forklift driver one needs to pass a mandatory test and then be recertified every year or so, but to get a commercial truck driver's licence you don't need to take any entry-level training, or ongoing training (beyond such things as dangerous goods transportation). All you have to do is pass a relatively simple test and you're in. That's not good enough anymore.

This sort of change won't happen quickly; there are lots of obstacles to overcome, not the least of which will be to convince all of the provincial governments to move in this direction at the same time. And the ESC mandate is likely not to become law for a while yet.

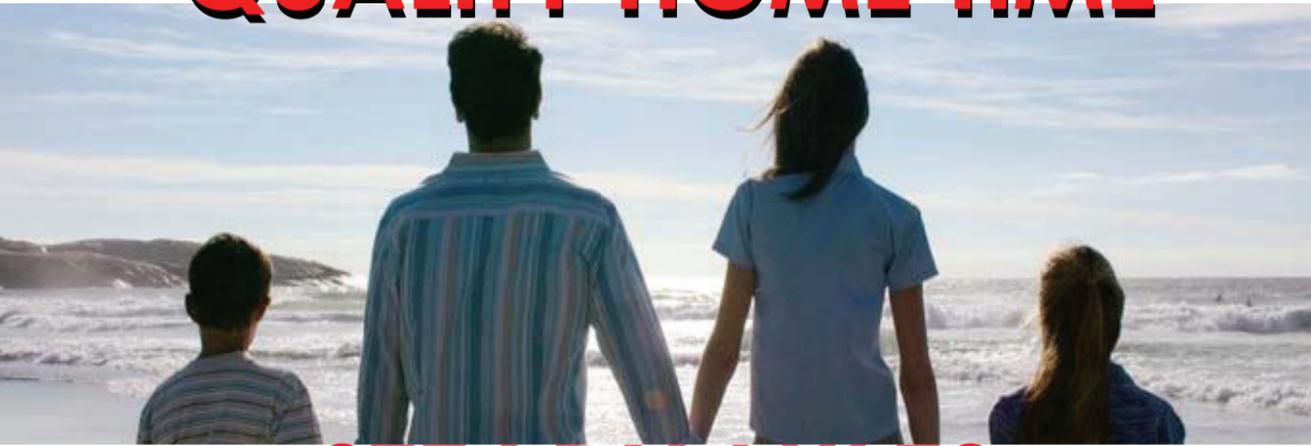
So, in the meantime, let's try to get everyone to pay a bit more attention, watch your speed and avoid the rollovers. □

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

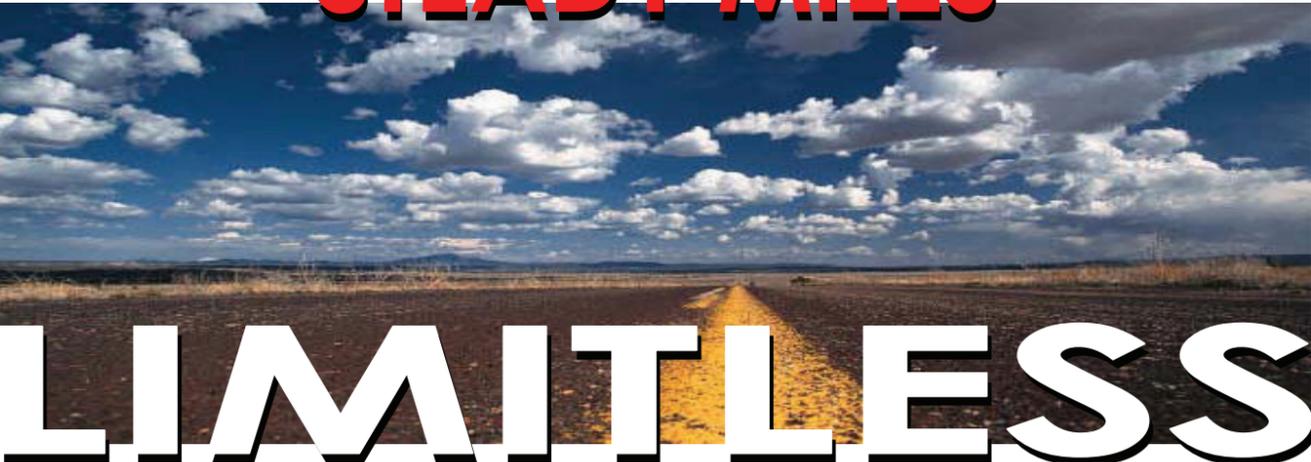
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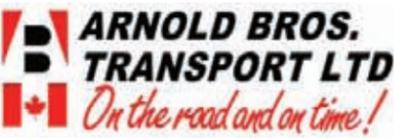
## QUALITY HOME TIME



## STEADY MILES



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## EXECUTIVE VIEW

# Executive view: Don Streuber

## Bison CEO dishes on western expansion, LCVs and the new normal for motor carriers

By Lou Smyrlis

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – As one of the largest motor carriers based in Winnipeg, Bison Transport has established itself as a leader in the industry. Whether it be by running the nation's largest LCV fleet or consistently winning awards for its safety record and driver-oriented programs, the company is always at the forefront.

We caught up with Bison CEO Don Streuber to discuss the latest industry trends and company initiatives.

*TW:* You recently expanded Bison's presence in B.C. with the purchase of a new terminal in Langley. Tell me about the terminal's features and how it will help you better serve that market.

*Streuber:* We have acquired a 12,000 sq.-ft. office coupled with a cross-dock facility and small maintenance shop. Our objective is to expand the existing operation, which we had been operating out there, including our local drayage service that feeds our established customer base, and expanding our western regional network. It's something we have been laying the foundation for for the last couple of years and this was the next stage of the expansion. It provides the necessary infrastructure. The staffing will be doubled over the next year or two as we continue to grow.

*TW:* Any more expansions in the works for 2012?

*Streuber:* The acquisition we did last spring has just acquired property and is building a terminal in Grand Forks to provide for the growth that has already occurred there. Since we acquired that fleet it has grown by 20% and we are continuing our growth strategy with it. In the east we certainly see continued opportunity in that market and we will look to strengthen our position out there.

*TW:* Do you plan on adding capacity in 2012?

*Streuber:* We would not be averse to maybe a 5% addition of capacity, but certainly nothing beyond that on the Canadian fleet. That's really geared towards addressing existing customer demand.

*TW:* Saskatchewan currently has a pilot project with Loblaws running triple 53s. Given Bison's large LCV operations, do you see the company getting into this configuration eventually?

*Streuber:* We are the largest LCV operator in Canada right now. We have close to 200 tractors doing only LCV work. We are experienced in that and certainly believe the future of highway transit will include LCVs throughout Canada and the US.

The moving of two 53' trailers can be done as safely as moving a single tractor-trailer. It's just a question of jurisdictional transition into acceptance and creating the appropriate transitional strategies, not unlike when trailer sizes went from 48-ft. to 53-ft. Moving up to triples, there isn't any difficulty in terms of driver operation when in motion. What changes is the driver's awareness of the circumstanc-

es he is operating within and the vulnerability of that configuration to different conditions such as wind. There is an opportunity, however, to run such units safely and effectively on appropriately established highways.

*TW:* Bison is running LCVs in Ontario and the province will be doubling the number of permits it will issue to fleets participating in its long combination vehicle program from two permits per carrier to four. Your thoughts on how that program is progressing?

*Streuber:* As I said, we already operate close to 200 LCV tractors Canada-wide, so, in our opinion, it is moving too slowly and we would like to see the Ontario government catch up to the rest of Canada. Doing so will reduce congestion on Ontario highways.

LCVs achieve close to a 40% reduction in GHG emissions, which is far better than the reductions delivered by trailer skirts and low rolling resistance tires. To the extent that GHG reduction becomes a recognized objective, the easy way to achieve it is through an LCV operation. I would prefer that shippers are also more supportive in raising this issue with government. Unfortunately, so far, they have taken too quiet a stance.

*TW:* You were recently chosen as the new chairman for the Canadian Trucking Alliance. What is the most important thing you would like shippers to appreciate about Canada's trucking industry?

*Streuber:* As much as the supply chain has evolved, the supply chain fulfillment sector has also changed and we need to keep up with those changes, including the ability to use LCVs as an effective means of reducing our carbon footprint and providing more efficient service. It isn't more complicated than that. We talk about a driver shortage and with LCVs, one driver can pull two trailers.

The absence of LCVs means the carrier has to hire a second driver. When you consider how to address the driver shortage, one possible solution is the utilization of LCVs. It's not going to address all our driver requirements, and not all drivers will be able to drive LCVs, but it is a component of the long-term answer.

*TW:* Bison once again, for the fifth time, was named the grand prize winner of the TCA's National Safety Awards. It's a considerable accomplishment considering the US fleets you are up against. What accounts for Bison's consistent excellent safety performance?

*Streuber:* There is no question safety is a top-down initiative. It has to be endorsed at every level in the organization, not just through words in a memo, but through investment, attitude and support. We spend a lot of energy on all aspects of safety. It isn't as simple as one key ingredient. It's like what makes a great bowl of soup? Ultimately, it's the combination of ingredients and the method of putting them together that results in success.

We take training very seriously and our commitment to that is unre-



lenting. We take issues of equipment quality and the safety component attached to that, and the integration of dispatch and operations towards a safety-minded culture very seriously. And ultimately, we give drivers the right to decide. We treat them as the professionals they are and allow them to make a professional decision on every mile whether it's safe to continue on. Our goal with our safety program is not to win safety awards. Doing so is just further ratification that we are doing it correctly.

*TW:* You were also named one of the Best Fleets to Drive For, for the third year in a row. Transportation is a very challenging business, both in terms of profit margins and workloads. What goes into making a company one that people want to work for?

*Streuber:* Like safety, it must be a top-down initiative that focuses on respect and trust that a driver will behave as a professional. As soon as you allow someone to do their job and trust them to do it right and appreciate it when they do it right, either through affirmation or awards or remuneration tied to performance, all those things build upon the core mindset of feeling respected as a professional contributing to the success of the business.

*TW:* The economic recovery still appears to be rather slow and somewhat shaky. What do you see as the

new normal?

*Streuber:* There is no question we are seeing shippers wanting to secure supply. If the larger players are not increasing supply and the smaller carriers are leaving the industry, there will be less supply. As supply drops, pricing will go up to a level of rates that we had back a few years ago. If the pricing gets high enough, the supply situation may change, but we are still recovering rates and need to continue to receive appropriate payment for what we have invested and what we are planning to do down the road.

The difficulty right now is that the recovery is slow. We are not seeing a consistency of market recovery either by industry or geography, but we are seeing recovery. Government cuts may have an impact. Lack of consumer confidence really does penetrate the whole transportation cycle.

*TW:* Where do you see areas of growth for Bison?

*Streuber:* One of the areas we are looking to grow is LTL. This is a new initiative we are in the process of developing. Order fulfillment patterns, due to growing Internet purchases, are changing. We are not looking at a traditional LTL model and we will define what the level of infrastructure investment will be and the market penetration we wish to pursue. We recognize every type of freight movement is, in fact, a different type of business. □

### Bison, Jessiman Foundation donate \$1M to park

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Bison Transport and the Jessiman Foundation have given a joint gift of \$1 million towards the Assiniboine Park Conservancy's (APC) Imagine a Place Campaign.

The announcement was made last month by Rob Penner, executive vice-president and chief operating officer at Bison Transport (founded in 1969 by the Jessiman family), and Peter Jessiman, director of the Jessiman Foundation.

The \$1 million gift has been designated in support of various projects within the Assiniboine Park Conservancy's overall \$200-million redevelopment plan and was made in honour of the ongoing contributions to the community made by Bison CEO Donald Streuber, according to company officials. Streuber is also vice-chair of the Assiniboine Park Conservancy.

"Don has played a crucial role in the bold transformation of Assiniboine Park that is currently underway," said Margaret Redmond, APC president and CEO. "We are so pleased to have him as a part of our team and to see him recognized in this way."

"We are thrilled to be able to honour Don and thank him for his many years of outstanding leadership, both at Bison Transport and in the many community-based organizations in which he has played a leading role," said Jessiman.

Streuber and his family were officially recognized at the announcement with the naming of the Streuber Family Children's Garden.

"This is definitely a fitting recognition for a man who genuinely cares about people," Penner said. "We are very excited to see the Streuber family and in particular, Don's efforts and contributions, recognized in this manner." □

## CANADA

# What does it take to become a Best Fleet to Drive For?

## Popular seminar series shares best practices of competition winners

By James Menzies

Becoming one of the best fleets to drive for is a lofty goal for any trucking company, but thanks to the emergence of the Best Fleets to Drive For competition, there's now a roadmap that can be followed to get there.

The Best Fleets to Drive For contest has been run by the Truckload Carriers Association and administered by Canadian online training firm CarriersEdge for four years now. Each year, CarriersEdge president Mark Murrell hits the road for a cross-Canada speaking tour during which he shares the best practices (and some of the worst) employed by carriers that were nominated through the program. The seminar series is hosted by Marsh Canada and sponsored by Kee Human Resources and *Truck West*. This year, it visited 10 Canadian cities and was attended by hundreds of fleet managers, company owners and recruiters.

To participate in the competition, a carrier must be nominated by one of its drivers. From there, Murrell and his team conduct an exhaustive evaluation of the nominated fleet and the programs and services they provide to their drivers. Drivers are surveyed to determine what it's really like to work there. This year, more than 80 fleets were nominated for the award and 51 went through the data collection process. More than 3,200 drivers and owner/operators were surveyed and in the end, 20 fleets were named Best Fleets to Drive For. From those, two grand champions were chosen: Paramount Freight Systems was named Best Fleet for Owner/Operators and Motor Carrier Service was named Best Fleet for Company Drivers. Seven of this year's finalists are based in Canada.

Only two companies have made the cut in each of the four years the contest has been run: Don Hummer Trucking out of Oxford, Iowa and Saskatoon, Sask.-based Yanke Group. Murrell offered some comforting words to carriers that have dropped off the list in past years: "I really want to underscore, not making the list isn't any sort of failure," he said. "There are about 50,000 fleets in North America that are eligible to be part of this program. Just getting nominated says a lot about a fleet."

So, what are some of the common characteristics among the fleets that consistently perform well in the program?

### Getting started

Murrell said a lot can be learned about a trucking company over the phone when they're first notified they've been nominated. Some carriers welcome the opportunity to participate and assign high-ranking executives to assist with the evaluation process while others are

dismissive and hand the project off to a junior representative who isn't armed with all the necessary information.

"The companies that take this stuff seriously put a senior person onto it, in a lot of cases it's the owner of the company," Murrell said. "Other companies assign a junior person who doesn't have the full information. That tells us a lot about the company and how seriously they're focused on HR issues."

When phone interviews are conducted, Murrell said interviewers are paying attention to the background environment. Is it noisy and chaotic? Or is the environment relaxed and calm? During the phone interview, fleets are asked a wide range of questions, but Murrell said four so-called "magic questions" are most telling. They include:

**How does the company ensure its total work environment meets the needs of its drivers?:** This question covers compensation, benefits, the presence of a career path and other factors that create a positive workplace experience.

**How would you describe your hiring process?:** Here, Murrell said evaluators often find two distinctly different approaches. Some recruiters are "optimists," giving a new hire every chance to succeed through mentoring and other initiatives. Others, Murrell describes as "pessimists," working from a checklist of items that makes a prospective hire unemployable and actively seeking out their shortcomings. "They just move from one failure point to the next," Murrell explained. "The people looking for those failures tend to find them."

**How do you ensure your drivers are not subjected to, or contribute to, an inappropriate, hostile or toxic work environment?:** Here, Murrell said, managers tend to gravitate towards one direction or another, focusing on either protecting employees from abuse or ensuring they aren't perpetrators of abuse themselves. Companies that have focused more on dealing with abusive employees may have a work environment where such behaviour is widespread, which can set off alarms.

**How many training days, on average, do drivers receive each year?:**

"We ask this question because everybody wants their drivers to stick around, but traditionally trucking has put most of its training in the first year," Murrell explained. But this appears to be changing, he

"We need a program to help everyone get a laptop and printer on board every truck. It is the wireless age and all of us are part of it so let's make it so all can use it too."

"We need a plan to help the economically stressed to buy laptops and electronics."

"Shuttle service from terminal to a decent restaurant."

"Someone warm and fuzzy to talk to when you get lonely, tired or just sick of the bull."

"I believe that O/Os should be able to carry a concealed weapon on their person if they have the proper training and have a permit."

"Escort service."

"Would like to see online safety courses offered at no expense to drivers."

"UNRESTRICTED Internet to access social networking sites such as Facebook. Drivers who are away from their families for months at a time rely on sites like these to stay connected to their families."

fuel surcharges).

Murrell said more fleets are starting to pay their owner/operators a percentage of gross revenue rather than straight mileage.

Drivers continue to complain about running unpaid miles. Carriers have employed all kinds of tricks, such as paying from city limit-to-city limit or zip code-to-zip code. This cheats drivers out of pay for all the inner-city miles they run at either end of the delivery. Surveyed drivers also expressed frustration over tarping pay – or lack thereof – and some said that pay reductions put into place during the recession have yet to be restored, even as freight volumes have recovered.

Murrell also has noticed that fleets are becoming more sophisticated in how they track performance and distribute bonuses. Bonus struc-

tures used to be based on the number of miles run without an accident and/or fuel consumption. Now, Murrell said, fleets are measuring driver performance across a broader spectrum of indicators.

"This year, we saw the emergence of a much more comprehensive package of metrics used to calculate bonuses," he said. Among the common considerations are: miles; collisions; infractions; idle-time; mpg; customer feedback; on-time percentage; and participation in safety meetings and training programs.

"It recognizes that there's more to being a driver than driving a lot of miles every quarter and doing it safely," Murrell said. "It allows people to participate in a bonus program even if they have problems in one area. It's not an all-or-nothing bonus. It's less of a bonus and more performance-based pay."

In most cases, Murrell said, fleets are using driver scorecards to measure performance and determine bonuses. Drivers seem to appreciate the new approach, he added.

What else do drivers like? Perhaps surprising to many readers, drivers who are provided with electronic logs tend to consider it a benefit.

"The drivers using electronic logs have great things to say about it," Murrell said. Drivers seem to be getting more comfortable with technology and many voiced their desire for in-cab computers and printers. Drivers want unfettered access to the Internet, so they can use social networking sites like Facebook to stay in touch with family, surveys indicated.

One item that caught Murrell's

### WHAT DRIVERS WANT

### ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

### Trends and innovations

Conducting the carrier interviews, and also the driver surveys, has provided program administrators with a gold mine of information that can be used to identify trends on everything from driver compensation to employee benefits. This year, the survey found company drivers working for nominated fleets averaged a salary of \$53,673 and ran 112,000 miles. Owner/operators grossed an average of \$162,985 and averaged 116,000 miles.

Year to year, Murrell said, the income of drivers and owner/operators hasn't changed much. Company drivers saw their earnings go up only 1% compared to the previous year while owner/operators enjoyed 5.5% higher income compared to the year before. (Some of that, however, could be attributed to higher

## WHAT DRIVERS LIKE

“Thanks to the coaching of the on site nurse, I have lost almost three inches off my waistline.”

“Loving the electronic logs now.”

“The company provides a car to its drivers so they are able to run errands while they are at the terminal either on their personal time or if the truck is getting work done to it.”

attention was that even at the best fleets to drive for, turnover remains an issue.

Of the surveyed drivers, 28% had been with their current company for less than a year and more than two-thirds of drivers had been there for less than five years.

Another trend that emerged this year was that driver wellness has suddenly become a top of mind issue.

“It really changed this year,” Murrell said. “In the past, wellness was one of those things a few people were doing, the outliers. Wellness entered the mainstream this year and pretty much everybody we talked to has some kind of wellness program brought in for their drivers.”

Programs include everything from providing on-site nurses to installing inverters so drivers can have a fridge and microwave in their truck. Interestingly, many drivers voiced a desire for an in-ground swimming pool at their terminal so they could get some exercise and swim some laps between loads.

“This year, everybody wants indoor pools,” Murrell said.

Another trend Murrell noticed was that the best fleets are becoming more accommodating to minority drivers. Celadon Canada, which made the Top 20 list, has a large contingent of Muslim drivers, so it serves Muslim-friendly food at company events, takes care not to dispatch loads of cigarettes and alcohol to them, and even has tailored its owner/operator lease programs so that they don't have to pay interest, which is a violation of Sharia law.

Despite the positive trends, Murrell said some negative perceptions continue to linger, such as the notion women can't handle flatdeck work or that drivers don't understand technology.

### A Best Fleet: Motor Carrier Service

During his presentation, Murrell highlighted some of the programs that made the winning fleets so successful. Motor Carrier Service (MCS) won the Best Fleet for Company Drivers award, mostly by taking common programs and tweaking them for their own needs.

For instance, rather than issuing a fuel bonus only to the top-performing drivers, the company pays \$100 per month to every driver that averages seven mpg or better. The top five performers receive an additional \$100, but there's no limit to how many drivers can earn their bonus.

“They don't have to be the best, they just have to hit a certain threshold,” Murrell said. About a third of MCS's drivers hit the mark each month. MCS also pays drivers \$200 for every clean inspection, as well as \$25 to the mechan-

ic for both the tractor and the trailer when it passes an inspection. This creates some camaraderie between driver and mechanic and has them both working towards the same goal, Murrell noted. As a result, MCS has mostly clean inspections.

When setting up a comprehensive bonus program, MCS asked the drivers what they wanted to be scored on. Drivers came back with some surprising suggestions, including attitude and cleanliness of their trucks.

MCS also has a driver liaison program, paying a bonus to longtime drivers who in turn assist newer hires with any difficulties that come up. It also hosts twice-yearly safety rodeos, where drivers put their skills on display in front of their peers in a variety of challenges. It becomes a very interactive safety meeting, Murrell noted.

MCS developed an interesting wellness program dubbed The Walk to Las Vegas. Drivers and office staff were broken into teams and then convert various physical activities into a corresponding number of steps. The first team to walk the equivalent of a trip to Las Vegas wins \$2,000.

“It gets people moving, gets them active,” said Murrell. “It also allows them to bond as a community because office staff and drivers are working together.”

### A Best Fleet: Paramount Freight Systems

Many owner/operator-based fleets are afraid to provide programs to their people, for fear of blurring the line between company driver and independent operator, which could lead to problems with the tax man. However, Murrell said progressive owner/operator fleets are able to provide programs without threatening their status as independent operators.

Paramount Freight Systems, which has won the Best Fleet for Owner/Operators award the past two years, has done just that. For starters, Paramount awards owner/operators who stay on by increasing their pay by one cent per mile each year. It also pays for all their tolls and has negotiated on behalf of its owner/operators a parts discount through a vast network of retailers. As a result, its owner/operators pay just 7% above cost for parts through select retailers.

Paramount has driver of the week, month and year programs that issue \$250, \$500 and \$1,500 rewards respectively. Paramount also has provided its O/Os with the latest in-cab

technology, including scanners and electronic logs. It also enrolls its O/Os in a CSA scorecard program so they can monitor their own safety record and be on the lookout for any false reports.

Social media is where Paramount “really shines,” Murrell said. Paramount has a Facebook page that's liked by 262 people. Owner/ops use the site to communicate with office staff in what has become a “virtual water cooler” of sorts.

Photos of company functions are uploaded to the Facebook photo albums, keeping owner/operators informed on the latest happenings. Owner/ops are also invited to upload pictures of their trucks and can win gift certificates to restaurants for the best pictures.

The by-product is that owner/

## WHAT DRIVERS DISLIKE

“Running empty miles within city limit that I have to legally log, but yet do not get paid.”

“I have had to go around my fleet manager to get problems resolved or it just doesn't happen.”

“Personally, I like the idea of dispatch ‘rolling the dice’ to see where I am going next.”

operator pride in how their equipment looks.

Paramount also uses Survey Monkey to conduct regular surveys of its drivers. This allows the company to get on top of any issues quickly. It also surveys new owner/operators when hired, to find out why they left their previous company.

“You never get good information during exit interviews but when someone's coming on-board, you get good information on why they left to make sure you don't make the same mistakes,” Murrell pointed out.

Paramount also runs a “buddy program,” which is rare among owner/operator fleets.

### Becoming a Best Fleet

Having spent four years studying the best practices of the best fleets to drive for, Murrell is in a position to identify some of their common traits. So, how do you become a Best Fleet winner? For starters, Murrell said it's important to get buy-in from top executives.

“The number one thing is to get the executive team engaged,” he said. “That's where we see the biggest difference.”

Next, he suggested fleets survey their drivers to identify areas of concern.

“You're going to find some very simple things that are easy to implement,” he said.

Murrell also advised fleets to figure out what they do best and focus on their strengths.

Fleets that lack an identity, or try to be everything to everyone, tend not to provide the greatest workplaces, he said. Murrell suggested

carriers get on top of operations to address the source of most driver complaints.

“Time after time, operations is the source of the problems,” Murrell said. “We see a lot of comments from drivers who say the company believes in this, but operations doesn't.”

Murrell also said some carriers must do a better job of informing drivers about what services and programs are available to them. Driver surveys indicate that often, drivers aren't even aware of the programs their carrier offers.

And finally, Murrell suggested that carriers set measurable objectives in order to continuously improve working conditions for drivers and owner/operators. □

## NOT How to become a 'best fleet'

Among the many great programs and initiatives run by fleets nominated into the Best Fleets to Drive For program, there are a few such programs that may have been created with the best of intentions, but questionable results.

Mark Murrell, president of CarriersEdge, which administers the competition, spoke of a couple such programs.

One carrier looking to reduce its crash costs created a profit-sharing fund and then deducted crash-related costs from the pot throughout the year. Worse, it outed the drivers responsible for any incident by posting their name and the amount of money their accident cost the fund.

“I can tell you they're a very safe fleet, but a Best Fleet to Drive For? I don't think so,” Murrell said.

Another company has set up a spot outside its driver entrance where its wrecked vehicles would be parked with a sign that said: ‘Don't let this happen to you.’ As a result, Murrell said drivers live in fear of making a mistake and having it put on display.

“Anytime you have a section of your parking lot set aside for a wreck, you're going to have a wreck,” he said. “The problem is, drivers walk by it every single time they go in and out and the problem with that is, they're not thinking ‘I'm really excited to haul some freight for these guys,’ they're thinking ‘Holy crap, I hope that's not me!’” □

## FEATURE

# They liked it so much... they bought the company!

In a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit of the trucking industry, fleet executives are often prepared to invest in the technologies that most impress them.

Entrepreneurs have always been a major force in Canadian trucking. I recently went looking for a handful of trucking executives who had invested in technology because they believed in the product. The champion of this kind of leadership has to be Leland James, the owner of Consolidated Freightways of Portland, Ore. way back in 1937. He grew tired of having his innovative suggestions ignored by truck manufacturers and decided to design and build his own truck.

James had his mechanics adapt his fleet of American-made Fageols into a new breed of vehicle, using sheet metal to fashion the cabs into the distinctive cabover engine design. These first in-house trucks were called "Freightliners," and the name stuck.

James also had his mechanics experimenting with aluminum and magnesium parts: he wanted a lighter-weight, more durable design with more power for the

mountains. The first aluminum-covered COE was built in 1940 and weighed 2,000 lbs less than its closest competitor.

A later partnership with White Motors greatly expanded the market and White Freightliner became a household name. Consolidated Freightways soldiered on for three quarters of a century but finally closed up shop in 2002. But the truck brand never faltered and has been safely in the hands of Daimler Corp. for decades.

Innovation is a big part of trucking. A smart operator knows a good idea when he or she sees one. Twenty years ago, lightning struck Ross Mackie and one of his employees, Steve Shermeto, while they were hauling Formula 1 racing cars from Montreal to Mexico City for the Mexican Grand Prix.

Mackie is a stickler for cleanliness and the sand and dirt that got into the cabs during the trip was a constant annoyance. Shermeto had the brainwave of mounting an upside down brush somewhere on the truck steps or tanks. Mackie immediately liked the idea and challenged Shermeto and another trucker friend Steve Floyd, who drove for Maritime-Ontario, to come up with some drawings. From there he encouraged Shermeto to make up a prototype and guided him in starting the new enterprise.

During one of their group discussions the partners hit on the name "Boot Brush" and the rest is history. Ross provided some of the start-up capital and the part-



On-Road Editor

HARRY RUDOLFS

nership between Mackie, Shermeto and Shermeto's mother Marg, remains in place to this day.

Today Boot Brushes can be seen on the steps of trucks all over North America. "We've sold over 500,00 units so far," says Mackie. "We just got an order from a Pac-car dealership in Chile."

The partners continue to distribute Boot Brushes to truck stops and truck dealerships across the continent. "We sell them to Volvo and Navistar dealers, too, but Pac-car remains our biggest customer," says Mackie.

Scott Smith, president of JD Smith and Sons of Vaughan, Ont., has had a long-time interest in fuel-saving technologies and sustainability, encouraging

progressive shifting and best practices years ahead of the industry curve. In 2007 JD Smith Transport received the Supply Chain and Logistics Association's Green Supply Chain Award for setting and exceeding standards for environmental friendliness.

At the same time shippers and manufacturers were getting keenly interested in "greening" the supply chain. Perhaps as a result of the award, Smith was invited to sit on panels and discussion groups.

"That's how we met the EnerMotion people," says Smith. "They approached us as a potential partner that might be interested in helping to develop their product. It seemed like a perfect fit."

The product Smith refers to is a hybrid auxiliary power unit (APU) that runs directly off the waste heat generated by the engine. Up to 30% of the energy produced by a truck's engine is lost through heat that escapes from the exhaust pipe. EnerMotion's shop in Bolton, Ont. has developed a prototype that recaptures that energy and can run a truck's heating, cooling and bunk appliances and lighting for up to 10 hours without consuming any fuel.

Smith liked what he saw and jumped in, investing in the company itself, and providing a truck for field-testing purposes. "I see this as a potential future benefit and another way to eliminate idling, among other things. This is a credible product with credible people behind it," he says.

This is not the only project



**CUSTOMER AND DEALER:** Steve Ondejko found a trailer fairing that he liked, and inked a deal to become its Canadian distributor.

Smith has gotten behind. He's also closely involved in the testing and preliminary data capture of a new pallet that's neither wood or plastic, that can be re-used dozens of times, and comes equipped with a Radio Frequency Identifier (RFI) chip so products can be tracked and scanned on the pallet as they move through the shipping stream. And that's not all, Scott is also instrumental in the development of a new kind of portable gas can with some "revolutionary" features.

Trailer aero-skirts have been in fashion for years among the leading fleets in Canada. But finding the right design and model is often a case of trial and error. Diligent fleet managers thoroughly research a component before making a commitment.

"We were looking to equip our fleet with trailer skirts and we did an evaluation of several types," says Steve Ondejko president of Onfreight Logistics in Tecumseh, Ont. "For our kind of work, where we service a lot of drop down docks, the Aerofficient system was the most durable and cost-effective."

Aerofficient features a hinged system on the skirts which allows them to fold inward or outward as they encounter a foreign object or steep slope. They also supply a sliding panel kit which can be trimmed for the best efficiency when the bogies are moved. Ondejko was so impressed with the product that he sat down with the president of Aerofficient for three hours. At the end of the meeting Ondejko had been offered and accepted a partnership with three other parties for the Canadian distribution rights.

Thus, Aerofficient Canada was born. The skirts are manufactured in nearby Livonia, Mich., just across the river from Onfreight in Windsor, Ont. One advantage to the Aerofficient system is that the product can be installed, even on a loaded trailer, in a fraction of the time from the competitors' brands, he claims. Ondejko is currently setting up a dealer network across Canada and training a team to install the wings on-location. He currently has Aerofficient trailer skirts installed on 40 of his trailers.

Many entrepreneurial side projects were borne out of frustration with existing products. Dave Tyrchniewicz, owner of Turk Enterprises with about 50 trucks and trailers in Winnipeg, Man., was not happy with the brand of underskirts he'd installed on his trailers.

"They weren't getting the mile-

age savings that were promised," he says. "And we found that there were a lot of maintenance issues with them. It seemed like they had to be repaired or straightened every month. I'm fussy about how my trucks look; I won't let them run down the road with a warped or bent underskirt."

To the rescue came the Smart-Truck's Aerodynamic Undertray system – a radically different aero configuration that uses an undercarriage pan to reduce drag, leaving the sides of the trailer completely open. Tyrchniewicz tried the product and liked the results.

"Trailer skirts might work in perfect conditions in a wind tunnel, but out on the prairies we get a lot of cross-winds. The Smart-Truck undertray works in all conditions. Another advantage is that it makes it easier for the driver to do his circle check, and we don't get the build-up of salt and dirt under the trailer as happens with skirts."

When Tyrchniewicz realized that SmartTruck didn't have a plan for Canada, he went into negotiations with the company and came away with the Canadian distribution rights. He also started a new company, Northern Aerodynamic Solutions, to market the product to Canada companies, which operates separately from his trucking concern.

The next step was to set up a dealer network across the country. He currently has 15 dealerships from coast-to-coast who can sell and service the products. "We're still a little light in the Maritimes but we're working on it."

Tyrchniewicz's biggest sale so far was selling 250 units to Ocean Trailers in western Canada. "When you believe in a product and can prove it works, it pretty well sells itself," he says. □



**MORE THAN A TEST FLEET:** Scott Smith of JD Smith and Sons, has bought into this Hyper APU powered by waste heat recovery.

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## ALBERTA

# AMTA's organizational structure revamped to provide more consistency

**Continued from page 1**

whereas “normally it’s about 175.” Wilson speculated upon a couple of reasons for the lowered attendance, though acknowledging that no hard data exists as of yet.

“One is because we moved the date,” he said, referring to previous conferences’ late April scheduling, “and this year it was a week later. And it was a little bit more money at the Banff Springs.”

The Banff Springs was chosen, Wilson said, after the organizing committee looked into other possibilities. “I think they kicked around Kananaskis, Lake Louise, I think even Jasper was tossed around,” he said, “but the Banff Springs stuck out and they wanted to try that.”

The popularity of the Banff Springs, however, meant the AMTA was a little less flexible in what it could do. For instance, it had to provide a firm head count earlier than at the previous venue and there wasn’t much room for dicker-ing on price.

“They aren’t hungry, and we are a comparatively small group,” Wilson said. “In a case like that, you find the people a little harder to deal with. But on the whole people were pretty pleased, and it was a good general consensus we got.”

Other than the venue, it was pretty much business as usual for the AMTA gang, with business sessions dealing with the hiring of foreign workers and fatigue management, as well as the Annual General Meeting, plenty of fine dining and – as this year’s theme for the Friday night celebration – a toga party that must have made other Banff Springs guests wonder who was “Roman” around those hallowed Rocky Mountain halls.

The big news out of the association’s AGM, which was otherwise straightforward, was a change to the structure and terms of the executive.

“What they ended up passing was that there will now be four on the executive,” Wilson said, “so there’s now a v.p. position, a senior vice-president, then president and past-president.”

What that means is a four-year commitment for the executive members, instead of three, but there was method behind the apparent madness.

“The thinking was to involve basically all four of those (people) in meetings with government,” Wilson explained, “so you have consistency there – even though you’re not in the president’s chair for two years right from the start, you’re involved in the decision-making process and the exposure to the government people, so you have that longer term of talking and meeting with those people which is probably good for building a relationship.”

The change elevated Manitoulin’s Rob Eskins to the position of vice-president, rather than his previous gig as director-at-large, as the association chose to maintain the same number of bodies on the board rather than expand it by one to accommodate the change in executive structure.

Wilson said that at one point they had thought about increasing the terms to two years, but “that would

have meant a six-year commitment – two years incoming, two years as president, two years past-president – and people didn’t find that inviting for a volunteer position,” he said.

At the Saturday morning AGM, outgoing president Carl Rosenau paid tribute to his successor, Dan Duckering, noting that “a couple of weeks ago he delivered his sixth baby at home,” which may indicate that the new president knows all about making deliveries even when they don’t involve trucks.

As for the AMTA itself, Rosenau noted the mortgage burning for the Calgary Centre of Excellence – a feat he said took them less than three years to accomplish and which was performed via a short ceremony at a large fireplace just outside the business sessions, a good test for the Banff Springs’ fire control systems.

“We’re now moving on to Edmonton, to a new Centre of Excellence,” he told the delegates, inviting members to partake of the facility for driver training, computer labs, etc.

Rosenau also spoke to increased participation in the Certificate of Recognition program, noting that in 2010 there were only about 720 CORs, “so we gained about 100 people over the course of the year, which is tremendous.”

He also reported that the AMTA’s Safety Toolbox, a “safety program in a box” online tool covered in *Truck West* a few months back, was proving to be a valuable resource. “It’s unbelievable what you have to go through (to develop a safety program) without knowing what you’re doing,” he said, “but with the Safety Toolbox, it points you in the right direction for every little thing you need.”

He also noted that the Partners in Compliance program now boasts some 9,000 vehicles wearing the bright yellow PIC plates and encouraged more carriers to get on-board – if for no other reason than financial self-interest.

“We think it’s about \$5 per scale passed (PIC membership) saves a company, so the grand total of money saved by PIC carriers is about \$1.5 million a year. They also get to pull their own abstracts any time they want.”

The outgoing president admitted there’s more to be done, however, noting that one ongoing issue is hours-of-service.

“We had a meeting with the Minister just before he didn’t get re-elected,” Rosenau said in a voice tinged with irony, “and he was really amazed when we explained to him that when a police officer pulls you over he has to have two sets of rule books – federal and provincial – and we’ve been trying to hammer home that there needs to be one set of rules.”

Other issues Rosenau touched upon included super-single tires. “If not for the (delay and personnel changes caused by the) provincial election,” he said, “I’m more than confident we would have had them.”

Incoming president Duckering welcomed and introduced the new board (see this month’s Brayings, pg. 38) and, noting that the year past had been a “phenomenal



**CELEBRATING THE BEST:** Pictured from left to right: Don Wilson, AMTA executive director; Road Knights Dennis Hokanson, Darwin Clark and Robert Wells; Dan Duckering, AMTA president; and Carl Rosenau, AMTA past-president. For info on AMTA award winners, see Jim’s Brayings, pg. 38.

ride.” Duckering predicted the new, four-year executive term would position the association much better with provincial government officials because of its increased continuity. “That’s one of the things we wanted to focus on,” he said.

Duckering also addressed a petition initiated and being circulated at the event by Hill Brothers’ Bob Hill, which is aimed at helping get a ‘skilled profession’ designation for truckers. Crediting his Edmonton terminal’s receptionist with having come up with the pitch, he asked “If you’re a grandfather, do you want your grandkids on the highway with unskilled workers?”

“I encourage you guys,” Duckering said, “it doesn’t matter what angle you look at it from, it makes sense. If we want to drive the standard up in our industry we have to take a leading role in that.”

That segued into Duckering’s comment that one of the things about which he’s most proud for the association is that it doesn’t “stand around saying ‘This is how it’s always been done;’ we say ‘This is what needs to be done so let’s find a way to make that happen.’”

Duckering also echoed Rosenau’s earlier call for members to support the associated trades, noting that “these guys support our businesses, they support our association and we need to give them some reciprocal business.”

The new AMTA president also vowed, tongue in check, not to be as hard on elected officials as his predecessors had been.

“We’ve been through a few of them,” he noted with a grin, “and hopefully we can give them a longer time in office.”

As usual, several awards were handed out over the course of the conference, including Driver of the Year and Safety Person of the Year. See this issue’s Jim’s Brayings for a breakdown of what hardware went to whom.

Despite the AGM and the business sessions, the weekend wasn’t all work, of course. As mentioned, togas were the dress item of choice – by many but by no means all of the attendees – for

the Friday night party, which prompted Wilson to express surprise at just how popular the dress-up event proved to be. “It was phenomenal,” he said.

Wilson also noted that the feedback from the annual spousal program – where the better halves can hang out while the worse halves are occupied with the business sessions – was also top notch.

“They had the typical nail painting and some dancing stuff and then they were actually making togas there, too,” he said, “so that might have helped encourage people to dress up for the evening.”

The AMTA’s Road Knights were also re-introduced to the conference crowd and gave an update on their gig. This quartet of drivers has been going around the province over the past couple of years, trying to help spur the notion among youth that the trucking industry can be a heckuva career if they’d care to look into it.

That’s only part of it, though. Their visits to community groups such as high schools, career fairs and business clubs also deliver information about the economic importance of the industry, as well as tips on sharing the road safely with trucks. They also make media appearances to push the concepts.

The initial four Road Knights came from Trimac and Bison, two from each (Darwin Clark and Dennis Hokanson from Trimac and Rob Wells and Craig Gavel from Bison), prompting the AMTA to acknowledge those carriers for their commitment to the cause.

Taking it one step further, Rosenau doffed his virtual hat to the Road Knights themselves during his address to the AGM, saying “Man, these guys have done an excellent job representing the AMTA and getting the message out to the schools and the public.”

The weekend wrapped up with the President’s Banquet on Saturday night, a semi-formal annual event that this year saw a touch of salsa dancing inflicted upon unsuspecting delegates. It was the capstone to what Wilson deemed a successful event and a successful experiment with the new venue.

“I think every indication is probably to return to the Springs next year, and we can get the late April weekend then as well,” he said. Wilson also noted that the feedback from those on-hand was very positive.

To paraphrase Rick Blaine from the end of *Casablanca*, “This could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.” □

# Twinning of Hwy. 63 discussed at AMTA annual general meeting

By Jim Bray

**BANFF, Alta.** – Alberta's booming economy means there's also a boom in road and infrastructure projects designed to help keep the province's motor vehicles flowing freely, or at least efficiently.

That was according to an update the province's Transportation Ministry outlined at the recent Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA) Business Conference in Banff. Speaking to the assembled multitude of industry folks, Alberta Transport's director of transport engineering, Kim Durdle (representing the then-Ministerless department) brought the delegates up to date with a lot of the stuff going on across the province.

Noting that the Ministry continues to work with the industry on such issues as super-single tires and the LCV program, Durdle pointed out that everything was on hold temporarily until the new minister is appointed – an appointment made shortly after the event when former Calgary alderman, mayoralty candidate and new PC MLA Ric McIvor was given the portfolio.

Still, there was plenty for Durdle to report, including an issue she said was near and dear to her: an overall transportation strategy for Alberta.

"We're currently in the process of developing a long-term multimodal – that's road, rail, air, public transportation – strategy that supports the province's competitiveness in the global economy, and a high quality of life for Albertans' environmental communities," she said.

Durdle explained the strategy is expected to secure "long-term prosperity for Albertans by promoting access to new markets and improving competitiveness in the global economy." She made a sop to the politically correct side of things when she said the strategy is also meant to "support families and communities by providing transportation options for smart growth, livable communities and active living," as well as increasing Alberta's "stewardship" by "reducing the footprint of future transportation options on the environment," which may help keep the James Camerons of the world quiet till they find another cause du jour.

On a more mundane but perhaps more practical note to the trucking industry, Durdle also acknowledged that the strategy is meant to "improve transportation safety and security while reducing costly bottlenecks and congestion, and promote collaboration of the transportation economy across the province and in Western Canada."

As for what's happening right now in the grand scheme of things, Durdle said "the department is preparing and assembling the resources to move ahead and will be working with our partners and stakeholders over the coming year to develop the strategy." She expects an initial draft to be available in 2013.

Durdle also gave updates on some of the many construction projects underway or planned around the province, including what is perhaps the most controver-



**IMPROVEMENTS COMING:** The death trap known as Hwy. 63, where large industrial traffic mixes with four-wheelers with sometimes deadly consequences, is getting some attention from the province.

sial one right now, the death trap also known as Hwy. 63 – the road to Fort McMurray.

"I guess we all know the Fort McMurray area has experienced tremendous growth in recent years and that has caused much traffic congestion and safety concerns within the urban service area and Hwy. 63," Durdle said. She noted that some major works are underway within Fort McMurray "to alleviate some of these concerns," and pointed out the planned (and, some say, much overdue) twinning of Hwy. 63 south of Fort McMurray to Hwy. 55.

The good news is that some of these major projects are nearing completion. The Fort McMurray interchange at Thickwood Boulevard and Confederation Way, Durdle said, should be finished this year, while the Steinhauer Bridge replacement is expected to be completed in 2013.

Not as close to completion are the Grant McEwan bridge lowering and the Franklin tunnel, which she said should be finished in 2014, while the Parson's Creek interchange construction is slated to start later this year, with completion anticipated in 2015.

As for the twinning of Hwy. 63, "approximately 240 kms of twinning is required between Fort McMurray and Hwy. 55," Durdle noted, adding that "17 kilometres have already been twinned and are open to traffic with another 36 kilometres expected to be complete in 2013." Durdle said the estimated cost to complete the twinning is approximately a billion dollars but she had no word about when the job would be completed.

Durdle also touched upon the north-south trade corridor from Alaska to Mexico. She noted that about 1,000 clicks have been twinned and are open to traffic, and that a section from west of Beaverlodge to the B.C. border may be twinned as well. She also noted that the twinning of the high-

way through the Sturgeon Lake reserve is expected to be complete in the next few years. "We know that's a big LCV issue," she said, noting that the design process on the Beaverlodge bypass is ongoing and that construction will begin "when funding is available."

Moving on to the province's major metropolitan areas, Durdle announced that "in the Edmonton area, we have 90% of the Anthony Hendy (ring road) already open for traffic. The first segment, in the southwest, was delivered using traditional design, bid, build procurement and two segments, in the southeast and northwest, we delivered using the P3 – public private partnership – procurement and are now in operation." The final segment, she said, is "in the final stages of P3 procurement and construction is scheduled to start this summer."

As for Calgary's Stoney Trail ring road, "we have about 45% currently open to traffic," she said, noting that, as with Edmonton's version, "the first segment, in the NW, was delivered using a traditional design, bid, build procurement and two segments were delivered using P3 procurement. These are in the Northeast, which is completed and in operation, and in the Southeast, which is still under construction." The final segment, which is meant to serve the southwest, is "currently under review due to land acquisition issues or selection of alternate alignments."

Which means those pesky native reserve land issues continue to stymie development.

Durdle also spoke of the Transportation Safety Services Division, noting that the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch has been moved out from under the Transportation umbrella and is now under the department of the Solicitor General and Public Security. "Despite that," Durdle was quick to point out, "our relationship hasn't changed and the minister says it's

business as usual."

She noted that a project is underway at the branch where "they're testing what they call smart roadside technology," she thinks will be very beneficial to the trucking industry.

"I know over the past years there's always been a concern about inspections at roadside that don't get recorded," she said, pointing out that the smart technology uses cameras at specific vehicle inspection stations that are capable of reading a truck's licence plate, dangerous goods placard and the like, and "can transmit these images to the officer in the scale house." Durdle said the technology also allows for thermal image snapshots that can "help identify any mechanical deficiencies on the vehicle."

The branch is also arranging to have its patrol vehicles outfitted to allow an officer to capture inspection information directly into a database, with the information available immediately to the department and the carriers.

"Hopefully this will speed things up," Durdle said, "and given that the information is captured electronically and won't be hand-written documents, it will reduce any errors and concerns that have been identified in the past."

Durdle also brought AMTA members up to date with the province's multi-jurisdictional program, which she described as "our one-stop shop for permitting."

The system development is now complete, she said, and they are now "focusing on implementation and bringing all the municipalities on-board." The scheme is designed to streamline the permitting process across the province so that "you'll be able to just come to the province and get a permit that'll not only be good for provincial highways but county highways, too, so there'll be no more making two, three, four phone calls."

That, Durdle said, will offer a huge benefit for everyone involved. □

## OPINION

# A cautionary tale down Mexico way

In 1992 the governments of Canada, the US and Mexico signed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), creating one of the largest trading blocs in the world. Two years later, when the agreement came into force, the CEO of the first carrier to haul freight from Canada into Mexico, hailed that country as the “the next land of opportunity.”

Fast-forward a couple of decades and we find precious few drivers willing to take advantage of that opportunity. With more than 10,000 trucks hijacked last year on Mexico’s roadways, and an average of 47 people murdered there every day in 2011, crossing the Rio Grande is a scary prospect.

And yet, hundreds of Canadian and American truck drivers travel regularly in and out of the Mexico/US border zone to grab a share of surface transportation trade between the three countries that’s reached a record monthly value of \$86 billion.

Most of these drivers are seasoned veterans who are well aware of the dangers, and keep their wits about them to protect themselves and their loads. They’re especially on guard against become unwitting mules for drug dealers.

Less well known is the risk unsuspecting truckers face in being caught up in the crime of human smuggling.

They’re certainly aware of the enormous problem of illegal migrants crossing the Mexico/US border. Horrifying stories of “illegals” found concealed in vehicles make sensational headlines, often because of the



Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

appalling conditions in which they’re discovered.

What makes headlines far less often are stories where the driver of the vehicle is a victim as well; completely unaware that he or she has a stowaway on-board. After a Manitoba-based OBAC member became one such victim last month, I asked *Canada Calling* listeners if they’d ever heard of such a thing. My phone hasn’t stopped ringing.

Along the southern border, it’s not unusual for drivers to find they have cargo on-board they weren’t counting on.

Most often, the stowaways are discovered at a truck stop, hidden under tarps, inside trailers, and tucked into places you wouldn’t think a body or three could fit.

By the time they hop a northbound truck, these desperate people have already crossed the porous Mexican border, usually with the help of a facilitator or “coyote,” and need safe transportation past some 22,000 US Border Patrol agents who, backed up by drug-sniffing dogs and a plethora of other enforcement folks, are authorized to check vehicles within 100 miles of the border.

Discovering stowaways is disturbing, but if they’re found by the drivers themselves before they reach a check-

point, that’s usually the end of it.

Not so for our Manitoba driver. After loading near Edinburg, Texas, he stopped at the Flying J, went inside to grab his scale ticket, then headed out. At the checkpoint a few miles down the road he was greeted by a Border Patrol agent and a very excited dog. When the BP folks climbed up the side of his truck, his first thought was that someone had stashed drugs in his sleeper.

He watched in amazement as two terrified Mexican teenagers – a boy and a girl who had been tucked into the space on top of his sleeper, behind his roof faring – scrambled down. He was even more amazed at what happened next.

His truck and trailer were seized, he was stripped of his belongings, fingerprinted, and tossed in a cell where he was questioned for the next two hours.

The most frustrating thing, he told me, was that he was completely in the dark about what was happening to him. Could he make a call to his carrier? Absolutely not. Was he being arrested? No, he was being “processed.” Was he being charged? He’s “under investigation.”

Armed only with a piece of paper he signed acknowledging that his truck and trailer had been returned to him, it was a nerve-wracking trip home for our driver. And it didn’t get any better at the Canadian border. After checking his paperwork and scanning his passport, the CBSA agent asked a curious question: “Did you have any problems on this trip?”

He told his story, hoping the Canadian agent might shed some light on his ordeal. Not our department. Have a nice day.

Back in Canada, our driver called the US Customs and Border Protection folks at his usual border crossing in North Dakota, trying to determine his status in the computer system, and if he might experience any difficulty gaining entry or travelling in the US? Maybe, maybe not, they tell him. It’s an open investigation – a Homeland Security issue, and Homeland Security doesn’t answer any questions.

We’re also having trouble finding Canadian officials who even believe this is happening. While they’re a bit more sympathetic than their US counterparts, they’re certainly not very helpful.

The reaction of companies these drivers work for is also interesting. Some would really rather not know about it, and they *really* don’t want the Border Patrol to know about it. Other carriers take immediate steps to protect their drivers, by blocking any possible access points on the truck and continually reminding them to be aware, and to be vigilant, when they’re travelling in the Mexico/US border zone.

Awareness and vigilance – good advice if you find yourself down that way. Hopefully, our Manitoba driver will soon get the answers he needs to make sure he’s not an “illegal” himself. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Are you stowing away this advice? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll free 888-794-9990.

## SAFETY

# The fight against fatigue begins with a trip plan

Discussions about a shipment often touch on little more than pick-up and delivery times, details about the freight, and ultimate destinations. The related scheduling efforts?

These are limited to calculating distances, assuming an average speed of 70-80 km/h, and asking about the status of logbooks.

Drivers are left to manage every hour of service along the way.

But fleet operations teams who search for a little more information can help drivers establish the detailed trip plans that create a better balance between customer demands, hours-of-service regulations, and the need to rest.

It is a process that begins with open conversations between dispatchers and drivers.

After all, a surprising number of challenges emerge because of simple misunderstandings.

A driver who is told to return to a fleet yard “as soon as possible” after delivering a load may assume he is being told to make the trip at all costs – even if that means bending hours-of-service rules or driving when fatigued. Clearly stated company policies can tell him otherwise.

Meanwhile, a dispatcher who assumes that an experienced driver will recognize an approaching limit on driving time may forget that the driver’s last training session was based



Ask the Expert

KEVIN DUTCHAK

on an old version of the regulations. Specific information will leave nothing to chance.

Ongoing conversations can also help to uncover bad habits like the extended coffee breaks or delayed departures that conspire against the most reasonable delivery schedules.

Consider the length of every lunch break as an example. Hours-of-service rules clearly define minimum rest periods, but drivers are responsible for deciding how long a break might last.

Someone who chooses to spend three hours at a truck stop might technically be leaving enough time to reach a destination, but they may also be consuming the time that was built into the schedule to offset unexpected traffic jams, delays related to road construction, bad weather, or the need for an extended rest when feeling truly fatigued.

Suggestions about specific departure times can make a difference, too.

A trucker who tries to cross the Canada-US border when there is less than an hour of available driving time could certainly be squeezed into an

hours-of-service violation if there is an unexpected delay.

And any hopes of staying at a particular truck stop will involve looking beyond the hours it will take to reach the destination, and consider the time of day when the related parking spaces tend to be filled. Otherwise, the off-duty time may need to be spent on the shoulder of a road, far away from the environment that can ensure a more restful sleep.

Dispatchers who are informed about ongoing construction delays, collisions, or other time-crunching factors will even be able to share the details with other drivers in the fleet, and plan future routes accordingly.

Of course, shippers and receivers have a role in the trip planning process as well.

Operations personnel who commit to working with their customers can often address a number of challenges, ensuring that freight continues to arrive safely and on time.

Yes, this may be the era of just-in-time deliveries, but there is no secret that delays continue to be a fact of life. A few small changes can make a big difference in the impact these delays can have at any loading dock.

Drivers are often expected to sit close to a radio during any delay, waiting for instructions on when to head to the next available loading bay.

Receivers who become true part-

ners in a trip planning process might be able to find a way to allow delayed drivers to climb into the sleeper for a defined period of time, creating an opportunity for some real rest.

And clear directions to secure parking areas could certainly offer a better alternative to situations in which drivers are told to move their equipment when the lines of a logbook dictate that it is time to park for a rest.

Trucking is a business, and freight must continue to move. Refined schedules or delivery procedures can also require changes to a corporate culture. But those who embrace the idea of trip planning will be able to help ensure that freight is protected, drivers are rested, and every highway becomes a little safer.

They are the plans that should help everyone to sleep a little bit easier. □

– This month’s expert is Kevin Dutchak, risk services specialist with Northbridge Insurance. Kevin has served the trucking industry for more than 25 years as a driver, in operations, safety, training and risk management services. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a longstanding 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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# Chasing 10 mpg



**CLOSING IN ON 10 MPG:** This Cascadia Evolution, decked out in every imaginable fuel-saving option and pulling an aerodynamic trailer, achieved 9.31 mpg in on-road testing. Daimler CEO Martin Daum says the 10 mpg truck is “not out of reach.”

## Daimler introduces Freightliner Cascadia Evolution; promises 5% fuel savings over today’s top model.

By James Menzies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Freightliner has introduced a new version of its flagship Cascadia, which it claims will be 5% more fuel-efficient than today’s version, even with all the latest aerodynamic fairings.

That makes it 7% more economical than the majority of Cascadias on the road today and 5.5% more fuel-efficient than its closest competitor, the company announced.

The 2014 Cascadia Evolution has achieved an impressive 10.67 mpg on closed circuit testing pulling an aerodynamic trailer and 9.31 mpg in over-the-road testing, the company announced during a recent unveiling.

Aerodynamic improvements were achieved through subtle front-end enhancements – so subtle in fact, the company didn’t bother covering the front end during cross-country on-road testing, as the Evolution looks very similar to today’s Cascadia. Exterior changes include: a new air dam, bumper closure, a redesigned windshield seal and a hood-to-bumper fill. Other enhancements include an improved cooling system, more aerodynamic mirrors and antennas that are integrated into the cab.

Daimler also improved upon its Detroit DD15 engine for further fuel economy gains, shedding 100 lbs and incorporating a new asymmetric turbocharger along with a new amplified common rail fuel system. Officials say the new turbo is less complex than variable geometry turbochargers and was designed specifically to work with Detroit’s DD15 EGR system.

“We examined every detail to ensure that no stone was left unturned when developing the Cascadia Evolution,” said TJ Reed, director of product marketing for Freightliner Trucks. “The result is a truck that will immediately benefit fuel economy performance and overall cost

of ownership.”

Freightliner has assembled an ultra-fuel efficient spec’ that includes: wide base tires, wheel covers and the new Detroit automated transmission in a 6x2 configuration, and it was this truck that yielded the greatest fuel savings. However, when the truck becomes available in 2013, customers will still have the option of spec’ing Cummins engines, Eaton transmissions and Meritor axles if they so choose.

“But the most fuel efficient combination will always be the captive one,” said Daimler Trucks North America president and CEO Martin Daum, speaking of the combination of a Detroit engine, axles and transmission.

The Cascadia Evolution with integrated powertrain will consistently deliver a 7% fuel savings over most Cascadias on the road today, Daum said.

Mark Lampert, senior vice-president of sales and marketing, said pricing of the new model has not been finalized and while it will be priced higher than today’s Cascadia, he said the fuel savings will provide a return in short order.

“I think what we will see is the value proposition and corresponding payback for customers who choose to go with the Evolution will be quite short,” Lampert said. “It will be within a year to a year-and-a-half timeframe; the payback will be much shorter than anybody’s trade cycle.”

David Hames, general manager of marketing and strategy with Daimler, shared fuel economy test results that showed today’s Freightliner Cascadia with DD15 engine is the most fuel-efficient Class 8 vehicle available, but he admitted competitors were closing the gap with recent enhancements.

“The Cascadia with its 2011 aerodynamic improvements was still the best-in-class vehicle in terms of fuel

efficiency, but the gap was beginning to narrow and we weren’t waiting for the competition to catch us,” Hames said.

Freightliner will be delivering customer demonstration units of the Cascadia Evolution later this year with production set to begin in early 2013.

### Putting it to the test

Freightliner knew changes to its Cascadia model would provide fuel savings, but just how significant those savings would be needed to be determined through some extensive testing.

With that in mind, the company set out on its Evolution of Efficiency Tour, which pitted the new Cascadia Evolution against a “baseline” Cascadia in “first generation” EPA2010 trim.

“The Evolution of Efficiency Tour provided us with the unique opportunity to gauge the fuel efficiency of our newest truck – the Cascadia Evolution – against the Cascadia, our most fuel-efficient product to date,” explained Freightliner’s Reed. “This tour put our latest technologies and innovations to the test in real-world circumstances, and validates our continuous achievements in fuel economy over the past several years.”

The tour covered 2,400 miles between San Diego, Cal. and Gastonia, N.C. from May 17-23. The Cascadia Evolution featured a 125-inch tractor with 72-inch raised roof sleeper, the redesigned Detroit DD15 engine, Detroit tandem rear axles and an Eaton UltraShift Plus transmission. The baseline truck was a similarly spec’d Cascadia featuring only the first generation aerodynamic package.

The cross-country route covered various terrain and drivers averaged between 250 and 425 miles per day, running at a cruise speed of 62 mph grossing 76,000 lbs. Fuel usage was

measured by Automotive Testing and Development Services, using high-accuracy fuel flow meters, Freightliner officials explained.

Drivers and trailers were swapped at the midway point of each day to account for driver- and trailer-related variables.

“It was imperative that we followed very precise testing procedures to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the test,” said Al Pearson, chief engineer, product validation engineering for Daimler Trucks North America. “In comparing the vehicles, we followed a standard fuel economy test procedure as close as possible given the unique nature of this drive. Very few fuel economy tests encompass these kinds of mileages and terrain so we went to great lengths to ensure that the vehicles were operated as similarly as possible and in accordance with standardized test procedures.”

In the end, the Cascadia Evolution consumed 7% less fuel than its predecessor.

### On the track

Freightliner also tested a Cascadia Evolution that was optimally spec’d for maximum fuel savings and achieved a staggering 10.67 mpg on a closed circuit.

The test was conducted prior to the Evolution of Efficiency Tour, at the Continental Proving Grounds in Uvalde, Texas.

A Cascadia Evolution, powered by the redesigned Detroit DD15 engine, was equipped with the new Detroit DT12 automated transmission, wide-base tires, in a 6x2 drive-train configuration and pulled a specially-designed trailer fitted with numerous aftermarket fuel-saving technologies currently available. (It was expected the truck itself would get about 7.64 mpg pulling a conventional van trailer without the aerodynamic add-ons. This compares to a baseline of 7 mpg achieved by today’s Cascadia).

The truck was run over the 8.5-mile track for 1,000 miles at an average speed of 60 mph with a gross weight of 76,000 lbs, company officials said.

“The closed-track demonstration enabled us to eliminate interfering elements of a typical on-highway fuel economy test such as traffic, construction and speed variations,” said Pearson. “The use of a closed test track allows us to demonstrate pure fuel economy potential with ambient weather conditions being the only uncontrollable factor.”

Had it not been for some rain, which caused the tires to lose some grip, officials said it’s possible the Cascadia Evolution may even have reached 11 mpg.

The test results were especially gratifying for DTNA’s Daum, who in one of his first speeches as CEO in 2009 predicted there will be a 10 mpg truck on the market within the span of his career.

While on-road testing showed the Evolution to achieve 9.31 mpg, it’s not far off the 10 mpg target that Daum said raised some eyebrows when first predicted.

“The 10 mpg truck is not out of reach anymore,” Daum said. “It’s a huge step and every step gets more difficult than the step before, but I still believe during my professional lifetime (the goal will be reached).” □

# The little engine that could

The ISL G engine in a Kenworth T440 belies its small displacement, providing an attractive option for regional fleets

By James Menzies

**MOUNT VERNON, Wash.** – As the buzz surrounding natural gas as a viable alternative to diesel in the heavy truck industry continues to grow, manufacturers have rapidly expanded their natural gas-fueled offerings in an effort to position themselves as leaders in this emerging market.

There is no arguing the potential cost savings when switching from diesel to natural gas. A recent Conference Board of Canada report entitled *Cheap enough? Making the switch from diesel fuel to natural gas*, concluded that fuel savings of up to \$150,000 per truck over a 10-year period are attainable at the current price spread between diesel and natural gas. Such savings are enough to pay for the cost of the technology two, maybe even three times over a 10-year period, which is a compelling proposition for regional fleets where truck life-cycles are typically longer than in over-the-road applications.

In regional applications, one option worth considering is Kenworth's T440, available with the Cummins ISL G natural gas engine in either a Class 7 or 8 configuration. I recently spent some time behind the wheel of a Class 8 version of this truck, pulling a loaded trailer on the roads surrounding Paccar's Technical Center in Mount Vernon, Wash.

I wasn't able to stray too far from the tech center, ironically because of fuel limitations, which remains one of the two biggest concerns of most fleets considering the switch to natural gas (the other being the cost of the technology). Availability of both CNG and LNG is quickly improving on both sides of the border, however, with new partnerships between opportunistic gas suppliers and heavy vehicle users resulting in a rapid rollout of fueling stations.

The T440 I drove is in many ways an ideal regional truck for lighter loads on reasonably flat roads. The ISL G engine can be spec'd to run off natural gas in either liquefied or compressed form. In Canada, the most high profile fleets to embrace natural gas have gravitated towards liquefied natural gas with Westport's 15-litre LNG engine. This is understandable as LNG offers greater range for longer routes such as Montreal-Toronto, the lane on which Robert Transport has deployed most of its natural gas vehicles.

In more regional applications, however, OEMs speak favourably of CNG, which lacks the range of LNG but is simpler to handle. Drivers can watch a five-minute video to learn everything they need to know about fueling their truck with CNG while certified handlers are required to fuel ve-

hicles with LNG. Liquefied natural gas also comes with more limitations in terms of where trucks can be parked or operated. Less driver training is required with CNG as well.

"With CNG, a driver can just get in the truck and go within 15 minutes," said Alan Fennimore, vocational marketing manager with Kenworth. "That type of technology has been around for pushing 30 years now."

Fleets considering adding natural gas trucks to their operations will want to research the fueling infrastructure available in their vicinity. In many cases, Fennimore said, natural gas stations offer both types of fuel since LNG can be easily converted to CNG on-site.

The T440 I drove was fitted with two 40.5 diesel gallon equivalent (DGE) tanks, good for about 350 miles (560 kilometres). The ISL G is an 8.9-litre, spark-ignited engine available with up to 320 hp and 1,000 lb.-ft. of torque. At first glance it seems underpowered for most Class 8 applications but don't underestimate the capability of this little engine. On my drive, it performed beyond expectations, thanks largely to the deceptive torque delivered in combination with the standard Al-

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'With range comes cost. The fuel storage system accounts for at least half the premium you can expect to pay for a natural gas-powered vehicle.'

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lison 3000HS six-speed automatic transmission.

When I told Fennimore I was pleasantly surprised by the abundance of torque, he credited the Allison transmissions torque converter and its torque multiplication capabilities.

"In first and second gear, you've got that torque converter that allows you to basically slip and that slipping allows you to get an additional gear range so it doesn't feel like 1,000 lb.-ft. of torque, it feels like 1,350 lb.-ft.," Fennimore explained. "It was a conscious decision by Cummins to only offer the Allison transmission and it was a good decision. For a manual transmission to pull 80,000 lbs with 1,000 lb.-ft. of torque is very tough. Having that gear multiplication



**SMALL TRUCK, BIG POWER:** This Kenworth T440 with the Cummins ISL G engine provides a deceiving amount of torque despite its 8.9 litre displacement.

Photo by James Menzies

in first and second gear gives you that gradability you need to get a heavy load off the ground."

The other attribute of the ISL G that's immediately noticeable is its quiet operation, even in a day cab pulling a heavy load. You become more attuned to other sounds, like the operation of the air compressor, which traditionally were drowned out by the rumbling of a diesel engine.

Real-world users of the ISL G, including Swift Transport CEO Jerry Moyes, have said the engine is undersized for heavy loads and it certainly could be, even though it greatly outperforms its single-digit displacement. Cummins will soon have an answer to this with the release of its ISX12 G engine,

fuel storage system accounts for at least half the premium you can expect to pay for a natural gas-powered vehicle. The ISL G costs about \$25,000 more than an ISL base engine and two CNG tanks will set you back another \$25,000, bringing the total upcharge to about \$50,000. Cheaper, steel tanks are available but Fennimore said most customers are investing in the more durable Type 4 composite tanks, which are lighter weight and feature a plastic core wrapped within a carbon fiber composite material.

Kenworth likes the T440 as a natural gas vehicle because "it was just the right size," Fennimore explained. The company considered making its T800 short hood model its natural gas guinea pig but in the end, Fennimore said, "we decided to put it in a lower content vehicle to keep costs down."

The larger cooling module of the T800 was seen as overkill and so it was decided the T440 offered all the requirements needed of a natural gas-powered regional truck at a lower cost. Because natural gas is a clean burning fuel, the truck doesn't require a diesel particulate filter (DPF) or selective catalytic reduction (SCR) emissions system. Just a back of cab-mounted three-way catalyst is all that's required for emissions compliance.

Drivers won't have anything to complain about when operating this truck as long as it's placed into the right application and isn't asked to do too much.

Remember, this is a workhorse medium-duty truck available in a Class 8 configuration but it's no heavy hauler.

The T440 with ISL G may not be the right truck for pulling heavy loads over the Rockies, but a regional fleet operating within a metro area pulling lightish loads on regular routes of 500 kilometres or less would be a perfect fit, provided the fueling infrastructure is available.

If the Conference Board of Canada report is to be believed, running a T440 with ISL G engine in such an application over a 10-year period could actually deliver a six-figure savings even after the cost of the technology is accounted for. How can you not be intrigued by that? □

## The spec's:

**Model:** Kenworth T440

**Engine:** Cummins ISL-G, 320 hp, 1,000 lb.-ft. torque

**Cab configuration:** Extended day cab

**Transmission:** Allison 3000 HS six-speed automatic

**Front suspension:** 13.2K Taperleaf

**Rear suspension:** Kenworth AG4000L

**Wheelbase:** 193-inch

**Colour:** Solar Flare Red

**Fuel storage:** Twin frame-mounted 40.5 DGE CNG tanks □

# Western Star shows off new 4700, introduces tractor version

## Full Western Star product line showcased in the Nevada desert

By James Menzies

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – “The best way to sell a Western Star, quite candidly, is to give people the opportunity to drive them,” Michael Jackson, general manager of Western Star Trucks told a gathering of trucking industry journalists in early May.

And with that in mind, the company set up shop in the Nevada desert for a two-week customer and dealer demonstration event, which put on display the full breadth of the Western Star product line.

The newest addition to the family is, of course, the 4700, which was introduced last spring but didn't go into production until December. The first of those trucks are making their

way to dealers and customers and Jackson said the reaction has been positive.

“We're in a ramp-up at the plant,” Jackson said, noting the plant has now added a second shift. “We're taking orders and the trucks are hitting dealers' lots. They're being bodied up and I've actually seen a couple on the road, doing what they're supposed to be doing.”

The 4700 is a ‘Baby 8,’ meaning it's designed for lighter Class 8 applications, or for work that's too rugged for Classes 6-7 vocational trucks. The truck is on back order through July, Jackson said, and the company has just announced the availability of a tractor version of the new model.



**MORE VERSATILE:** Western Star is now offering a tractor version of its new 4700.

Initially launched to serve six core vocational segments (dump; mixer; crane; roll-off; snow plow; and sewer vac), Jackson said dealers are finding the truck to be more versatile than first thought. They're now expand-

ing the applications the truck can be put into and the tractor version takes it into a whole new realm.

“This will further expand our dealers' capabilities to attract people that want to pull trailers with fifth wheels,” Jackson said.

The 4700 tractor will be targeted towards bulk haul, local delivery and construction applications. It will be available in both set-forward and set-back axle configurations with a day cab. The tractor is available with the Cummins ISC and ISL engines or the more powerful Detroit DD13, with power ratings from 260-470 hp. Despite its ‘Baby 8’ moniker, the 4700 boasts a full-sized, expansive cab, which is also highly functional. This is a pure work truck, and was designed with serviceability in mind. To access the wiring system, for example, all you have to do is remove a few screws and then the entire dash panel folds forward to provide unfettered access to all the wires.

A twin-steer 4800 tractor was one of many trucks Western Star made available to drive on a makeshift construction site set up at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. It was nimble and maneuverable, turning on the proverbial dime and climbing over a steep incline with ease. The 4800 is a new designation from Western Star; previously it was known as the 4900 with 109-inch BBC.

As for the 4700, its exterior appearance is pure Western Star, with a distinctive grille and bold stance. While it's unmistakably a Star, the 4700 has its own unique DNA and is easy to identify from other models within the family. It does not, by any stretch, appear to be a pared down version of an existing Western Star model.

In addition to the twin-steer 4800, I drove a 4700 oilfield service truck and another 4700 mounted with a crane. I took the service truck on a course designed to showcase its maneuverability and ease of backing. The truck's sloped hood provided excellent forward visibility and the truck's steering was ultra-responsive. Coupled with an Allison transmission, the service truck was both easy and comfortable to drive.

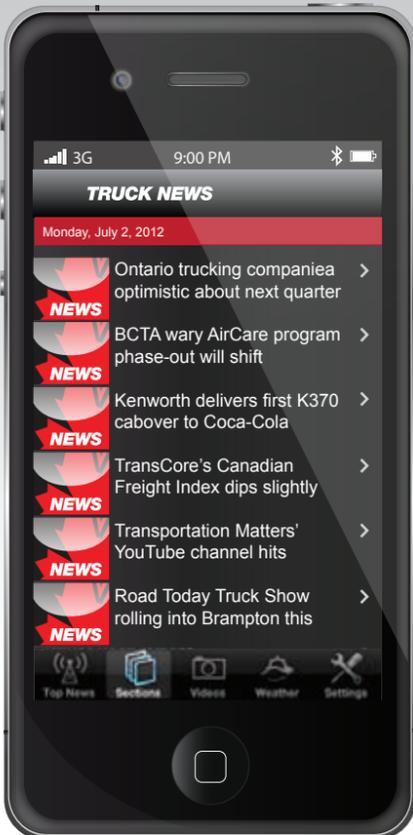
I took the crane-mounted 4700 out on the road where it was so nimble and responsive that in some respects it drove like an oversized pick-up truck. It did not have to be manhandled through the corners like you'd expect from a Class 8 vocational truck.

With the launch of the 4700, Western Star is feeling pretty good about

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itself. Jackson admitted launching a new model in 2011, amid so much economic uncertainty – particularly in the construction segment – was “daunting.”

“There were a lot of naysayers,” he admitted. However, the gamble appears to be paying off, with orders for the new model being incremental to Western Star’s business.

“They haven’t taken anything away” from sales of existing models, Jackson said.

Western Star continues to enjoy a loyal following here in Canada, partly because of its Canadian heritage and also because so many Canadian customers put their trucks to work in the harshest of conditions, where only a premium, custom-built truck can survive. Here in Canada, Western Star’s market share sits at a healthy 7% while it’s only 1-1.5% in the US. The company has an ambitious plan to improve its North American market share, but it’s challenging for a brand that sells mostly to customers with less than three trucks.

“Every time we make some progress, it seems the large fleets make an order and that dilutes our progress because that’s not where we play,” Jackson explained.

Indeed, Western Star sells 64% of its trucks to customers with less than three units, while its sister company Freightliner sells the majority of its trucks to customers operating more than 100 units.

Still, Jackson said there’s plenty of pent-up demand out there in the construction and municipal markets – vocations where Western Star is traditionally very strong. He noted there are 435,000 trucks within the construction and municipal segments that are nearing 15 years of age and will soon need replacing.

This presents a welcomed opportunity for Western Star’s newest offering. Jackson said about half of the 4700’s orders to date have come from the construction services segment, while utility and P&D follow in that order. The company is already strong in the forestry, mining, specialty heavy-haul, petroleum and vehicle transporter markets. It sees its chief areas of growth coming from the general freight, government, HazMat, agricultural and construction segments.

Going forward, Jackson said Western Star plans to better promote the benefits of being part of the Daimler organization.

“I think this has been a missed opportunity over the past couple of years for Western Star,” Jackson admitted. “Being part of Daimler gives us an advantage I don’t think a lot of other people have. You’re going to hear us talk more in the future about our connection with Daimler.”

For example, being part of the Daimler organization means Western Star has access to proven, existing technologies without having to spend a fortune on research and development. It can also adopt Daimler programs such as the recently announced Elite Support dealer service network, which sets standards and benchmarks for dealer service excellence.

“Our dealers get to take advantage of all those things that the bigger Freightliner and Daimler can invest in,” Jackson said. “Our dealers are pretty happy right now.” □

## Volvo’s Remote Diagnostics to keep trucks connected, out of shop

By Lou Smyrlis

**MIAMI, Fla.** – Telematics will continue to evolve until no truck is ever offline, according to Ron Huibers, president of North American sales and marketing for Volvo Trucks. And judging by what Volvo launched in mid-May, the future may well be here.

Volvo Trucks, during a special media conference held in Miami in conjunction with the Volvo Ocean Race, announced the launch of its Remote Diagnostics aftermarket service for North America. The service is designed to provide “a seamless, dynamically connected system of vehicle management tools to help maximize vehicle uptime.”

Remote Diagnostics is now standard on all Volvo-powered VN model highway trucks.

Huibers said Volvo was the first North American truck manufacturer to deliver a telematics solution, offering fleet management tools in 2002. Today, Volvo’s Remote Diagnostics provides proactive diagnostic and repair planning assistance with detailed analysis of critical diagnostic trouble codes. The remote communication platform facilitates live dealer and customer communication through Volvo Action Service, Volvo’s 24/7 support team. Proactive diagnostics streamline service procedures with confirmation of parts on-hand before a truck arrives at a service location, increasing uptime, according to the company.

Remote Diagnostics also provides service case communication and documentation among Volvo Action Service, dealers and customers through ASIST, Volvo’s Web-based service management tool, which comes free of charge for two years with the purchase of all new Volvo trucks.

“Remote Diagnostics maximizes vehicle uptime by reaching far beyond proactive diagnostics to deliver total connectivity among the vehicle, Volvo and the decision-makers responsible for maintenance,” said Stephen Roy, Volvo Trucks senior vice-president, aftermarket and soft products. “As part of our integrated business solution, Volvo Trucks Support Services, and bundled under Connected Vehicle services, Remote Diagnostics leverages Volvo’s support network and service management tools to rapidly address service issues before they occur.”

For nearly a year, Volvo field-tested Remote Diagnostics with motor carriers in the US and Canada, drawing on the feedback from 15 customers operating more than 1,300 Volvo VNs with the service. Volvo officials said the test trials found that by using Remote Diagnostics downtime could be reduced by about one day per event.

Challenger Motor Freight was one of the Canadian participants in the test trials and Bryan Burningham, director of maintenance at Challenger, was on-hand at the launch to talk about his experience with the system.

“The Remote Diagnostics service has really helped with vehicle uptime,” Burningham concurred. “It’s much easier to manage events

with the service communication tool because it provides a very good data trail so we know what

‘If we can help keep trucks on the road, everybody wins,’

Ron Huibers, Volvo

we’re working on, what we’ve done and when we expect it will be done. Communication has really sped up and internally we are able to have

more intelligent discussions.”

Volvo’s Huibers said Remote Diagnostics raises the bar to a whole new level in terms of what a truck maker can deliver to help keep customers on the road moving freight. He believes it will help “leapfrog” Volvo over competitors.

“If we can help keep trucks on the road, everybody wins,” Huibers said.

Remote Diagnostics is the first service being offered under the new Connected Vehicle Services category of the Volvo Trucks Support Services bundled aftermarket offering. □

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TRUCKWEST

OEM/DEALER NEWS

# Volvo to produce own LNG engine

By Lou Smyrlis

**MIAMI, Fla.** – Volvo Trucks has announced it will launch its own 13-litre liquefied natural gas (LNG) engine for the North American market in 2014, claiming “significant” fuel efficiency gains compared with current natural gas products.

Combined with the company’s previously announced offering of compressed natural gas (CNG)-powered Volvo VNM and VNL model day cabs, the new diesel ignition engine provides Volvo with a range of natural gas-powered solutions. Volvo is also testing another fuel that can be produced from natural gas, DME (dimethyl ether), which Volvo executives believe has the potential to become an attractive alternative for the North American market.

“Our focused strategy is not to put all our eggs into one basket. In the future there will be regional differences and we don’t know which way alternative fuels will go. We want to keep our options open,” said Olof Persson, president of AB Volvo and CEO of Volvo Group.

Through high-pressure diesel ignition technology – using trace amounts of diesel to ignite the natural gas – Volvo’s LNG engine will deliver a 30% fuel efficiency improvement compared with spark-ignition engines, making it a viable alternative for long-haul applications, said Ron Huibers, president of Volvo Trucks North American sales and marketing.

Huibers also says the engine will accomplish these savings without sacrificing power, torque or fuel efficiency, all of which are critical attributes for on-highway operations. The company’s proprietary Volvo I-Shift automated mechanical transmission also will be available for customers to specify.

The company also recently announced that it is operating natural gas-powered VNL demonstrator trucks. The larger, more robust VNL model features a 12-litre Cummins-Westport ISX12 G gas engine. Factory production of the natural gas-powered VNL day cab will begin in conjunction with commercial availability of the 12-litre gas engine in early 2013. The Volvo Group has conducted hundreds of thousands of miles of customer field-testing of trucks equipped with DME, which can be produced from natural gas.

The results – from 10 vehicles operating in a variety of applications in Europe – indicate DME holds much promise as a heavy-truck fuel, and could become a viable alternative in North America to CNG or LNG when it comes to performance, environmental impact, safety and distribution, Persson and Huibers agreed. DME most closely mirrors the performance qualities and energy efficiency of diesel while significantly reducing GHG emissions.

It is a compression ignition fuel that, like diesel, requires no separate ignition mechanism. Unlike LNG, it does not require cryogenic temperatures; it is handled like propane, with tank pressures of 75 psi (compared to 3,000 psi for CNG). □

# Cat now offering 15-litre engine in CT660

**PEORIA, Ill.** – Caterpillar has announced the availability of its 15-litre CT15 engine in the CT660 vocational truck.

The CT15 rounds out the engine line, which currently consists of a CT11 and CT13 engine with 11 and 13 litres displacement, respectively. The new offering can provide as much as 550 hp and 1,850 lb.-ft. of torque, the company says.

“The CT15 engine is the perfect power solution for heavy-duty applications and extreme environments,” said George Taylor, director of the Caterpillar Global On-Highway Truck Group. “Cat vocational truck customers can count on the CT15 for years of reliable, durable operation, which translates into a longer-lasting truck and higher resale value.”

The CT15 reaches peak torque

at 2,100 rpm and pulls strong at low engine speeds, allowing for shifting at lower speeds when accelerating, according to the company.

It also features an engine brake rated at more than 600 bhp, helping drivers maintain optimum speeds down steep or long grades.

Based on a Navistar design, the CT15 uses exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) to eliminate NOx in-cylinder without requiring exhaust aftertreatment.

Cat says there’s a single electronic control module and fewer electrical connections to improve



**CAT’S MEOW:** Cat’s CT15 engine packs 550 hp with 1,800 lb.-ft. of torque.

reliability and reduce maintenance time. For more info, visit [www.DriveCat.com](http://www.DriveCat.com). □

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

# Human traffic on the road

By Edo van Belkom

Mark was nearing his destination and hadn't heard from his dispatcher Bud for a while. He was in need of another load so he decided to give the man a call.

"Hello?" Bud said.

"Bud, this is Mark."

"Mark who?"

'Did he never get tired of that?' Mark thought. "Mark S. Welby, Doctor of Trucking."

"Very funny, Dalton. Sad thing is, I'm old enough to remember that show."

"I need my next load, Bud."

"Yeah, you and everyone else working for me."

"Things that bad?"

"Not really, just slow at the moment."

"So you don't have a heavy load going all the way across the country that's going to make me a truckload of cash?"

"If I had that," Bud said, "I'd still be driving myself."

Mark nodded. "Okay, what do you have?"

"I didn't think you'd be interested, seeing as you like adventure and all that, but I have about four weeks worth of trips to Montreal and back. Two round trips every three days."

"Sounds like a grind."

"It's honest work," Bud said. "And it's yours if you want it."

"I'll take it. My truck's not making money if it's not moving."

Bud gave Mark the details.

Mark was able to comfortably go from Toronto to Montreal and halfway back again before running out of hours in his logbook, so he decided he would stop overnight at the same truck stop outside Kingston whenever he had to stop halfway between the two cities. That would give him alternating days off in Toronto and Montreal, which wasn't too bad a gig, all things considered.

While he liked the food and amenities the truck stop had to offer, the hardest part of the trip by far was the overnight stay. Mother Load was comfortable enough and he could usually get a good night's rest in her sleeper no matter where she was parked,

but this truck stop was making peaceful sleep a real challenge.

The problem began on the third night he stayed in the truck stop's lot. He was tucked into his bunk, all warm and snug and just about to drift off into a deep sleep when there was a knock on the door.

The first time it happened he didn't even realize what was going on until the third knock. By then he was up and wondering who the hell was knocking on his door at this time of night.

"You lonely, mister?" It was a female voice and a young one at that.

"What?" he said. "No!"

"You sure? I'm young and pretty."

"Get lost!" Mark said, shaking his head. There were lot lizards just about everywhere you went in North America – probably the world too, for that matter – but he'd never been in a place where they were so brazen as to walk up to a truck and knock on your door. He didn't approve of it anywhere, but at least in other places people were discrete about it. This was like, well...

selling candy door-to-door.

Mark put his head back on his pillow and closed his eyes.

Minutes later there was another knock on his door.

"You want a good time?" the woman on the other side of the door asked.

Mark lifted his head off his pillow and saw a young woman peeking into his cab through the driver's side window.

"No, I don't want a good time."

"I can make you feel real good."

"I'll call the cops in a minute if you don't get down off my truck, now!" he said.

"Relax, mister. All you gotta say is no."

'Really?,' Mark thought, having already said the word, "No." He looked over at the window again, but the woman was gone.

With a sigh, Mark rolled over onto his other side and closed his eyes once more.

Sure enough, an hour later there was yet another knock on his door.

"How many times do I have to say, NO?"

There was no response, only the sound of someone climbing down off his truck and walking away.

Thankfully, he was not disturbed the

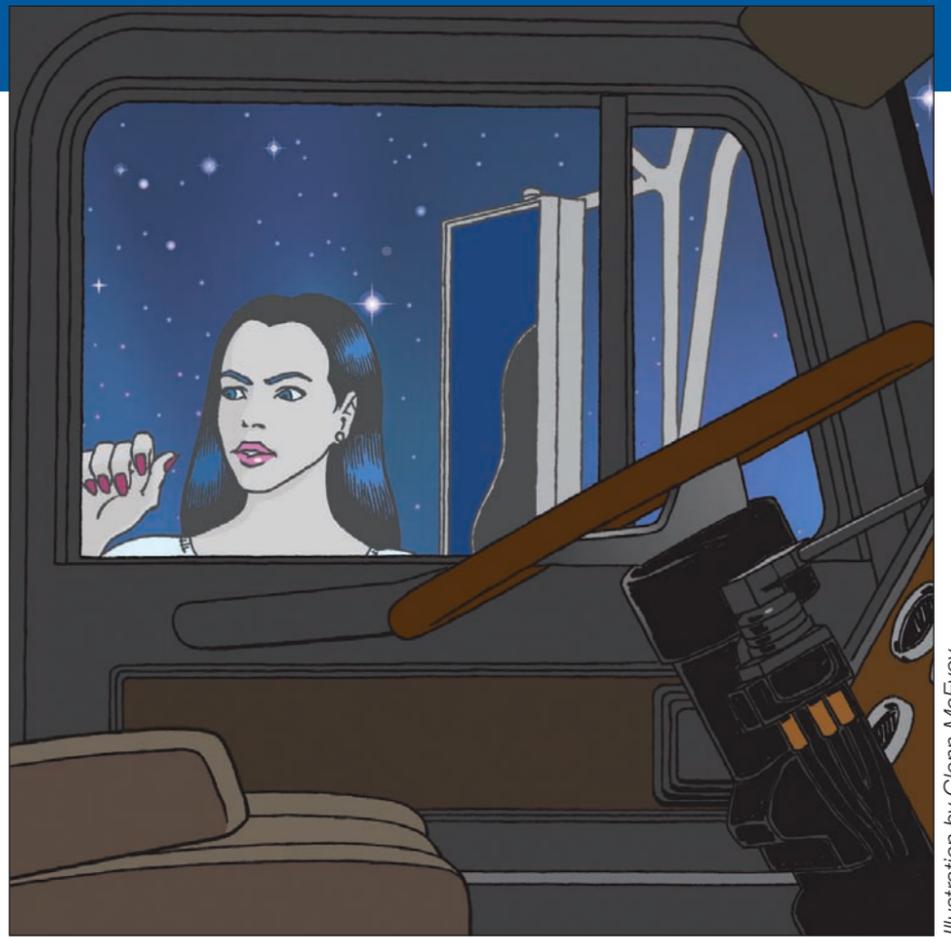


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

rest of the night.

Mark awoke when the sun began streaming in through his front windshield. Still sleepy and wishing it was one of his days off, he threw the sheets off and knelt up in bed. There was little movement in the lot so early in the morning and that's why he noticed a dark blue van drive into the lot and stop in front of the long row of trucks Mark was parked in. In moments, three women emerged from three separate trucks, walked across the lot and got inside the van. When the third woman was inside, the van drove off, passing the fuel pumps and restaurant and continuing onto the highway without stopping.

The whole pick-up seemed familiar to him somehow and then he recalled that he'd seen this same van making a similar pick-up a week or so ago, only that time there had been just two women. He remembered the van because at the time he'd thought the van had looked a lot like a school bus picking up kids for school.

He wondered if these girls were actually still in school, and the thought of it made him shudder.

At breakfast Mark ran into a driver he'd seen at the truck stop the past few weeks and joined the man at his table.

As Mark ate, the man just looked at him with a quizzical look. "What? What is it?" Mark asked.

"You look terrible," he said. "Your eyes are red and there's bags under them."

Mark took a bite of his breakfast sandwich. "I didn't get much sleep. There was someone knocking on my door every half-hour."

"Where'd you park?"

"Out in the lot, that way," Mark jabbed a thumb over his shoulder. "At the north edge near the trees."

The other driver laughed.

"What's so funny?"

"Of course they were knocking on your door. You were parked in Party Row all night."

"Party row?"

"It's where you park if you're looking for a good time."

"Ah," Mark said, making the connection between the knocks on his door and the van collecting the girls each morning. "But they're so young."

"That's the way it is now with human trafficking. The girls are young, really young. They get bought and sold and wound up being forced into prostitution by people who are able to control them."

Mark had heard of groups like Truckers Against Trafficking, but he'd always thought they were all about smuggling illegals into the US or Canada, not child prostitution. That was something that was a problem in, well...third-world countries.

"If everyone knows what's going on, why don't they do something about it?" Mark asked.

"The police do shut them down, but they just move down the highway to the next stop. Think of it this way...it might be a new problem in the trucking industry, but that doesn't change the fact that it's still the world's oldest profession." Mark thought about that a long time. □

—Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of *Human Traffic on the Road*.

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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NEW PRODUCTS



Caterpillar has announced the availability of its **15-litre CT15 engine** in the CT660 vocational truck. The CT15 rounds out the engine line, which currently consists of a CT11 and CT13 engine with 11 and 13 litres displacement respectively. The new offering can provide as much as 550 hp and 1,850 lb.-ft. of torque, the company says. The CT15 reaches peak torque at 2,100 rpm and pulls strong at low engine speeds, allowing for shifting at lower speeds when accelerating, according to the company. Based on a Navistar design, the CT15 uses exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) to eliminate NOx in-cylinder without requiring exhaust aftertreatment.

Federal-Mogul has introduced Abex **reduced stopping distance brake block** to comply with FMVSS 121, requiring heavy trucks to stop in 30% less distance than before. The company says its new RSD drum brake block includes three application-specific formulations engineered to improve overall performance while meeting the new requirement. They include an RN premium organic 20,000-lb axle rating, copper-free formulation; an RSM premium semi-metallic, 29,000-lb axle rating for reduced stopping distance and severe-service applications; and RSC, a premium semi-metallic combo formulation with a 23,000-lb axle rating. For more info, contact an Abex distributor or Federal-Mogul rep.



Carrier Transicold has come out with two new models of its X2 series of **trailer refrigeration units**, the 2500 APX and 2100 APX. Both feature the new APX control system as well as what Carrier insists is the industry's most comprehensive warranty at 60 months or 10,000 hours for the electronics and 48 months or 8,000 hours on the engine and other major components. With the APX control system, Carrier says it's the first in the TRU industry to combine: distributed, modular electronics for enhanced reliability, serviceability and expandability; an easy-to-use driver interface with bright graphic display; and USB connectivity for fast, convenient data transfers. For more info, see a dealer or visit [www.trucktrailer.carrier.com](http://www.trucktrailer.carrier.com).

OPINION

My retirement plans? Staring into space

I've been told that if you retire early, you'd better get a hobby or volunteer for a worthwhile cause.

For the majority of people, an early retirement is the result of careful financial planning. Investing for the long-term is the name of the game and forget about the "get rich quick" scams.

Getting into a good defined benefit company retirement plan sure helps. These are rare today, with most companies offering contribution-based plans. The other option is your own self-directed RSP. All have their advantages and a quick trip to a financial planner will help you decide which one is best for you. You don't need to head down to Bay Street to find one. The next time you're in your local bank, make an appointment to see one of their consultants. You'll never be sorry or regret planning for the future, that's for sure.

Speaking of the future and finding a hobby, I recently directed my attention to astronomy. I thought this would be something I could enjoy now, and later in life during my retirement years. So after extensive research I jumped in with both feet. I found the telescope make and model that fit my expertise (zip) and budget (cheap) and started searching the Internet classifieds. A few weeks later, I found what I was looking for and dusted off my hard-earned *Truck West* bucks to pay for it.

Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



Being a guy, I didn't read the instructions. This baby is supposed to be "simple" to operate, so being of very average intelligence, I thought I'd have no problems. After all, how difficult could it be? Aim, focus and presto...beware ye little green men of Mars, I'm watching!

Apparently their definition of "simple" is a little bit different than mine. The only thing I saw that night was the reflection of my ugly mug. I thought I saw the moon at one point but quickly realized I was aiming at a streetlight. I couldn't see a thing through this beast and I wondered if Galileo had the same problems?

Simple to operate, blah, blah, blah. I'd have been better off looking through a Cracker Jack freebie.

If and when I do retire I'm going to be very happy wearing a volunteer badge at the local hospital. I'm sure it will be a lot less stressful even if bedpans are involved! □

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

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