

# TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989 • September 2013 Volume 24, Issue 9

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trucknews.com



Than Vermilyea has been named the 2013 Truck News/Truck West Owner/Operator of the Year.



Reach us at our Western Canada news bureau

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

## One-Man TV Show

Independent owner/operator Than Vermilyea wins national award as tops in the business.

By James Menzies

**A** 40-year safe trucking career, and we almost ruined it. When *Truck West* called Than Vermilyea of Belleville, Ont. to inform him he was selected as our 2013 Owner/Operator of the Year, we didn't yet know he was an emotional man who wears his heart on his sleeve.

We didn't know he gets choked up when he's happy, and we certainly didn't know he was on the Bay Bridge near Belleville at the time of our call.

"I said 'I better pull this rig over, I'm going to have an accident here'," Vermilyea later told us. "I get choked up. I was up on the Bay Bridge, so it was hard to pull over. I had to wait till I got down off the bridge. I was pretty surprised and humbled. The happiest guy in Canada."

As Owner/Operator of the Year, Vermilyea

won \$6,000 cash, a diamond ring, a trip to Toronto and a couple armfuls of gifts from the award's sponsors: Castrol, Goodyear and Mack Trucks. He also received a lifetime membership in the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada.

But despite all those gifts, it was the recognition that meant the most to Vermilyea, especially since he dropped out of school to pursue his trucking passion and on more than one occasion was dubbed a failure because of his lack of formal education.

"That takes the cake right there," he said, voice wavering as he gestured to the ring on his finger. "Owner/Operator of the Year - that's quite the honour."

School was never one of Vermilyea's priorities. He grew up on a farm and knew from a young age he wanted to drive truck as soon

Continued on page 10

## MB pulling 'fast one' on province's truckers

MTA says rate hike has to go. Will truckers stand together?

**WINNIPEG, Man.** - In a strongly worded letter to members, Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) chief Bob Dolyniuk has warned of potential 400% fee increases that will affect some of the province's trucking companies.

According to the MTA, the province plans to eliminate the 'T' licence place category, requiring trucking companies that fall under this category to register as 'PSV' or 'CT' vehicle users. This will see them face licensing fee increases of up to 400%, the MTA claims.

The changes are included in Bill 41: The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Enhanced Safety Regulation of Heavy Motor Vehicles). However, Dolyniuk said the elimination of the T class is not about improving safety, but rather increasing revenues on the backs of truckers.

Historically, T plates cost less to register because those vehicles are restricted in their scope of operation. They can only operate within a city or municipality within the province if they are hauling designated or exempt commodities, Dolyniuk explained in the letter. Registering as a PSV or CT vehicle will allow these operators to haul anything, anywhere, for anyone - but at a much higher fee.

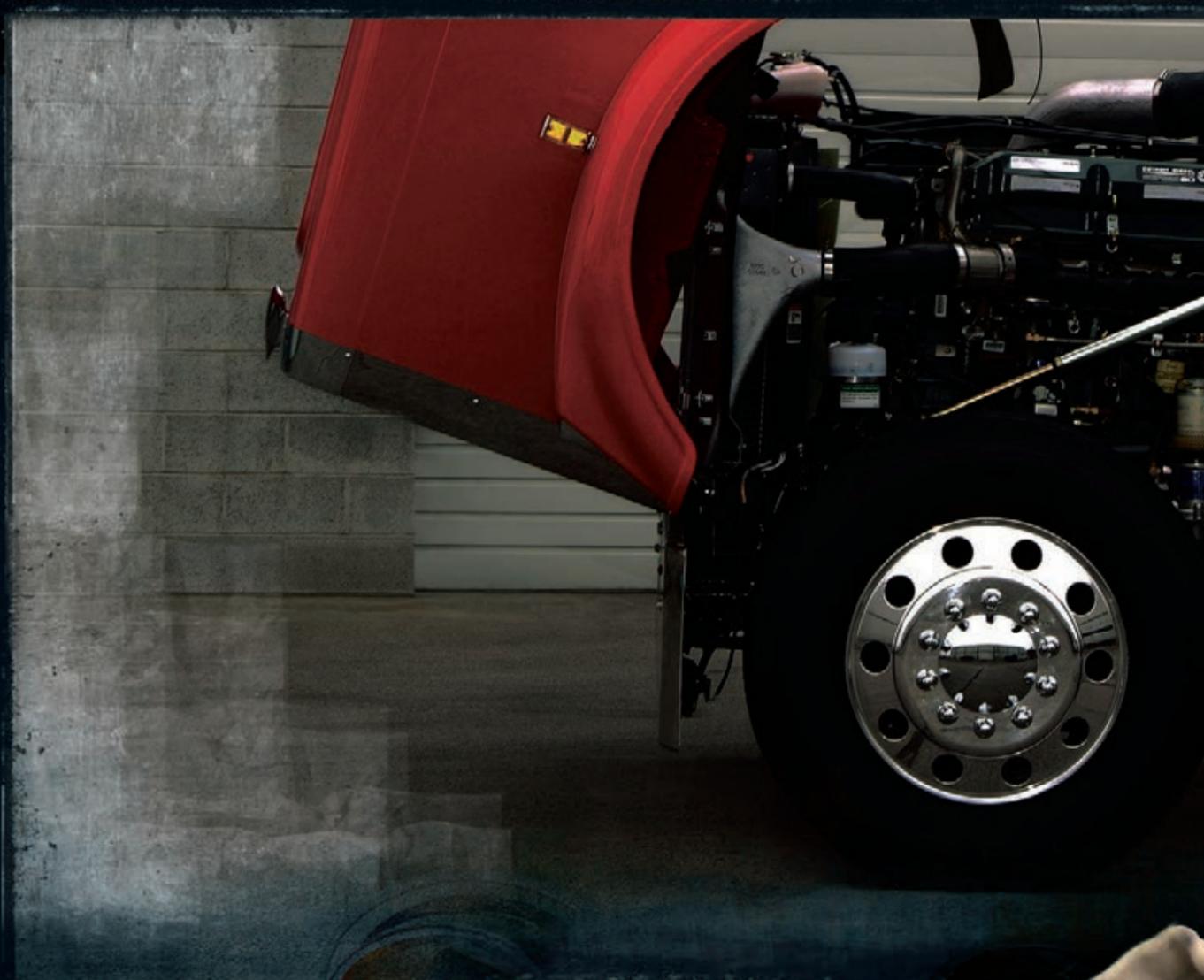
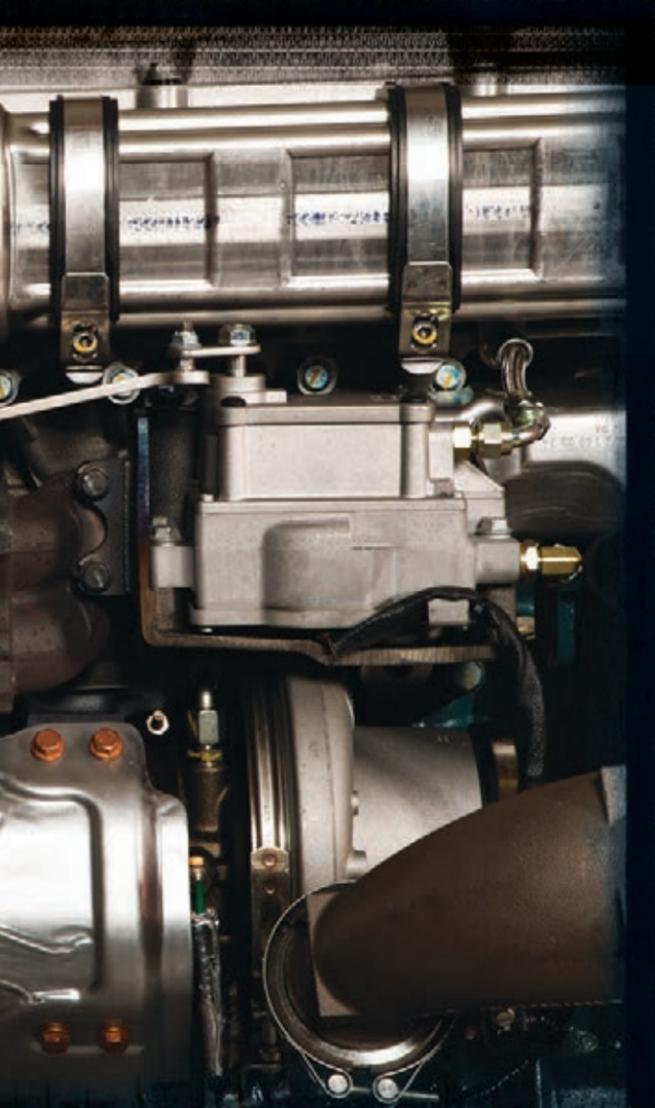
"There was no need for the government to do this. It could have quite easily made legislative amendments to make all T plate operators with a GVWR greater than 4,500 kg subject to all aspects of the National Safety Code," Dolyniuk blasted. "In their zeal to generate more revenue this government is going to cause some businesses to close and others to lay off workers and sell some of their equipment (assuming there is still a market left). One company with 10 units will see its registration cost increase from \$6,854 per year to \$21,104 per year. That's a 308% increase. Another member will see a \$100,000 (338%) increase. Overall this will cost T plate operators millions of dollars in additional licensing costs each year."

The MTA plans to fight the changes, and is urging any affected members to lobby against the rule as well. Carriers can contact the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly at 204-945-3636 to make their feelings known. **TW**

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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

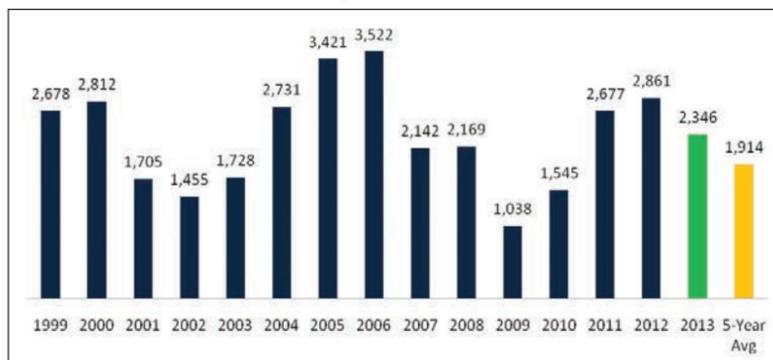
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June's Class 8 sales results continued the trend shown for most of 2013 with sales falling behind the previous year's mark. The 2,346 trucks sold in June were more than 500 behind last year's pace and more than 300 behind the total for June 2011. Every OEM, with the exception of Western Star, posted lower figures than the previous year. Going back to 1999, there were 7 years with better sales results in June. The sales total for the month, however, was still more than 400 above the five-year average.

## Monthly Class 8 Sales – June 13

| OEM           | This Month  | Last Year   |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|
| Freightliner  | 588         | 591         |
| International | 300         | 441         |
| Kenworth      | 368         | 581         |
| Mack          | 234         | 246         |
| Peterbilt     | 337         | 377         |
| Volvo         | 277         | 419         |
| Western Star  | 242         | 206         |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>2346</b> | <b>2861</b> |

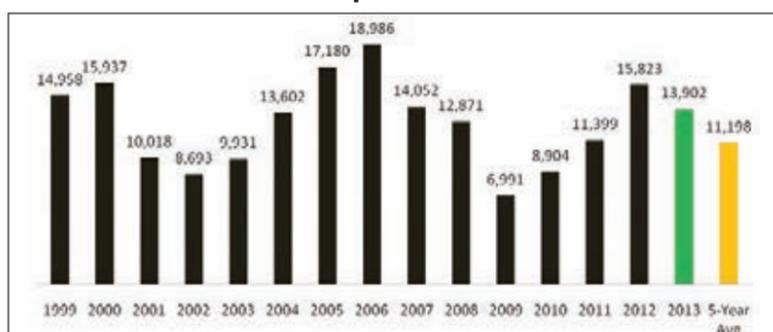
## Historical Comparison – June 13 Sales



## Class 8 Sales (YTD June 13) by Province and OEM

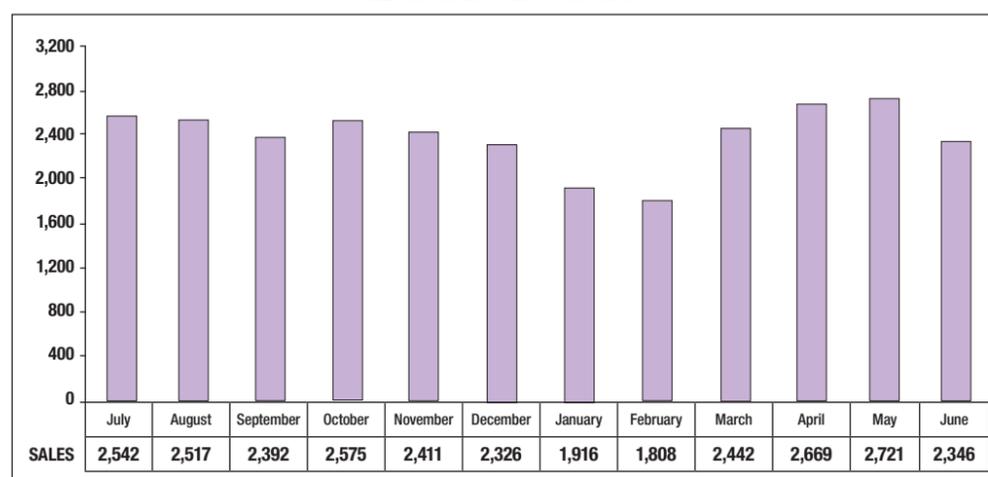
| OEM           | BC           | ALTA         | SASK       | MAN        | ONT          | QUE          | NB         | NS         | PEI       | NF        | CDA           |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| Freightliner  | 292          | 471          | 103        | 193        | 1,641        | 620          | 185        | 60         | 5         | 13        | 3,583         |
| Kenworth      | 458          | 903          | 232        | 52         | 381          | 459          | 67         | 0          | 0         | 0         | 2,552         |
| Mack          | 86           | 187          | 85         | 41         | 398          | 183          | 42         | 42         | 0         | 6         | 1,070         |
| International | 76           | 364          | 32         | 75         | 827          | 433          | 66         | 27         | 16        | 21        | 1,937         |
| Peterbilt     | 292          | 664          | 143        | 132        | 283          | 319          | 82         | 39         | 0         | 0         | 1,954         |
| Volvo         | 177          | 109          | 84         | 110        | 658          | 367          | 73         | 37         | 0         | 3         | 1,618         |
| Western Star  | 178          | 380          | 40         | 28         | 217          | 236          | 29         | 60         | 4         | 16        | 1,188         |
| <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>1,559</b> | <b>3,078</b> | <b>719</b> | <b>631</b> | <b>4,405</b> | <b>2,617</b> | <b>544</b> | <b>265</b> | <b>25</b> | <b>59</b> | <b>13,902</b> |

## Historical Comparison – YTD June 13



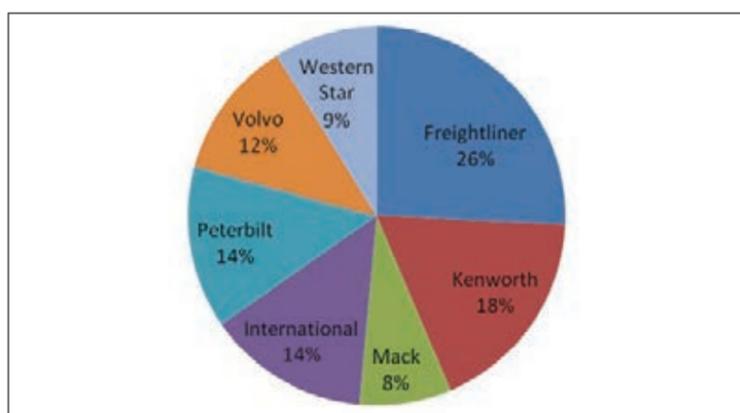
At the half way mark of the year, YTD Class 8 sales of 13,902 units places 2013 almost 2,000 trucks behind last year's pace but also about 2,700 above the five-year average. So far this is the 6th best year in sales going back to 1999. We don't expect a particularly strong second half of the year, however. Our revised estimate is for Class 8 sales to come in around 28,500 vehicles in 2013.

## 12-Month Sales Trends



Class 8 sales have come in above 2,000, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007, for four straight months now. However, the three-month trend towards increased sales figures month over month has come to an end. The big question now is how well sales will hold up over the summer months and the rest of 2013.

## Market Share Class 8 – June 13 YTD



Six months into the year and Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, remains in firm command of the market share lead with more than a quarter of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Kenworth finished 2012 in the number two spot for market share, its wide western network tapping into the stronger western economy. The company still sits in second place with 19% market share. Navistar International finished the year with 15% market share and is now in a dead heat with Peterbilt with a 14% share of the Canadian Class 8 market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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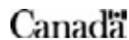
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**Congratulations, TV!**

**Editorial Comment**

James Menzies



I've got a pretty good gig. I get to travel the world, drive trucks, rub shoulders with industry leaders and be among the first to see new technologies and vehicles. But ask me what the highlight of this job is in any given year, and I'll tell you it's none of the above; it's phoning our Owner/Operator of the Year to inform them they've won the prestigious national award.

When I inform the winner, I'm usually greeted by silence as they struggle to find the right words to express their gratitude. Being an owner/operator can be a thankless job, and they're not used to the recognition.

This year's reaction took the cake. An emotional Than Vermilyea was soon crying tears of happiness. For him, more than other past winners, receiving the award was sweet vindication. Than – or TV, as he's affectionately known by friends and customers – knew from a young age that he wanted to be a truck driver.

He dropped out of school to pursue his dream as soon as he was old enough. Even then, he had already spent years practicing his backing techniques using his father's farm tractor and manure spreader.

Than had, and to this day has, a passion for the industry that's lacking in so many modern day drivers. He is a true independent owner/operator, which in itself is becoming increasingly rare.

He serves a variety of customers in the Quinte region, near his Belleville, Ont. home.

For Than, achieving success was accomplished the old-fashioned way, by building a loyal customers base over many years of delivering personalized service. If you call TV, you're dealing with TV. He'll show up on time and deliver the load – and if he screws up, he won't try to lay the blame at anyone else's feet. That simple philosophy has endeared Than to many of his customers, who lined up to recommend him for the award via many glowing testimonials.

As enjoyable as it is to notify our winner, it's equally painstaking to eliminate from consideration the other deserving finalists. I wish we had more of these awards to give away, but restricting it to one per year is essential to retaining the integrity of the award.

Than was joined by his family and friends at our Toronto offices for the presentation of the cheque, plaque, ring and other gifts. Then the sponsors – Castrol, Goodyear and Mack Trucks – loaded him up with more gifts. Then, it was off to a nice restaurant for a memorable dinner.

The next morning, Than returned to our Toronto offices for an interview. You can read all about him in this month's cover story. You can also check out Trucknews.com over the coming weeks for video highlights from our interview.

As I got to know Than, I realized there was good reason behind the outpouring of emotions upon learning he won the award. Because he chose trucking over a formal education, he's heard over the years he was a failure. The success he has achieved in the industry – with or without this latest accolade – says otherwise. He has carved out a decent living in one of the most competitive and challenging of businesses. I've seen MBA-holding executives run trucking



companies into the ground. Than has resisted the temptation to add trucks or to hire drivers, instead focusing on delivering a personalized service the big guys can't deliver. Congratulations, Than. You deserve it! **TW**

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

**I'm hanging up my publishing cleats**

Ladies and gentleman, Elvis has left the building. Effective Aug. 30, I'm officially hanging up the publishing cleats and retiring.

I've decided to follow in the footsteps of the great Oliver Douglas from the hit 60s TV series Green Acres.

I've bought a country home and I'm moving north where "business casual attire" means no holes in your jeans.

My new home comes complete with a garden tractor, which my wife will tell you sealed the deal. She's a honey (my wife is, too).

It's a Toro Wheel Horse that came complete with all the attachments a "gentleman farmer" such as myself could ever want.

Except, I'm going to need a cup holder...maybe two. It's going to take the better part of a day to cut the grass and I'll need plenty of liquids to keep cool. Packing 20 raw horsepower, this puppy can really throw off the heat if you open her up.

My decision to retire wasn't an easy one. You see, I've been very lucky. I actually enjoy what I do. I'll miss this magazine and the many industry



friends I've made during my shift as publisher.

I've had the pleasure of working with some very talented people and have learned from the best. George Clark, my publisher in the early days, taught me that the morality of a decision should be paramount and that often took precedence over the almighty dollar.

Next on my mentor meter was Herschel Fenik, our former vice-president. It was common knowledge that working one year for Herschel was like working two for anybody else.

Boy, did he know the publishing business, and he really knew how to get the best out of people.

Hersch also made sure that any sales trips I made south of the border included a stop at the local Walgreens to pick up cigars.

Many times the words "Big, black and a buck," would be the last thing I'd hear prior to leaving on a sales trip.

The past 13 years of my career have been spent with the Transportation Group. This group of people is what made my decision so damn hard. I'm leaving behind my second family and I will miss them all. Kathy Penner, our associate publisher (AKA my work wife) has been by my side every step of the way.

She has earned my respect and gratitude. We didn't always see eye to eye, but that's a good thing. If I wanted a bobbing head puppy dog I'd have kept the one in my 69 Chev Impala.

I take comfort in knowing this publication is being left in very capable hands.

Lou Smyrlis, our editorial director, will be taking over as publisher. Lou is well known in both the transportation and logistics markets. He has won numerous editorial awards and is recognized as one of our country's top transportation authorities.

Good luck everyone. Drive safe, stay healthy, avoid the 407 (grrr...) and keep the faith. It's been an amazing ride. Adios! **TW**

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



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Mack's western ambassador Hank the Tank passed away suddenly this summer.

## Mack's Hank the Tank passes away

By James Menzies

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – Hank the Tank, Mack Trucks' beloved four-legged western sales rep, has passed away. The affable bulldog, which has represented Mack at Western Canadian trade shows for the past couple years – licking thousands of smiling faces in the process – died recently when visiting the vet for minor surgery. His death has left his owners distraught, but comforted by the many memories the beefy bulldog created at truck shows.

Wendy Wilson, bulldog breeder and Hank's co-owner, said he was born to entertain.

"He greeted thousands of people," she recalled of his truck show appearances. "Hank would saunter in and take his spot and everybody would come up and meet and greet him. He'd give everybody a face wash and smile for the camera. He was a gorgeous boy; a really sweet boy. And he was very good for Mack."

Hank the Tank came by his nickname honestly; he was a stout bulldog, tipping the scales at nearly 85 lbs. But Wilson said he carried it well.

"He was not overweight," she said. "He was very toned and very well muscled; just an impressive big boy. Gentle as a kitten."

Hank lived with Mike Lebach and Jacki Schultheiss along with their other bulldog, Henry. Like many bulldogs, Henry was hyper at times, but when Hank moved in, he taught Henry how to properly interact with visitors.

"Henry totally changed when Hank came into the picture," Wilson said. But like a celebrity, Hank's popularity made it difficult to go out for walks unmolested.

"The hard part was trying to take him for a walk," Wilson laughed. "He never got much exercise, because you didn't get far. You'd take two steps and there'd be a group of people there. Sometimes, it would take half an hour just to get from the Mack booth to the side door, which was literally 12 feet away."

While she mourns Hank's passing, Wilson said she's comforted by the many lives he touched and the thousands of photos that exist of him, taken at the various truck shows.

Hank died before getting the opportunity to breed, but Wilson said his spirit will live on through his nieces and nephews.

She's hoping one of them may eventually go on to represent Mack, but she admitted they'll "have hard shoes to fill."

Hank the Tank would have been

three years old on Aug. 3. Do you have pictures of Hank the Tank? Share them on our Facebook page at [www.Facebook.com/Trucknews](http://www.Facebook.com/Trucknews). **TW**

## Overweight log trucks an issue at Red Rock scales: CILA

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C. – Overweight log trucks are becoming an issue at the Red Rock scales in B.C., according to the Central Interior Logging Association (CILA). The association has been told by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Enforcement branch, that truckers are often exceeding the 63,500-kg limit and in some cases are pushing 70,000 kgs. Some have travelled to nearby Carrier Lumber and requested for part of their load to be removed. Carrier has refused, citing liability and timber mark concerns.

CILA is reminding timber truckers and local forestry companies to be mindful of the legal weight limits.

"CVSE, by law, needs to address the weight issue, not only for safety reasons, but also because of damage to infrastructure," CILA said in a bulletin. "They are still working on a province-wide overweight program, but in the meantime need to address the current situation. Log haulers need to get into compliance, while we work on the best way to deal with overweight loads. And the licensees receiving the wood also need to take responsibility for encouraging overweights by continuing to pay for the weight. If we don't work on this all together, the measures that will have to be taken will be hard on everybody." **TW**



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# Overdue for a look at OT?

**I**t was a fairly straightforward Facebook post, prompted by a pamphlet I picked up at a truck show earlier this year. "Under Part III of the Canada Labour Code (Labour Standards), employee drivers of federally regulated carriers are entitled to overtime pay after 60 hours/week. Are you regularly paid overtime? Have you been told you're not eligible? Tell us your overtime experience." I obviously hit a hot-button topic; the comments went viral, my e-mail inbox overflowed, and folks across the country continue to share their overtime stories with me. I wasn't surprised that the majority of folks I talked to had never received one penny of overtime, but what really struck me was that most drivers truly believe they aren't eligible.

The pamphlet - Information on Labour Standards: 9A Hours of Work, Motor Transport - is prepared by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, the federal department responsible for the Labour Program and the Canada Labour Code (CLC). It's just one of several information products HRSDC makes available at various trucking events in an attempt to heighten awareness in the industry about the rights and responsibilities of both employees and employers under the CLC. So far, their outreach doesn't appear to be working. For years, trucking has had the dubious distinction of generating more complaints than any other sector - at times close to 80% - received under the Labour Program.

Regulations governing the trucking industry are among the most complex in the country, and nowhere is this more apparent than in the interpretation and application of the CLC. Much of the CLC, especially the Part III, Labour Standards, is confusing and out of step with the trucking industry, which has led to trucking developing its own standards and modes of operation that are quite different from the typical industrial model. One key difference is how drivers are compensated for their work. Since transportation output is based on distance, performance-based payment schemes are the norm, meaning that most drivers are paid on a productivity, or per-mile, basis. And there's the rub.

Pay schemes that don't fit the traditional model - or the CLC rules, which were written with hourly-paid workers in mind - have resulted in a whole lot of difficulties for employees when it comes to understanding their pay packages, but also for employers in determining rates of pay in order to arrive at pay-related benefits such as holiday, vacation and overtime pay. The HRSDC folks agree with me, that compensation packages are a huge part of the problem. The many complexities in the way drivers are paid, how they (and their bosses) keep (or don't keep) records, and their various interpretations of definitions, cause more than enough confusion to justify the stunning number of complaints. Layer on the differences between Transport Canada Hours-of-Service rules and the CLC hours-of-work rules, and well, need I say more?

There's no question that drivers "get it" when it comes to the nature of their work compared to, say, the traditional manufacturing model where the pay scheme is generally based on time. And



Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie

yes, they know that if they're working in an extra-provincial trucking operation, they'll be spending time away from home and working long hours which, in other sectors, would unquestionably be considered overtime.

All that being said, none of this lets an employer off the hook from developing pay a package that is predictable and transparent, and that compensates employee drivers - at a fair rate - for all the work they do, driving and otherwise. The law is quite clear: if an employee works

longer than the standard hours (in a day or a week), he or she must be paid at least one-and-one-half times the regular rate of pay. But it's those two little phrases - "standard hours" and "regular rate of pay" - that create the wiggle-room and make it possible for employers in the trucking industry (whether intentionally or unwittingly) to ignore overtime for highway drivers and cause peals of laughter among drivers when I ask them if they're getting paid overtime.

First of all, there's no question that hours-of-work provisions under the CLC are modified by the Motor Vehicle Operators Hours of Work Regulation, or HoS, as we know it. In other words, trucking industry HoS trump CLC hours of work when it comes to determining "standard hours." Hence the special interpretation bulletin I refer to above. So, for employee truck drivers, standard hours after which overtime is payable are 60 hours/week for highway drivers, and 45 hours/week

or nine hours/day for city drivers.

Furthermore, *all* hours other than those spent off-duty (lines 1 and 2 on a log sheet) are counted in calculating working hours, so in a week, while you can't *drive* after 70 hours on-duty in seven days if you're using Cycle 1, your combined on-duty time, both driving and not-driving (lines 3 and 4) count as work, according to the CLC. But figuring out a log book is probably the easiest part for drivers, and, by the way, one more *very* good reason not to shoot yourself in the foot by making "adjustments." The issues are much more complex. I came up with a long list of questions based my own research as well as the comments and input I got from drivers, and we agreed to meet in September to give the now also-puzzled folks as HRSDC time to come up with some answers. **TW**

Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC.

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# A truly independent owner/operator

Continued from page 1

as he was able. He learned early that driving the farm tractors was more enjoyable than milking cows, and spent countless hours practicing backing a tractor with manure spreader in tow, so he'd be ready when he was old enough to get his driver's licence. When he turned 16, he wasted no time getting his chauffer's licence, a decision his father approved of.

"When I was a young lad, my Dad went to my Mom and said 'Don't worry about him and school. If it's got a gearshift, a seat and a steering wheel, he's going to be fine,'" Vermilyea recalled. "It's just in me; the shifting of the gears and the sounds of the pipes. That's why I'm deaf in my left ear, I

always liked the straight pipes. Now that I've gotten older, I like the quietness."

Today, Vermilyea owns and operates Than Vermilyea Trucking, pulling flatdeck loads for a variety of customers in the Quinte region as one of the few remaining truly independent owner/operators. He began his trucking career with a local company called Web's Trucking in Trenton, Ont., doing seasonal work in the summer. He was loaned out to Gulf Oil for wintertime home fuel deliveries and then bought his first truck in 1980. In 1991, Than Vermilyea Trucking was born. To this day, he relishes the independence of running his own business. Asked why it was important to him

to have his name on the door, he answered in one word: "Pride."

He also wanted to control his own

when things go wrong.

"If I make a mistake, I own it immediately," he said. "I make mistakes. We all sleep in, we all stay up too late at night. We all make mistakes, but you have to be honest and step up to the plate. I take my whooping when I'm entitled to it."

That honesty and accountability has earned Vermilyea a loyal base of customers. They affectionately refer to him as 'TV' and when a particularly challenging delivery has to be made, many local customers have issued the order to "Call TV."

"If I say I'm going to be there, I'm there," Vermilyea said. "They pick up the phone and they call me and they're dealing with me. I'm a one-man show."

Vermilyea has resisted the temptation to grow his company by adding trucks and drivers, even though customers have asked him if he could take on some additional work.

"I've been asked many times (to add more trucks)," he said. "I want to stay a one-man show. I have a fuse that's about half-an-inch long and when I snap, I snap. Drivers would say something to me and next thing you know, we'd be rolling around on the ground. I'm a one-man show and I have only myself to blame (when things go wrong)."

Of course, he counts his wife Dawn as part of that show, considering her his "better half." She handles the bookkeeping and washes the interior of the truck each week. Vermilyea himself washes the exterior of his 1999 International at the start of every workweek; he won't start a week with a dirty truck. The truck is meticulously maintained and still garners praise over the CB.

"The biggest pride somebody can have is when you're driving down the road and somebody picks up the CB and says 'Red Eagle, good looking truck,'" Vermilyea said. For this reason, he also volunteers his time and his truck to take part in many community events, including Santa Claus parades and local fundraising initiatives. He does it because he loves seeing the reactions on the kids' faces.

"I soak that right up," he said. "I just love people giving me the thumb's up, saying it looks good."

Keeping the truck in good condition also pays off at the scales. Vermilyea said he's never bothered at the MTO scales because the truck looks good and he treats the inspection officers with respect.

"I don't have trouble with the MTO when I roll across the plate," he said. "They look and they see I have a good piece of equipment, I secured the load the best I could. I make mistakes, I'm only human, but if the MTO officer says 'This strap is on the borderline,' I have spare straps right there with me. It gets back to good ol' 'yes-sir, no-sir,' be polite with them."

While Vermilyea has enjoyed a successful career as an owner/operator,

**'If I say I'm going to be there, I'm there.'**

**Than Vermilyea**

destiny, and not have to rely on dispatchers or others. That, of course, means there's nobody to hide behind

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**Continued on page 12**



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# Canada's top owner/operator: Than Vermilyea

Continued from page 10

he acknowledges not all recent changes in the industry have been for the better.

He pines for the old days, when there was camaraderie among drivers on the road. These days, he hides out on Channel 9 on the CB rather than Channel 19, which has become home to so much bickering amongst drivers.

"In the olden days, you'd be broken down on the side of the 401 and you'd have a truck in front of you, you've got two behind you and another one on the other side of the 401 coming across with tools, wrenches...today, if you break down you better have your cell phone charged or you better have tools with you," Vermilyea said. "Everybody goes by."

But not everybody goes by. Vermilyea himself has stopped to help others in need, including one instance that will affect him forever. While en route to a delivery in Milton, Ont., Vermilyea watched in horror as a trucker lost control of a set of B-trains and collided with a car. He ran to the aid of the motorists and found two ladies trapped inside the car. Unable to free them, he ran back to his truck to retrieve a hammer so he could smash out the windows. But the car caught fire and burst into flames before he could return; the wall of heat proving too much for him to overcome.



O/O Than Vermilyea (second from right) is congratulated by sponsors (L-R): Brad Houle, Goodyear; Mark Laine, Mack; and Shelly Hubbard, Castrol.

"All you could hear was their voices screaming, then the voices kind of faintly went away," he recalled with tears in his eyes. "Every time I go back to that spot in Cobourg, I think of that. It's hard."

Today, Vermilyea is counting down the miles to retirement. He says his current rig will be his last, but that he'll always be driving truck in some capacity, if not as an O/O.

"I'll never put it behind me," he said of driving. "When I decide I've got enough pennies put away to retire, I'll never quit trucking. I'll go to work for my nephews and I'll drive truck for

them, but it'll be when I want to go to work or when they need the crops taken off. That way I can go back to the cottage, go fishing or go hunting. I'll always be around a steering wheel somewhere, as long as I'm still able to get there. If I have to have a wheelchair to get there, I'll get'er done."

Vermilyea admitted the industry has changed drastically and being a small player among the major carriers is difficult. He has succeeded, due to his focus on personalized service. He has some tips for aspiring young owner/operators, but his first advice is to stay in school. If they decide to

pursue a career in the trucking business, he emphasized the importance of good money management.

"Get your ducks in a row," he said. "A lot of people think when they get that first big paycheque, 'Let's take a trip, honey. You want that big fur coat? You want that big, fancy Mustang?' I was kind of old-school, where your first big cheque pays your fuel, the second cheque pays the truck payment, the third cheque pays maintenance and breakdowns and that fourth cheque, well, let's just put that away for a rainy day. Then, start back on that first cheque again for the fuel and so forth."

It has become harder to make ends meet, with every cost – including fuel, tires and insurance – trending upwards.

"Licensing jumped now from \$963 for 140,000-lb gross, up to \$1,100 in one jump," he said. But asked if he'd be able to achieve the same success in the industry if starting out today, Vermilyea took a moment to think before saying: "I pretty well guarantee I would, because I'm a bullheaded French-Irish cross. If I make my mind to doing something, I'm going to do it. One thing I always took pride in was raising my family, keeping my name on the door and paying my bills – and I'd do it again. But again, I'm a different breed." **TW**

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# Dealing with summer drivers

**I** was lucky enough to spend Canada Day in downtown Vancouver. I was hauling the sound system for part of the celebrations. During the unloading process I was parked right in the middle of things, where thousands of people were milling around and taking in the sights.

My truck was looking pretty sharp, thanks to a large portion of elbow grease with a side order of sweat and I had many an admiring glance from passersby. Quite a lot of people stopped to pass the time and ask questions about the truck, where I had come from and what I was hauling. Some of those were hoping that the name on the side of the truck meant

**You say tomato  
I say tomahto**

Mark Lee



an appearance by the singer who shares that name. In this case that wasn't to be, but I still got a lot of attention.

That attention was all good; people asked how it was driving through the mountains and generally made positive comments about the truck. This wasn't a unique experience; when touring with the aforementioned singer, I was often parked centre stage outside of the venues and people were al-

ways coming along to visit and talk about the truck, where we were coming from, where we were going and how the drive had been.

All in all, meeting the public is a pleasant experience – that is until they get behind the wheel of a car. Then the game changes and not in a good way. Some are just plain ignorant of the results of their actions, but even worse are the ones who know what they're doing but just don't care. Leaving downtown, I was cut off more times than I care to remember long before I got out on TC1.

Some of these drivers were visiting with me earlier, yet now that they had a steering wheel in their hands, I was public enemy number one.

The summer season is the worst time for this, especially along the more scenic routes. Now, I understand that people are on vacation, but some of the behaviour we witness out on the roads leaves me puzzled. How can it be enjoyable to drive, or be a passenger in a vehicle, that is being driven as if on a qualifying lap for the Montreal Grand Prix?

These drivers seem to be convinced it is a slur on their manliness to be behind a big truck. The fact that they're going around a blind curve is irrelevant; they must be in front at all costs.

Then we have the ones that are oblivious to everyone around them. They're sightseeing and nothing else matters, they are going to drive at 20 km/h under the speed limit so they don't miss anything and that is that. You see them driving along with a huge line of traffic behind them and some, like the ones I described above, will do anything they can to get around it, regardless of whether or not it is safe to do so.

Worst of all though, in my opinion, are the ones that combine those two elements.

On the two-lane roads, they amble along without a care in the world, braking for the slightest curve and getting in everyone's way, but as soon as the road opens up a little, it's as if the checkered flag has dropped, they're off like a scalded cat until the road narrows again and there they are, just waiting to hold you up again.

As professional drivers we have to deal with these people on a daily basis and it can be frustrating, to say the least. You learn to recognize which group the drivers around you belong to and drive accordingly. The best way to deal with the lunatics is to just let them go, so they don't do anything stupid around you.

The ones that amble along without a care in the world are easy. We know the roads, we know where the passing lanes are, so just hang back until the opportunity to pass comes along and soon they're just a distant memory.

The third group is the one that is most difficult to deal with. Sure, you can outthink them and get around before they have a chance to floor it on an open section, but then you're in danger of being in the first group yourself.

You can just follow along getting more and more frustrated with every mile you drive, or you can just pull off at the first opportunity and have five minutes to yourself, maybe do a quick circle check, clean your windows, mirrors or lights or take a bathroom break. By the time you're done, they'll be a good way ahead of you.

As I found out in Vancouver, these people are decent folk, but they change when they get behind the wheel. Most of it is due to a complete lack of driving education, some of it is due to attitude, but whatever the case, it is what it is, we have to deal with it. **TW**

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

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# US retains HoS rules

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Any faint hope that remained that a US Court would reverse the new hours-of-service rules implemented July 1, has been completely dashed. The US Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit issued its ruling recently, retaining the new rules with the exception of one small change that won't affect Canadian carriers. The Court struck down the requirement for a 30-minute off-duty break for short-haul drivers only.

"While we are disappointed the Court chose to give unlimited deference to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's agenda-driving rulemaking, the striking down of the short-haul break provision is an important victory (for American carriers)," said Dave Osiecki, ATA senior vice-president of policy and regulatory affairs.

The ATA issued a statement blasting the FMCSA for how it went about implementing the new HoS rules. "FMCSA won the day not through the strengths of its rulemaking prowess," but rather through "an artless war of attrition," the association blasted.

"The court recognized on numerous occasions the shortcomings of the agency's deliberations, so despite upholding most of the rule, we hope this opinion will serve as a warning to FMCSA not to rely on similarly unsubstantiated rulemakings in the future," Osiecki said. "One thing this rulemaking makes clear is that fatigue is a small problem when viewed through a crash causation lens. ATA hopes FMCSA will work with the trucking industry to address more pressing safety and driver behavior issues, including those than can be directly affected through proven traffic enforcement activities aimed at unsafe operating behaviours."

Meanwhile, the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) also reacted, claiming it's now time to get on with training drivers.

"As far as hours-of-service, we have long believed that drivers need flexibility to do their jobs safely. That hasn't changed. But the court's decision has put the issue to bed for now," said OOIDA executive vice-president Todd Spencer. "That being said, hopefully we can now move on to addressing the biggest safety gap in the trucking industry and that's the lack of basic training standards for new drivers."

OOIDA recently launched a Truckers for Safety agenda, aimed at preparing the next generation of long-haul truckers and addressing other highway safety concerns. "Better trained drivers mean safer drivers," said Spencer. "An experienced career trucker is the type that people want to share the road with, and training should be the biggest focus of highway safety efforts."

More on that campaign can be found at [www.truckersforsafety.com](http://www.truckersforsafety.com). **TW**



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## US truck tonnage up in June

ARLINGTON, Va. – US for-hire truck tonnage nudged up 0.1% in June, on the heels of a 2.1% increase in May, according to the latest data from the American Trucking Associations (ATA).

May's gain was revised down from the initially reported 2.3% gain. June's seasonally adjusted truck tonnage is the highest level on record. The seasonally adjusted tonnage index was up 5.9% compared to June 2012, ATA reported. It characterized the latest data as "robust, although below May's 6.5% year-over-year gain."

"The fact that tonnage didn't fall back after the 2.1% surge in May is quite remarkable," ATA chief economist Bob Costello said. "While housing starts were down in June, tonnage was buoyed by other areas like auto production which was very strong in June and durable-goods output, which increased 0.5% during the month according to the Federal Reserve." **TW**

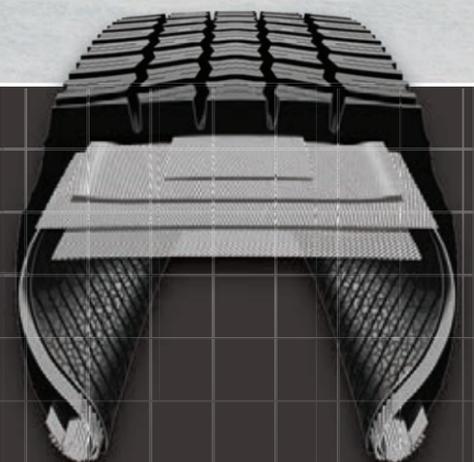


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# Claiming and collecting GST/HST

In theory, GST/HST should be a simple tax to file. You write down what you paid on business expenses and the amount will be fully refunded to you.

What's difficult is that there are so many different rates and rules to follow.

With British Columbia and PEI having changed their GST/HST rates effective Apr. 1, there are now four different rates in this country.

Alberta, B.C., Manitoba, Quebec, and Saskatchewan are at 5%; New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Ontario are at 13%; PEI is at 14%; and Nova Scotia is at 15%.

Those provinces charging 5% might look cheap, but they are not. All except Alberta have a provincial sales tax in addition to the GST/HST, and you don't get this back as a credit. So if you get your truck repaired in B.C. for \$100, the total including PST and GST/HST would be \$112.

You can claim only the GST/HST portion - \$5 - meaning your net cost is \$107. If you spend that same \$100 in Ontario, a province with no PST on repairs, you'll be charged \$113 including GST/HST but you'll get to claim \$13 back. Your net cost is \$100.

Because sales tax rates and rules vary from province to province, you'd better be paying attention to your re-



**Tax Talk**  
Scott Taylor

ceipts when you make your claim.

## Should you collect GST/HST?

If you're an owner/operator working for a carrier, your sales/income are "zero-rated" and therefore you should not collect GST/HST for your services.

You still get to claim credits on any GST/HST paid on your business expenses, thereby giving you a refund, but this refund, of course, is just you getting your own money back.

While the act of trucking for a carrier is zero-rated, most of your other business activities are taxable. For example, if you're going to truck for someone on the side and he's not a carrier, you must charge GST/HST on the amount.

A "self-employed driver" must charge GST/HST for his services if he exceeds the annual \$30,000 gross limitation. By definition, a self-employed driver does not use his own truck and does not assume liability for the supply of a freight transpor-

tation service for GST/HST purposes. He is providing a driving service, which is taxable.

I can't tell you how many times I've run into small carriers using self-employed drivers and refusing to pay GST/HST to them on their gross earnings.

I mean, they're already taking a risk trying to avoid the whole "employee" issue, so why take another risk and not pay GST/HST? They'll get it back on their returns anyway.

Some will try to argue that if the self-employed driver is taking a load from Canada to the US, the service is zero-rated and not subject to GST/HST.

However, Canada Revenue Agency has issued an information circular and deemed that the delivery of the "service" is considered delivered to the carrier's office.

Assuming the carrier is Canadian, GST/HST applies to driving a truck to the US and back. (For details, visit the CRA Web site and look up RC 4080 - GST/HST Information for Freight Carriers and GST/HST Memorandum 28.2 - Freight Transportation Services. It's all there and easy to read).

The real crime in all this is that you, as a self-employed driver, are responsible for charging GST/HST on your services.

If you are working for a carrier that

refuses to pay GST/HST and you're audited, CRA is going to hand you the bill.

## Selling your truck

If you sell your truck or any other business equipment, you have to charge GST/HST.

And buyer beware: If you think you can go to the licence office and pay the GST/HST there when you transfer the ownership instead of paying tax to the seller, think again.

You are really paying PST at the licence office, and it is not refundable (Ontario, for example, used to have a special form where you can apply and get PST back, but not anymore).

If you buy a used truck in a private deal, make sure the seller charges GST/HST on the bill of sale and shows his account number.

If you have questions about how to properly charge and report GST/HST, talk to your accountant.

Auditors don't want to hear how complicated it is to record expenses or calculate the right amounts. More importantly, you want to claim back every penny that you're entitled to receive. **TW**

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



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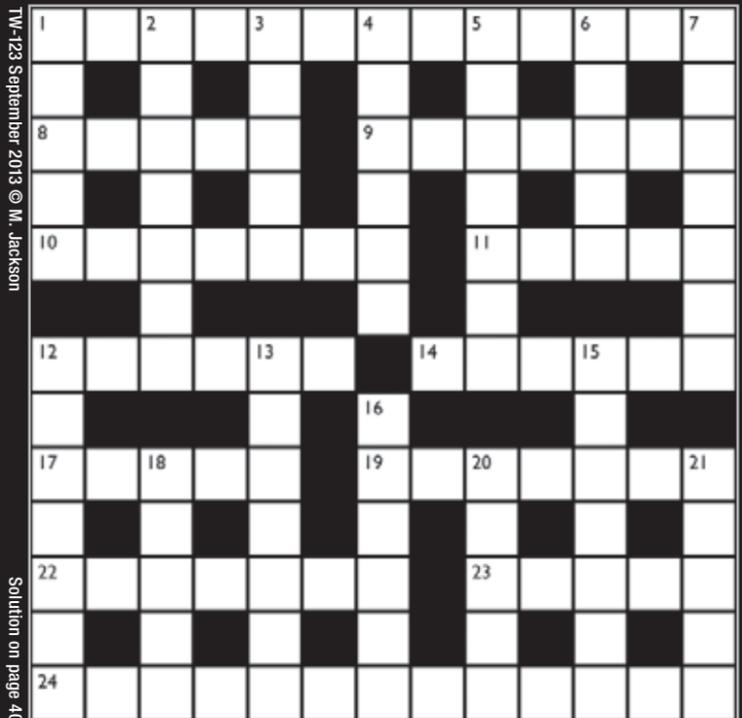
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- 9 Rules and regs (3,4)
- 10 Oversize-rig companion vehicles
- 11 Burned fuel pointlessly
- 12 Truck-buyer's need, usually
- 14 Franchised truck vendor
- 17 Entered the big-rig drags
- 19 Stainless-steel tanker brand
- 22 Cargo protection or support material
- 23 Orange traffic diverter
- 24 Certain urban roads (3,3,7)

### Down

- 1 Roadside weigh station
- 2 Retread a tire, for example
- 3 Half of 0/0
- 4 Driver problem, perhaps
- 5 Critical tachometer mark
- 6 Rush-hour traffic speed, sometimes
- 7 Smokey's radar-gun target
- 12 Inter-truck chatbox (1,1,5)
- 13 State bounded by MI, OH, KY and IL
- 15 Autoroute 15 to I-87 border crossing
- 16 Certain big-rig tires
- 18 Boat on four-wheeler's roof
- 20 Airtronic bunk-heater brand
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# Bridge generation gap with understanding

**N**othing demonstrates the need to reach out to a new generation of employees better than recently released data from the 2011 National Household Survey. The average truck driver was found to be older than previously thought, at 46 years of age, and this is four-and-a-half years older than the average Canadian worker. Put another way, the trucking industry's workforce is approaching retirement faster than expected, fuelling concerns about an impending driver shortage.

Generation Y, born between the late 1970s and 1990s, will obviously play a key role in any recruiting-related solutions. It is the largest demographic group of employees since the Baby Boom, representing roughly nine million Canadians depending on the ages used in the calculations, and it will be better educated and more diverse than any previous cohort.

The potential advantages do not end there. Generation Y is often characterized as quick to embrace strategies which make it possible to complete tasks more quickly and efficiently. While older drivers may have balked at tools like tracking systems, speed limiters and electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs), these tech-savvy employees will see technological innovations as important tools to reach key business goals.

## Ask the Expert

Heather Blackwell Decker



But while it plays a key role in the search for future employees, Generation Y also represents a generation gap that needs to be bridged.

The trucking industry has traditionally placed the highest value on experienced workers who are 50 years of age or older, associating age with the quality of work. Those who fail to consider the value of younger workers may miss out on a number of opportunities and solutions.

There are several misconceptions which keep some employers from seeing the value of Generation Y.

While this demographic group is often labeled as having a sense of entitlement, for example, this same description has been applied to every generation that came before it ("These kids today..."). And suggestions these younger workers are lazier than earlier generations may simply fail to recognize that members of Generation Y place a greater emphasis on the quality of life.

They refuse to wrap identities in careers after seeing modern economic realities destroy the promise of "jobs for life." It is one of the reasons why they are

more likely to focus on the opportunities to learn skills which can be transferred from one industry to another, as they chart personal career paths.

Not surprisingly, they also tend to look for compensation packages based on specific roles and the quality of work rather than a focus on seniority and age alone. As important as financial compensation will always be, offering sudden shifts in pay packages can be particularly difficult in an industry like trucking, where profit margins are razor thin at the best of times. But these limitations can be offset by other compensation options which resonate particularly well with Generation Y. Workplace wellness programs, for example, can offset the cost of gym memberships that support the young generation's interest in an active lifestyle and quality of life.

Meanwhile, training led by existing employees will certainly be valued by the newest additions to the trucking industry. Formal mentorship programs with well-trained instructors can steer the newest drivers in the right directions, encouraging learning through failure and successes alike, and supporting retention efforts.

A fleet's commitment to social responsibility will also play a role in attracting and retaining the younger workers. Growing up in an era of social media, Generation Y places a significant value on the ideals of transparency and global

awareness. Companies which adopt corporate sustainability programs – measuring environmentally friendly gains in the form of lower emissions, on top of other social commitments – will be particularly attractive.

But recruiting this generation of employees into the trucking industry as a whole presents an altogether different challenge. While their predecessors were often attracted by the promise of adventure on the open road, members of Generation Y often have the opportunity to realize these adventures in other ways. Coupled with their focus on quality of life, this might offer a significant advantage to fleets which can offer hub-and-spoke delivery models and more time at home.

Above all, the industry's newest workers will want to have their voices heard, just like employees of any age, and they will remain on career paths when they can participate in a workplace that is transparent and honest. I speak from experience. I am Generation Y, and I have seen what the trucking industry can offer. **TW**

*This month's expert is Heather Blackwell Decker, risk services solutions analyst. Heather has seven years experience in trucking safety and compliance and now works within the Northbridge Insurance Risk Services team. You can visit Northbridge Insurance at [www.nbins.com](http://www.nbins.com).*



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# Recent changes to US HoS rules have increased stress

**F**rom the driver reaction I've witnessed on social media recently, the half-hour compulsory break included in the FMC-SA hours-of-service rule changes that came into effect this past July, seem to have released a whole bunch of pent-up frustration within the driver pool.

I think it is the most foolish rule to be imposed yet. Why? Because how many drivers in North America were not taking at least a half-hour break once per day either in the form of a meal break

## Over the road

Al Goodhall



or off-duty time at the dock?

I've heard the word "stress" used more by drivers since July 1 than ever before. Stress has been on my mind a lot in the past few years. If you're a driver, perhaps it has been on your mind too. I've been feeling stressed out despite experiencing many positive things in

my life. This had me concerned to the point that I was even perusing mental health Web sites at one point, checking the warning signs for depression. I just seem to be in a funk, a general feeling of fatigue and frustration. I'm generally not unhappy, although that pops up from time to time. In a way, I've been glad to hear more drivers voicing their concerns over stress on the job. I'm obviously not alone.

As I look back over the columns I have written, the issue of time spent on the job comes up quite frequently, and I usually relate that to feelings

of stress. I've called it the difficulty in finding a balance between work and home when the scale is always tipped towards the amount of time spent on the job. So obviously I haven't found a solution to resolve these feelings of stress. So I've been asking myself, what gives here?

My wife and I have a loving relationship that strengthens with each passing year. We have a wonderful daughter and two beautiful grandchildren. The relationship I have with my employer is built on honesty and integrity and provides well for my family. When I look around at the state of the world, I recognize how lucky I am and I am truly grateful.

Despite all those positives, I still find myself asking the question: Is this trucking lifestyle really for me? I find myself thinking about the many things I'm missing out on as I cruise down the road.

Thoughts of family, of play, of hobbies, and of relaxing and doing nothing at all. As a driver, do you find yourself asking similar questions? When you get to your home time is it frenzied and rushed and does that suck some of the enjoyment out of that time?

Here's an example from my own life. Home renovation is something my wife and I enjoy doing together. Our home is somewhat of a playground for us. My wife has a flare for design and can visualize changes in her mind's eye. I can make it happen. Our skills complement one another's and we really enjoy that time together.

We are just finishing up a major kitchen renovation we started in the fall of 2010. Because of my recent push to see this project finished up, I have not been getting to the gym on a regular basis or getting out for my regular runs. A regular exercise regimen has become an important part of my life over the past decade. I'm missing it. That limited home time has seen me sacrifice one thing I enjoy doing for another. That frustrates me. Situations like this arise time and again for me.

Okay, so as drivers we know we can't have it all. This profession requires that you commit a large block of your time to the job. That's why it is so important that we maintain the ability to decide for ourselves how we use that time. I think the mandatory imposition of the half-hour break has hit a sore spot in this regard. It's politics, not common sense. It's window dressing to satisfy the strong safety lobby that exists out there but does nothing more than place an additional burden of compliance on the driver.

As far as the stress I feel goes, I know that for the most part it is self-imposed.

When I stop thinking about all of the things I want to do when I get home and bring my mind into the present moment, I enjoy every minute I am out on the road. When I am at home and put aside thoughts of the limited time I have available and of all of the things I won't get done and simply enjoy the present moment, again, I am able to enjoy every minute of that time. That advice I give to myself appears to be a simple and sensible solution. It's anything but. **TW**

*Al Goodhall has been a professional long-haul driver since 1998. He shares his experiences via his 'Over the Road' blog at <http://truckingcrosscanada.blogspot.com>.*

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# Many factors influence truck safety

**F**atigue management hit the news again in July with the release of the well-researched North American Fatigue Management Program. If you haven't read the press on this, the program was developed over a 10-year period by researchers and carriers in Canada and the US. It is a voluntary, web-based educational and training program that provides an extensive array of information and tools on the subject. It deals with the factors contributing to fatigue, guidance on health and wellness, time management, scheduling, and strategies to mitigate fatigue. And, best of all possible news, the program is free to all. Visit [www.nafmp.com](http://www.nafmp.com) and get started. There are plenty of factors involved when it



**Private Matters**

Bruce Richards

comes to truck safety. The fatigue management program deserves to be part of the discussion as one piece of a growing body of knowledge on the non-mechanical aspects of truck safety – those that focus on drivers. Another is the CCMTA's report on the human factors involved, which I've written about previously.

Pierre Thiffault chaired the Task Force that delivered that report and he presented the findings and recommendations at PMTC's recent annual conference. The report states that significant driver behaviour issues are at fault in up to 90%

of commercial motor vehicle crashes. These include recognition and decision errors. Recognition errors include inattention due to fatigue or distraction; and decision errors include a long list of high-risk behaviours. Addressing fatigue, it is the Task Force's belief that hours-of-service regulations on their own are not enough to prevent fatigue-related crashes. Truck drivers who recognize that fatigue is setting in may continue to drive for a variety of reasons (as do automobile drivers, by the way). Understanding the motivation to continue driving while drowsy is important if the problem is to be fully addressed.

The decision to continue driving while fatigued can be influenced by any of a wide variety of factors, including compensation practices, company policies, dispatcher instructions, and

shippers' needs to name a few. The factors that influence the drive/don't drive decision demand further examination, because even though company policies and regulations may dictate rest periods and safety-first approaches to fatigue, these may be overridden in the driver's mind by other 'more important' needs.

While we certainly agree that training in fatigue management techniques is critical, equally we see the need to address distracted driving, going well beyond a simple ban on handheld communication devices. Most of us, let's be honest, do all sorts of things while driving that take our attention away from the road. Among other things while in our personal vehicles, we may fiddle with the radio, move the seat around, eat or drink, adjust the temperature, and talk – either on the telephone (including using hands-free devices) or to passengers.

Commercial motor vehicle drivers have all the same distractions as those of the average commuter, but they also deal with in-vehicle technologies unique to trucking and the potential those devices have for pulling the driver's attention away from the primary job. The CCMTA report recommended research into how these systems should be used or not used while the vehicle is in motion.

In examining decision errors as a cause of collisions, the CCMTA report stated that risky driver behaviour should be given priority as a topic of study. This point was underscored during the recent PMTC conference where some tools for identifying high-risk drivers were discussed. The importance of identifying these drivers can't be overstated, since estimates indicate that there is a 33% chance that any given hire will exhibit high-risk behaviour at some point. The presentation by Scott Creighton of Northbridge Insurance described a practical methodology for tracking driver behaviour and making any required adjustments to that behaviour before a problem occurs. Some of the identified and better known factors in motor vehicle collisions include fatigue, distraction, poor decision-making, and high risk behaviour. But there is one other factor that needs to be included in the mix. That is the individual driver's attentional and interpersonal style.

Some time back, PMTC worked with MBA Consulting to assess a number of drivers who had been inducted into the PMTC-Huron Services Hall of Fame for Professional Drivers. The assessment revealed that each of these drivers had as many as eight characteristics in common. This information needs to be included in the body of work when we discuss truck safety and hiring practices. It's no coincidence that Hall of Fame drivers share these characteristics.

Imagine the possibilities if we could pull together all the information generated by these various studies and use it to develop comprehensive strategies to help drivers and fleet operators. We might be able to remove the temptation to drive while drowsy, cut down on distractions in the cab, avoid hiring (or retaining) high-risk drivers, and hire drivers with Hall of Fame characteristics. Put it all together with the safety technology included with today's trucks and we just might be looking at a brand new world of truck safety. **TW**

*The PMTC is the only national association dedicated to the private trucking community. Send comments to [trucks@pmtc.ca](mailto:trucks@pmtc.ca).*

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# Small fleets require bigger representation

**A**s a small carrier, believe it or not, you are a member of the majority – not just a ‘little guy.’ Statistics tell us that carriers with 10 or fewer power units make up 60% of all for-hire trucks on the road in Canada. So why do we (rightfully) feel so insignificant? In my opinion, it’s because of a severe lack of organized representation.

There are a myriad of organizations for smaller carriers or owner/operators and drivers. I’ve been approached by several and found that most (unfortunately not all) are directed by people with the absolute best of intentions, with a genuine concern for those they wish to serve. Unfortunately, they are all mostly ineffective. I don’t mean that as an insult, just an honest, straightforward observation. One substantial organization came on the scene several years ago, amid plenty of high hopes. Within months, some founding members left in a very publicly aired display of frustration with the direction the group was gravitating towards.

The same organization allowed various remaining members to write guest columns in nearly every industry publication. Unfortunately, most of these folks showed an uncanny ability to open their mouth solely to change feet, and to unilaterally blame drivers’ financial issues on their employers, showing many of us that this was not a group we really wanted to be affiliated with, or encourage our employees to join. A shame, really.

Another, much smaller organization contacted me one evening, about 10 years ago. The president of this group pretended to be a job-seeking owner/operator to get me on the phone. With the usual questions answered, he inquired as to our fuel surcharges, then argued that they weren’t high enough. In his urge to show me just how clever he was, he started quoting what various industry sources recommend, making me aware of his real identity and purpose.

When I pressured him to explain to me how fuel surcharges can be a one-size-fits-all percentage, he paused. If my competitors, I argued, are charging \$2 per mile, but I’m charging \$3, travelling to the same areas, my surcharge percentage can be considerably lower. I’ll still arrive at the same net dollar figure, resulting in a fair, transparent surcharge, not just a thinly veiled rate increase, as we know happens often. When he attempted to sputter his way through an explanation, I told him we were done. Sadly, this fly-by-night group is still in existence, I presume still offering incomplete advice based on generalities.

You don’t have to have read this column much to know that I’m not a supporter of any organization. My loudest wrath has been aimed at the Canadian Trucking Alliance, or here in Ontario, the Ontario Trucking Association, organizations which, depending on your outlook, want little to do with small carriers anyway.

I criticize them most because honestly, they’re the only organization that actually accomplishes anything substantial (whether you agree with what they accomplish is up to you). Why bother criticizing the ineffective groups? One thing I can never criticize the CTA or OTA for, is their determination and level of organization. If other groups could



**Small Fleet, Big Attitude**

Bill Cameron

match their drive, and organization level, perhaps they would someday enjoy the same notoriety as the CTA or comparable provincial associations. But there seems to be no attempt being made in this area. At the risk of opening old wounds, consider the speed limiter issue in Ontario as an example. At every opportunity, the OTA issued statements, policies, and recommendations regarding heavy truck speed limiters. Right out of the gate, they had scientific facts and statistics to offer for consideration.

One of the smaller organizations fought back by handing out T-shirts

proclaiming: ‘My speed limiter is in the driver’s seat.’ Hardly a substantial rebuttal, now was it?

I will repeat my own argument: The fuel economy and GHG emission numbers quoted by the OTA were generalizations. Those of us involved in heavy haul or running hilly country in higher speed limit jurisdictions – particularly with top-notch drivers – found that with speed limiters, our fuel consumption actually increased. This should suggest that GHG emissions increased as well. As a non-member of any group, I forfeited the right to state my case anywhere but in these pages. Generalizations or not, the OTA’s numbers came from legitimate scientific study, something the other public detractors either didn’t have, or didn’t capitalize on.

During the debate process, the Ontario government was guilty of a slightly

unsavoury action, but with predictable results. A long-awaited public input session was announced, but on less than 24 hours’ notice. The OTA arrived, with all facts and arguments ready. Other pre-registrants arrived, complaining of the short notice, a recurring excuse for incomplete presentations. Although the notification of the meeting was unacceptable, we all knew for months that the day was coming. How could any registered presenter not be ready?

Small carriers deserve representation indicative of the number of trucks we operate and volumes of freight we move.

I don’t believe any existing organization could adjust their current agenda to stand toe to toe with the large provincial associations, so a new, ground-up association, with no political or personal agenda involved, is required. **TW**

*Bill Cameron and his wife Nancy own and operate Parks Transportation, a four-truck flatdeck trucking company.*

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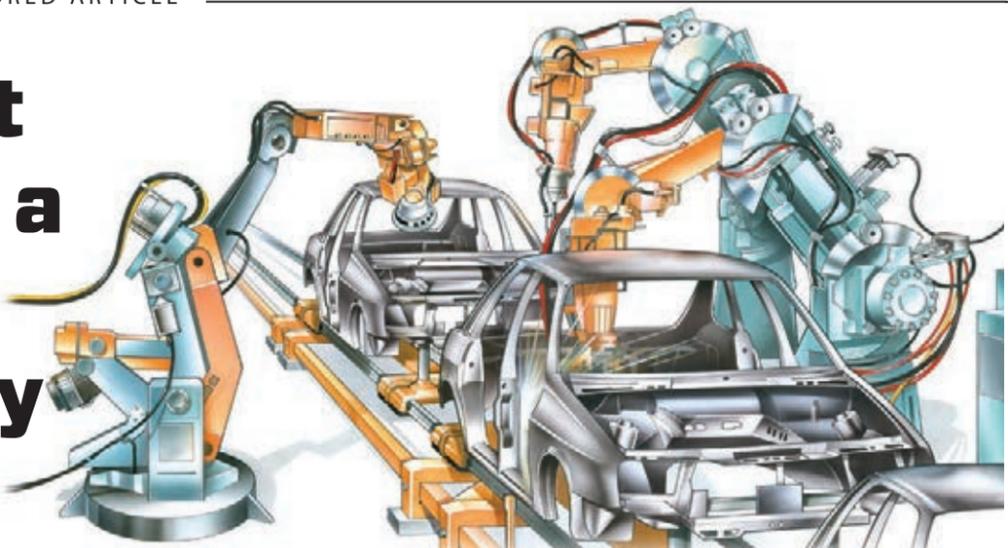
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# Truckers do what it takes to keep up with a frenetic Just-in-Time Automotive Industry

BY HARRY RUDOLFS



The auto industry has been through so many dramatic cycles. But its humble servant, the automotive trucking sector, has kept pace with the changes and continues to meet the demands of the OEMs. Just-in-Time remains the operative strategy for auto manufacturers, although shifting supply lines and source-points pose ever-greater challenges to its suppliers and transporters. Rather than stockpiling parts on-site, car makers prefer to have their materials rolling and en-route. The OEMs want their supplies to meet precise time windows, sometimes assessing severe penalties to carriers missing performance deadlines.

Arguably, auto manufacturing has endured more turmoil than any other industrial sector: booms and busts, recessions and upticks, periods of record sales and years of dismal numbers.

Over the last few decades, we've watched the life and death of the North American Auto Pact; Japanese and Asian car makers gaining a significant share of the domestic marketplace; robots taking over some of the work of humans on the assembly line; and the coming of the third-party players like Penske and Ryder.

In 1985, I got a job working for a trucking company in Talbotville, Ont., and there was plenty of work. In those days, every second or third truck on the 401 was hauling auto parts. The Canadian dollar was cheap, 78 cents US, and that made export goods very attractive.

Parts factories and suppliers abounded in places like Owen Sound, Waterloo, Collingwood, Lindsay, Midland, Wheatly and Niagara Falls, making auto glass, shock absorbers, seat belt fasteners, door latches, brackets, spindles, gaskets, wiring assemblies, brake parts, steering wheels and bumpers.

But in the matter of a few short years, the automotive environment had changed. The Japanese were opening assembly plants in North America and were pushing harder toward the Just-In-Time methodology. They expected every product and service to continually improve and get cheaper, including transportation.

Suzuki became involved in a joint venture with GM in Ingersoll, Ont., and one morning I watched the workers lined up and doing callisthenics before the start of their shift. 'What kind of a car plant is this?' I wondered. By the late 80s, robots were all the rage and were beginning to be installed in plants, primarily used for spot welding. Automation cut labour costs, but the technology was expensive and required some consolidation of assembly plants. But there were plenty of pressures on the domestic automakers at the time. For one thing, retirees were living longer, and good health and death benefits negotiated by the UAW and CAW were costing the Big Three dearly.

Domestic automakers found some savings by setting up parts shops in the Maquiladora states of Mexico, located just south of the US border, where labour was cheap and the peso was cheaper. Meanwhile, Asian OEMs searched even further afield, sourcing components in Asia. Their cars might be manufactured in North America but most of the parts arrived in containers after a long sea journey.

The extended supply chain across the Pacific put a strain on the JIT system requiring longer lead times of four to six weeks to get parts to the assembly line. Their reliance on near-zero inventory came back to bite the Japanese auto giants big time after the tsunami of 2011. Their North American operations were profoundly impacted by this event.

These days, auto makers are increasingly becoming at-

tracted to near-shoring and sourcing in places like the southern US or Mexico. This development has been a slight boon to North American trucking interests, which have benefited from the overland supply lines.

At one time, the automotive industry was serviced almost exclusively by large carriers dedicated to that sector. But the reverse bidding process favoured by OEMs has scared many of them off. Bids on parcels of work are posted and the contract is usually rewarded to the lowest bidder. Many carriers are reluctant to play in this sandbox. What's the point, they wonder, in investing in expensive equipment only to lose the contract the following quarter? The reverse bidding process has no doubt benefited 3PLs, and logistics giants like Ryder and Penske as they can often better coordinate movements and juggle carriers, while, at the same time, provide warehousing and pooling facilities. But make



This was the first robot brought into the GM plant in Oshawa.

no mistake, auto manufacturing will always be reliant on road transport and motor carriers, no matter if the parts arrive by air, sea or rail, and no matter which logistics multinational is working the levers. There will always be a hardworking truck driver delivering the load and product at the end of the line, wherever it has to go.

## Trucks of Steel

Mike Donahue is president of International Freight Systems headquartered in Tilbury, Ont. He's been involved in various aspects of automotive trucking for decades and has done his share of unloading and loading coils at steel plants and automotive facilities.

"Just-in-Time used to be a consideration for freight haulers, but it's gradually seeped into other parts of trucking, including deck work. These days if you miss an appointment time you won't get unloaded until the next day, unless they really need the product. But things have gotten easier for us delivering steel into the auto plants. Used to be when you sent a driver into an auto plant he'd be there half a day unloading a couple of coils, sometimes a whole day.

"Nowadays, most of the steel doesn't go directly into the auto plants like it used to; they use a staging warehouse for steel deliveries and the drivers are in and out of there much quicker. Each of these staging warehouses might deal with four or five different steel suppliers. The deliveries to the car plants themselves are done by a local carrier as needed.

"The equipment has changed a lot over the past few years; it's lighter and stronger - and a lot more expensive. Deck and rack trailers are primarily aluminium, and the sides are no longer those heavy wooden panels that we used to fight with. Nowadays, the side panels are plastic or Styrofoam and much easier to handle.

"Automotive grade steel coils are rarely delivered on a flatdeck anymore. Some steel plants won't even load you if you show up with a flatdeck. The customers want the steel completely covered and there are few exceptions. They want the steel delivered in rack or roll-tite trailers. Today, about 70% of our trailer fleet is either rack-and-tarp or roll-tite."

## Mackie the Mover becomes a world automotive player

Hauling parts to auto makers has certainly come a long way from its beginnings. One of the first players who helped forge the auto parts and auto transport business was The Mackie Group. The company had humble beginnings on Charlie Mackie's farm on Harmony Road in Oshawa in 1928. As a lad of 16, Charlie's grandson Ross made his first trip from Oshawa to the Yukon in 1951 delivering a load of furniture. He also managed to pick up a backhaul from Dawson City - a disabled Lincoln that had to go back to the dealership in Edmonton.

Sixty years later, the Mackie fleet of covered car haulers might be delivering Lamborghinis, Ferraris, or even the occasional Rolls-Royce. Speciality car haulage makes up about 10% of the company's business.



This car carrier from the good old days had a bunk for relief drivers mounted beneath the cab where the engine typically is found. The engine is located low in the frame midway between the front and center wheels. This design allowed an extra car to be carried above the cab.

Ross reminisces about the events that made Mackie Automotive a world leader in automotive sequencing.

"One day I got a call from the traffic and purchasing department at General Motors Oshawa. They wanted me and my son Paul to come over and have a discussion with them. This was back in 1986, and we really didn't know what they wanted.

"They identified a project they needed help with and were looking for a local transportation company to undertake it. Originally, it was a project for the Chevy Lumina, and they wanted to add a small chrome insert to the fascia. They were looking for a transport provider to pick up the fascia and install the chrome for them. They requested for us to quote on it as they thought we would be an ideal provider, since we'd transported their cars for all the car shows and done complete office re-locations for them for years. "We went out and rented a small warehouse - about 5,000 square feet - and acquired a lift truck and racking. We started out with a small team of just five members on the project, but we really didn't know what to expect. What started out as a little job, transformed Mackie Automotive into a major player within the industry.

"Things picked up quickly after that. Soon we had plants in Europe and North America, including Poland,



Germany and England performing the outsourcing for GM, as well as a plant in St. Therese, Que. By the time we sold the company outright to TDI in 2002, we had 16 plants operating around the world employing 2,200 people. The plant in St. Therese was dedicated to Paccar's Class 7 trucks and we ended up supplying the exhaust systems, aluminum cabs, and the dressed engines for the Kenworths and Peterbilts built there.

"Mackie Automotive still exists but the name has been changed. I like to think that our company played a role in moving the automotive industry, and the automotive trucking value-added sector, into a new era."

### Advances in Technology make Just-in-Time trucking easier

Another thing that has moved auto and auto parts transport into the future is the adoption of new technologies. Bill Penner is 53 and lives in St. Thomas, Ont. He's been involved in the auto industry for over 30 years, 20-plus as a driver and a 10-year stint working on the assembly line at the CAMI plant in Ingersol. He currently has a dedicated run with Elgin Motor Freight picking up auto parts in Vaughan and delivering them to a distributor in Port Huron, Michigan.

"Equipment has changed drastically and for the better. I spent a lot of time in a GMC Brigadier: vinyl seat, AM radio, no Air, but they did have that little cowl below the windshield. And those darned air powered wipers? Ford Louisvilles were better because they had AM/FM and an arm rest – but still no Air. Cabovers? I drove International CO9670s and some Chevy Astros – smelly, noisy, rough. Trailers have gone through quite a metamorphosis from 45' to 48' to 53'. I'm so old I remember when air ride first showed up. To have air ride in your truck as well as your trailer was quite the thing. Tractors, particularly fleet trucks, have become like luxury liners compared to the old school trucks. I've had leather high backs with not one but TWO armrests and seats with every possible adjustment and all these air pockets you can fill or dump at your lumbar's discretion etc. Cabs are much quieter too and the ride has vastly improved as well.

"The advent of Qualcomm made life a lot easier in my opinion – no more waiting on hold. Sometimes, if they were available, I'd have two payphones going at once trying to get through to dispatch. Cell phones were a revolution! I now drive a 2012 Volvo with Bluetooth; I have buttons on the steering wheel to accept or cancel incoming calls, voice-dialing, automatic transmissions, cruise control, aahhh...I love it, love it!

"So working conditions as far as equipment have vastly improved. Working conditions as far as the real world is concerned have not taken the road to enlightenment at all – just the opposite. Traffic volume has increased exponentially, though roads have gotten bigger too – I remember the 401 being two lanes with gravel shoulders. As

far as crossing the US and Canadian borders, I like the new electronic systems and manifests. At last the onus is on people sitting in offices with computers and phones and fax machines and flush toilets, instead of some poor schmuck in a truck!

"Initiatives like the FAST card work great with Just-in-Time auto freight, as well as other systems which make a driver's life easier. The auto industry doesn't just kick you out of the dock anymore. It's almost like they're with you every step of the way."

Truckers like Penner are responsible for getting the parts to the auto manufacturers. Then a different set of truckers take over to get the final product to the dealers.

### From Shop Floor to Dealership: Auto haulers are the final link between manufacturers and consumer

Affectionately called 'Parking Lots' by other truck drivers, car carriers are essential to the industry and the only way to get a new car delivered to a dealership. Dennis Callery is a driver for Allied Systems Canada and lives in Gananoque, Ont. He's been hauling cars for 31 years.

"Every car hauler is a truck driver, but not every truck driver can be a car hauler. I started working for MCL in 1983. At that time, the company had a yard here.

## Extending truck life through maintenance

Hauling in a JIT environment means breakdowns aren't acceptable. Trucks have to be well maintained to avoid unnecessary delays. Here are some maintenance and analysis practices that can help assure maximum operating efficiency, help extend the life of your truck and possibly save you some money, no matter what you're hauling.

### Engine care and maintenance:

- Make sure your engine oil is full. If there is not enough oil in the engine, oil will oxidize faster and reduce engine oil life. This can also increase engine wear.
- Consider using a full synthetic engine oil such as Shell Rotella T6 SAE 5W-40 full synthetic when running in cold climates. It can help oil flow quickly to engine parts during cold start up. An engine that starts easily also reduces stress on the battery and electrical system.
- Excess idling can cost a lot of money, so when you have to idle, be sure your engine is running at a low level.
- Shifting at the proper time can save fuel; don't over rev your engine.
- If you customize your truck, don't reduce airflow to the engine through the grill. This will increase heat.
- Make sure your air filter is clean, as it can help improve the way your engine performs and can help maintain fuel economy.
- You may want to carry a spare fuel filter in case you need to replace it while on the road.

- **Oil analysis:** The knowledge gained from a consistent oil analysis program can help increase equipment reliability, minimize unscheduled downtime, and more precisely track operating efficiency and maintenance practices. This combination can contribute to helping lower total operating costs.

- **Coolant Analysis:** Coolant maintenance for conventional fully formulated coolants requires checking the freeze point of the coolant and the additive or inhibitor level at each maintenance service of the vehicle. With Extended Life Coolants (ELC), checking the freeze point is required at each maintenance interval and checking the inhibitor level annually is recommended. ELCs such as Shell Rotella ELC help reduce maintenance costs and can help improve water pump life, as well as eliminate the need for supplemental coolant additives.

- Also, regularly check air pressure and tire tread. Tires inflated to the proper pressure on any vehicle should help maintain fuel mileage and maximize tire life.

I've been told that only about 25% of the people who apply actually carry on. Many guys are not comfortable doing this work because of the heights, the narrow ramps, and the tight squeezes. But it never bothered me. After the first car I was good to go. MCL originally began as Charlton Transport, one of the original car carriers out of Oshawa. When I started, there were some old-timers who still remembered driving the cars to Montreal and getting picked up by Mrs. Charlton in an eight-passenger Buick. In those days, it took approximately 12 hours to get from Oshawa to Montreal.

"MCL originally had a yard in Oshawa and one in Gananoque. MCL bought Roadway and Roadway was changed to ACL. MCL/ACL was then bought out by Ryder. And then, a few years later, Allied Systems Canada bought MCL/ACL which included carriers like McCallum Maris and AutoHaulaway. We're all under the same banner now, but we only have one yard in Toronto. Originally, car transport was exclusive to a few dedicated unionized carriers, but now there seems to be a lot of different companies, many of them non-union, doing this including many independents.

"It used to be a great paying job, and still is if you want to work hard. It's all piece work. You get paid for

fuelling, picking out the cars, loading and unloading, each stop and a mileage rate. I generally run eastern Ontario and some of western Quebec, and usually deliver about three or four loads a week. That works out to about 65 hours."

Despite the hiccoughs faced by a constantly changing and often volatile marketplace, the automotive industry remains a key player in the North American economy. Canadian trucking companies who have always gained the lion's share of cross-border traffic continue to provide excellent service to this sector on both sides of the US/Canada border, no matter what logistics giant is pulling the levers. As driver Bill Penner points out, automotive OEMs work closely with their carrier counterparts to assure prompt delivery of components. Programs like electronic manifests, ACE, CTPAT and FAST lanes have been honed to benefit manufacturers and carriers alike.

To be sure, auto manufacturing will always be reliant on road transport and motor carriers, no matter if the parts arrive by air, sea or rail. Canadian carriers like Wolverine, Challenger, TST Overland, and Verspeeten remain a critical link in the automotive supply chain and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

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# Bridge frustrations

## Trans-Canada bridgework creating hassles for truckers in Saskatchewan.

By Jim Bray

REGINA, Sask. – It might be a straightforward bridge upgrade to the suits at city hall, but for the trucking industry it's a major headache that could have been handled differently to ease some of the pain.

That's the upshot from Al Rosseker, executive director of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA), who told *Truck West* the industry was blindsided by Regina's move to restrict the eastbound lanes of the Trans-Canada Highway as they pass over a bridge crossing Pilot Butte Creek. The structure is still open, but weight restrictions slapped on it mean a lot of the trucks that ply

Hwy. 1 now have to detour around the area, a process that adds time and subtracts money from their trips.

The situation was made worse by the fact the industry wasn't given notice of the change beforehand, a situation Rosseker thinks may have been due to a lack of knowledge on the city's part when it comes to trucking.

"I don't know that they know what a long combination vehicle is," he said, adding that his organization is trying to correct that. "We're in the midst of setting up a kind of Trucking 101 meeting with the some of their folks in the next little while to tell them we need some kind of notice. We've got trucks running 24/7 and trucks en-route to everywhere

and all of a sudden (they) just say 'We're putting a restriction on this bridge or shutting down a roadway.'"

It isn't the first time this has happened, either, Rosseker said, pointing to a major off-ramp on "what's called our ring road" that was shut down for paving on only a day's notice.

"Here we're sitting with turnpike doubles trying to move," he said, "and you just can't detour these things too quickly. We've got to get (the city) a little more educated in terms of how to do these things and to start thinking about length of vehicles and that kind of thing."

The detour around the bridge – which moves trucks over to Hwy. 46 north of the Trans-Canada – poses its own problems, since it's a two-lane stretch that isn't particularly LCV-friendly to begin with.

"At one point they weren't even allowing us to go down Hwy. 46 with turnpikes, so we had to do some scrambling over at the provincial Highways Ministry," Rosseker said. He credited the STA's good working relationship with the province for helping get the permits amended so turnpike doubles can take the designated highway for the duration.

It was a welcome change from when the restrictions were announced and the STA was left asking the \$64-million question of where to break up the doubles, while the city's response, according to Rosseker, was basically "Huh? What do you mean break them up?"

Hence the STA's Trucking 101 outreach. As for the bridge itself, it appears to be part of a disappearing breed of such structures.

"There are a few (of these old bridges) across Canada still on the Trans-Canada," Rosseker said, "and government seems to be in more a reactive mode instead of a proactive mode to replace them." He thinks they're trying to get as much life out of the bridges as they can – which is understandable – but "then, when the deteriorating infrastructure catches up, we're all running around like chickens with our heads cut off."

Rosseker was quick to note that this "headless hen syndrome" seems to come more from City Hall than the Legislative Assembly, and may be exacerbated by overlapping areas of interest.

"The problem is that it's sort of inter-jurisdictional," he said. "It's within the city limits and it's on the Trans-Canada Highway, so the province and the city are negotiating the best solution."

And while he did point the finger at the city for "issuing detour signs and everything else without talking to anybody," he also acknowledged it's in their jurisdiction. On the other hand, Regina's "manager of roadway preservation" stressed in an article in the *Regina Leader-Post*, that the detour was chosen because it was the only one that could accommodate the heavy trucks.

"We cannot put (it) through residential streets in the city so this was the only option," Nigora Yulyakshieva said, while admitting that "We did not share the detour details, but we did share that we were doing the road analysis on this bridge and we shared the results with the association."

Rosseker disagreed about there being a lack of other options, however, telling *Truck West* the STA offered various solutions for getting trucks through efficiently. The STA's proposals included limiting westbound traffic to one lane and crossing eastbound traffic over to the still-open span.

"It'll bottleneck (traffic)," he noted, "but from a safety standpoint I think it would be worth doing." Rosseker said the idea was rejected because the government didn't think there was enough room at the site to build a proper detour into the westbound lane. He also admitted that, while he thinks the idea has merit, "we're not engineers."

Another potential solution was to bring in a kind of "bailey bridge."

"We also asked about a temporary bridge, like the Army Corps of Engineers brings in every so often for flood zones and stuff like that," Rosseker said. Yet another idea would have been to reroute automobile traffic instead of trucks. "For me, I look around that zone and I can see three different commutes for auto traffic, three different alternate routes," he said.

The detour not only adds about five kilometres to the trip, it also creates challenges for those who fuel up regularly in the area.

"From the bridge, you can see the Husky House, which is a major fuelling point," Rosseker said. "But unfortunately if you're carrying a heavy load you can't use the bridge, which means you have to detour." The STA has been advising carriers to fuel up in Swift Current as an alternative strategy.

"If you're putting in 200 gallons, that should get you to Winnipeg," he said, noting "there are some other cardlocks along the way but turnpike doubles are just so long it's almost impossible to get them in and out."

Getting off the detour isn't a walk in the park for drivers, either. Rosseker said they can rejoin Hwy. 1 just west of Balgoni, but "the problem is that now we've got turnpike doubles having to make a left-hand turn go east on the Trans-Canada. Anytime any kind of truck is making a left-hand turn across a major artery the safety flags have to go up."

Whether the enforced detour is due to logic or logistics, it still results in a major economic corridor being constricted at a time when it comes as just the latest whammy in what so far has been a challenging year. "We've had those problems called flooding in Calgary," Rosseker pointed out. "We had the Trans-Canada knocked out in two places west of Calgary – now we've got a bridge restriction in Regina. You're really not hitting a home run for our industry this year."

And of course any bottleneck in the supply chain will have an effect on the economy, and on trucking companies' books.

"Bottom line will probably be some higher prices because it's going to cost us more to detour," Rosseker said. "It's going to be a fuel issue, and an hours-of-service issue, obviously – it's going to take longer to get by this area. We're going to have to pass some of those, if not all of those, costs along to the shippers and consumers."

Rosseker estimates the restrictions will continue for a minimum of three months. But even when the bridge is back in business, the upgrades may end up merely delaying another problem: some day, this old wooden bridge will reach the end of its serviceable life span.

"I think they're into the situation now where they have to replace it," Rosseker said, "but their concern now is the Trans-Canada Highway, so they're looking at a stop gap measure."

Despite his concerns with how the detour was handled, Rosseker seems basically philosophical about its effect in the overall scheme of things. **TW**



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# Big Bird in the Sky

Which truck-specific GPS system is best for professional drivers?

By Harry Rudolfs

Ronald Reagan left a legacy of at least three things: deregulation, the war on drugs, and public access to GPS satellites. The jury is still out on the wisdom of the first two initiatives, but overall GPS has been a boon to humanity, and has changed the way the world navigates. The effect on trucking, itself, has been profound.

Truck drivers and GPS were meant for each other. It's a tool that can save fuel, money, unnecessary u-turns, and lost time spent in traffic snarls. But you've got to get one that's specifically made for trucks and commercial

drivers. A typical GPS unit designed for four-wheelers could get you in a lot of trouble.

One problem is that some drivers regard their GPS as a kind of autopilot. Last year a truck driver ran into a well-marked low bridge in Moncton, N.B., while paying attention to the GPS instead of the warning signs. Apparently the unit had been set on "car mode" rather than "truck mode."

Over-reliance on the GPS can lead to problems even on a designated truck route. Road conditions and obstacles can crop up unexpectedly. And your GPS can be wrong or misleading at times. I suggest carrying a recent road atlas or street guide just in case.

A spate of bridge collisions, particularly in New York State, has prompted the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to issue a warning against truck drivers using GPS intended for passenger vehicles. A 2009 study pointed out that 80% of low bridge col-

lisions in that state were the result of commercial drivers using inappropriate navigation devices. The FMC-SA also wants to see entry-level commercial drivers receiving GPS tutorials as part of their training package.

Some component of GPS technology is usually at the heart of most fleet management programs. Ironically, while I was recently checking out several GPS units, I in turn was getting tracked by the GPS located in the scanner I'm required to carry when doing city pick-ups.

My concern was with personalized, trucker-friendly GPS units. I managed to obtain three state-of-the-art contenders and put them through their paces doing city and highway work:

**'All three GPS failed the Hwy. 30 test and this was a real letdown.'**

Garmin's dezl 760 LMT; the Magellan RoadMate 5370T-LMB; and the Rand McNally Intelliroute TND 720. All of the above are among the newest devices on the market and were specifically intended for trucking applications.

First off, it's not a truck GPS unless it lets you input the weight and dimensions of the rig you're driving. It should also ask if you are hauling dangerous goods (HazMat for US readers), and what kind of dangerous goods. Most of the trucker GPS systems on the market include functions that duplicate the logbook or electronic on-board recorder (EOBR). I suspect many drivers don't bother using this as it's just another redundant task. But all three devices allow one to input and change drivers, and alternate "on-" and "off-duty" cycles.

But I like the IFTA function (Fuel Tax Log) on the Garmin because of its simplicity. The Rand also allows you to log and record fuel purchases with lots more details, but seems to be slightly more complicated to operate.

## What do truckers want?

Truckers want clear, precise instructions. In a glance they want to be able to visualize their route: the highways they will be taking, secondary roads, toll roads (if necessary), weigh scales (and how to get around them); and of course they want to know about low bridges before they smack into them. Road closures, detours, traffic reports and lastly weather conditions are all considerations that most drivers regard as being important. Touch screens or rather "tap" screens are the norm for these units. I suppose, theoretically, tapping on the screen and finger-scrolling across the maps is not considered distracted driving.

And some level of connectivity to cell or smartphones is available on all three. The Rand McNally unit has opted for WiFi instead of Bluetooth, but Bluetooth seems important at least to users of the Garmin and Magellan units, although the Garmin can only be paired with an Android device, at this time.

Sunnie Tsai, Magellan's product

marketing director, stresses the importance of the Bluetooth function on their RoadMate.

"The cell phone has become part of our lives. We do want our drivers' eyes on the road so Magellan is using the Bluetooth to pair the GPS and cell phone and turn the GPS device into a speaker phone."

RoadMate drivers can connect to a phone number by tapping the phone icon. The device can be programmed to show a visual Alert when receiving a text. And pre-canned return messages are available such as, "I am driving now and will respond when I reach my destination at such and such a time" (the time taken from the GPS' estimated time of arrival data).

## Hwy. 30, where are you?

Somehow I got the idea that GPS mapping would be more reliable than road maps. After all, it's connected to space, isn't it? And those satellites see everything, don't they?

My first disillusionment came when I was looking for an address in Ville St. Pierre, an industrial area tucked in beside Hwy. 20 and the CN rail yards in south Montreal.

If you've ever seen the movie *Eraserhead*, this could be a twin location: steam belching out of chemical tanks and rail cars clanging in a murky industrial underworld. Anyway, I crossed the tracks on Rue Norman and the Garmin was convinced I was going to hit a bridge. The warnings on the screen got more and more frantic, until I was right under the ghost bridge. But there was no bridge!

Perhaps there is a mix-up with a map from an earlier era. At the end of the road there's a very tight turn restricted to 45-ft. trailers. Still, I'd rather be alerted to the presence of a ghost bridge than not know about an impending collision with the real thing. But mistakes are not that uncommon in the world of GPS. If I got the same message as a novice driver not knowing the area, I would have been very concerned and frantically trying to find a detour.

All three GPS failed the Hwy. 30 test and this was a real letdown. When a trucker purchases a GPS for his or her job, there is an expectation that all the important highways should be on there. However Hwy. 30, a toll road and a new bypass around the south shore of Montreal that opened in December 2012, did not make it onto any of these GPS mappings - and this is an important trucking route.

There have been some other changes in the Montreal area: Hwy. 540 has been changed to Hwy. 40, and some interchanges have been moved, ie., Hwy. 15 north off Hwy. 40 eastbound is now an exit on the right instead of the left. But missing Hwy. 30 seems a big oversight. The only place I could find it was on the 2013 Rand McNally Road Atlas. It appears there as a major highway but doesn't show as a toll route.

To find out why Hwy. 30 was missing in action, I contacted Navteq (owned by Nokia), the vendor of the maps used by all three GPS manufacturers. When I asked about the missing highway, I got this response from a Nokia rep: "We



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can confirm that we do have the road you mentioned in our database. It was put there last December 2012. Following that, our customers must update the maps on their devices."

But Amy Krouse, publicist for Rand McNally takes exception to the above comments. "Our team is having a little discrepancy with what you were told. It's a pretty extensive process to 'put the data in their products.' It may be in their databases but may not be QA'd through to provide to customers on their end or ours," she explains.

Jon Hosler, product manager for Garmin's dezl line of truck GPS, suggests that part of the problem with getting the data in a timely manner from Navteq is that a low priority may be given to roadway mapping on Nokia's part.

"It's purely a matter of getting and processing the data. For them it's a small revenue stream, for us it's important because (customers) blame Garmin if a road is missing."

All three units format easily for multiple routing, fastest time, quickest route, nuances like that. Garmin has a split screen when approaching a complex interchange; half shows the road map, while the other side shows highway signs sitting above the correct lanes you should be in. Magellan has also got the "correct" lane screen that pops up at certain junctures.

Around Toronto, I have my favourite routes and was surprised at some of the GPS choices being so different. But really, routing is like a chess game with several different choices. For the most part I tried to stay on highways or major roads.

The GPS makers buy the traffic info from various providers. These are picked up in major cities from an FM signal and transmitted to the GPS screen.

I liked the highway traffic mapping (yellow for slow, red for very slow), and I found the delay times fairly accurate on both the Magellan and Garmin. To get on-board traffic on the Rand required a special antenna (\$79).

The comparison between the three is unequal in that the Magellan was a five-inch screen while the others were seven-inch.

Rand is coming out with a five-inch right about the time we're going to press. It's nice to have the big screen, but if you're slip-seating tractors, the five-inch is quite a lot more portable, as the box is half the size.

**Best value?**

Of the three GPS units tested, I thought the Magellan RoadMate was the best value at a suggested retail price of \$279. It did most of the important stuff the other units do, was fairly quick, and had nice crisp graphics. Lifetime maps and traffic means you'll never have to buy anything for an upgrade. It's also a fairly simple unit to get started on.

Garmin's dezl 760 LMT (\$399) also got high marks for simplicity and user-friendliness. It seemed to be the fastest unit when switching views or zooming in or out. One advantage to pairing with an Android phone is that you can allow a customer to track your truck's movements for a specified time - sort of like customized GPS tracking. Various other services are available through the Android connection, like weather radar and enhanced traffic, for a moderate fee.



**What's in a GPS?** Harry Rudolfs found there were many differences between top models.

Rand McNally is the king of the map-makers so you would expect something good from its truck GPS.

This is the most robust of the three with a heavy-duty mounting bracket and well-padded viewing screen. It seems to be the most complex of the

three with some extensive databases, but it's not quite as easy to navigate around as the other units.

Not having traffic is problematic, and I would probably go for the expensive aerial if this unit was going to be my regular companion. I also

didn't think the close-up graphics of interchanges were as compelling as they could be. Lastly, the calibrations between metric and imperial measures were off slightly, so that a speed limit of 100 km/h appeared as 99, and 70 km/h as 69. Not a big deal, just slightly annoying.

**But can they find Tim Horton's?**

Okay, so the GPS may be able to navigate you across the continent, and keep your big truck out of trouble, but how fast can they find a Tim Horton's within, say, six kilometres of my house?

Merely typing in "Tim Horton's" in the respective GPS databases turned up a myriad of Tim's in all directions almost instantaneously.

The Magellan and Garmin found 16 Tim's while the Rand McNally found 13. Not bad, as this is a very important category. **TW**

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# Debating BYOD

Most drivers now carry their own smartphones or tablets. Does this make in-cab computers redundant?

By James Menzies

An interesting debate is percolating about the viability of driver-owned smartphones and tablets to serve as on-board computers, performing critical functions such as dispatch and the electronic logging of hours-of-service.

XRS Corp. has led the so-called Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) movement, with its platform approved for use across more than 50 mobile devices. Nearly 90% of professional drivers already have a personal mobile device, rendering traditional on-board computers redundant and unnecessary, according to Christian Schenk, senior vice-president, product strategy and market growth with XRS Corp.

"Just under 90% of truckers already have these devices," he said of smartphones and tablets. "They use them every single day. Adding technology beside that device is nothing more than adding cost."

A BYOD platform allows carriers to eliminate the hardware costs associ-

ated with conventional in-cab computers such as those provided by industry leaders Qualcomm and PeopleNet.

company-owned computers.

One of the most high profile converts to a BYOD platform is Tampa, Fla.-based Quality Distribution, which now uses personally-owned mobile devices for HoS and dispatch across its fleet of more than 3,000 vehicles. Despite all the talk of BYOD in the trucking industry, Brian McLaughlin, president of PeopleNet, recently told *Truck West* there are many potential pitfalls to consider. PeopleNet released a white paper this summer that

'There has been a lot of hype around BYOD. The implementation is much slower than the hype curve.'

Brian McLaughlin, PeopleNet

And according to Schenk, drivers prefer using their own devices anyway, and in turn, treat them better than

outlined the myriad risks involved, many of which revolve around security. Despite publication of the white paper, McLaughlin said there hasn't been a noticeable, industry-wide shift towards BYOD, yet he felt compelled to get involved in the discussion.

"I think there has been a lot of hype around BYOD," he told *Truck West*. "The practical implementation is much slower than the hype curve."

So, why publish the white paper?

"Any time you get a hype curve, as an industry leader you want to make sure you get your point of view heard," he explained. "We felt we'd been quiet on this topic for some time. The competition was pitching us into a position that was untrue and we felt we needed to present to our customers and to the marketplace, a more educated view that was less marketing and more of an educational view on the topic."

McLaughlin said one myth is that going with a traditional on-board computing provider restricts functionality for drivers. He touts what's being dubbed a Corporate Owned, Personally Enabled (COPE) model, in which the fleet installs the computer, yet enables personal e-mail, Web surfing or other functionality for drivers. This marks a shift away from the traditional Corporate Owned, Corporate Enabled (COCE) platform, which provided drivers with few, if any, personal options.

"The industry was 100% fleet-managed up until a couple years ago," McLaughlin said. "At that time, fleets started to say 'I want to give my drivers e-mail, I want to give my drivers Web access.' Really, over the last couple years, we've started to see a lot of discussion around what model is proper. I think there is probably room for all three (COCE, COPE and BYOD). I don't see fleet-managed going away any time in the near future. I think the larger fleets in particular that have fought for years to make sure they have high-reliability, timely data delivered to drivers aren't going to be giving up that control anytime in the near future, but I do think they'll demand more options for drivers and for their customers."

McLaughlin admitted some small fleets may benefit from a BYOD platform, in which drivers - particularly owner/operators - show up for work with their own device.

"When you get into the larger fleets, we hear a lot of fear," he added of BYOD. "We hear a lot of concern about BYOD, but they do want to offer more choices and that's where

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COPE comes into play.”

## Is it secure?

One of the biggest concerns fleets have about a BYOD platform is data security, McLaughlin pointed out. After all, a driver can misplace a cell phone and potentially have the data fall into the wrong hands.

“You’ve got your company information and all of your customers on there,” he pointed out. He also added “Each of these phones has an off button. You can turn it off and drive three hours and then turn it back on. That can be tracked, but at the same time, is that tamper-proof? Will these devices meet the requirements set forth in the US by the FMCSA and eventually in Canada as well?”

The security argument rankles XRS Corp.’s Schenk.

“If you want to argue security, I’ll bet all day long that a smartphone built by Samsung running XRS on it is 100% more secure than any PeopleNet box that somebody in Minnetonka, Minn. built and personally deemed secure,” he said.

When choosing a device to use in a BYOD environment, Schenk said customers should look for the SAFE logo, which indicates Samsung for Enterprise, and assures the device has been designed with maximum security. Similarly, the other major device manufacturers have their own security systems in place. Schenk pointed out even the FBI and US Secret Service trust the security that’s been built into the latest mobile devices. (While XRS is approved on more than 50 devices, nearly all of them run one of three operating systems: Android, Apple or Blackberry).

“You may not even know you have it, but you have it,” he said of the latest security systems. “You could buy a really inexpensive device or a free device that may not have those features, but you have to remember, security is the responsibility of the app and not necessarily the device. If you look at XRS, our permissions don’t allow other apps to look at our data or to sniff our data. You can’t send it out – it’s completely encrypted. From a security perspective, I would go head to head against PeopleNet or Qualcomm all day long.”

And as for drivers turning off their phones and slipping below the radar for periods of time?

“We track everything, 100% of the time,” he said. “We have a small relay that sits in the dash and is attached to the ECM and it tracks all the movements, even when the device isn’t connected.”

He noted XRS’s call centre finds less than 1.5% of the calls it receives are related to device power.

## Call IT

Another pitfall PeopleNet outlined in its white paper involved administration of a BYOD platform, which can be frustrating and onerous for IT departments.

“Basically, it’s bring your own device, support your own device,” McLaughlin said. “Just because an app can run (on a device), doesn’t mean they’re going to fully support it. You, as a fleet, have to support that. You, as an IT shop, have to work with the network provider and maybe the hardware provider and with the app provider, and now you have

people pointing fingers at each other.”

McLaughlin said there were 26 new personal devices launched in the first quarter alone, and that smartphone models quickly become obsolete and no longer supported. The same challenge holds true for new models.

“Say a driver has a phone for two years and then it breaks, and they go out and buy another one and you haven’t certified that yet as an EOBR provider,” McLaughlin said. “What do you tell your driver? You can’t use that? You have to go back to paper logs? There are lots of issues to wrangle with and larger fleets have too many other systems issues. They like fleet-managed or COPE, where they can give some personal enablement but own (the device).”

This is not so, according to XRS Corp.’s Schenk, again noting the vast majority of devices incorporate one of three operating systems so being an expert on every device out there is not

required.

“Regardless of the look and feel or the real estate of the device, whether it’s a tablet or smartphone, Samsung or HTC, the operating system is the same,” he stressed. “The menu structure is the same, the settings are the same, the policies are the same. It’s super easy for an IT manager to manage the device as long as they stick to what is really only the two devices in North America that remain marketable (Apple and Android). We never get push-back on that.”

And because drivers own their phone or tablet and use it for communication with family and for entertainment, they tend to take better care of the device, Schenk added.

“One customer who delivers beer swapped out rugged handsets and put in iPads,” he said. “The rationale was that drivers were going to take better care of it, and absolutely that is what they’ve seen.”

## Managing turnover

The trucking industry, particularly in the US, has been notoriously bad at managing driver turnover. Does BYOD or COPE work better in a high turnover environment? Schenk said the XRS platform allows the fleet owner to instantly disable the system on a departed driver’s device, and what can be easier than that?

“The old way, with a single-purpose device, it takes two to three hours to put it into (an owner/operator’s) truck,” Schenk said. “In an owner/operator world, you’re going to take that device in and out of the truck two-and-a-half times a year, at a \$200-\$300 cost. You can pay for our entire subscription for a year (for that cost). If you have an owner/operator fleet with high turnover, do BYOD, because it’s simple, they’re going to take care of it and then when they quit – which is inevitable – all you

Continued on page 34

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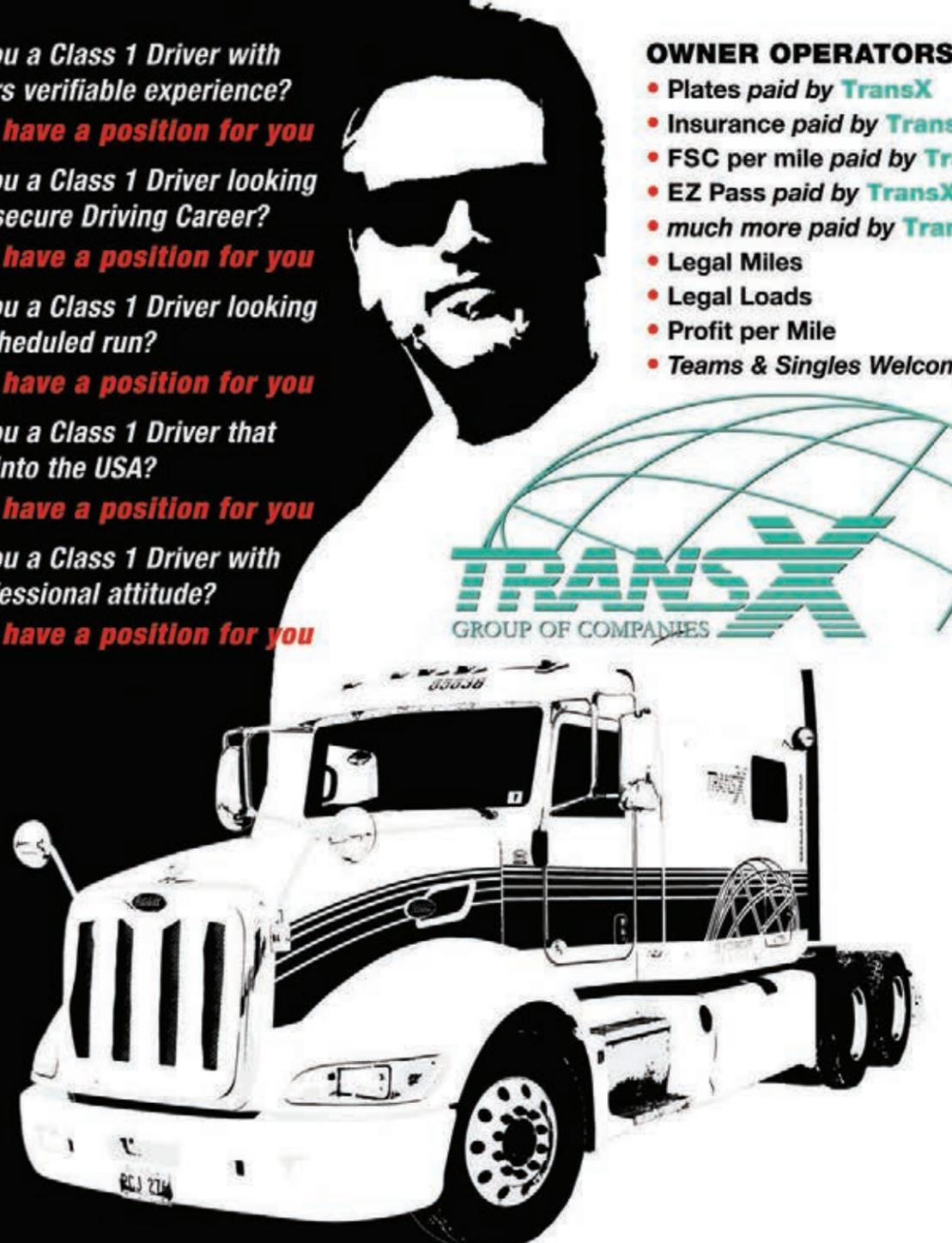
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# 34 COMMUNICATIONS

## BYOD vs COPE

Continued from page 32

have to do is disable their logins and the device rolls down the road and you don't care." On the flip side, driver turnover brings with it an ever-increasing range of devices to support, McLaughlin countered.

"Each of those drivers has their own different technology," he said. "Sometimes it's a Blackberry, an iPhone, maybe an Android. Maybe it's a five-year-old Motorola phone. The ability to support all those devices in a combined platform in mission critical applications like EOBRs is not practical. It scares the dickens out of the larger fleets."

### Driven to distraction?

Another argument against BYOD is that fleets shouldn't be encouraging the broader use of personal devices inside

the cab, when federal regulations prohibit the use of handheld cell phones while driving. In its white paper, PeopleNet pointed out that through the first four months of 2013, carriers and drivers have been fined more than \$10 million for using a handheld mobile device while operating a commercial vehicle and/or allowing drivers to do so. Forty-three carriers were charged in the first four months of the year, and 3,662 driver violations were issued.

In 2012, nearly 7,000 driver violations were doled out for the entire year, putting 2013 on pace for a marked increase in violations. McLaughlin doesn't blame a BYOD environment for contributing to the increase in violations, but does say it could create compliance issues.

"The other big trend we're seeing on distracted driving is, they're starting to go after the fleets," McLaughlin noted. "If you provision them with a smartphone that is now to be used as their EOBR, if the driver gets pulled over he can say 'My fleet made me do it,' and you are now guilty by association. You're giving your drivers a loaded weapon from a distracted driving perspective and creating more of a safety issue."

At the end of the day, there are compelling advantages to all three platforms that are currently available. COCE offers the ultimate in fleet control, BYOD can eliminate hardware costs, providing savings and maximum versatility for drivers and COPE offers a happy medium between the two extremes.

In Canada, BYOD is still more of a curiosity than a trend, and Schenk said this is because Canadian carriers fear they or their drivers will incur hefty roaming charges if they use mobile devices in the US.

"There's a fear around roaming and the ability for drivers to get a large bill when running in the US," Schenk admitted. "But our device consumes very little data, and we have partnerships with Rogers in Canada as well as three major carriers in the US that have roaming fees included in the package."

The XRS platform typically chews up about 10 MB of data per month, Schenk said, but he added discounted data plans are available for customers. In some cases, the savings realized through the negotiated discounts can cover the XRS subscription cost, Schenk added.

PeopleNet's McLaughlin acknowledged some small fleets could find a BYOD platform suits their needs, particularly for "non-mission critical functions."

However, he added for hours-of-service logging, dispatch and other "mission critical" functions, "I think you need a mission critical system that's either fleet-managed or something the company provisions you with."

Schenk, not surprisingly, disagrees. "Companies have bought corporate devices and drivers have said 'I want to use my own device.' The driver consolidates technology, too. They don't have to carry two devices. If you think about how ridiculous it sounds that our competitors are producing features like sending personal e-mail when the driver is carrying around a smartphone that can do video calls with his kids, it doesn't make any sense." **TW**

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# Freightliner flying through first half of 2013

By James Menzies

**NAPA, Calif.** – It has been a mediocre first half of the year for new truck orders, but a spectacular one for Freightliner relative to its competition. Mark Lampert, senior vice-president of sales and marketing, projected 2013 will end with Class 8 sales down 5-7% compared to last year, while Classes 6-7 demand will be up 7-8%. However, Freightliner thus far has been able to outperform the overall market and as a result, maintain steady production levels, Lampert noted. Freightliner has seen its Class 8 market share surge to 39% year-to-date.

“What pleases us the most is, we are taking share from everyone,” Lampert said. He anticipated Freightliner will end 2013 with its highest ever market share, though it may not sustain its current pace.

“We will probably experience some decline from 39%, but it will be our best year ever,” Lampert said.

The company attributes its rising popularity to a strong product line, and increasing emphasis among customers on fuel economy.

“Customers want anything they can get to benefit fuel economy,” Lampert said. Truck owners who held onto tractors longer through the past few years and are running EPA07 generation engines can drive down maintenance costs and improve fuel economy significantly by moving into the latest Freightliner Cascadia Evolution, Lampert said.

“That value proposition is very attractive,” he said. “You’re getting (better) fuel economy and also lower maintenance costs.”

The Cascadia Evolution is making waves in the Class 8 market, with 15,000 orders placed in the past six months, representing half of the Cascadia’s current backlog. Lampert said customers are seeing 5% improvements in fuel economy compared to its predecessor.

Freightliner is also taking steps to bolster its Classes 6-7 business. Lampert said demand for these vehicles is



Freightliner’s unprecedented Class 8 market share is in part due to its new Cascadia Evolution.

more consistent, making it an easier market to forecast. Freightliner holds about 40% of this segment, up substantially from recent years.

Much of this is because of the Busi-

ness Class M2, which has received 14,049 orders so far this year. Lampert compared that to the total of 13,723 Classes 6-7 truck orders placed for all other models combined over this same

time period.

Freightliner is also seeing success in the vocational market, where its share has climbed from 16% in 2008 to 33.8% year-to-date through March. This is the result of a renewed focus on the vocational market that began three years ago.

“We are seeing the benefits of the investments we made, and of that vocational strategy,” Lampert said. The company now works more closely with truck equipment manufacturers to simplify installation of various bodies onto Freightliner chassis. It also has urged dealers to assign vocational specialists who truly understand the business. Lampert also said vocational customers are focusing more on fuel economy than they have in the past, which plays into the brand’s favour. **TW**

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## Fleet Brake awards Veyance

**CALGARY, Alta.** – Veyance Technologies has been named the winner of Fleet Brake’s Manufacturer of the Year award. Veyance provides Goodyear Engineered products, including belts, hoses, hydraulics, tensioners and air springs. It recently helped Fleet Brake optimize its inventory through its fleet survey program.

The award was presented at Fleet Brake’s first ever vendor awards event.

“Veyance Technologies has developed a valuable partnership with our team and we’re happy to recognize them at our first-ever vendor awards,” said Fleet Brake vice-president, Tim Douglas. “Strong supplier relationships are very important as we continue to grow our business and we know that the Veyance team and parts will be there to support us every step of the way.” **TW**

## Reinvigorated Firestone brand showcases fuel-saving technologies

By Lou Smyrlis

AKRON, Ohio – Firestone and North America's owner/operators and small fleets have much in common: they've both been essential to getting trucking to where it is today, and they both deserve a lot more respect and attention than they've been getting of late. Firestone's Ship by Truck campaign back in 1918 was a key driver to helping the freight industry take off. But over the past few decades the Firestone brand has admittedly suffered from a lack of attention and investment, the company acknowledges. Similarly, owner/operators and small fleets form the heart of the continent's transportation industry but were deeply hurt during the Great Recession and many have yet to recover.

So it's rather fitting that Bridgestone Commercial Solutions, Firestone's parent company, is looking to reinvigorate the Firestone brand with new tire advancements that specifically address the needs of owner/operators and small fleet owners.

"Success isn't just about surviving; it's about thriving as a brand. And this is the year of Firestone," Philip Dobbs, chief marketing officer,

told media invited to the Firestone Media Boot Camp held at the company's modern (and extremely impressive) Americas Technical Center in Akron, Ohio. But he was quick to add that while the marketing message is important, "if you can't put the right product on the road, it doesn't matter."

What does matter for owner/operators and small fleets, according to Kurt Danielson, president of Bridgestone Commercial Solutions, are fuel efficiency, long tread wear and casing durability – all of which lead to bottom line relief. And that's what Firestone has focused on with its three new commercial truck tires for regional to long-haul use.

"You can make things as complicated as you want. We try to make things simple," Danielson said.

The tires for the steer, drive, and trailer positions are available in the US now and will be available in the sizes Canadian users favour in the late Fall.

The new tires – the FS591, FD691, and FT491 – also meet EPA SmartWay and California Air Resources Board (CARB) fuel efficiency requirements without sacrificing removal miles, ac-

ording to Firestone. Here is some information on each tire:

**FS591 Steer Radial:** Combines low rolling resistance tread and energy-saving casing design for fuel efficiency. The FS591 also features a wide, deep tread and proprietary shoulder design for greater removal mileage and irregular wear resistance. The Ulti-Rib and Defense Side Groove designs promote smooth wear while a continuous shoulder offers long, even wear and lower rolling resistance.

**FD691 Drive Radial:** A continuous shoulder design and high-rigidity tread pattern is designed to generate long, even wear, helping increase tread life and lower rolling resistance. A flow-through design evacuates water to increase road grip. The tire's optimized bead design and proprietary compound found in the sidewall lowers rolling resistance and improves fuel efficiency throughout the life-cycle of the casing.

**FT491 All-Position Radial:** Includes Ulti-Rib and Defense Groove designs to combat the initiation and spread of irregular wear. Sidewall protector ribs help protect the casing from curbing damage and abrasion. Plus, a wider tread spreads load over a larger area,

distributing footprint pressure to promote long, smooth wear, the company says. The wider design also takes a full-size drive cap when retreaded for extended life.

In combination, the tires deliver 19% longer life, and a 1% improvement in fuel economy, which according to Firestone officials, should translate into \$1,200 or 7% savings in annual operating costs, on average.

Developing tires for the cost-conscious owner/operators and small fleet market is a challenge because the cost of new advances can't be offset by higher pricing.

"How did we do it? By technology; it's as simple as that," said Todd Buxton with commercial tire development.

To reduce the cost involved with traditional road testing and boost its speed to market, Firestone has increasingly migrated towards computerized testing of its compounds and indoor wear tests of its prototype tires. Computer modeling technology can generate test results within a week or two compared to a minimum of a year spent in field tests.

Another advance has been the use of 3D printing technology, which builds sections of a prototype by adding layer on layer, much like a typical office printer produces colour documents. Doing so saves time and can point out faults not readily evident on the computer screen.

"It's amazing how you can look at something on a computer screen for days and days and not see something that you see right away with the actual model created," explained Keven Scheffle during an extensive tour of the company's Americas Technical Centre. Migrating to indoor wear tests on development tires also shaved time and cost in comparison to the traditional outdoor in-field trials.

In designing the three new tires, Buxton explained that Firestone engineers leveraged technologies developed at different times and combined them to produce more efficient tires. For example, the new sidewall tire design was developed to reduce mass in an area where it was not really needed and by doing so, tire rolling resistance, and hence fuel savings, was improved. **TW**

## Stahl Peterbilt to celebrate 10th anniversary with major customer event in Edmonton

EDMONTON, Alta. – Stahl Peterbilt is celebrating a decade in business with a customer appreciation event Sept. 21.

The event is open to customers and the public, and will take place at Stahl Peterbilt's Edmonton dealership at 18020-118 Ave. from 11 a.m. till 4 p.m. Money will be raised for the Dogs with Wings Society, and trips to Disney World and Las Vegas will be given away.

"We are honoured to be selling the Peterbilt Truck brand and we are grateful to have experienced the success we have over the years," said Eddy Stahl, president of Stahl Peterbilt. "We have great customers who have been with us since the beginning, and we have great customers who are fairly new to us. They have become our friends over the years, so gatherings like this is a time where we all kick back and enjoy each other's company."

The company is expecting about 1,000 visitors over the course of the day. It will have on display a new Stahl 10th Anniversary Edition Pete 389. There will also be activities for kids, the company announced. The dealership will be open the day of the event and special parts offers will be available. **TW**



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## Aluminum fifth wheel now available from all OEMs

MUSKEGON, Mich. – SAF-Holland has announced its FWAL aluminum fifth wheel is now available for factory installation with all Class 8 OEMs.

The fifth wheel is approved for on-highway applications and is touted as the world's lightest weight and only aluminum standard-duty fifth wheel.

The FWAL reduces weight by up to 100 lbs, according to the company. It features LowLube technology, including a grease-free top plate surface. **TW**

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# Freightliner expands natural gas offerings

By James Menzies

NAPA, Calif. – Who says natural gas trucks can't be aerodynamic? Freightliner has partnered with one of the most experienced natural gas fleets in the US to create a new 113-inch BBC day cab Cascadia with advanced aerodynamics.

The first 10 of these trucks will go to Saddle Creek Logistics, which helped engineer the package based on 12 million miles of natural gas trucking experience. The truck will have a 120-gallon fuel system and will mark the first time a natural gas system has been fully enclosed behind the side and back of the cab in aerodynamic fairings.

The set-up will include a roof fairing, chassis fairings (when saddle tanks aren't required) and side extenders. Under the hood, you'll find the new Cummins Westport ISX12 G natural gas engine, which can be fuelled by gas in compressed or liquefied form. The new truck, as equipped by Saddle Creek, is expected to get 700 miles between fills.

Natural gas was the main focus of a press event held here in July. Freightliner claims to have sold more conventional natural gas trucks than any other OEM, with 2,500 units deployed. It also says it's the only OEM to factory-install the tanks, saving as much as

\$4,000 in freight costs that's accrued when the truck has to be shipped elsewhere for tank installation.

The truck maker is excited about the arrival of the Cummins ISX12 G engine, which makes natural gas viable across a broader spectrum of applications.

"This engine has been touted for two or three years," said Robert Carrick, sales manager, natural gas with Freightliner. "Everyone was waiting for it. Never in history was the cart so far ahead of the horse, with everyone thinking they were going to get engines before everyone else."

Having gotten its own hands on a few of the engines, Freightliner is launching a demo program that will allow fleets to test a Cascadia with the ISX12 G in their own applications, pulling revenue-generating loads. One of five such trucks is currently deployed in Eastern Canada and will cycle through the country. You can talk to your Freightliner dealer to arrange some time with the truck, but be warned, demand is extremely high and the trucks are already booked through the rest of the year.

I drove a Freightliner Cascadia with ISX12 G in California and found it to be flush with torque and power.

The truck-engine combination seems at first glance to have an abundance of potential, including in Can-



Freightliner is expanding its line of natural gas vehicles, including the addition of fuel-saving fairings on the Cascadia model (fairings not pictured).

ada where higher horsepower is needed than was available from the ISL G.

Are you going to run the 400-hp ISX12 G between Vancouver and Calgary? Maybe not. But it's a truly capable engine for everyday 88,000-lb loads in most parts of the country. Peterbilt, which has the lion's share of the natural gas business in Canada, may want to look over its shoulder; a true rival has emerged.

Freightliner is also adding a 48-inch sleeper to its natural gas product line. Pre-series production will begin sometime this Fall.

Meanwhile, full production of the Cascadia 113 natural gas powered day cabs will begin in August. The Cascadia 113 natural gas-powered truck with aerodynamic package will be available in mid-2014. It's expected fuel economy will improve by 3% with the fairings, but keep in mind natural gas itself costs much less than diesel.

Next up, Carrick said Freightliner has its eyes on 7- and 15-litre natural gas engine options.

"Let's face it, if we're really going to get the product going, we need a 500-hp, 15-litre engine if we're really going to take the natural gas project to the

next level," he said.

The good news is, a 15L ISX nat-gas engine is already in the works.

Still, despite all the progress, Carrick said fleets are mostly hesitant to commit to those initial natural gas-powered purchases, and he admitted the alternative fuel isn't for everyone. A typical purchase process for a diesel truck takes 90 days, while natural gas sales can take as long as 18 months to close as the fleet does its due diligence.

Carrick said Freightliner and others are lobbying the US government to provide weight (and length, in the case of straight trucks) exemptions for natural gas trucks, so that operators aren't penalized for the extra weight or length needed to accommodate the tanks.

"Most people think this is going to pass at some point and that will take the weight factor out," Carrick said.

The return on investment for natural gas trucks depends on many variables, including miles run and the cost of natural gas versus diesel.

"You have to be running the miles and sourcing the fuel at the right cost," to get an ROI in two to three years, Carrick said. **TW**

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# 12M miles. Still learning.

Saddle Creek claims to have more on-highway natural gas trucking experience than anyone. But it's still learning, president Mike DelBovo admits.

By James Menzies

**NAPA, Calif.** – To say integrating natural gas trucks into your fleet involves a lengthy learning curve is an understatement. Just ask Mike DelBovo, president of Saddle Creek Transportation, which is currently designing its fourth generation natural gas trucks...since 2012.

Saddle Creek runs more than 100 natural gas Freightliner trucks and now has 12 million miles of experience with the alternative fuel. However, DelBovo is quick to add, "We still don't know everything."

Saddle Creek dived into natural gas when it was trying to figure out what to do with a fleet of older trucks. DelBovo visited the Dakotas with the thought of launching a regional fleet there. Instead, he saw a ton of natural gas drilling activity and began to think it would be a big part of the future.

"We were astounded with what was happening with natural gas," he told trucking journalists during a Freightliner press event. "We said, let's take our investment dollars and invest in this new technology that's going to be here to stay."

It took Saddle Creek nearly three years to design its first generation natural gas trucks with the help of Freightliner. It took delivery in 2012 of a fleet of Business Class M2s with the Cummins ISL 9 G engine. Saddle Creek became a big proponent of natural gas, even offering employees discounts on conversions of their personal vehicles.

Last year, the company spent \$25 million on natural gas equipment, including fuelling infrastructure. It'll spend another \$20 million this year.

It operates its own slow- and fast-fill fuel islands at its Lakeland, Fla. headquarters.

The company also launched a natural gas training program for drivers. Before any Saddle Creek driver pilots a natural gas truck, they must first pass a knowledge test after two days of training. They're expected to answer questions from shippers and members of the public and each cab is equipped with a natural gas FAQ to help them out.

"We had to overcome their worries about safety and range anxiety," DelBovo said of the education process.

Saddle Creek learned some hard lessons along the way, including the fact that only about 80% of the compressed natural gas in a tank can be extracted and used.

"It's really embarrassing to have to tow them back with a big diesel truck," he admitted. He also found that idling is a definite no-no with natural gas if you expect to realize fuel savings.

Saddle Creek partnered with PeopleNet and TMW to track fuel performance. DelBovo said the natural gas trucks are 10 times quieter than diesel equivalents and this has allowed them to gain exemptions from noise ordinances that forbid after-hours deliveries into certain communities.

The company also enjoys the peace of mind of knowing they'll have a steady supply of fuel, even in the event of a hurricane. Previously, DelBovo said, Saddle Creek would park tanker trailers full of diesel so they'd be able to continue making deliveries after a hurricane.

"Most trucking companies down in Florida have all these tankers full of diesel just sitting there," he said.

The first generation trucks had a range of 500 miles, and were fitted with 130 diesel gallon equivalents (DGE) of CNG capacity. The trucks were heavy, since the tanks were encased in a steel housing.

The Gen 2 trucks improved range to 600 miles. They had a 100 DGE tank capacity mounted to the back of the cab and another 40 DGEs along the frame. This time, a fiberglass cover and aluminum skin were used to reduce weight. The goal, however, was to reach a range of 700 miles. That will be accomplished with the Gen 3 trucks



Saddle Creek is in the process of working with Freightliner to design its fourth-generation natural gas trucks. The first-gen trucks were deployed just last year.

Saddle Creek is in the process of deploying. And it's already looking ahead to the Gen 4 truck, which will incorporate aerodynamic fairings from the Cascadia Evolution.

Fuel savings are nice, DelBovo said, but the real goal is to reduce fuel consumption so that range can be increased. Since natural gas is so cheap relative to diesel, small improvements don't translate to big bucks, but they do improve range. It requires a different mindset, DelBovo admitted.

Saddle Creek is seeing a payback in approximately 50 months, and is run-

ning the trucks for 10 years. The tanks will last 20, but DelBovo noted the tank technology is improving, so a secondary market for the tanks may not exist. Even if the company can't find anything to do with its 10-year-old trucks, it will have recouped its investment.

DelBovo hopes to improve fuel mileage on the Gen 4 truck to 6.5 mpg from about 6 mpg today. Saddle Creek has deployed several LNG trucks in California, but DelBovo's preference is for CNG, due to its simple fuelling process and the fact it's less expensive and delivered by pipeline. **TW**

## Eaton manuals available with ISX12 G

**GALESBURG, Mich.** – Eaton has announced its manual transmissions can now be ordered in Freightliner Cascadia trucks with Cummins Westport natural gas engines.

Eaton's manual transmissions are an option with the ISX12 G natural gas engine. The transmissions will first be offered in Freightliner Cascadia day cabs, which will enter production in September.

"Our manual transmissions have proven to be perfectly suited for the Westport engines and represent an ideal balance between environmentally friendly and fuel efficiency for a wide variety of trucking applications," said Michael Holahan, sales manager for Eaton. "We very much welcome this latest certification and look forward to much success with Freightliner and Westport." **TW**

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# Kenworth's T680 gets a shorter sleeper

By Steve Sturgess

**CHILlicothe, Ohio** - A 52-inch sleeper variant of Kenworth's new-generation T680 was available to drive at a mid-July Kenworth customer event at its Chillicothe, Ohio plant.

## T680

Kenworth's "new-generation" bowed in with the T680 at the Mid-America Trucking Show in 2012 and entered production later in the year. Featuring a 76-inch sleeper, the new model introduced a mid-width, highly tooled cab with a new concept in sleeper configuration and comfort.

This year saw the introduction of the 52-inch sleeper for length-sensitive or lower-cost regional applications, still offering the ultra-modern styling and quietly civilized cab, but with a 32- or 38-inch inch bunk and the option of a folding 32-inch upper bunk. The bunk effectively fills the space in the sleeper, though there is the option of the swivel passenger seat to open up into an L-shaped area. So the 52-inch T680 is for those applications where drivers - or teams - are out for a few nights rather than several weeks.

As a bonus, the mid-roof cab is more versatile for tank and flatbed operations as it pushes less air out of the way and, at the same time, saves 600 to 700 lbs.

Recapping the T680, it has a cab width that falls exactly midway between the 1.9 metres of the T660/T800 and W900 and the 2.3 metres of the full-width T700. Available initially as a day cab or a 76-inch full-height sleeper, the T680 was a joint development between Kenworth and Magna International and featured major input from customers in determining the optimum cab width.

Magna is a highly respected automotive supplier doing design and presswork for many passenger car brands. Its involvement has led to this highly tooled aluminum cab with automotive styling that is being assembled in an equally highly-automated production area at the big Kenworth Chillicothe production plant.

The design features complex double curvatures for the pressings and doors

and door openings that are also highly tooled and sculpted. This makes for a cab that promises a quiet interior from engineering fits and excellent door sealing, easy door closing effort and a highly durable cab that, from its aluminum construction, is still a lightweight structure.

The construction is through Henrob fasteners that offer the clamping of a Huckbolt but without piercing through the material surfaces. This means less opportunity for leaks or corrosion, which is further proofed by using adhesive at the joints as well as the fasteners. Back from the B-pillar, though, the construction of the sleeper is conventional flat panel with Huck fasteners so any damage sustained in use, such as a rear corner impact, can easily be repaired by any body shop familiar with heavy-duty cab construction.

So, in its assembly, the 52-inch T680 is identical to the 76-inch and is in fact made in the same robotic assembly area. There, 15 multi-tasking robots assemble a cab in 12 minutes from pressings and sub-assemblies manufactured in Magna's Spartanburg, S.C. plant. This is incidentally home to BMW's US production plant and Magna brings to Kenworth the same production values as it delivers to BMW and a host of other car companies.

## On the road

The 52-inch T680 is just now going into production as Kenworth takes orders for the new model. So an early production example was available during the ride-and-drive to touch and feel and compare with the earlier T680s we've driven. We were let loose with the tractor and a trailer, lightly loaded for ride, on the roads around Chillicothe, the demo unit featuring a Paccar MX-13 at 500 hp and an Eaton UltraShift Plus transmission.

The route was just a short blast up Hwy. 23 north to Circleville for a turnaround and pictures at the Walmart at the edge of town. Then it was back south again for an all-too-brief evaluation. No hills, no tight turns, no sound meter either as I had left it behind. But the T680 proved to be super quiet, a tribute to the cab design and the quiet-running MX-13 Paccar engine.



The Kenworth T680's new 52-inch sleeper is a comfortable option for drivers who'll be out on the road for a couple nights at a time.

The short drive did include a couple of none-too-demanding grades, but they were enough to call for a downshift on this high-g geared Kenworth (1,100 rpm at 55 mph). At this point the 13-speed UltraShift made a double downshift from 13 to 11, but then quickly grabbed a gear again to breast the short climb in 12th before quickly getting back into top gear as soon as the grade eased.

The quietness of the cab was deceptive and I found cruise control necessary to keep speed down to 55 mph on this highly patrolled stretch of highway. The cab was tight with no rattles from the dash or interior and the lack of any road or engine-excited booming in the panels attested to the integrity of the construction and rigidity of curved panels that add to the styling. And the truck rode nicely on its air front axle too, something I've noticed on the four T680 and 880 models I've driven so far.

Less welcome is the vagueness in the steering that was apparent in this T680. Admittedly, it was way better than a short wheelbase T880 driven earlier this year where a Kenworth engineer described it as herding the truck down the road. This was nothing like that, but still noticeable. One day I'm going to get Kenworth to build me a

T680 with Sheppard steering.

The controls in general are well laid out and combined with the rich softness of the Vantage trim give the Kenworth a Lexus-like feel. This is repeated back in the sleeper, though there's little room to roam around and enjoy the space. But this was a double-bunk unit. With a single bunk, there are upper cabinets and full-length hanging storage and even options such as a flat-screen TV. And even though this was a mid-roof cab, there was plenty of headroom at 6-ft., 4-in. standing up from the driver's seat.

Another option is the swivel passenger seat that would add a lounge chair and additional floor space to make the 52-inch single-bunk sleeper a very versatile space for R&R.

So while the sleeper is way smaller and less sumptuously equipped than the 76's, it is still a very comfortable place, especially in the anticipated role for this truck as a regional hauler.

To have to spend several nights out of a week in this T680 would be no hardship at all and the comfort and driving experience makes it very much a driver's truck in the strong tradition of Kenworth products. Throw into the mix the style of the new T680 line and you have a truck any driver will love. **TW**



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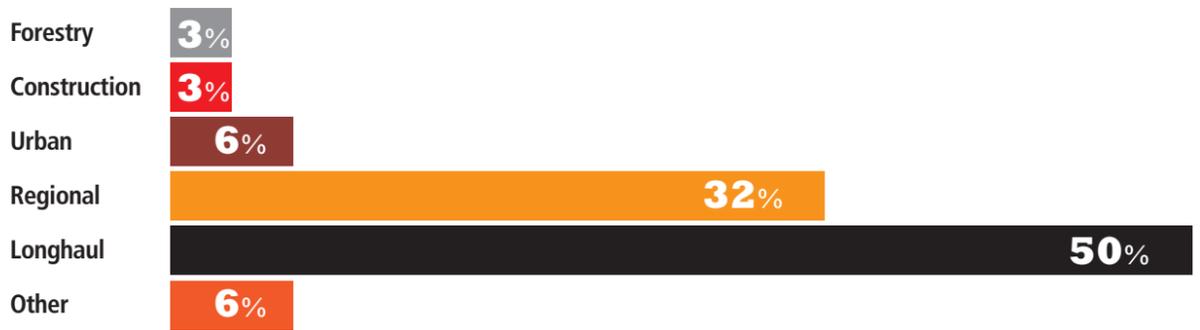
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# IN A BUYING MOOD?

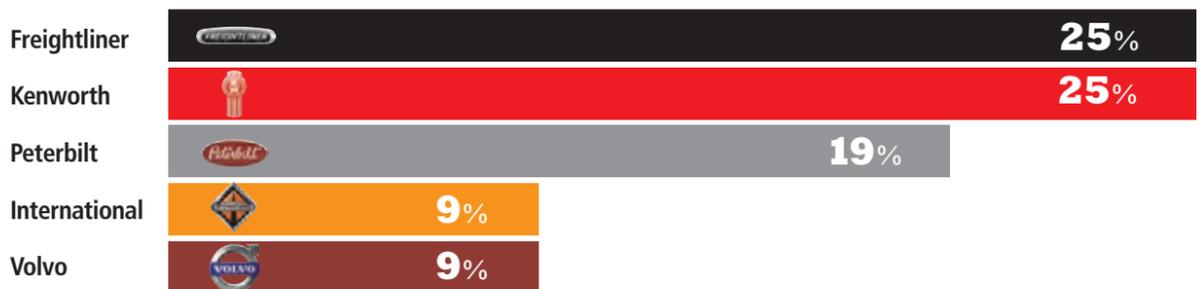
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WESTERN CANADA'S FOR-HIRE FLEETS REVEAL THEIR HD TRUCK PURCHASING PLANS

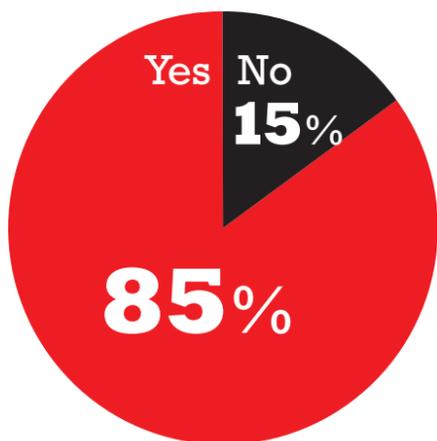
### Top four activities performed



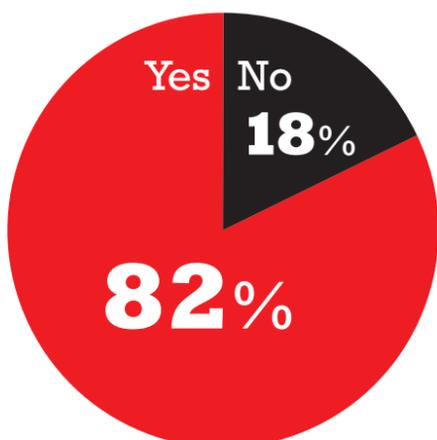
### Top 5 Brands of HD truck driven



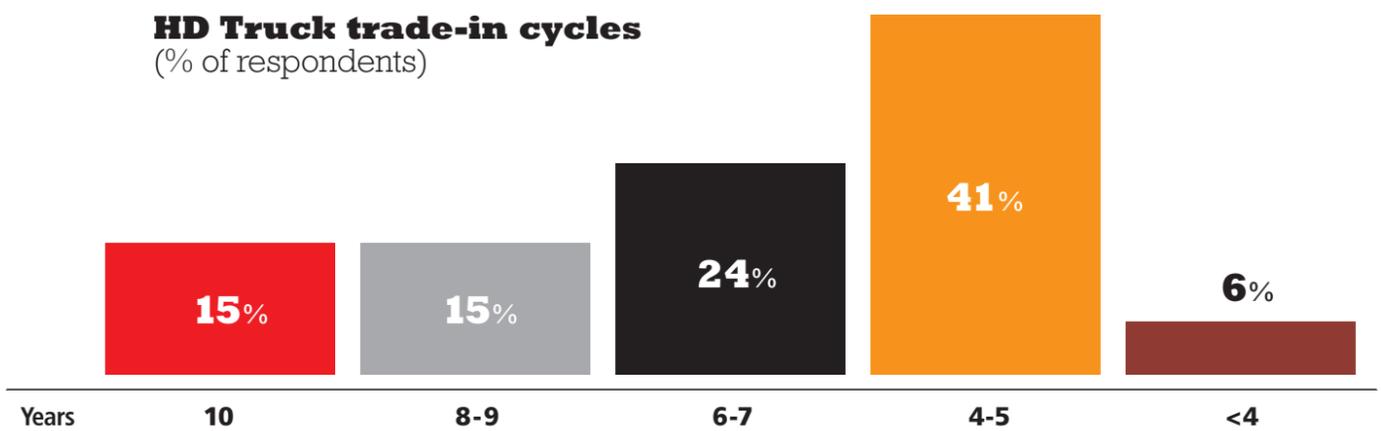
### Planning to replace HD truck(s) in 2013



### Planning to replace HD truck(s) in 2014



### HD Truck trade-in cycles (% of respondents)



### Class 8 trucks sold in Western Canada YTD

|                  | Freightliner | International | Kenworth | Mack | Peterbilt | Volvo | Western Star | Total |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------|------|-----------|-------|--------------|-------|
| British Columbia | 292          | 76            | 458      | 86   | 292       | 177   | 178          | 1,559 |
| Alberta          | 471          | 364           | 903      | 187  | 664       | 109   | 380          | 3,078 |
| Saskatchewan     | 103          | 32            | 232      | 85   | 143       | 84    | 40           | 719   |
| Manitoba         | 193          | 75            | 52       | 41   | 132       | 110   | 28           | 631   |

Last issue we looked at Western Canada's owner/operators and their Class 8 truck purchasing plans for the rest of 2013 and next year. We found that they are more willing than their Central and Eastern Canada counterparts to invest in new trucks. This issue we examine the purchasing intentions of Western Canada for-hire carriers. They are facing the same hefty increases in new truck prices but have enjoyed a stronger regional economy the past few years than the rest of the country. Are they similarly more enthusiastic about

investing in new iron than their counterparts in the rest of the country?

Our recently completed Annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey found that only 15% of Western Canada for-hire fleets have no plans to purchase new trucks for the rest of this year. This is considerably ahead of the national average where about one quarter of for-hire carriers told us they have no plans to purchase new trucks the remainder of 2013. The vast majority of Western Canada for-hire carriers (64%) are looking to replace up to 10% of their fleet. That too is considerably higher than the national average where only

49% of respondents to our survey reported plans to renew up to 10% of their fleet. Also, more than a fifth of Western Canada for-hire carriers are looking to update more than 20% of their fleet. Looking towards next year, only 18% of Western Canada for-hire carriers have no plans for new truck purchases.

Our survey also looked at the brands Western Canada for-hire carriers are purchasing. Freightliner is the top selling brand nationwide but in the west it's in a dead heat for the lead with Kenworth. Peterbilt is the third most preferred, with 19% of respondents reporting that as the main brand currently in their fleet. **TW**

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By Edo Van Belkom

**THE STORY SO FAR...**

Mark takes a load of steel rebar from HamilMark takes a load of steel rebar from Hamilton to Sudbury. It's very heavy and he takes it slow, and that encourages drivers to take risks getting by him. After one particularly close call, he's forced onto the shoulder.

Mark continues on, leaving Sudbury for Winnipeg. On curvy Hwy. 17, a minivan tries to make a dangerous pass in the oncoming lane. Mark tries to get out of the way but some quick turns of the wheel sent his trailer spinning, forcing his load to break free and spill into the ditch...

Before long, cars streamed past and drivers slowed down to gawk at the mess on the side of the road, then they sped up to get on with their lives. Mark noticed one of the drivers passed him with wide eyes and a cell phone pasted to his ear. The police, no doubt, would be showing up any minute now.

"Better take a look now, then," Mark said aloud. He climbed down out of the cab of Mother Load and walked around the front of the truck. "Ah, geez..."

There was rebar everywhere, looking not at all like steel rods, but more like drinking straws that had fallen out of a box onto the floor. Unlike drinking straws however, the bars were twisted and bent, belying the fact that each one weighed hundreds of kilos rather than mere milligrams.

A lot of heavy machinery would be required to get everything back on the trailer. And time...It would be hours before any special cranes could be brought to the scene, and then the road would have to be closed while the clean-up crews worked. Mark would be lucky if he was back on his way by nightfall.

'One step at a time,' he thought.

Mark accessed his flares from a steel box on the back of Mother Load and set them up behind his rig. Already, traffic had backed up and a line of cars stretched over a hundred metres behind him. But despite the number of cars that were now on the road, none of them belonged to the police, which gave him some time to check the rest of his load. As he approached Mother Load from the rear after setting his last flare, it was obvious that whatever had been holding the rear portion of his load in place had given way. That part of the load had emptied three of its four bundles into the ditch, leaving a single bundle behind. The four bundles up front were still in place and seemed secure.

"Something let go," Mark said under his breath. He climbed up on the trailer to inspect his load more closely, and quickly discovered the cause of the spill.

"There's your problem," he deadpanned.

The remnants of the four straps that had been stretched over the rear load had broken, their frayed ends looking like well-worn hairbrushes in the mid-day sun. But while two of the straps had frayed ends all the way across their width, two of the straps looked as if they'd been cut almost halfway through before the rest of the straps were ripped apart by tremendous force. For Mark, it was like finding a smoking gun in a murder investigation. Obviously two of the straps had been damaged before he'd set out with his load. It didn't seem impossible. After all, the straps were used to secure steel and there must have been times when the product had sharp edges that wore on the straps.



# The Blame Game

PART 3

Now, if he had done a thorough circle check prior to heading out, one that included him climbing up on top of the load to inspect the entire lengths of strapping, he might have noticed a problem and asked to have the straps replaced. But seriously, who could have imagined a company that moves tons and tons of steel every day using straps that weren't 100% capable of handling their loads? Mark thought about that a second longer.

Never mind 100%, the straps should have been strong enough, and in proper working order, to give them the ability to handle two or even three times their loads. Mark called the mill to let them know what happened.

The man on the phone, the shipper who'd given him the load, seemed annoyed by the call, but not incredulous. Mark had expected the man to say something like, "What? You're kidding! How did that happen?" but all he did was sigh and say, "Where are you? We'll arrange for a crane." As Mark was giving the man his location, the police arrived on the scene.

"Morning," Mark said, as the OPP officer approached. "Someone's having a bad day."

Mark conceded it was a fair assessment of the situation. "That would be me." The officer craned his neck and looked over Mark's shoulder at the lines of steel scattered over the ditch behind him. "Any idea how we're gonna get that stuff back onto your truck?"

"The company's sending a crane and a crew."

"How long will it be before they get here?"

"Couple of hours at least."

"Right," the officer said, turning to walk away. "Then I guess I'll try and keep traffic moving till then."

In the distance Mark could hear a helicopter approaching. No doubt the scene would make interest-

ing viewing on the nightly news.

It was three hours before the crane arrived, and then another two hours to pick each length of rebar off the ground then set it gently back onto the trailer.

"Looks like you'll be ready to go soon," the officer said as the crane and its crew were halfway through the clean-up.

"Hopefully, yeah," Mark said.

"Well, before you go, I need to talk to you..."

Mark knew what was coming. "...In my cruiser."

Inside the police car the officer asked Mark about what had happened and made notes as Mark explained about the oncoming car, how he swerved to avoid it, and how the worn-out straps gave way.

The officer seemed to be on Mark's side the whole time, but that didn't affect the final outcome one little bit.

"I don't doubt that there was a car coming at you. And you probably did a terrific job avoiding a collision and keeping the truck upright and on the road. I also don't doubt that the way the load was secured to your truck was suspect, or at least could have been better...but in the end, it's your truck, your load and you are responsible for what happens to it. So, I have no choice but to give you these tickets."

One was for careless driving, and another was for having an unsecure load. "But I was cut off."

"I believe you, but I need proof. You don't have a video camera on your truck, do you?"

"No."

"They're not that expensive anymore. A lot of drivers have them now...for situations just like this."

It was too late now, but Mark would be getting a dash cam as soon as he found one for sale. "If you want," the officer said, "you could fight the ticket. You never know, I might not be able to make it to court that day."

"Thanks," Mark said. "I'll keep that in mind."

A short time later, the last piece was set into place and the work crew set about banding the rebar into bundles with new metal banding. Then they secured the bundles to the trailer with four brand new heavy-duty straps. "All done," the crane's crew leader said when they were ready to leave.

"Great," Mark said. "Thanks so much for your help." He handed Mark an envelope. "What's this?"

"The bill for our service."

"Can't you send it to the mill?"

"They told me to give it to you."

"What? Why?"

"They said the load was your responsibility." A shrug. "To be honest, I don't care which one of you pays, that's just how much it is."

"Do I have some time to pay?"

"Couple weeks."

'Good,' thought Mark. 'Time enough to sort this mess out.' TW

- Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of *The Blame Game*.

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).

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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## Keystone Western sets up US shop

WINNIPEG, Man. – Keystone Western has announced its expansion into the US, with the addition of terminals in Minneapolis, Minn. and Fargo, N.D.

The asset-based logistics company is headquartered in Winnipeg.

“These two third-party facilities will provide cost-saving services for our clients who ship in either truckload or LTL quantities with dry van or deck equipment between Canada and the US,” said Norm Curtis, owner and president of Keystone Western.

“While other transportation firms are announcing rate increases for their services, as a result of these new locations, we will be announcing service improvements, and rate reductions to many clients.”

Keystone says its new services in the US will include: cross-docking; con-

solidation and deconsolidation services; door-to-door LTL service on some lanes; intra-US truckload service; intra-US and transborder intermodal service; short-term warehousing and order fulfillment services (US and Canada); cross-border logistics analysis; and transportation management services.

“The cost savings driven by our new business model will be passed on to our clients allowing their companies to be more efficient, and cost competitive,” said Brian Kuzdub, vice-president of sales and marketing. “It is all part of our lean logistics vision which is an extension of many of our clients’ current internal programs. Customers of Keystone Western will now have access to a full range of cost saving cross-border services.” **TW**

## Mullen Group opens wallet

OKOTOKS, Alta. – Mullen Group’s second quarter net income rose 13% to \$20.9 million this year, once adjusted for any unrealized foreign exchange gains and losses and the change in fair value of investments. Mullen’s Q2 revenue was \$310.3 million, a decrease of 3.1% year-over-year.

The company announced it has approved a further \$20 million in capital spending this year, bringing its approved capital budget to \$100 million.

The money will primarily be used to purchase specialized equipment for the oilfield services segment, as well as businesses involved in transporting production-related fluids. **TW**

# TRUCK WEST

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

**A**h, those lazy hazy crazy days of summer; to quote the late, great Nat King Cole, "those days of soda and pretzels and beer."

I dunno about the soda and pretzels – though I've been known to quaff the odd brew – but between floods, mosquitoes and campers/RVs on the roads (not to forget a major negative "shout-out" to all the drivers visiting the west who can't handle curves and hills) lazy, hazy days of summer 2013 have turned out to be crazier than usual.

It's enough to "drive" you nuts!

It isn't just tourists who can't drive, of course; even our industry has its share of substandard or ignorant folks behind the wheel.

These include truckers who take what seems like 20 minutes to pull out and inch (sorry, centimetre!) past another big truck/trailer combo, thereby screwing up all the traffic following for the duration of the endless pass and the time it takes for the backed up traffic to clear afterward.

Look, I know how frustrating it can be to follow someone who's slowing you down – I'm known to have been born with a bit of a lead foot myself – but there are times to pass and times to bite the bullet until safe passing opportunities actually present themselves.

And between these "endless passers," the "lane weavers" and the tailgaters (and other offenders), the rest of the drivers on the road end up having to deal with some real idiots out there! Not that the public doesn't have its share of on-road oafs...

But professional drivers are expected to be better – that's why they're professional drivers – and these so-called pros who don't drive like pros help tag the entire industry as being made up by a bunch of whacked-out yahoos (sorry, Stampede hangover!) who are hazards to everyone on the road, including themselves.

And we wonder why it's so tough to get the industry taken seriously!

Fortunately, for every one of these yacked-out whahoos there's at least one driver at the opposite end of the spectrum, and I'm pleased to use this column to showcase some of the best, as adjudicated from their performances in the various professional driving championships held across the west this year.

And there was a lot of great driving on display! So rather than keep whining about the worst of the worst (or,

for sausage lovers, the wurst of the wurst) I want to focus on the positive, by giving you a very quick look at the best of the best, the winners of the various provincial championships.

So here, from west to east, are the top drivers from this year's competitions:

### Beyond Comparison...

In B.C., Canadian Freightways driver Dale Scott of Mission scored the title of Grand Champion at the BCTA's 2013 Professional Truck Driving Championships, held on Saturday, June 22 at Abbotsford's Tradex Centre. Dale and fellow drivers, Robert Balan (Surrey), Jack Newton (Kelowna), and Jose Lecinana (Sooke) also won the team trophy for Canadian Freightways.

Rookie of the Year was Brent Locke of Port Coquitlam (Simard Westlink), while Richmond's Steve Dawydiak (ABC Traders), copped the 2013 Safety Award.

Here are the individual category breakdowns:

**Straight Truck:** Danny Wilson, Langley, (Overland West Freight Lines Ltd.);

**Single-Single:** Jose Lecinana, Sooke (Canadian Freightways)

**Single-Tandem:** Dale Scott, Mission (Canadian Freightways)

**Tandem-Tandem:** John Broker, Port Coquitlam, (Martin Brower)

**Super B-Train:** Lorne Roadhouse, Surrey, (Overland West Freight Lines Ltd.)

A banquet at the Sheraton Guildford Hotel in Surrey followed the competition, with Organizing Committee Chair Shaun Garvey and Chief Judge Gary Ryder (Chevron Canada Ltd.) presenting the awards to winners in each class.

The BCTA also announced separately that the 2013 BC Professional Driver of the Year is Bob Kelly. Bob has driven for Berry & Smith Trucking Ltd. for 25 years. In honouring Bob, the BCTA not only acknowledged his driving record but his and his wife Karen's special contributions to the communities in which they have lived and worked.

### Awesome, Best...

Alberta's annual AMTA Rodeo was held in Edmonton on June 15 this year and saw Canadian Freightways drive away with the Grand Champion award there, too, thanks to the performance of Rod Harrison. Not

only that, but the company's George Catlin was named Rookie of the Year while Jorge Medina, Pat Thorne, Rick Harris and Lonnie Wilton (the Canadian Freightways Calgary squad) scored the team award.

The individual awards went as follows:

**Straight Truck:** Keith Franklin (Canadian Freightways)

**Single-Single:** Darren Tychkowsky (Fed-Ex Freight)

**Single-Tandem:** Keith Day (Bison Transport)

**Tandem-Tandem:** Rod Harrison (Canadian Freightways)

**B-Train:** Steve Calhoun (Canadian Freightways)

### Special Kind...

The Saskatchewan Trucking Association held its 2013 Professional Truck Driving Championships on Saturday, June 8th, and saw Regina's Larry Radons (Reimer) take home the Grand Champion honours, beating 13 other drivers in the written exam and driving skills tests. He scored an impressive 467 out of a possible 500 points and also placed first in the Straight Truck category (are there crooked trucks?).

According to the STA, the event also saw a healthy turnout of rookies, the best of whom was Yanke's Ken Bourgeois.

Here's the rest of the winning bunch:

**Tandem-Tandem:** Steve Schwenker, Q-Line Trucking

**Single-Single:** Brian Weslowski (SLH Transport)

**B-Train:** Keith Atherton (SLH Transport)

This year's awards banquet also awarded the second annual Joe Laurin Memorial Award for Professionalism and Good Sportsmanship, which went to Richard Easton of Canadian Freightways.

### Mostly Brilliant...

On Saturday, June 15, Manitoba's competitors went cab to cab at Peterbilt Manitoba for that province's Professional Truck Driving Championship (PTDC).

The Grand Champion award was earned by Howard McAfee (H&T Trucking), while the team award went to – you guess it! – Canadian Freightways. The other category winners were:

**Straight Truck:** Jason Novak (Canadian Freightways)

**Single-Single:** Brian Hrabarchuk (Con-Way Freight)

**Single-Tandem:** Ronald Poirier (TST Overland Express)

**Tandem-Tandem:** Howard McAfee (H&T Trucking)

**Super-B Train:** Ken Wiebe (EBD Enterprises)

Other event winners included:

**J.O. Dutton Award:** Ken Wiebe (EBD Enterprises)

**First Time Entrant:** Nick Alexopoulos (Canada Safeway)

**Bjornson Memorial:** Brian Hrabarchuk (Con-Way Freight)

Also at this year's Driver Awards Banquet was the presentation of the MTA-Custom Truck Sales/Kenworth Truck Company Industry Excellence Award, which is for drivers who have demonstrated "a commitment to the trucking industry, safety, and customer service and even may have performed acts of outstanding bravery or courage, risking their own lives to save others."

A full dozen drivers received awards! They are: Abe Derksen (TST Overland Express); David Bowen (Arnold Bros. Transport); Grant Goss (Trappers Transport); Ibrahim Hrcic (Bison Transport); Malcolm Campbell (Arnold Bros. Transport); Mark Tricco (Bison Transport); Marshall Timmer (Arnold Bros. Transport); Michael Malley (Trappers Transport); Ranjodj Shergill (Trappers Transport); Richard Fredette (Arnold Bros. Transport); Robert Archambault (Bison Transport); Roy Dillon (TransX Group of Companies).

The annual Volvo Trucks Canada Driver of the Year award was awarded separately, a few days later, to Mark Tricco of Bison Transport.

The western winners will have a chance to strut their stuff again, taking on the best from the east (easy pickin's, eh?) at the Nationals, which will be held this year on September 21, in Abbotsford, B.C..

Congratulations to all the winners (and good luck at the Nationals!) and thanks to everyone who competed. You're credits to the industry. **TW**

*That's it for this time! Don't forget, this column is more than just a place for me to rant; it's also a place for you to help ensure your industry peers are kept apprised of important events and/or achievements. So drop me an email at [jim@transportationmedia.ca](mailto:jim@transportationmedia.ca) if you have an item you think fits the bill. We try to include everything, but Murphy's Law has yet to be repealed. Cheers!*



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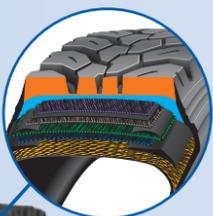
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