

# TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989 • September 2014 Volume 25, Issue 9

**Page 13** **A costly mistake:** Permitting vs pro-rating. Understand the differences or face the consequences.

**Page 14** **Not so fast:** Al Goodhall offers a driver's perspective on autonomous trucks.

**Page 21** **Cool technologies:** Refrigerated goods carriers are tracking cargo temperatures in real-time.

**Page 26** **On the road:** We take the new Volvo VNX heavy-hauler for a drive. Will it find a home in the oilpatch?

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Manitoba driver Sidhil Kumar's truck was shot up by unknown assailants while driving on I-94 in Wisconsin.



Reach us at our Western Canada news bureau

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## Too close for comfort

By Carolyn Gruske

**BALDWIN, Wisc.** - "Tat-tat-tat-tat." That's how Sidhil Kumar described the sounds that first alerted him that something serious was happening.

Kumar was driving a 2012 Peterbilt east along I-94 in Wisconsin. He had entered the US at the Pembina/Emerson border crossing and had refuelled in St. Cloud, Minn. Friday, Aug. 1 was rapidly drawing to a close, as the clock was just about to come up on midnight. Until that point, the trip from Trappers Transport in Winnipeg had been uneventful. Kumar had done this run before - hauling a 53-ft reefer full of frozen French fries from Manitoba to St. Johns, Mich. - so he thought he knew what to expect. He was planning on stopping for the night in either Menomonie (about 40 miles up the road) or Black River Falls, depending on where he could find space, but he didn't get that far.

At that point in the night, traffic along the busy highway was light. Kumar, whose truck is limited to 62 mph, was cruising in the right lane. Everything was perfectly normal. That's when he first spotted the red or maroon car.

"It was in front of me for a while - a few minutes," said Kumar in an exclusive interview with *Truck West*. "There was a white car as well, but

this maroon car slowed down. It looked like it was going to take an exit, so I moved to the left lane because I didn't want to slow down. Exit 16 was very close to me. This car was in the right lane, but I didn't see the car. I couldn't see it. When I went to the left lane, I guess the car came up to the normal speed and was driving parallel to me. I didn't pay much attention to it. It was quite normal. I just passed it when I had enough space to move over."

Kumar, however, quickly found a reason to start paying closer attention, even though by then it was too late.

"I heard something like hammering on my cab. Like somebody was beating on the cab with a hammer. It was several shots. I know about bullets. I have a gun licence. But I never expected this: that somebody was shooting at my truck without any reason. There was no expectation. There were a number of gunshots - I'd say 15 to 20. It was like tat-tat-tat-tat-tat. Then a stop. Then tat-tat-tat-tat. Then stop, then three, four or five shots again. Then stop, and again shots. It felt like non-stop for 10 or 15 seconds, like somebody hammering at me. It was a mixture of bullet shots and hits. I know they fired more than 15 bullets at me. Maybe 20.

"I didn't realize exactly what was happening

Continued on page 5

## Getting to know MTA's new executive director

By Lou Smyrlis

**WINNIPEG, Man.** - There's a new person at the helm of the Manitoba Trucking Association. Terry Shaw, who spent three years as the association's general manager, moved into the executive director's office after the retirement of the much respected Bob Dolyniuk (who spent 43 years in the industry, 17 of them as head of the MTA). *Truck West* publisher and editorial director Lou Smyrlis travelled to Winnipeg to get to know Shaw, and understand how he will shape the association in the years to come.

*TW:* Bob Dolyniuk was the head of the Manitoba Trucking Association for a long time and was one of the best known and respected people in the industry.

Now that he has retired, you are stepping in to run the association. How will your background before joining the MTA affect the kind of leader you will be?

*Shaw:* I'm one of the guys in the industry who doesn't have a family history in trucking but I have been in the industry since 1996. One of the gentlemen I went to school with had a friend working at TransX at the time, and I ended up working at TransX for about five years in a variety of roles. One of my first roles was as a log audit clerk. From there I worked through planning, dispatch, customer service and other positions.

When I left TransX, I went to work for the Workers Compensation Board here in Manitoba for about a year and then went to Big Freight Systems - working out of their Steinbach office initially and over the years out of both their Steinbach and Winnipeg offices for just under a decade. So in terms of leadership, I've had the opportunity to work for a large company and a smaller company to work with an LTL focus and a project-related open deck focus. It was excellent working and learning with the executives running these companies and capturing the elements that would work for me in terms of my own professional development.

*TW:* It's interesting that you do not have a family background in the industry. As you know, this is an industry where family ties are common. Yet

Continued on page 22

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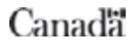
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# Celebrating the professional driver

## Editorial Comment

James Menzies



It's been a tough month for trucking industry advocates, as the industry has come under fire from numerous directions – in some cases deservedly so. Stateside, CNBC has run a series of 'investigative reports' that have presented an unfavourable portrayal of the trucking industry and its safety record.

Unfavourable would be an understatement. The series set out to create a public furor over the issue of truck safety, forcing the American Trucking Associations to respond. The ATA noted the trucking industry in the US spends more than \$7 billion per year on safety. The sensational CNBC series is just the latest fallout from the crash earlier this summer involving a Walmart-owned tractor-trailer that plowed into a limousine carrying comedian Tracy Morgan. Morgan was injured and his friend killed in the wreck.

Closer to home, an allegedly drunk guy in a truck (I can't even refer to him as a truck driver) ran into the Burlington Skyway Bridge with his bucket raised, taking it out of commission for several days, including over the heavily-travelled Civic Holiday weekend.

This prompted widespread criticism of the trucking industry and moved the Ontario Trucking Association to point out truck drivers are the least likely of

any motorists to drive while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They pointed to the fact that no truck driver has been involved in a fatal crash in Ontario while impaired, according to the province's latest road safety statistics.

Still, the damage this individual brought upon the industry's reputation can't be undone. And then as if on cue, another Ontario truck driver was arrested in Michigan and charged with impaired driving after being seen driving erratically.

It's almost enough to make you lose faith in the industry. But it isn't. Fortunately, at *Truck News*, we prefer to focus on the accomplishments of the truly professional drivers, such as Jake and Mary Siemens, a husband-wife team you can read about on pg. 70, who have together racked up four million miles of safe driving. Each month, we dedicate this page to celebrating someone special from within the industry and there is no shortage of people from whom to choose. We've also been delivering unprecedented coverage of the Ontario Professional Truck Driving Championships and its competitors. And while all this was going on, we've been knee-deep in nominations for our annual *Truck News* Owner/Operator of the Year award. We've whittled the list of nominees into a short list of finalists and each of them are deserving



of this, the most prestigious O/O award in the country. We'll be announcing the winner in the weeks ahead.

So, while the truly unprofessional drivers are commanding a lot of attention in the mainstream media, we must remember the industry is still stacked with true professionals who every day go about their business without a lot of fanfare. Interest in their stories is limited to those of us with a connection to the trucking industry, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't continue to celebrate them. And we'll continue to do just that. **TW**

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# What will the future truck look like?

Can truck design become a significant tool in attracting a new generation of drivers? We got a better glimpse into that future this year than we have in some time. Question is, are we headed in the right direction?

To me that future looks a lot different than the past. If the traditional box-shaped, low-tech, big power and fuel efficiency be damned design is what you crave, then I don't think you will like what the future holds. If streamlined, high-tech, ergonomic, slipstream design turns your crank then I think you will. The truck of the future will look and feel a lot less like a tank and a lot more like a high-performance airplane.

Walmart stretched our imagination at the start of the year with the Walmart Advanced Vehicle Experience or WAVE vehicle, a collaboration between the retailer, Peterbilt, Great Dane Trailers, and Capstone Turbine. The fact that Peterbilt, perhaps the brand most commonly associated with the traditional box-shaped design many drivers have come to love over the years, was involved perhaps is telling about where things are going.

Much of the new design elements, such as the hybrid powertrain and convex-nosed trailer constructed from carbon fibre, are aimed towards greatly improving fuel efficiency.

But the inside of the cab complete-

## The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



ly reinvents the current driver workspace with a centred driver's seat, and an electronic dashboard with customizable gauges and performance data. The driver becomes the focal point of a much more technically sophisticated vehicle. But it also requires a future driver who is comfortable with and willing to be the focal point of much more intelligent machinery.

And then this summer Daimler Trucks demonstrated a truck which truly resembles the piloting of a commercial airliner. Daimler's first autonomous truck drives itself much of the time. Many of the technologies that make up the truck are already commercially available safety systems.

The self-driving trucks can be operated on existing road infrastructure, provided lane markings are clearly visible.

The truck is smart enough to respond to disabled vehicles parked on the shoulder of the road, to navigate stop-and-go traffic without driver intervention and to cruise at highway speeds of up to 85 km/h.

Certain maneuvers require the driver to take over, including overtak-

ing other vehicles but it's expected at least 50% of the time an autonomous truck would operate without any driver involvement at all.

So if drivers of the future can be excused from a good half of the driving, what would they do with their time? They can use their seat time to perform other work duties that have traditionally been handled by office staff, according to Daimler, such as invoicing, planning deliveries and arranging future loads. Like the WAVE concept vehicle, it requires a driver who is attracted to a job that is much different than today's driving job.

In other words, technology already available today has the potential to radically change the driving profession. Is this the forward step the industry has been struggling to take to make the driving profession more attractive?

I would love to hear from you on that, particularly from younger drivers.

You can e-mail me your thoughts at [lou@transportationmedia.ca](mailto:lou@transportationmedia.ca). Also be sure to check out pg. 14 for a driver's perspective on self-driving trucks. **TW**

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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

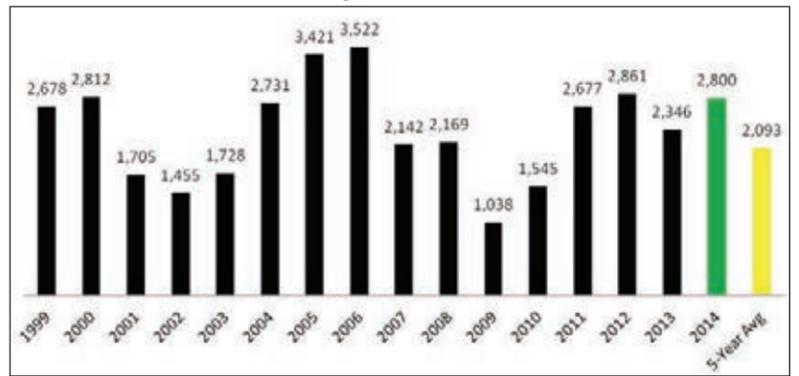
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## Monthly Class 8 Sales – June 14

June was a breath of fresh air for Canadian Class 8 truck sales. After dipping below the previous year's pace for four straight months, June's sales totals soared above last year's. The month's sales totals were the fifth best June totals dating back to 1999. Volvo in particular showed significant improvement to their numbers over the past year while Freightliner, International and Kenworth also surpassed their previous year's numbers.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	686	588
International	382	300
Kenworth	407	368
Mack	217	234
Peterbilt	304	337
Volvo	576	277
Western Star	228	242
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2800</b>	<b>2346</b>

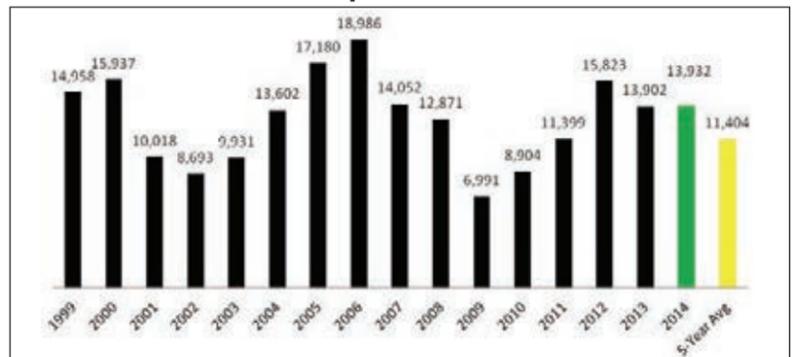
## Historical Comparison – June 14 Sales



## Class 8 Sales (YTD June 14) by Province and OEM

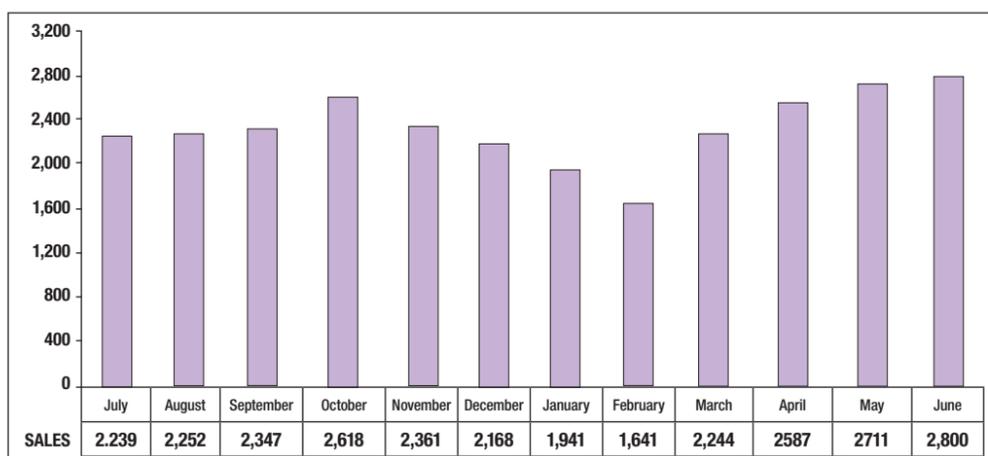
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	307	505	115	162	1,425	526	147	63	1	21	3,272
Kenworth	303	936	215	1	363	397	42	0	0	0	2,257
Mack	77	193	86	67	583	140	14	23	5	13	1,201
International	72	292	38	74	932	332	78	29	5	21	1,873
Peterbilt	255	687	162	105	360	236	75	11	0	0	1,891
Volvo	276	297	59	171	1,013	331	105	53	0	1	2,306
Western Star	163	422	41	65	190	182	28	34	3	4	1,132
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,453</b>	<b>3,332</b>	<b>716</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>4,866</b>	<b>2,144</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>13,932</b>

## Historical Comparison – YTD June 14



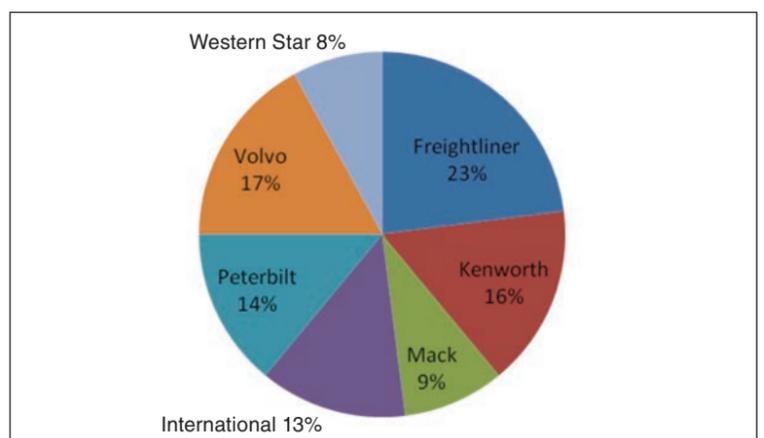
The optimism for an improvement in Class 8 truck sales in 2014 after 2013 proved a disappointing year was quickly fading, despite improving fortunes for trucking companies. Then the June sales figures came in, blowing past last year's totals. YTD numbers are still nowhere close to those of 2012, the best year since the recession for Class 8 sales, but they are now ahead of last year's results. With small carriers more willing to purchase new trucks than they have been in years, according to our latest research, and all carriers feeling more optimistic, could the second half of 2014 be a memorable one?

## 12-Month Sales Trends



June has proved the best sales month of the past year. After 10 straight months of sales coming in above the 2,000 mark, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007, they dropped slightly below 2,000 in January and considerably further in February. Good news is that they bounced back in March and April, topping the 2,000 mark both months. May showed further improvement and June was a welcomed surprise and shows a steady improvement in sales numbers the last four months.

## Market Share Class 8 – June 14 YTD



Volvo's star continues to rise with Canadian Class 8 truck purchasers. Last month we reported that Volvo had surged to capture 16% of the Canadian market, leap frogging past Peterbilt, which was down to 14% market share. This month Volvo has slipped past the other Paccar company, Kenworth, to grab the number two spot. Volvo now enjoys a 17% share of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Freightliner remains the market leader with a 23% share.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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## Manitoba trucker fired upon for no apparent reason

Continued from page 1

to me. It was like somebody standing behind my cab beating on it. I thought maybe some crazy people got behind my truck when I stopped for fuelling and they've been standing there for one-and-a-half hours. My truck has only one berth, so there was nothing to fall down from the upper berth. The luggage compartment was secured. There was nothing that could make that sound."

Curious about the noise and wanting to stop and determine the cause, Kumar spied an exit. He didn't take it, but he pulled over just past the off-ramp calculating there would be more room on the side of the road there than on the regular highway shoulder.

"I didn't shut down the engine. I just applied my parking brakes and went to the cabin. I saw my (sleeper) cab window was down. It looked like somebody shot it - glass everywhere. I realized it was not the safest place to park, so thought let's go someplace else, like some rest area or a truck stop or take another exit. I thought let's go. So I immediately started driving again.

"I was picking up my speed. I was in the right lane and another truck driver, an American female truck driver, she put her cab lights on and was waving her hands at me like park, park. She was talking on the radio, 'You have a fuel leak.' I put my back lights on and

looked what was happening to my trailer and I saw the fuel going out like a fog because my fuel tanks were full. There were 50 gallons of fuel there in my reefer tanks. I came to realize later these guys shot my fuel tank and made a hole, so fuel was coming out and spreading everywhere, covering the cars behind me."

Including the white car Kumar noticed before all the shooting.

Even though she couldn't be aware of exactly what happened to cause the fuel leak, the woman who flagged Kumar down pulled her rig over, parked it on the side of the road and got out. That gave Kumar the confidence to know the road was safe enough to pull over himself.

"She ran at me and asked me what happened. I said I realized I was shot, but I didn't realize the fuel leak. I gave my phone to her to call the cops: 9-1-1. At the same time, I went to disconnect my tractor and trailer because there was a heavy fuel leak and I didn't want, if it caught fire, to take my truck too."

Kumar pulled his truck ahead, laid out his safety triangles and within minutes, an assortment of officials had arrived, including highway troopers, firefighters and officers from the St. Croix County sheriff's office. Kumar said the firefighters were able to plug the fuel leak, but there was still a flood

of diesel on the road.

By that point, Kumar and the other driver had become the centre of attention.

"The cops were very good. They came and asked me if I was safe. They talked to me. They also had a very good witness, the female driver. They interviewed her as well. They asked for my licence. I'm a trusted traveller, so I have my FAST Card. They took my FAST Card, so they know I'm not a criminal. They took my ID and kept it for an hour. I stayed there for over two hours because there were lots of things to do. They took one statement from me," he said.

"Everybody was taking reports from me. They asked me for my truck insurance, my truck documents. Everything was in order. After noting down everything, they gave it all back. They were good. They told me, 'You were lucky.'"

One investigator even got on the phone with Kumar's dispatcher and explained the situation to her, after Kumar has made the initial phone call, reporting what had happened. Kumar spoke with numerous people from Trappers including the company's safety team.

"Everybody was upset because it has never happened in their history. They've never had the experience of somebody shooting their truck."

While Kumar spent more than two hours on the side of the road, the other trucker was allowed to go after about 30 minutes. Kumar said that in the confusion and chaos that happened,



A mechanic repairs the reefer fuel tank after it was punctured by several bullets.

he didn't get a chance to really talk to her.

"I don't know her name. I met her, but we didn't get much time to talk or exchange numbers or that kind of thing because of the circumstances. She called the cops and was busy with the cops.

"She had the courage to stop. Otherwise she could have just told me, 'You have a fuel leak' and went away. Somebody else would have done that, but she stopped with me."

Around 3 a.m. Saturday, police officials informed Kumar they were going to tow his truck to the impound yard so they could continue their investigation.

They also told him to grab his bags before having an officer drive him to a local hotel.

Kumar wasn't finished telling his story, though. He had to give another, more detailed statement from his

Continued on page 7

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## Driver convinced shooters were aiming to kill

Continued from page 5

hotel room later that day.

On Sunday morning, Kumar received a call saying he could reclaim his truck, even if it wasn't ready to drive.

"I had a flat tire. I had a leaked fuel tank, so my company sent mechanics – a tire guy and a reefer mechanic with a new tank. When the tire guy replaced the tire, they found a bullet inside the tire. The same thing with the reefer tank. When they replaced the reefer tank, they got a bullet."

In total police in Wisconsin found nine bullet holes in Kumar's truck. It wasn't until he got to Canada when he realized they hadn't found them all.

"I was shot nine times – well actually 10 times. The cops counted nine, but when I stopped at the Canadian border, the Canadian Customs inspector found one more shot. They flattened my trailer tire. They shot my door of my cab – one shot that was actually supposed to hit me. They shot at the window at an angle that goes directly to the driver's seat, but I was very fortunate. That bullet hit the window frame and the aluminum was so strong that even though it's pierced, it stopped it. That was supposed to really hit me. I was so lucky.

"One shot was high, I don't know where they aimed, but it went into the cab cover – there was a hole. Two shots pierced the reefer. One shot in the landing gear and one shot made a hole in the fuel tank. There is one shot in the tire and one shot in the DEF tank. The DEF tank is on the right-hand side, so maybe they mistakenly thought it was the fuel tank they were shooting at. The last shot I found at the back of my trailer. It looked to me like they slowed down and shot when I passed. They took the last shot at the back of my trailer, then they took the exit and were gone. Because they knew there was an exit ahead."

While Kumar didn't see the red or maroon car leave the highway, or even notice anything about who was in the vehicle, he has some ideas about what happened.

He believes there must have been at least two, or more likely three people in the car. He also thinks they knew how to shoot and had some familiarity with trucks.

"I guess there were maybe three people, because a driver cannot shoot me while driving because of the air turbulence. When you are travelling beside a big semi going 105 km/h, there is turbulence, so he cannot safely shoot me, especially at night while being safe.

"He shot my cab. He shot my window. This cannot be done left-handed or one-handed. If he had a passenger, the passenger cannot shoot as well because he has the driver on his left-hand side. It's not easy for him to shoot me from the right side. The shot came, maybe, from the back seat – somebody sitting in the back seat on the left-hand side. I think there were three or more people," he said.

"I've heard of truckers experiencing one shot or two shots, breaking the

window and they're gone. This is not like that. This is somebody who really wanted to kill me.

"The angle of the shots – if you look at the one shot at the window, it would have seriously injured me. To shoot me like that from a car to a truck, it's not that easy. A car is too low for a truck. I'm on the other side, so to target me, it's not easy. So the guys who were shooting at me were really, really good shooters. And at night, you cannot differentiate between a reefer and a dry van, and the shooters, they knew there was a diesel tank just behind the trailer they were shooting into. It's hard to see

Continued on page 9

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# Shooting suspects still at large

Continued from page 7

at night. They know much about trucking. These guys know much about a truck. They didn't realize I had a DEF tank on my right-hand side. They misunderstood it was a fuel tank and were shooting at that. They blew my tire. Ten shots hit me. They are very good with the guns, and they know much about the truck.

"They shot the passenger side. If any passenger was on the seat, they might have got a shot. The bullet went into the truck. It pierced the door and went into the truck. Luckily, I didn't have any passenger or co-driver or somebody sleeping at my berth, they could have been seriously injured or died. It's like they really wanted to make some serious thing. It wasn't a funny shooting – somebody randomly shooting a truck, breaking some glass and panicking. If they wanted to panic me, they could easily do that because it's hard shooting this way. They could easily shoot the windows, but they didn't shoot at the windows. It was something very serious."

While Kumar is convinced that the gunman (or gunmen) were highly skilled, St. Croix County sheriff John Shilts offered a different perspective on the shooting.

"A truck is big. We're not exactly sure just how close the vehicle was to the truck when the individual would have begun firing," he told *Truck West*.

"When we've got something the size of a tractor trailer rig, if you're each in your own respective lanes, what do you have – six feet in between you? In that sense you don't necessarily have to be a great shot. It's like the old adage 'couldn't hit the broadside of a barn,' in this case it's similar, but it's a truck.

**"This appears to be completely random... I wouldn't categorize it as a joy ride or a pot-shot."**

**John Shilts, St. Croix County Sheriff**

"Now you start putting in the factors – the size of the targets, the rates, the movements, the distance apart. My suspicion is they are quite close together when the individual fired the shots in which case he's literally aiming for the side of a barn."

Shilts said the description of a "red or maroon car" doesn't give his investigators much to go on although they checked the local area that night and

found one car that matched the description. It turns out, however, its owners had an alibi and there was no evidence they were involved.

He added that ballistics evidence offers the best chance of catching whoever shot Kumar's truck, as the bullets and shell casings recovered are 10 mm, which isn't an exactly common size of ammunition.

"Probably about 10 or 15 years ago there was an upsurge in that particular calibre for handguns. Actually, law enforcement began to use it for a bit, but that was short-lived. You don't see too many of them anymore. In that sense

it's unique but there are plenty of them out there. It's not to the point of being rare," he said.

"Now it becomes a situation where we wait to see if we recover a unique weapon such as a 10 mm and maybe we can match up any ammunition that is with it or see if we can find that particular weapon," he said.

According to Shilts, the shooting was out of the ordinary for this part of Wis-

consin, and that there is no history of truck hijackings in the county.

"This is extremely unusual for us," he said. "We are actually a suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul. To that extent, it is not uncommon for you to see that in the more populated metropolitan areas. But for our area it is very unusual. The last (truck shooting) I can remember is probably 15 years ago. It ended up being bad blood between a couple of people who knew each other. This appears to be completely random. Certainly the number of shots shows, at least in my opinion, an intent to do harm. I wouldn't categorize it as a joy ride or a pot-shot. Nine rounds is a lot of rounds to shoot."

As to why it happened, Shilts said there really isn't an obvious reason.

"We thought: Is it something because of this particular company? Is it because it's a Canadian truck? Is it something because of an ethnicity issue with the driver?"

"But when you take into all those factors into account and the time of the day, and the fact there was really no exchange before hand, it really doesn't seem like something that was thought out. It looks to be a reaction. I'm presuming this person perceived that this truck or driver somehow infringed on their driving down the road. I don't understand why anybody else would do something like this. Who knows?"

Kumar ran through a similar list of questions as to why it happened, and

Continued on page 11



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## COVER STORY

# Truck shooting

Continued from page 9

like Shilts, he can't come up with an answer.

"It's something random that happened, but when they shot at me, they really wanted to kill me and blow the tractor for some reason. Maybe they don't like Canadians because anybody can see it's a Canadian truck. Some trucks have Winnipeg, CA, but my truck has big bold letters saying Winnipeg, Canada, so anybody can tell in an instant it's a Canadian truck. That could be a reason. Even at night it's also possible that they can see I'm originally East Indian. They can see the guy is not white because even at night you can see there is a different shade between a white driver and a non-white driver. That could be a reason also. Who knows?"

While the Trappers mechanics repaired the tire and tank they didn't repair the bullet holes and they weren't able to fix the blown-out window.

"When the cops impounded the truck, they put something to cover the window, so they taped it - evidence was written on the tape - and I put some duct tape on it. A broken window was not anything related to my safety driving. It was only 800 or 900 kms, so it was only one day driving. So I took permission from my company, I took permission from the cops, and they told me if anything happened, if DOT or anybody pulled me over because of the broken window, I could give them their card and have them call, so I was safe. I don't think anything would happen with me at the border crossing because everybody knew and it was nothing related to the safety of my driving."

Despite having his truck released on Sunday, Kumar didn't cross back home into Canada until Wednesday. Arrangements had to be made for the load, and closures due to the August civic holiday slowed things down.

When he got to the border, both US Customs and Canada Customs insisted on doing thorough inspections and on documenting what happened.

The Canadian inspector was the person who found the 10th bullet hole.

When Kumar told his story to the US Customs inspector, the inspector told him "You go and buy a lottery ticket. If you don't buy one, give me your birthday and I'll play the numbers."

Kumar's immediate plans involved taking the truck to the insurance company and getting back on the road. He said he had no intentions of letting this incident stop him from driving.

"I'm good. I told my company I am good to go there tomorrow, but in a different truck. It will take some time to fix it. I don't have any problems to go the same place again, because I know it's not somebody targeting me personally. There is no reason for some American guys to be targeting me, or that they'll shoot me again. We have more than 110 trucks. Most of them go to the same place."

While he told his company he's ready to be back on the road, there was (at the time of the interview) a message he hadn't delivered. Kumar is married with a wife and a family.

"They're not in the country. I didn't tell them," he said quietly. **TW**



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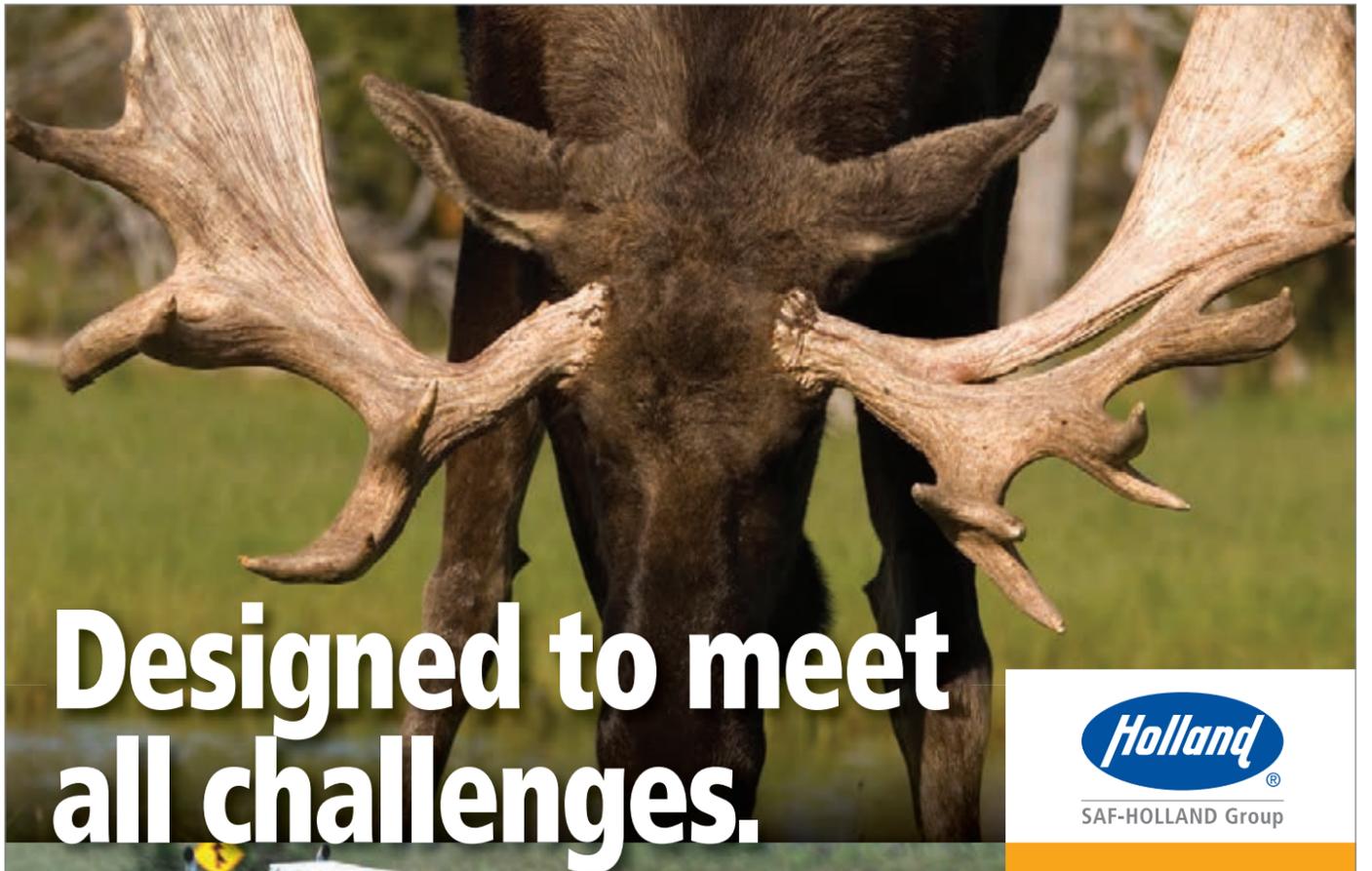
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# Know when to permit, when to prorate

**Y**ou can make a fortune hauling oilfield equipment between Alberta and British Columbia. You can also lose it if you miscalculate the real cost of using single trip permits.

I recently met with an Alberta oilfield services company that had taken a job hauling heavy equipment from Slave Lake, Alta., to Prince Rupert, B.C. It penciled out the costs, including a 30-day trip permit (\$312) and Alberta base plate (\$2,400), and negotiated a contract with the customer. What the company failed to account for was having to pay roughly \$70,000 in provincial sales tax to B.C. on the million-dollar piece of trailing equipment it used during the move.

B.C.'s switch from HST to a combination of GST and PST in April 2013 created a mass of confusion about what is and isn't taxable. By February of this year, the province had completely rewritten its tax bulletin on PST and vehicles (you can still find the old version online, so make sure you're reading the most current one). Unfortunately, confusion and miscommunication are not valid excuses when you're staring down a tax audit.

## What to know

British Columbia requires PST to be paid on vehicles regardless of whether they are for personal or business use.

If you're based outside of B.C., it's important to know that there are rules for taxing vehicles ("goods") that come into the province for "temporary use." The rules centre around how many days the vehicle is used in B.C. over a 12-month period. In most cases, a vehicle is exempt from PST if the number of days is five or less. The days can be consecutive or spread out, and a partial day is considered a full day for the purposes of PST.

Under the temporary use formula, you pay 7% PST on the depreciated value of the vehicle in installments over a three-year period. In this case, the oilfield services company owed approximately \$23,000 PST this year, next year, and in 2016. If it failed to pay, it could be assessed the tax plus a penalty and interest on the amount owing from the time the vehicle first entered the province.

The fleet manager didn't know about the PST issue until it came up during a review with an accountant at the head office in Calgary, who wanted to know why the company had recovered \$312 from the customer for the trip permit but not any of the \$23,000 in PST. Now here's the kicker: the fleet manager got a call from the customer about doing more jobs in B.C. and also Saskatchewan. The fleet manager looked it up: Saskatchewan has PST, too - 5% on any commercial equipment, vehicle, or tools used in the province for one or more days in any 12-month period.

## A decision to make

The company has a choice to make. Instead of paying for single trip permits and PST on equipment (and related supplies and repairs), it can license vehicles under the International Registration Plan (IRP). With IRP, you pay licensing fees and prorated sales tax to your

## Permits & Licensing

Sandy Johnson



base jurisdiction at the time of registration. The jurisdiction will calculate and forward the proper amounts to other IRP jurisdictions according to the proportion of distance you travel there. Licensing a million-dollar rig that spends 80% of its time in Alberta and the other 20% divided between B.C. and Saskatchewan would cost a total of \$2,396 per year under IRP. It would be exempt from PST and instead the owner would pay a prorated sales tax of \$3,294 to B.C.

and \$2,353 to Saskatchewan. The benefits would be significant.

The company could operate in all three provinces for three years for roughly what it would cost for one year of trip permits and PST paid to British Columbia alone. Plus, it would have the operational flexibility to use the vehicle in any IRP-member jurisdiction at a moment's notice.

Prorating also makes it easier to calculate surcharges. If the total cost of prorated licensing fees and sales tax in Alberta, B.C., and Saskatchewan is \$8,043 per year, divide that by 365 and you get a daily rate of \$22.04.

Now you know how much to charge in order to recoup license fees and sales tax from customers.

## When to permit?

When should you use trip permits and when should you register vehicles under IRP? It depends on how many days you plan to operate outside your home province and whether you've already paid the sales tax on your equipment.

Registering a vehicle under IRP doesn't represent a cost savings in every situation. But it's probably worth finding out - before the accountant calls from the head office. **TW**

*Sandy Johnson is founder and managing director at North Star Fleet Solutions in Calgary. She can be reached at 877-860-8025 or northstarfleet.com.*



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# Self-driving trucks are redundant

**W**ith all the reports out of Germany in early July regarding Daimler's self-driving trucks, I can't help but throw in my own two cents on this topic as a full-time driver.

We all know that the majority of collisions on our roads are caused by driver error. Automation can eliminate fatigued driving, distracted driving, speeding, and other bad driving habits.

If safety were the sole motivator of vehicle automation we would all be embracing the technology.

But of course safety is only one factor, albeit an important one. When technology impacts our personal lives and changes how we live, work, and play - then the issue becomes murky.

So what about productivity gains? The first thing that comes to mind is improved fuel mileage. I was surprised that Daimler stated this technology would mean an immediate gain of 5% in fuel mileage. Five per cent? Really? That's it?

I have no idea how Daimler calculated this, but research has shown that drivers can impact fuel economy by as much as

## Over the Road

Al Goodhall



20% according to some of the Fleetsmart training material I've been exposed to.

I'll assume that Daimler's numbers are gains above their current fuel mileage standards of vehicles driven to specification, something that doesn't happen all of the time in real-world applications. So I think trucking companies would realize much better gains in fuel economy with automated trucks.

In this regard, is automation much different than imposing speed limiters on the industry, since a driver would always be behind the wheel? Would it be accepted by current drivers any differently than speed limiters have been?

Consider this quote taken from the TruckNews.com article posted on July 3, *Daimler demonstrates self-driving trucks*.

"Autonomous driving will inevitably also change the job profile of truck drivers," said Dr. Ing. Klaus Ruff. "They will gain time for other activities than

just driving the truck: office work, social interaction, relaxation periods. Autonomous driving will make the driver's working time more varied and less stressful, and help to make long-distance driving more attractive as a profession."

Okay, so first of all let's look at the concept of office work while on the road.

Are we to become driver/dispatcher/load planner? Perhaps we are. There are great efficiencies and costs to be gained here but it's not what I signed up for, how about you?

Social interaction? I spend 120 hours per week in my truck. I drive it, eat in it and sleep in it. In an automated truck I would still be doing the same. Social interaction would come through electronic media, which gets old in a hurry.

Relaxation periods? Those happen outside the normal working environment. Just because I don't have to pay attention to the road does not necessarily equate with relaxation time.

The greatest stresses we face as drivers result from the amount of time we spend on the road - not from how we spend that time on the road.

I'm not clear on exactly how my working time will become less stressful if you were to turn over some of my driving responsibilities to an automated truck, replace them with some "office work" but still leave me with 100% of the responsibility for the operation of that truck while it's rolling down the road.

After all, I would still be the driver of record in the seat, right? How would all of this equate to our profession becoming

more attractive? I'm not clear on that. Why would someone want to sit in a truck for all of those hours doing the work they could do at home on a tablet unless they were paid an above-average income? They wouldn't.

If automation is about efficiency, how is this attractive in any way?

It's not. It's just a stepping stone to automated driverless trucks. That's where the real cost savings and improved safety lie. The driver is the weak link here and I don't think we should lose sight of that fact.

This is a contentious opinion, I know, but where else does automation lead in regard to cost control?

We only have to look around to see how labour-intensive positions are being made increasingly redundant through technology. This has been going on for decades now and it is not going to abate anytime in the near future.

There is no doubt in my mind that automated trucks that eventually lead to driverless trucks is a good thing for our society on many fronts.

At the same time it leads to the redundancy of millions of middle-class jobs from the marketplace across North America.

We certainly have no final word on this topic. **TW**

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

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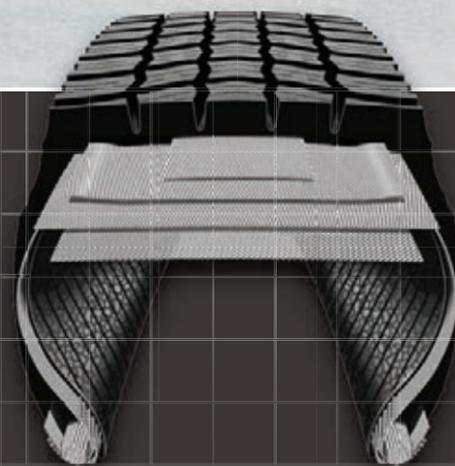


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# Getting that warm, fuzzy feeling

**A**s I wrote last month, my truck was almost due for its first service. I'm happy to say that it was a pleasant experience. It didn't go according to plan at first and I was about to blow a gasket within a couple of minutes of arriving at the dealership in Winnipeg.

I made the booking to coincide with dropping a load off in the city, so it was mid-morning when I arrived. Not a problem as I had advised them a day or so earlier when I made the booking. So upon arrival I went around the back and dropped my trailer. I then walked down to the check-in desk and having taken photos of the VIN number and odometer I was fully prepared for all the questions I would be asked.

So far so good – the guy at the desk was polite and informative and I had a warm and fuzzy feeling. While this was happening a technician took my keys and my truck went into the shop, making me feel warmer and fuzzier. Then it all started to go horribly wrong. I brought up my alignment issue and instead of hearing positive words I heard only one, the word 'no.' This was

**You say tomato  
I say tomahto**

Mark Lee



not a word I wanted to hear, the technician told me that as the truck had done more than 50,000 kms, that it was not something that they dealt with.

He went on to explain the reasons why and they all made sense, but I didn't care about sensible responses, I only wanted to hear that they would take care of it. I had, after all, just spent a lot of money buying a truck from them and I wanted everything to be 100% how it should be. Now this technician must have taken a body language course as he sensed I was about to go off and he asked if I had notified anyone of the problem before.

I told him that it wasn't something I noticed when I collected the truck, it was a windy day with a northeast wind and as I was heading southeast it was blowing me around a bit. I did pick up on it when I set out on my first trip; I was heading west with a fairly stiff northerly wind and the truck was

still pulling to the right, so I called the salesman who I did the deal with and he said that it would be put right.

Now those were the words that Steve was waiting to hear and he said that I should go see the salesman and he would take care of it. They don't do alignments on site, so they would have it taken care of by a partner company and after visiting the salesman, that's exactly what happened.

Because I was aware of the alignment issue, I had been closely monitoring my tire wear. Visually there were no signs of any abnormality and running my hand across the tire had confirmed that. Usually with an alignment issue there will be a feathered wear pattern on the front tire or tires. Running your hand back and forth across the tire will feel smooth in one direction and rough in the other. This is a very useful diagnostic procedure and any alignment shop that doesn't look at the tires to ascertain what is going on before making any adjustments is best avoided in my opinion.

So after the service was completed I set off to the alignment shop. The first thing the guy did was feel my steer tires and my warm and fuzzy feeling returned. He said there was no issue with the tire wear, so the misalignment hadn't had much effect on the truck, which I was pleased to hear.

The truck went up on the ramps and some adjustments were made. The result was that I drove home in a dead straight line, so all's well that ends well. Not quite.

I went east on my next trip and parked for the night in Thunder Bay. The following morning I did my pre-trip and fired up the truck. Well, I tried to, except it didn't want to start. It was cranking over fine, but would not catch. It did eventually start and I made the decision to carry on to Toronto and see how things developed.

I had a 50,000-lb load so elected for Hwy. 11 as it's easier on the truck and I made it as far as North Bay that night. I shut her down and grabbed some beauty sleep. The next morning the same thing happened – it eventually fired up and then a warning came up on the dash display. Check fuel filter it said, so I did. I have one of those glass bowl filters and I drained the fuel from it, stripped it down and found nothing amiss, so I put it back together again, poured in the fuel I had drained and shut the hood.

I got behind the wheel, turned the key and it started as it should. I shut it down and tried again, it started just fine. So I set off and all was good until the first stoplight when the fuel filter warning came up on the dash again. The truck was running fine, so I carried on. It was Sunday so there was no point visiting the service agent in North Bay. I continued my journey, thinking that I was visit a dealer in Toronto and get it sorted, then my satellite beeped. It was a load offer. My outbound trailer was already going to our terminal and there would be a trailer waiting there to take me home.

With that in mind I revised my decision to get it fixed in Toronto to try to make it home. So far it hadn't been any trouble once it was up and running and my load home was nice and light, so that's what I did.

Each morning I would purge the diesel from the filter, take it apart and re-fit it. The truck started fine once I had gone through that procedure, so I was confident that it would get me home – and it did.

I was having some home time when I got back, so I called the dealer to book the truck in and was put through to the same technician who worked on it before. He told me to bring it in whenever it was convenient and they would take care of it and that is exactly what they did. It turned out that the gasket that seals the filter bowl onto the housing was not uniform in size and it must've been allowing a bit of air in to the system, which under normal operating conditions wasn't a problem. But when it was shut off for the night it interfered with the capillary action of the fuel lines (like holding your thumb over the end of a drinking straw, when you release the pressure, the liquid comes out) and the fuel was running back from the injectors, making it difficult to start the engine.

I have no complaints about how I was looked after at the dealership. On the contrary, they were professional every step of the way and I'm both pleased and confident for the future. It wasn't a perfect start to my truck ownership experience, but that's trucking. **TW**

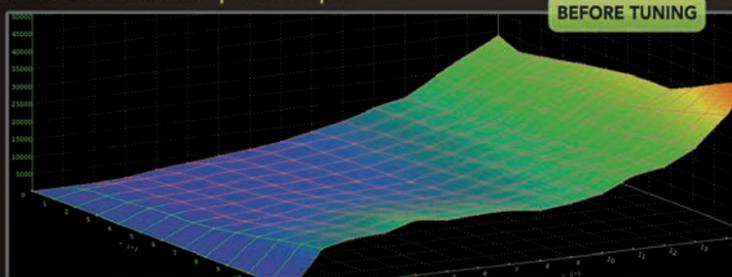
*A fourth generation trucker and trucking journalist, Mark Lee uses his 25 years of transcontinental trucking in Europe, Asia, North Africa and now North America to provide an alternative view of life on the road.*

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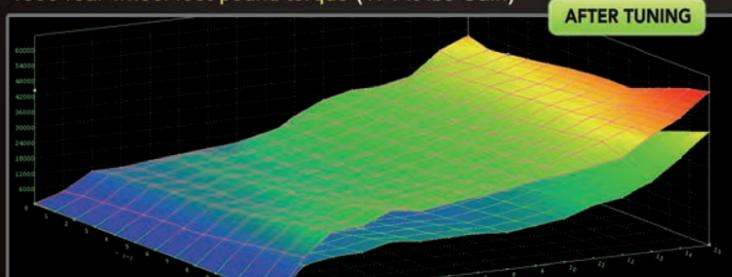
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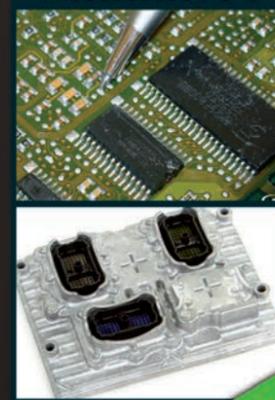
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# The pros and cons of contracting driver services

**T**he trucking industry is always under pressure to save money, and one way companies try to do it is through the use of self-employed drivers or “driver services.”

By contracting a driver, the fleet can add or subtract capacity without the obligations and costs of having an employee.

There are good and bad sides for both the carrier and the driver in this type of arrangement.

First, let's state the obvious: Canada Revenue Agency hates the concept, and rarely does a driver-service relationship stand up to a CRA review.

CRA has a guidebook called *Employee or Self-employed (RC4110)* that provides the framework for how the agency evaluates whether a relationship is business-to-business or employer-employee.

Primarily, they look for the level of control the payer has over the worker, including:

- Does the worker provide his own tools and equipment?
- Can the worker subcontract the work or hire assistants?
- What is the worker's degree of financial risk?
- What is the degree of responsibility for investment and management?
- What is the worker's opportunity for profit?

Whether a worker is an employee or a self-employed individual goes beyond who pays taxes.

It affects how a worker is treated under the Canada Pension Plan, the Employment Insurance Act, Income Tax Act, Workers Compensation, and other labour rules.

Another point that catches people off guard is that the self-employed driver must charge GST/HST for his services if he exceeds the annual \$30,000 gross limitation.

Where a self-employed driver does not use his own truck and does not assume liability for the supply of a freight transportation service, the driver is not supplying a freight transportation service for GST/HST purposes. He is providing a driving service, which is taxable.

Some may argue that if the self-employed driver is taking a load from Canada to the US, the service is zero-rated.

However, CRA has 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.

I can't tell you how many times I've run into small carriers paying 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 the GST/HST?

## Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



They'll get it back on their returns anyway.

The real crime here is that the driver is responsible for charging GST/HST on his services.

If you're a self-employed driver working for a carrier that refuses to pay GST/HST, in an audit CRA is go-

ing to hand you the bill.

On the other hand, I recently had a client using driver services that was burned by some of his drivers.

They all had GST/HST numbers but a few of them closed their accounts.

Not knowing this, my client continued to pay them HST on their earnings, and when he was audited, he had to repay CRA all the HST he had paid these guys and had received as refunds.

The drivers? They didn't get in trouble for receiving HST on can-

celled accounts.

If a worker or payer is not sure of the worker's employment status, either party can request a ruling to have the status determined.

Use Form CPT1, *Request for a Ruling as to the Status of a Worker under the Canada Pension Plan and/or the Employment Insurance Act*.

Whether you're a driver or a fleet manager, a driver-service arrangement can give you flexibility, tax advantages, and help keep certain costs in check.

But only if all parties involved are clear about their obligations and responsibilities. **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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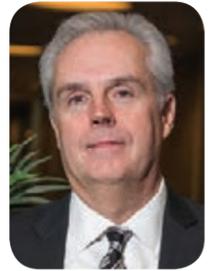
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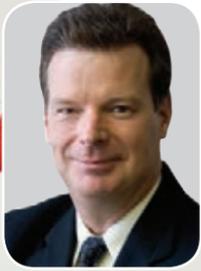
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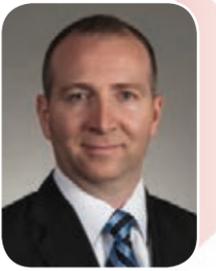
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Private Fleets  
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## AGENDA

**LOOK AHEAD:** The economy in 2015 – what trends will impact your business. Expert analysis from an economist, a transportation market specialist and two transportation company CEOs.

**THE VIEW FROM THE TOP:** The transportation executive's perspective on the major trends driving truck and rail transportation.

**SHIPPER – CARRIER COLLABORATION 2.0:** What does the new face of collaboration really entail?

**SAME DAY DELIVERY SERVICE:** Are you ready for this game changer?

**INSURANCE TELEMATICS:** How they will reshape your insurance policy.

**REGULATORY ISSUES IN TRANSPORTATION:** An insider's look ahead.

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# Keeping cool and avoiding the blame game

For years, when temperature-sensitive product went bad, carriers were a convenient scapegoat. But tracking technology that monitors temperatures is changing that.

By James Menzies

When something goes awry with a shipment of temperature-sensitive product, blame is often first cast upon the carrier.

This places the carrier in a precarious position. Do you dig in your heels and argue with the customer at the risk of losing future business? Or do you accept blame, even though you're confident your company maintained the integrity of the product while it was within your care?

Many refrigerated carriers are now wising up and taking advantage of the latest tracking technologies to ensure product is handled correctly while in-transit and to protect themselves – and their customers – from blame when others along the supply chain have made a mistake that compromised the product.

There are many systems on the market today that allow for the real-time, remote monitoring of cargo temperatures. Phil Langevin, president of P.A. Langevin Transport in Carleton Place, Ont., adopted Blue Tree Systems' R:COM after learning the hard way how quickly a carrier can be wrongly accused.

Langevin recalled a time when the LTL carrier was blamed when one portion of a 12,000-lb order went bad. Because the rest of the load was fine, Langevin knew the mishandling of the product didn't occur while it was in-transit, but he had little to offer in the way of proof.

"I said, 'What are you saying? That we pulled over at the side of the road, unloaded 4,000 lbs, heated it up and put it back in the trailer?'" Langevin recalled.

Meanwhile, Langevin was noticing that more shippers were sealing the trailer, making it trickier for the driver to ensure cargo temperatures were properly maintained while in-transit.

Enter the R:COM system, which now allows Langevin to track cargo temperatures from his office and receive real-time alerts when something goes wrong.

Previously, drivers had to visit a dealer and physically download reefer data, which was difficult to schedule while making LTL deliveries.

"By the time you get a guy over to Thermo King or Carrier to download the reefer, there's so much time involved. And we do LTL, so we do a lot of deliveries with appointments and you can't skip appointments," Langevin said. "Now, any time we need to know the temperature, it's right there at our fingertips and that makes it a lot quicker and easier."

It also makes it easier for P.A. Langevin to help its customers identify when and how product may have been mishandled along the supply chain, or at least to absolve the carrier from blame.

"If there is an issue or a claim or if they are telling us the product was at the wrong temperature, we can just download (a report) and fire it off to them to show them we had the reefer set at the proper temperatures," Langevin said.

Ram Berniker, owner of Bel Refrigerated Transport, which runs 18 trucks and 26 refrigerated trailers primarily

serving the Ontario market, uses Orbcomm's StarTrak reefer monitoring system for the same reasons. It protects his customers from being wrongly blamed for product spoilage and it also absolves his company, when the product was properly delivered. In one instance, a customer's customer moved from one warehouse to another and afterwards claimed that product was spoiled when it was delivered to the first warehouse.

"They came back and claimed the product was delivered out of temperature and the product was compromised," Berniker recalled. Even though the complaint was issued eight months after the delivery, "We provided proof of what the temperature was and what we delivered and the claim went away."

Berniker can view six months' worth of data on his computer and can ask StarTrak to go back as far as two years. The program is customizable, so Berniker can determine when he'd like to receive alerts. "You can have notifications for everything, but at that point the deluge of data is going to be overwhelming," he said. Berniker receive alerts for things such as low oil levels and overheated reefer units.

Andy Ellison, logistics manager with Cold Star Freight Systems, which delivers food from the Lower Mainland in B.C. to Vancouver Island, said his company tracks product temperature while in-transit, including when the trucks are aboard the ferries.

"B.C. Ferries has its own internal procedures, which dictate that we have to turn our refrigeration units off while on the ferries," he said. "It has always created a few challenges, especially on highly temperature-sensitive product. We do a lot of conveyance testing, where we will seal up the conveyance – an empty unit – turn all the refrigeration units off and see how much the temperature drops in a very specific period of time, so we know how many degrees we lose over a period of time."

It's not uncommon for Cold Star drivers to turn the reefers off as they roll onto the ferry and then power them back up as they're rolling off, Ellison noted.

Cold Star uses Thermo King's Wintrac reefer tracking software and Telus' Fleet Complete for tracking and monitoring of cargo temperatures.

Also, each unit is equipped with temperature probes drivers are required to use when picking up a load to ensure the integrity of the product that's being picked up for delivery.

"The most important thing to start with, at the time the product is picked up, is that it's at the correct temperature," Ellison explained. "We have a variety of different procedures in place, starting at the dock level. At dock level, drivers are checking the temperatures to ensure they're within the correct specifications."

When food becomes spoiled due to being stored at the incorrect temperature, it's usually because it was not properly stored by the receiver, Ellison noted. To reduce these incidents, Cold Star

drivers offer to deliver the product right to the appropriate cooler.

"Our drivers are instructed that just leaving it on the dock, that's not the end of our job," Ellison said. "When they get to the customer, the question is asked 'Is there a cooler you'd like me to put this in?' Some consignees will say 'No, we'll take it from here,' but the question is still asked. It's not just a matter of dropping it on the dock and walking away because as everybody knows, things get forgotten. That skid could be sitting out there for a couple of hours."

Cold Star is diligent about maintaining its refrigeration units and has a refrigeration technician that's constantly inspecting and maintaining equipment and is on-call 24/7. The refrigeration units are maintained every six months and new trailers are ordered regularly.

"We are constantly upgrading our equipment," Ellison said. "We are constantly bringing new trailers in. Every couple of years someone comes up with a better way of keeping a trailer cold. We like to keep on the cutting edge of that."

A trailer's ability to keep in cold air is as essential as a fleet's ability to monitor temperatures. Berniker said he pays as much as twice the amount for a new refrigerated trailer as some of his competitors, even though it costs him interior space.

"I'm not able to put as many pallets on my trailer as my competition is," he said. "Because I have so much insulation

I don't have the interior width to put 30 pallets in, I can only put in 28. I tell my customers what I sell them is temperature control, not space, and on the hottest day of the year on the shortest trip, this is the only way I know to achieve it."

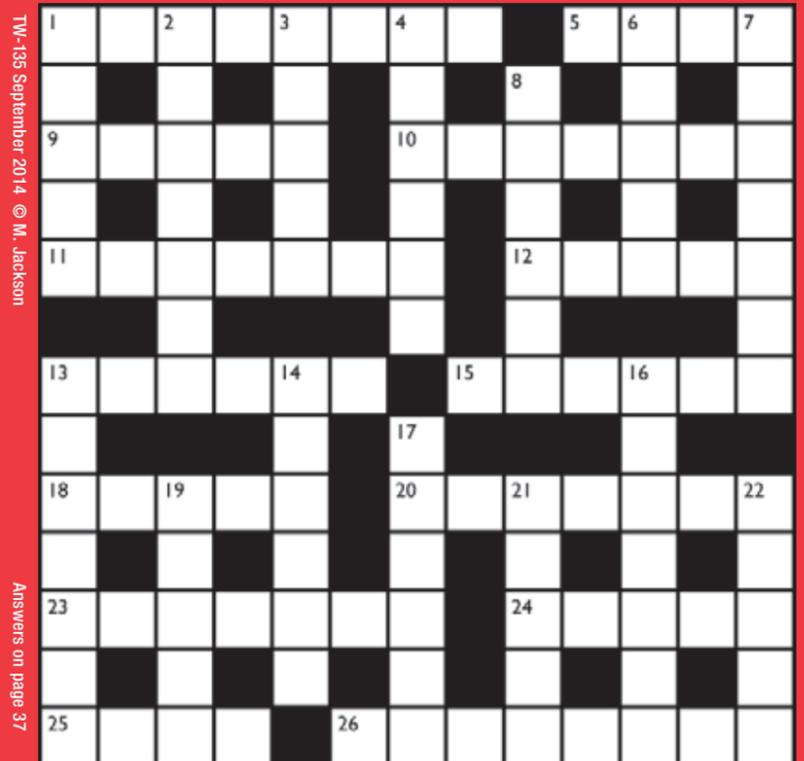
P.A. Langevin is one of the last carriers to haul hanging beef, which requires the refrigeration unit to be constantly on, to maintain continuous airflow around the meat. Langevin said the ability to remotely monitor reefer fault codes gives him peace of mind that problems can be identified and fixed before they result in a downed unit or a lost load.

"Having this tool just allows us to make sure everything is going well with our trailer and to try to catch some of the fault codes, some of the warnings that are coming up, before the unit goes down," Langevin said.

For many transporters of temperature-sensitive food products, the mission to deliver product not only on time, but also at the correct temperature, is personal.

"We're feeding our families, so let's make sure we do everything we can to make sure the product is getting to the end-customer at the right time and the right temperature," Ellison said. "I enjoy the fact I can go into a grocery store and look at the display of chicken breasts and say, 'I know who delivered that, I know when it was delivered and that it was at the correct temperature when it got here.'" **TW**

## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



TW-138 September 2014 © M. Jackson

Answers on page 37

### Across

- 1 Cubed out (4,4)
- 5 Wheel brand
- 9 Roll along in neutral
- 10 Malodorous municipal-truck material
- 11 Evening attractions, for some
- 12 Residual \_\_\_\_, lease-end worth
- 13 Cab's West Coast appendage
- 15 Name on cash-carrying truck
- 18 Radar's laser-based cousin
- 20 Cold-cargo carriers
- 23 '90s Ford Class 8 model
- 24 Truck-shopper's concern
- 25 It's right on the map
- 26 Rubberneckers in rental cars

### Down

- 1 S. Dakota's "Great \_\_\_\_, Great Places" tags
- 2 Teen in driving-school car
- 3 Canadian diesel-pump unit
- 4 Former flat-front Freightliner
- 6 Aptly named rent-a-truck (1,4)
- 7 Mack motors
- 8 Big-rig operator
- 13 Odometer information
- 14 Highway-access lane
- 16 Isuzu low-cab-forward line (1,6)
- 17 Western Canada truck show
- 19 Pub projectiles
- 21 Airtronic bunk-heater brand
- 22 Truck buyer's requirements, briefly

# A vision for the future

Continued from page 1

in keeping the industry vibrant you do need new blood, new people coming in from the outside with different ideas.

*Shaw:* There are two ways into the industry - through family connection and simply finding your way into it. We are trying to make it a bit more of a career path and expose children and young adults to the industry and what a career in it entails. There are three distinct employment categories: truck driver, maintenance, and everything else, such as accounting, marketing, operations, pricing, IT and a whole host of other areas about which we are trying to create awareness and open people up to so that if you are going to go to Red River

College and become an accountant, why not consider the trucking industry?

Understand how big it is, how diverse it is and what kind of opportunities it holds for young people.

*TW:* I'm sure if your career with MTA is going to be as long as Bob's, at some point you are going to run into some tough issues. Is there a political or business leader who has inspired you and whose actions you try to emulate, particularly during tough times?

*Shaw:* I've had the real pleasure of getting to know Bob over the past three years and watching him interact with people on multiple levels from the premier to a whole host of other stakehold-

ers, and that has been a fantastic education. Over the past three years, Bob and I worked very closely and he has been very generous in affording me opportunities to learn.

I've recognized his success and worked very hard to capture those elements which I identified in him and thought would work with me. Outside of Bob, getting to work with our board and our executive and watching these people in action, seeing how they approach situations, the questions they ask, how they reflect on situations before they take action, has been invaluable. I've learned more in the past three years probably than in the previous 16 years of my career, which is saying a lot because I did

learn a lot in those initial 16 years.

*TW:* In your previous role with the MTA as general manager, you managed the association's efforts on several industry issues and developed position papers. What would be the most important issues you've worked on?

*Shaw:* The biggest issue recently was the T-plate issue. We've got different ways of licensing trucks in Manitoba, one of which is a T-plate. It's a bit of a unique animal in that it's a limited cost licence for a limited operating area. Just recently, I was up in The Pas and the nature of the work the gentlemen I was visiting do was such that they had registered for T-plates.

For many years the Ministry of Transportation had been advocating that T-plates should be preserved but also should be subject to the National Safety Code, which they previously weren't.

The province had indicated they were willing to make that change, which was fantastic but as things went through the machine of government it came out the other end with the suggestion not to amend the Highway Traffic Act but rather to remove T-plates as a licensing option, which would have seemed a simple solution bureaucratically but it would have meant people in the industry would have had to register their trucks facing 300% licensing fee increases, costing them thousands of dollars per year and our industry millions of dollars per year. We fought long and hard, and successfully on that issue.

*TW:* When you look at the next few years, are there any legislative issues percolating right now that you think will be grabbing your attention in the future?

*Shaw:* We have a whole host of infrastructure and transportation issues. We have been advocating for years for a wide-base tire study and we finally have some traction on that. The Periodic Mandatory Vehicle Inspection is on a six-month schedule in Manitoba. We, along with B.C. and the Yukon, are the only jurisdictions in Canada that operate on a six-month schedule as opposed to a 12-month schedule. We've asked for a review. Manitoba regulators are regulating Manitoba companies to a different standard and it is creating a competitive disadvantage for our members. We believe we will be successful on that front and that will be very meaningful to our members because it will bring them on par with their counterparts in other jurisdictions and be a significant cost savings and create efficiencies with equipment by not having it tied up in the shop twice a year.

*TW:* What challenges do you see your membership facing in the years ahead and how do you see the MTA evolving to help them address those challenges?

*Shaw:* We are seeing constant challenges in attracting workers, which is by no means a challenge that is unique to Manitoba carriers. Besides drivers, there is a shortage of skilled technicians. In my years here I've seen growing recognition that we need to do a better job of promoting who we are and what we do and the value we create to the economy.

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Terry Shaw

There has also been a greater push and interest in education, such as mandatory minimum driver training. We are involved in some projects that move beyond the pure regulatory training, such as hours of service, and try to create tools and draw connections between essential skills and safety in trucking. We have an English-at-work program we are working with the province to create because of the demographics of some our driver pools in Manitoba. So we are seeing a whole host of educational opportunities and we are trying to package those for our members in ways that work for them.

The traditional method of bringing employees to a classroom still works and it is something we offer but education needs to be quicker and more accessible. People in The Pas have the same educational needs and wants as people in Winnipeg but the reality is they are not likely going to come to Winnipeg to get that education. So we are working on remote options and Web-based options. We are also seeing in Manitoba some Workers Compensation Board education concerns. We are working on creating tools through the creation of an industry specific safety association, to leverage best practices to raise the level of safety and also, for those employing best practices, to receive some recognition for doing so. TW

## Manitoba golf tourney raises money for sick kids

WINNIPEG, Man. – At the eighth annual Manitoba Truckers Going The Distance golf tournament, the province's trucking community raised more than \$30,000 for the Children's Wish Foundation.

The event was hosted by Beaver Truck Centre and was put on to raise funds for the charity that grants wishes to special children.

"This was a wildly successful event," said Barry Searcy, president of Beaver Truck Centre. "We've been doing this for eight years now and this was one of our best years. We've committed all funds raised through the golf tournament to the Children's Wish Foundation for the last two years and have raised approximately \$55,000 on behalf of the kids."

The event, which was sold out, saw 144 golfers from Manitoba's trucking industry at Glendale Golf and Country Club.

It is estimated that between 55 and 65 children have their wishes granted through the charity every year. TW

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# Smart social media strategies are key

**W**e live and work in an increasingly connected world, where employees and customers alike can easily share a wealth of information. A recent survey by Media Technology Monitor found that 71% of Internet users are now active on social media, and the interest in platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter continues to grow. This is all a good thing – as long as the online conversations are managed against the backdrop of an effective social media strategy.

Any corporate strategy designed to manage such messages begins with a clear understanding of how different social media platforms are used. LinkedIn, for example, gives business professionals a place to share everything from contact details to virtual resumes and recommendations. Facebook, which according to Media Technology Monitor reaches a whopping 93% of Canada's social media users, tends to be a stronger platform for personal and lifestyle-related posts. Twitter's 140-character bites of information offer a quick way to share news and engage in related conversations.

Each can be used by a fleet in a different way. Sales teams may use LinkedIn to build business connections, while employees throughout the fleet can participate in designed discussion groups. Facebook gives otherwise isolated drivers a chance to share pictures and updates with co-workers, family and friends. Twitter might be used to spread safety-related messages and the positive results from a roadside inspection blitz, all helping to reinforce the company's commitment to a professional workplace.

There is no shortage of good news to share. These platforms offer a place to welcome new customers, acknowledge drivers who reach milestones such as one million safe kilometres, or simply announce the newest members of a team. In fact, every positive message can be liked or shared, to help expand the audience.

Of course, the conversations are a two-way street. Not every posted comment or bit of news will be positive. But a formal policy and strategy will turn these situations into a learning experience, and even enhance the company's image in the process.

A formal social media policy serves to remind employees that they are representing the company brand whenever they post information about a fleet – even on a personal account. It stresses an employee's role as a business ambassador and how every post can reach a wide audience, making it important to remain factual and respectful of others.

After all, a negative post about the fleet could affect everything from recruiting efforts to sales. Simply encouraging workers to pause and think about the broader impact before posting any details can help to avoid many common pitfalls.

Formal policies also offer a chance to reinforce that some company information is only meant for internal eyes. They can explore the kind of information peo-



## Ask the Experts

Danielle Pitl & Heather Blackwell

ple can be expected to share, and the details such as a trailer's destination which should remain in house. And they define who is authorized to speak on behalf of the company, or use branding elements such as logos.

Those who are authorized to post information on a company account, mean-

while, can be provided with the information that will ensure posts align with corporate values.

One way to draw the line between personal and corporate opinions is to ensure company email addresses and computers are not used to establish personal social media accounts.

Fleets that take the time to monitor posts about their business also have the chance to monitor employee and customer opinions which might otherwise be hidden or be grumbled around a loading dock.

Facing a customer who has vented about a late delivery or poor service, for example, a fleet can use the same social media platform to respond. People will often remove complaints when a company provides an apology about the negative experience, promises to correct the matter, and then offers to discuss the issue offline.

Drivers can also be approached about

online posts that complain about working conditions, to ensure that the underlying challenges are actually addressed. It is all about making connections, and acting on the lessons that are learned. **TW**

*This month's experts are Danielle Pitl and Heather Blackwell. Danielle is the director, corporate communications for Northbridge Financial Corporation and has been working as a communications professional for more than eight years. Heather has seven years' experience in trucking safety and compliance and now provides support to the Northbridge Insurance risk services team. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a longstanding history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at [www.nbins.com](http://www.nbins.com).*

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# A smooth-cruisin' heavy-hauler

With its new VNX, Volvo set out to bring the comforts and amenities found in its on-highway tractor to the heavy-haul segment. Mission accomplished.

By James Menzies

When you spec' a heavy-haul tractor, some compromise is expected.

Here in Canada, we're allowed to pull some pretty hefty payloads, often over mountainous terrain. To do this we need big noisy engines, stiff

suspensions and nothing less than an 18-speed manual transmission. Or do we?

With its new VNX, Volvo delivers heavy-haul capabilities within a package that features all the comforts and amenities found in its VNL highway tractor. It has created a rugged truck with big-time power that drives as smoothly and quietly as any other VN.

I recently spent a couple hours driving a VNX around southwestern Ontario, pulling a load of Challenger Bulk-supplied trash contained within a seven-axle Titan trailer.

The load grossed 124,278 lbs and stunk to high heavens. But this is heavy-haul – we weren't looking for a load of flowers.

It's true that southern Ontario offers few hills of any significance to truly test the D16 engine. But it does have its share of bumpy, two-lane roads and we spent about half of our drive navigating such roads before venturing through downtown Woodstock and then joining the 401 for some highway cruising.

The VNX is a bona-fide heavy-hauler, not an overspec'd highway tractor. The powertrain features the Volvo D16 engine with 500, 550 or 600 hp and the I-Shift automated manual transmission comes standard. An 18-speed manual is available as well but Jason Spence, marketing product manager, long-haul, said all buyers to date have taken the I-Shift. Not long ago, this would have come as a surprise; early generation AMTs being limited mostly to linehaul applications whether out of necessity or due to perception.

However, the I-Shift has proven to be capable of some fairly robust hauling and across the pond it's routinely found in applications much more severe than we can throw at it here. Consider that Volvo produces a 750-hp engine in Sweden, which can be mated only to the I-Shift, which is used in off-road mining and logging applications. By comparison, our 125,000 lbs of garbage hauled over southern Ontario's flat roads was nothing to sweat.

"The I-Shift is fully capable of this

application," assured Spence as we headed out from Expressway Trucks. "It is set up for 200,000-lb GVW and will go even higher than that, but you need application approval."

This particular VNX was a day cab powered by Volvo's D16 engine, which produced 600 hp and 2,050 lb.-ft. of torque. The I-Shift was a 12-speed Performance version, which allowed me to override its gear selection if so inclined, or shift into Performance mode for some extra oomph when climbing through the lower gears.

Even at 125,000 lbs, I was able to get up to speed quickly thanks to the I-Shift's affinity for skip-shifting. This is important on rural roads as it deters impatient motorists from darting out into oncoming traffic to complete a pass.

The VNX shares the same cab as its on-highway cousin but the truck itself is a true heavy-hauler. It is recommended for applications that will remain on-highway about 95% of the time, but that require the occasional off-road foray, whether it be into a landfill site or the bush.

The VNX marries aspects of the VNL with attributes from Volvo's VHD vocational product. For example, the VNX mirrors the 10-inch ride height found on the VHD and features a heavy-haul bumper with a single tow eye. The steer axle can accommodate wide 445 tires but we were running 385 Michelins. The truck also features a dual steering gear for improved handling and a set-back axle that provides a tight turning radius.

The steering on this truck is exceptional. Even over the bumpier roads we encountered, the harsh inputs from the road were barely felt through the steering wheel. The steering was responsive and comfortable, always.

The VNX also offers an extremely quiet ride, particularly for a day cab. This speaks to a well-designed cab that keeps engine noise and other ambient sounds from invading the driver's workspace. Noise is not only an irritant, it's also fatiguing.

The integration between the D16

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engine and the I-Shift allows for some special features that are fun and useful. The engine brake is quiet enough you can ignore those municipal bylaws prohibiting their use and effective enough to limit wear on the service brakes.

The cruise control also benefits from the integration between engine and transmission.

One of the nice features was to set the highway cruise speed at 100 km/h and the top speed cruise to 108 km/h; this would activate the engine brake automatically when 108 was reached when descending a grade, holding the vehicle within the specified speed window.

With your upper and lower speeds locked in, you can sit back, relax and enjoy the sights.

Visibility out of and around the VNX is excellent, thanks to a short sloped hood and well-placed hood-mounted mirrors. Volvo recently extended the length of its windshield wipers to 24 inches from 22, providing a larger clean view when they're required. The windshield wiper motors were upgraded accordingly as well.

I didn't need windshield wipers on this sunny late-July afternoon. I did, however, appreciate the exterior sun visor, which Volvo has chosen to retain while many other OEMs are eliminating them due to interference with aerodynamics. Spence told me Volvo conducted extensive testing and found its exterior sun visor didn't impact fuel economy, yet actually provided some efficiency benefits.

"The exterior sun visor is functional," Spence explained. "It reduces the solar load into the truck itself, so the air-conditioning doesn't have to work as hard to keep the cab cool."

And of course, it also reduces the glare of the sun. Speaking of sun visors, the internal ones are cleverly designed as well. Two separate visors along the windshield overlap to provide complete coverage. And they don't swing towards the driver - a potential safety hazard - as there are separate visors mounted above the side windows. These are small things that exemplify the attention Volvo affords safety.

The VNX, with heavy load in tow, over rough country roads, drove as smoothly as any highway tractor and much more smoothly than you'd expect from a heavy-hauler. This is partly due to the tandem drive axles: the 46,000 lb-rated RT-46-164EH from Meritor, which was designed for the Canadian market, its rough roads and heavy payloads, and the 46,000-lb Neway ADZ-246 rear suspension. The front axle was Volvo's own VF20 rated at 16,000 lbs.

As in the VN, the driver display provides real-time driver performance and coaching info. Dollar signs indicate how well the driver is remaining within the engine's sweet spot. This can be set up to reward efficient driving, for example, by providing drivers with extra speed, which seems counterproductive, like rewarding good behaviour in prison by giving the prisoner the keys to the bank. But nonetheless, if you want to do that, you can.

Volvo's driver display is well designed, providing the information

you want and need but not so much that it becomes a distraction.

The Volvo VNX was designed to bring an on-highway driving experience to the heavy-haul segment and it has accomplished that mission. It makes heavy payloads less daunting for drivers with little or no heavy-haul experience. And it's a nice looking truck, too.

Volvo began taking orders for the VNX late last year and so far, not surprisingly, most of the interest in the truck has come from Canada.

The truck I drove was one of several demonstration vehicles that are making the rounds among customers. There are many heavy-haul applications within Canada that are well suited to the VNX.

In the oilpatch and the quarry, the landfill and the bush, the KWs and Petes may have to make some room for a new heavyweight contender. **TW**

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## How Freightliner conquered the vocational truck market

By James Menzies

**NAPA VALLEY, Calif.** – The medium-duty and vocational truck markets can no longer be thought of as side businesses to Freightliner, executives declared while providing an update on their vocational strategy initiated five years ago.

When Freightliner set out to become the vocational truck segment leader, it did so from second position, but well behind Navistar International. A well-executed strategy by Freightliner, coupled with Navistar's emissions-related struggles, have enabled the company to achieve its goal ahead of schedule. Year-to-date, Freightliner now leads the market share race in all six sub-segments that comprise the vocational truck market (specialized hauling, utility, food and beverage, government, construction and refuse), executives said, citing Polk data.

"When we pitched this (strategy) internally, Navistar had the lead position in every one of what we call the six sub-segments of vocational," said David Hames, general manager, marketing and strategy with Daimler Trucks North America. "Our goal was to eventually supplant Navistar, or whoever was in that lead position, by 2015. This is the first time we've been able to get to that lead position across the board."

Freightliner's goal is to control 32% of the vocational truck market this year and it presently sits about one point

shy of that mark. The company now considers the vocational market part of its core business and not a secondary business unit, Hames said.

"We can't look at medium-duty as a secondary business. We can't look at vocational as a side business. Medium-duty and vocational is not something that is a side business for us anymore," he said. "That was a major accomplishment that came out of this five-year vocational strategy – to become a more well-rounded, diversified truck manufacturer."

To put into context how important this market is to Freightliner, Hames showed a chart that indicated Freightliner sells more M2 Business Class and SD vocational trucks than the total production of most other OEMs; never mind on-highway tractors where it's also the current leader in market share.

Its US/Canada Class 6/7 vocational market share is 35.1% year-to-date, up from 14.6% when it launched its vocational strategy in 2009. Including Class 8, Freightliner holds 30.8% of the market, up from 16.8% in 2009.

Richard Saward, general manager, vocational sales with Freightliner, admitted it hasn't been easy. To become a vocational truck leader, the company has had to step outside its comfort zone and take on special projects that in the past would have been easy to turn down.

"We looked to the top of the hill at the market share leader, who was 25

points in market share ahead of us, and said, 'We've got to do some things, get serious about it and commit to get that stuff done,'" Saward recalled. It took some courage, during a depressed market in 2009, to go to senior management and ask for a significant investment in a market segment that then only represented about 20,000 units (or 42,000 units today, now that the market has recovered).

"We asked for a boatload of money and said, 'If you do this, we promise you we'll get some rewards out there,'" Saward said.

Money in hand, the company consulted with its dealer network to ensure they were on-board with the plan. There were some initial concerns that dealers might be complacent in being an on-highway leader and disinterested in pursuing what is a very different market. However, those concerns were quickly put to rest when the dealers that were consulted said they were all-in on vocational.

The SD line of trucks brought Freightliner the solid, rugged, versatile product platform it needed to pursue the vocational market. However, Saward said it was daunting to say 'yes' to customers who brought forth some unorthodox requests.

"We were challenging ourselves to do some uncomfortable builds," he said. "When you have a 60-ton crane and a boom that's 100 feet out in the air and it's unloading materials, there's no

guesswork involved. You better know, you better have tested it and you better know your partner is putting a body on it that the outrigger is going to hold and it's not going to tip over. That's a \$400,000 unit and the truck is maybe \$120,000 of that. They're mounting a piece of equipment that's two to three times the value of our chassis and before they do it they want to make sure they're working with someone who knows what they're doing."

Another element of Freightliner's new focus on the vocational market was to change how its dealers viewed truck equipment manufacturers (TEMs). They began looking at TEMs as partners rather than customers, and working with them more closely to design a chassis that's easy to upfit. This included keeping a clean frame and back of cab and pre-drilling holes so upfitters wouldn't have to. Freightliner also developed a multiplex electrical system that allowed body builders to more easily install their equipment. It also incorporated new programmable features requested by its customers, such as turning down the radio volume when the truck is put into reverse and displaying the side camera view in the driver display when the turn signal on that side of the truck is activated.

While it's pleased with the progress it has made, Freightliner executives hastened to add they're not yet satisfied with their position. "We're not spiking the ball yet," said Hames. They promised another update next year, at which time they're confident they'll be able to discuss further market share gains. **TW**



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## Volvo offering integrated, hardware-free fleet management tools

By James Menzies

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – Volvo Trucks has expanded its partnership with Telogis, to provide integrated fleet management tools with no additional hardware required.

The Built-In Fleet Intelligence system will be available on new Volvo trucks beginning in September, as well as the 60,000 or so vehicles that have been purchased since 2012 with Volvo's Remote Diagnostics capabilities.

The new offering uses the same data-gathering system as Remote Diagnostics, and uses that information to provide fleet management tools such as hours-of-service monitoring, navigation, IFTA reporting, inspection reports and other real-time alerts.

The system also taps into Telogis' community of 130,000 drivers, who can provide real-time road updates. For example, when road construction or a severe storm has taken a route out of service to trucks, a driver can provide an update with the push of a single button and once the truck has stopped, provide further details that will be visible to other drivers.

"We refer to it as social navigation, where other drivers are helping each other," Erin Cave, vice-president, product management with Telogis said during an online press conference.

The system is based on a Bring Your

Own Device (BYOD) model, allowing drivers to use any Android or Apple-enabled tablet or smartphone to access information via a free app. Fleets can access the data in scorecard form and intervene with drivers who are displaying bad habits such as excessive idling, speeding or hard-braking. The system can also generate "vehicle health reports" so that fleet managers can identify inefficiencies and spot trucks or drivers that aren't performing to expectations.

The partnership is unique, because Volvo trucks will come straight from

the factory with the necessary software and can be generating usable data immediately with no associated hardware costs, said Conal Deedy, director, connected vehicle services, with Volvo Trucks.

"Typically, when a truck has to be fitted after delivery, it may take a day or two to install the hardware and get fully functioning," Deedy said. "Now, we can go from the dealership right into service collecting data."

Deedy said Built-In Fleet Intelligence compliments Volvo's Remote Diagnostics program, which monitors

fault codes and advises the operator on the proper course of action before a breakdown occurs. The subscription cost can be incorporated into the financing of the vehicle. The Telogis navigation bundle and fleet management bundle can be ordered separately or together as one package.

Built-In Fleet Intelligence will be rolled out in Canada and the US at the same time in September. Data consumption rates vary depending on the parameters chosen but typically amount to about 1-2 MB per vehicle each month, officials said. **TW**

## Navistar launches used truck reconditioning program

**LISLE, IL.** – Navistar has introduced a new reconditioning program for used trucks, which includes a thorough inspection and two-year warranty.

The company says its new Diamond Renewed program offers the best used truck value in the industry.

Trucks bought through the program will have warranty coverage of up to two years/200,000 miles and will come with Navistar's OnCommand Connection uptime monitoring system.

"Diamond Renewed is an industry game-changer and we are raising the bar by providing our used truck customers with a new truck experience," said David Gerrard, senior vice-president of distribution, Navistar.

"Our comprehensive reconditioning process includes more than 180 vehicle and engine inspection points to drive consistency across the International brand. Our warranty includes coverage of the EGR system and we are

providing the best in uptime support as the only OEM to provide performance and uptime monitoring as standard on our used trucks."

Trucks purchased through the Diamond Renewed program will have undergone full mechanical and aesthetic reconditioning, the company says.

This includes cleaning or replacing diesel particulate filters and diesel oxidation catalysts, exhaust gas recirculation calibration software updates, checking and repairing brake systems, body work repairs, painting the frame and more.

"Diamond Renewed assures every truck meets our stringent reconditioning and quality standards," Gerrard said.

The program covers model year 2010 or newer International ProStar, TranStar and LoneStar trucks powered by the MaxxForce EGR engines with under 400,000 miles and up to 450 hp. **TW**

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# Are you overpaying for vocational trucks? Develop a plan and stick to it

By James Menzies

Vocational truck buyers who don't develop and stick to a purchasing plan, are often left paying more than necessary for an overspec'd dealer stock truck.

Steve Bates, Mack sales manager, Mid-Ontario Truck Centre, said there is money to be saved with good planning. Vocational trucks make up about a quarter of the Class 8 truck population, but the trucks are highly specialized by region.

"You can take a highway tractor and I can sell it in Ontario, Quebec, Vancouver, California - anywhere in North America, it's pretty much the same truck," Bates told an audience at the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Seminar. "The vocational trucks we sell in Ontario are unique to Ontario.

If I have a vocational truck at my dealership and I can't sell it, I can't sell it anywhere else."

To avoid being stuck with inventory they can't move, dealers often spec' trucks that are loaded with features that many vocational truck buyers really don't need.

Bates gave the example of a municipality such as the City of Toronto looking for a tandem roll-off truck rated for 27,000 kgs.

"If you try to find one of these at any dealership, chances are it's spec'd out with 500 hp," Bates said. "Do you need 500 hp? No, you probably need a maximum of 360-375 hp, that's it. Why did the dealer put 500 hp in the truck? Because he's going to go with what he can sell the easiest and not get stuck with, so he goes with the high horse-

power. If you buy that truck, think of the consequences. You just bought a truck that's going to cost you an ad-

ditional \$1,500 per year in fuel for the next 15 years. Let's say that truck had diff-locks on it; most vocational trucks are spec'd with diff-locks. You do not need diff-locks to do what you're going to do in the city of Toronto. Diff-locks are worth \$1,000, so you just overpaid. You bought something you'll never use. I can stand here and name another 30 items on that truck that you're overpaying for."

The key to avoiding this, said Bates, is to develop a purchasing plan and spec' to your own requirements instead of buying hastily and settling for dealer

**'Having a purchasing plan will save you an awful lot of money.'**

Steve Bates

stock units.

"Having a purchasing plan will save you an awful lot of money," he said.

Bates said customers should strive for standardization within their fleet so the trucks are easier to service and maintain.

"Standardization should be a goal. In a fleet, how many brands of trucks can your mechanics work on? How many different engines? Let alone types of transmissions, rear ends and so on," he said.

Fleets should also plan for obsolescence, noted Bates, and retire older vehicles before they break down and require a replacement unit to be bought off the lot.

"If you wait for an engine failure, now it's a panic buy situation and you're looking for another truck on a dealer lot," Bates said. "Try to plan ahead."

This extends to the body as well; if possible, try to plan so that the truck and body will expire around the same time.

"I see people overbuy trucks and put a little body on it," Bates said. "When you buy a truck with a body on it, you want to plan out so that the two are going to become obsolete at approximately the same time. There's very little divorce that goes on with a truck and body - they usually stay together for life."

Because some vocational trucks, such as cement mixers, are often kept in service for 18-24 years, a bad buying decision can have lingering repercussions.

"If you make a bad decision or purchase the wrong truck up front, that's a long time to own that bad decision," Bates said.

In Ontario, vocational truck operators should also be aware that the Safe, Productive, Infrastructure-Friendly (SPIF) regulations will be fully in place by Dec. 31, 2020, when the grandfather period for existing trucks comes to an end.

This means mixers built after 2002 and other vocational truck types built after 2007 will have to comply with SPIF, or be saddled with weight penalties of 5,100 kgs. Because of the long life-cycles of these types of trucks, Bates said fleets should be planning now for the conclusion of the grandfather period.

"It's coming sooner than you think," he warned. "These trucks will have to be modified or replaced. There are a lot of tri-axle roll-off trucks on the road that are going to be affected." **TW**



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## From uncertainty to prosperity: Cummins engine plant turns 40

By James Menzies

JAMESTOWN, N. Y. – Cummins in early August celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Jamestown Engine Plant, which produces heavy-duty truck engines for the North American market.

The milestone stirred strong emotions among those with ties to the plant, since just 10 years ago the future of the facility was very much in doubt. Cummins was struggling with excess engine-building capacity in 2002 and needed to consolidate production in either Columbus, Ind. or in Jamestown. With Columbus serving as the corporate headquarters for Cummins as well as its founding location, a betting man may have written off the Jamestown plant.

However the company decided to consolidate production in Jamestown, N.Y., which during speeches Aug. 8, executives past and present said has turned out to be the correct decision.

“At the time, there were a few critics both inside Cummins and outside Cummins,” recalled Dana Vogt, who served as plant manager from 2003 to 2007. “But we really nailed it and we blew those critics away and really have confirmed this was the right decision for Cummins.”

(The Columbus plant now houses production of the ISV5.0 engine Cummins introduced last year).

Among those who cast a vote for Jamestown was Jim Kelly, who was plant manager from 1989 to 1992 and the president of Cummins’ engine business from 2005-2010. When Kelly oversaw production in Jamestown, it was churning out about 65 engines a day, four days a week. Today, it produces 400 engines per day.

“There were many of us who didn’t think the plant would ever see its 40th anniversary,” Kelly admitted. “I’m delighted to be here and be a part of that. We persevered.”

Kelly, now retired, said the attribute that makes the Jamestown plant special is its “can-do” attitude.

Ignacio Garcia served as plant manager from 1998-2003, during the time when speculation of the plant’s closure was omnipresent.

“When I was here, there were a lot of times we were really concerned about the future of heavy-duty engines for the company,” he said. Garcia credited the introduction of the ISX engine platform and the company’s decision to move production to Jamestown as the key de-

isions that have resulted in the company’s turnaround.

Garcia said the move to Jamestown occurred over the Christmas holidays, with 90 trailers of equipment being relocated and many employees working through the holidays to ensure production was ready to ramp up in January 2003.

Dave Crompton, current president of Cummins engine business, noted the move to Jamestown “wasn’t a vote against where we came from; it was vote for the future and where we could go.”

Crompton pointed out that since the plant’s opening in 1974, 8,500 inches of snow has fallen on Jamestown but the plant has not shut down for a single snow day. About 40 trailers full of Cummins engines leave the plant each day, destined for truck plants across North America.

The Jamestown plant produced its 1.5 millionth engine in 2013 and today employs about 1,500 people.

“The Jamestown Engine Plant plays a critical role in our company’s ability to produce a broad range of diesel and natural gas engines for different customers around the world,” said Crompton. “This anniversary is a testament to our more than 1,500 employees at JEP who produce reliable, clean and fuel-efficient engines that enable our customers to be successful in all of the markets they operate.”

In addition to the ISX, the Jamestown plant also builds the ISM, which is exported to Mexico, as well as the Cummins Westport ISX12 G natural gas engine.

On Saturday, members of the community and employees’ families were invited to tour the plant, which is the region’s biggest private employer and the largest contributor to the local United Way. Employees there are allowed to work at least four hours per year on public service projects while on the clock.

“We take Cummins commitment to community service and improving the communities in which we live very seriously,” said Mike Abbate, JEP plant manager. “I’m tremendously proud of what our employees are doing inside and out of our plant to make western New York a better place to live. This anniversary is a great time to celebrate and salute their many contributions to our company and the community. We owe gratitude to our former and current employees, who have been and continue to be the reason why we are a successful company.” **TW**



Cummins Jamestown Engine Plant is celebrating its 40th year in business.

## Freightliner looks to limit downtime to three days in the shop, max

NAPA VALLEY, Calif. – Freightliner has set an internal goal to limit the downtime of its vehicles to no more than three days, for even major repairs. Richard Howard, the company’s newly appointed senior vice-president of sales and marketing, revealed the plan during a press event.

“We have set a key aspiration for us,” he said. “The maximum time a truck should be in the shop is three days, as a maximum. We don’t want any of our customers’ trucks being in the shop longer than three days.”

The company is currently using telematics and its Uptime Pro management program to better monitor the time its customers’ trucks spend in the shop. Daimler plans to use that

data to become more involved in the repair process, ensuring the required parts are readily available and other measures, some of which will be best practices already employed by top dealers.

While it’s still too early in the process to determine how long the average truck spends in the shop, it’s well under three days, Howard indicated. However, he also acknowledged there’s room for improvement.

Freightliner has introduced other measures to improve uptime, including launching Express Assessment, which provides a diagnosis, checks parts availability and produces an estimate within two hours of a service write-up. **TW**



## Need tires that can stand up to demanding applications?

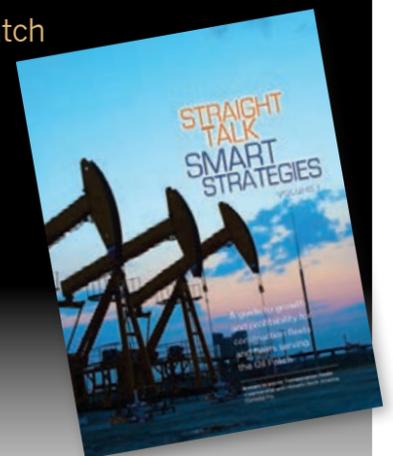
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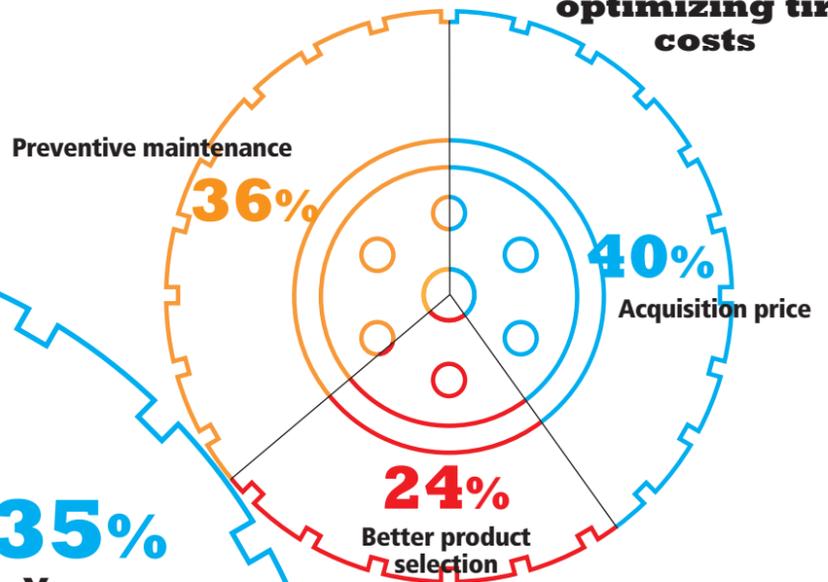


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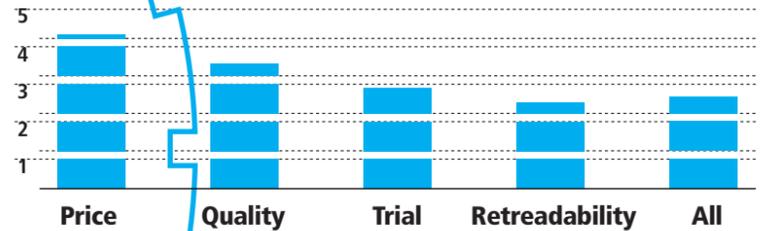
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## WHY WESTERN CANADA O/Os CONSIDER USING OFFSHORE TIRE BRANDS

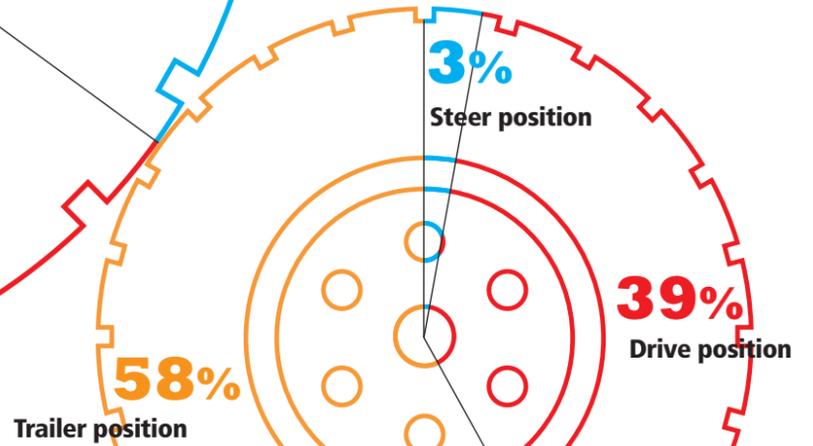
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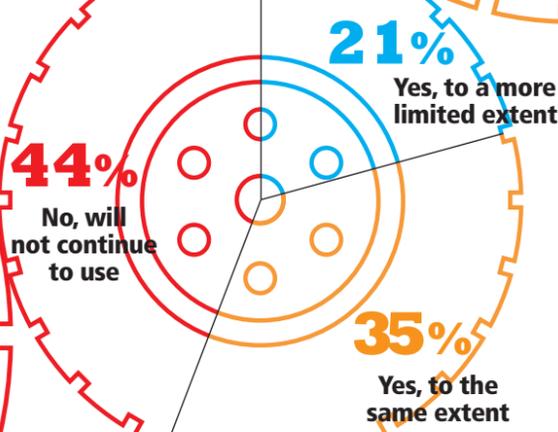
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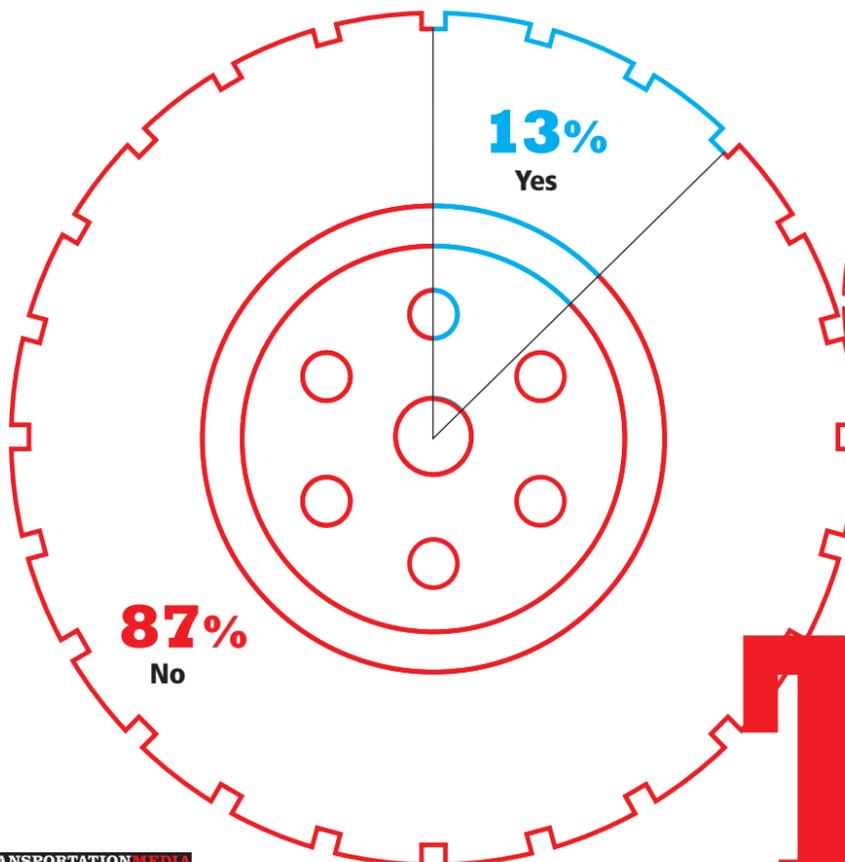
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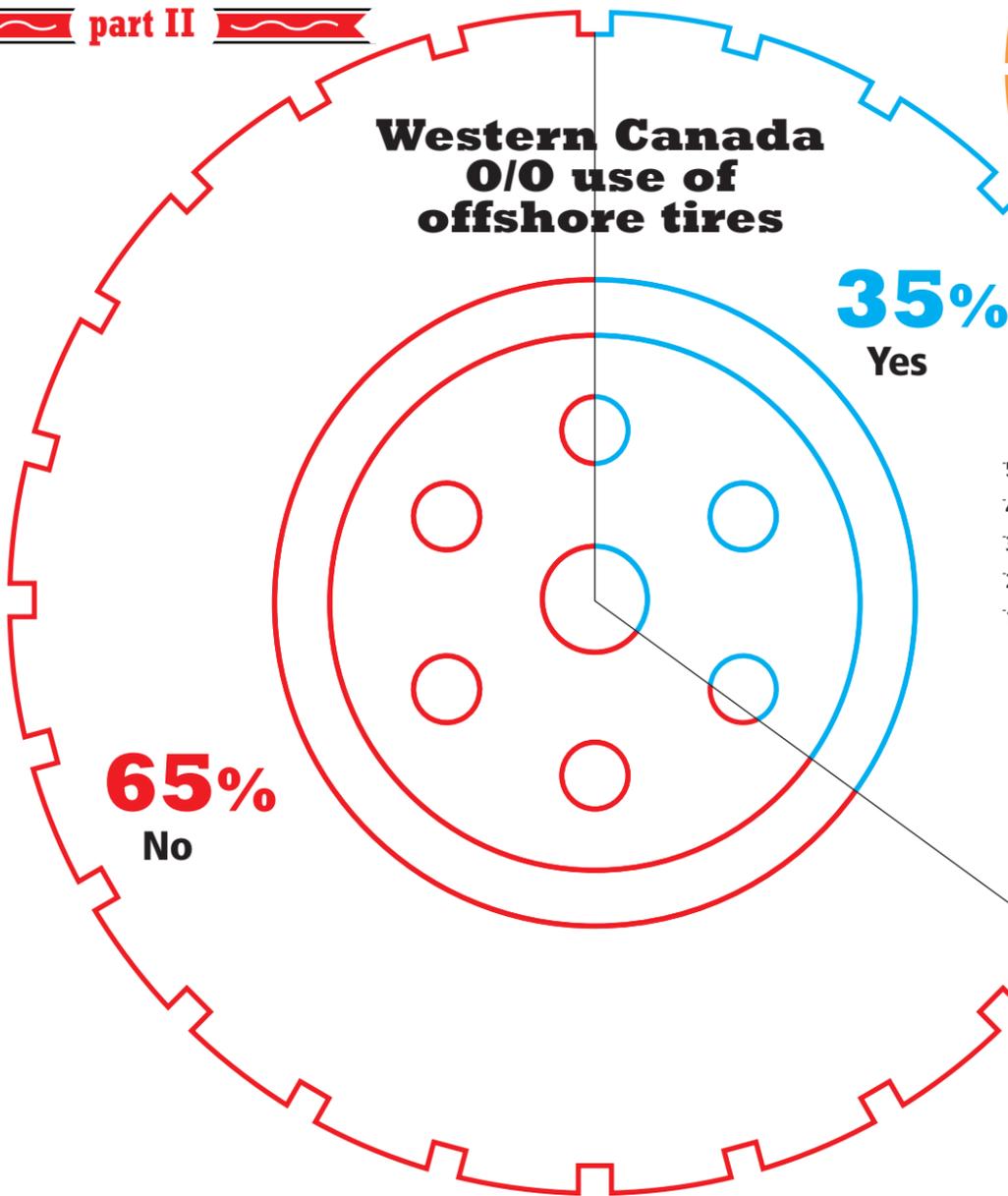
**Western Canada O/O intentions to continue using offshore brands**



**Consider replacing brand name tires with offshore brands**



**Western Canada O/O use of offshore tires**



Tires are one of the largest expenses for owner/operators. During difficult economic times, such as experienced in recent years, our research indicates there is strong temptation to make purchase price the deciding factor when spec'ing tires. In the June issue we examined how Western Canada fleets were responding to the growing avail-

ability of low-cost offshore tire brands, made in countries such as China and India. This issue we examine Western Canada owner/operator attitudes towards these tires. Our research found that more than one third have used offshore tire brands, primarily in the trailer position but increasingly in the drive position as well. **TW**



By Edo Van Belkom

**THE STORY SO FAR...**

*Bud is off for a couple of days, so Mark gets a load from his replacement. It's a sweet load of cowhide into California. Mark is concerned that the trailer he's given to use is not compliant with the SmartWay program that is mandatory in California, but the shipper convinces Mark that the trailer is compliant and everything will be alright.*

*As Mark crosses the border he is questioned about the trailer and SmartWay compliance. Mark is sure the trailer's is alright because 75% of the fleet it is a part of is already compliant. However, the closer he gets to California, the more he's worried that everything is not as easy as he's been told.*

*At his destination, the receiver refuses to accept the load because Mark has no paperwork proving the trailer is part of a SmartWay compliant fleet. He's stranded in California until someone offers him a solution. He's taken to a second warehouse where a group of hardscrabble men look as if they intend to rob him.*

"We understand you have a problem delivering your load," one of the men said, obviously the leader.

"That's right," Mark said. "The receiver won't accept it."

The man nodded. "So, you've got a problem and we've got a solution."

"Which is?"

"We're willing to let you borrow our trailer for a few hours for just \$500."

Mark said nothing for a moment, considering the offer. "What about my return load? I won't be able to pick anything up with my trailer."

"No problem. For another \$500, you can use our trailer to pick up your load. Then you bring it back here, we switch it up for you and you're on your way."

Mark considered the offer further and shook his head in disgust. He had nothing against these men who had obviously recognized a need in the industry and stepped up to fill that need.

No, his problem was with the shipper who sent him into California knowing that the trailer he was pulling was not SmartWay compliant. Sure, the shipper saved \$7,000 or \$8,000 by not retrofitting the trailer, but now he was going to be out \$1,000 just to get a delivery made and a load picked up.

Not only that, but what Mark was considering doing was probably highly illegal and likely the subject of countless fines and suspensions. If the guy had just paid for the upgrades to his trailer, he would have earned his money back in fuel savings in just a couple of years. This way, he was simply going to be out the money while the owner/operator took a huge risk in terms of the ongoing operation of his business.

And it all came down to Mark.

Here he was in another country, thousands of miles from home with a load that was probably worth tens of thousands of dollars. Five hundred bucks to drop off, and another \$500 to pick up was just a fraction of the total value of the loads. So, even though it turned Mark's stomach to do it, the deal actually made good business sense.

"Okay," Mark said, "But your trailer gets hooked up to my truck before we switch the load."

The leader of the men nodded his head while the rest of them just smiled.

"And if anything goes wrong, or if you guys try to make off with my trailer...or my load, I won't hesitate to call the police."

The leader sneered at Mark, obviously not too happy to have the police mentioned as part of the deal. The other men looked at him with equally derisive glares. "If we cheat you, or screw you over, you do whatever you think you have to do to make it right, okay?"

The man's answer disarmed Mark. It wasn't the response he was expecting. This offer seemed too good to be true. "And the paperwork's got to be right," he said.

Everyone in the warehouse except for Mark burst into laughter.

"What is it?" Mark asked.



# Mark learns the SmartWay

PART 4

"We can give you any kind of paperwork you want. If you want good paperwork that says the load is being delivered by Mickey Mouse, we can do that for you." More laughter.

Mark suddenly felt small and out of his league.

"Do you think this is the first time we've ever done this?"

Mark knew the answer, but said nothing.

"Why would we spoil a sweet operation like this by stealing a trailer we can't even use in this state?"

That was a good point, Mark had to admit.

"Now hurry up and make your delivery. We've got another trailer coming in here in an hour."

Before Mark made his delivery, he stopped at a bank machine and withdrew money from his account, then got an advance on his credit card. Then with \$1,000 cash in his pocket, he continued on to the warehouse he'd attended just a few hours before. Loopy Ears recognized Mark and was happy to have the load delivered, but avoided any questions about how he'd managed to get his load onto a SmartWay certified trailer. Without any small talk, Mark was on his way in minutes and was able to pick up his return load without delay. Less than an hour later he was back at the warehouse getting the return load placed into his trailer. Once the money changed hands, Mark was on his way.

He waited until he was out of California without incident before making a phone call to the shipper in Calgary. The man sounded a bit surprised to hear that Mark had already dropped off his load and was on his way back with another, but he was

absolutely taken aback at the suggestion that he now owed Mark an additional \$1,000 for the round-trip on top of his regular fees.

"Why would I pay you that?" he asked. "I sent you down with a good trailer."

Mark just shook his head. "You and I both know you haven't got a clue about how the SmartWay program works. You sent me to California with a bum trailer hoping I'd get lucky. Things didn't work out that way and now you're going to pay."

"If you couldn't get that load delivered, that's your problem. I'm not going to pay you a dime extra."

Mark sighed, then said. "You are going to pay and I'll tell you why. If you don't, I'll just pull over onto the shoulder somewhere in Washington State, unhook the trailer and bobtail it back to Canada."

"I'll sue you."

"You can bring all the civil action you want against me, but we both know that it'll take years and tens of thousands of dollars to get anything out of me. You could also make an insurance claim and recoup your losses that way, but I've got paperwork that says the load was picked up by Carlito Trucking and you'll have a hard time convincing anyone that the load was ever in your possession."

"Are you threatening me?"

"Yes, I am. You sent me to California thinking I was too stupid to know better about SmartWay certifications. Well, you were only partly right. I was stupid enough to make the delivery for you, but not stupid enough to let you get away with it. I'll just say it one last time...wire \$1,000 to my dispatcher or this trailer gets left on the side of the road."

"You're bluffing."

The accusation brought a smile to Mark's face. "If you think so, call around and ask anyone who knows me if I'm the kind of person who would bluff about something like this." He paused a moment, gearing down. "Ah, here's a good spot."

He pulled onto the shoulder and hung up the phone. It took a few hours, but Mark's phone eventually rang. It was Bud. "Hey Mark, why did we just get \$1,000 credited to your account?"

Mark smiled, started up Mother Load and got back on his way. **TW**

**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 eco ENERGY for Fleets (Fleet Smart) at [fleetsmart.gc.ca](http://fleetsmart.gc.ca).**



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<b>Child Find-Missing Kids</b> 35	<b>Husky Oil Marketing</b> 12	<b>Truck West-Subscription</b> 35
<b>Crossword Puzzle &amp; Solution</b> 21,37	<b>Imperial Oil</b> 19	<b>Trucking Safety Council B.C.</b> 11
<b>Cummins Inc.</b> 8	<b>Kindersley Transport</b> 28,29	<b>Truxpo 2014</b> 18
<b>David Benjatschek - Wowtrucks</b> 37	<b>Kingpin Trailer/Hyundai Translead</b> 13	<b>UFA</b> 17
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# JIM'S BRAYINGS



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

I guess it's a law of nature – or at least of government – that the good summer weather brings road construction. So when we finally have road conditions conducive to driving, we have roadblocks and slowdowns that ensure we can't make good time.

I don't know what the solution is other than twinning every major road so there's always a couple of lanes getting through, an expensive and rather "pie in the sky" answer that would also destroy some really great driving roads for those who enjoy a romp through the twisty bits. It's just frustrating having wonderfully clean and clear roads stretching ahead of you while you're parked in a long line of barely-moving traffic!

This undoubtedly annoys truckers more than writers, but I run into it myself nearly every time I hit the highway. Heck, coming back from a wedding in Edmonton on a recent Sunday morning, traffic on Calgary Trail was backed up for kilometres – despite the signs saying the construction would finish at 8 a.m. (it was noonish at the time). Naturally, the workers were all standing around together, solving the world's problems, while we crawled past.

Maybe some of the frustration could be eased if at least the workers would subscribe to some "truth in advertising." I mean, who hasn't had to slow for a supposed construction zone only to discover there's no one working, and no evidence beyond some cones on the roadside that anyone will ever be working there? It's inconvenient enough to be caught in a construction zone, let alone to be subjected to ones that for all intents and purposes are imaginary – or at least inactive.

This will all be solved when I'm Emperor, of course, though it's taking longer than I expected to get there.

## News from all over

Jay's Group of Companies held its 23rd Annual Golf Classic for Telemiracle recently, raising a record-setting \$124,906 for the Saskatchewan-based charity. Very nicely done!

Bison Transport's Gary de Vos (an Ontarian, poor fellow) has been awarded Highway Angel Status, thanks to an incident in which he assisted a motorist who had hit a deer on Hwy. 1 east of Winnipeg. The title, granted by the Truckload Carriers Association

(TCA), is presented to truck drivers for the "unusual kindness, courtesy, and courage they have shown others while on the job." Congratulations, Gary, and well done!

And in response to a speed limit increase that was introduced on certain highways in B.C. recently, the British Columbia Trucking Association (BCTA) said it's not likely going to change things for the industry. According to BCTA president and CEO Louise Yako, they surveyed drivers while the province was conducting the speed limit review, and "our members indicated that regardless of what changes might occur in terms of posted speed limits they were very unlikely to change their practices."

Despite my zeal to try the new limits in a high-performance car, the BCTA's reasons sound like common sense ones for the trucking industry. After all, as Yako pointed out, most of the BCTA's members are governing or limiting their speeds in some way already, for a couple of legitimate reasons: safety and to reduce emissions and fuel consumption.

Let's just hope the trucks (and everyone else who chooses not to partake of the new limits) will stay in the right lane and let the speeders by.

## Last call for Truxpo

What's billed as western Canada's largest trucking and logistics show is approaching quickly. Truxpo, held at Abbotsford's Tradex Centre (which, at 1190 Cornell Street, is crawling distance from Abbotsford airport), promises to be (as Ed Sullivan would have noted) a "really big shew" this year. Not only will there be the usual exhibits and booths (drop by the *Truck West* booth and say hello!), but there'll also be a Show & Shine, a Ride & Drive (where you can test drive the newest trucks from top OEMs on-site), as well as the Pacific Heavy Equipment Show on the grounds.

This year, there's also a BCTA conference on the Friday morning, and the organizers have announced that Mike "Pinball" Clemons – legendary Argo and motivational speaker – will be on-hand to give a keynote address. Clemons was the speaker at the AMTA's Banff bash a couple of months ago and he's very much worth hearing (though he apparently doesn't like microphones, so you might have to listen closely or get a seat up front).

Truxpo runs on Sept. 19-20, from noon till 9 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

## Surveying the industry landscape

The Alberta Motor Transport Association wants to hear from you! And so does the rest of the nation! The organization is asking for input from Canadian motor carriers in its quest to help get tractor-trailer drivers classified as skilled workers. And to give that input, they're directing you to an online CTA survey where your opinions will be gathered and collated.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) Wage Survey for Tractor-Trailer Drivers vs. Straight Truck (non-Tractor-Trailer) Drivers looks as if it's meant more for companies than individual drivers, but you can check it out at OTA's Web site: [www.ontruck.org](http://www.ontruck.org).

If you decide to play, you'll find it a quick and relatively painless process.

On a similar vein, Trucking HR Canada is looking for a few good women – to fill out a survey. The study is meant to help the organization raise awareness among women of the various career opportunities in the trucking and freight transportation industry, where they claim female participation (especially behind the wheel) lags the national average. The organization also wants to help raise awareness among employers of recruitment and retention practices they can use to help support the integration of women into the workforce – as well as helping them develop practical tools to "support connecting women with careers in trucking and freight transportation."

You can find a link to the survey, along with its rationale at [www.TruckingHR.com](http://www.TruckingHR.com).

## It's nice to have pull

If you're in Manitoba, the MTA reminds you of the fifth annual Truck Pull in support of the United Way. The event will kick off National Trucking Week in the province by "demonstrating the MB Trucking Industry's commitment to giving back to the communities in which we operate," the MTA said, noting that it's not only a fundraiser but an awareness raiser as well. "The United Way ensures an essential network of programs and services by providing support to nearly 100 agency partners," the MTA explained. "Each plays a vital

role in their overall strategy to ensure lasting, positive change by addressing the underlying causes of our city's most challenging social issues."

The event will run from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sept. 5 at the Polo Park Mall parking lot. Cost to enter is a measly \$500 for a team of 10 people – fifty bucks a head (\$100 if you're two-faced). For more information, visit the MTA at: <http://www.trucking.mb.ca/event/annual-truck-pull-for-united-way/>

Sounds like a real drag, er, race!

## Another convoy for Special Olympics

The MTA is also involved as presenting sponsor for the World's Largest Truck Convoy in support of Special Olympics Manitoba. That'll run Sept. 6, from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. To find out more information or to register for this year's convoy surf by this URL: <http://www.trucking.mb.ca/event/worlds-largest-truck-convoy-for-special-olympics/>. In Alberta, the AMTA's Calgary office will be the marshalling ground for that city's version (there's one in Grande Prairie, too). "Don't miss this fun and important event where participants can proudly show off their rig and help heighten awareness of the trucking industry and its support for Special Olympians," the organization said. For more info: [www.albertatorchrun.ca](http://www.albertatorchrun.ca).

## PIC-ture perfect results

Alberta's Partners in Compliance program is pleased to announce a new member: the Giusti Group of Companies (Giusti Finance). Starting as a custom home builder over 40 years ago in British Columbia, the Giusti group has grown into a multifaceted beast with operations throughout western Canada and has become an industry leader in heavy industrial, commercial and multi-family residential construction.

Headquartered in Calgary, the Giusti Group maintains a fleet of 23 NSC vehicles, including Tractor-Trailers, five ton flat decks and Concrete Pumper Trucks. Congratulations, and well done! **TW**

*That's it for this month. Don't forget to fire me off an e-mail – [jim@transportationmedia.ca](mailto:jim@transportationmedia.ca) – if you know of a person or an event you think needs some publicity. We try to print everything, but we can't print it if you don't send it. So there! See you next month.*

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

# THE MICHELIN® X® LINE™ ENERGY™ TIRES MOVING TOGETHER TOWARDS REAL SAVINGS.



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Did you know that tires are responsible for nearly 30% of vehicle fuel consumption? This is far from negligible. What fuel savings does your company make thanks to your tires? It is difficult to say really. Michelin will allow you to estimate your real potential for savings with the **MICHELIN® X® LINE™ Energy™** tires, which are dedicated to long distance transportation.

Ask your Michelin representative for a bespoke diagnosis or visit [michelintruck.com](http://michelintruck.com).

