

TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989 • December 2013 Volume 24, Issue 12

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trucknews.com



The BCTA recently held a seminar to help fleets better understand cost management.

Photo by WowTrucksCalendar.com

Fighting adversity

Ken Johnson
Trucking survives fire without missing a load

By Jim Bray

LANGLEY, B.C. – For Ken Johnson and his team, the burning question was how to recover after a major explosion and fire destroyed a big part of his operations.

The answer appears to be “very well, thank you.”

It all started last October, when “there was an error made by one of our technicians in the shop,” said Johnson, owner of the eponymous Ken Johnson Trucking company of Langley, B.C. That costly mistake resulted in the shop being a nearly total loss, with smoke and water damage done to the office as well. The accident led to some major scrambling to stay in business – as well as a nearly year-long rebuilding process Johnson said he looks back upon as a major learning experience.

“We realized some of our training may not have been up to snuff,” he told *Truck West*, “and we made expectations that obviously were not good enough.”

Forced to think and act quickly, “We basically just kind of moved up to the Tim

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

Unlock your inner profit

Get to know, and appreciate, cost management

By Lou Smyrlis

SURREY, B.C. – While growing revenues may be the more exciting part of running a transport business, understanding and managing your costs – whether you are a large fleet operator or an owner/operator – can be just as critical to business success.

And cost control can be particularly important where there is a significant degree of competition from other trucking firms, which may be keeping rates in check, according to David Colledge. The president of Colledge Transportation Consulting spoke at BCTA's recent Managing Profitability Conference in Surrey, B.C. and outlined how to get a handle on costs.

The impact of vigilant cost management is directly evident on the bottom line.

“If you can improve your operating margin by just five cents a kilometre and you operate a truck 200,000 kms a year, it adds \$10,000 to your bottom line. And if you operate a fleet of 50 trucks the savings would amount to half a

million a year,” Colledge pointed out.

Truckers have long bemoaned the better than 20% profit margins of the Canadian Class 1 railways, while trucking companies are fortunate to make five to seven cents on the dollar, on average. Colledge, whose transportation costing experience began in the rail sector, used railways as an example of how to do cost management right.

Nothing wrong with learning from the competition.

“The railways have transformed the arcane science of railway costing into something of an art form. They have in place very sophisticated costing frameworks. But it is the way they apply these frameworks not only to manage costs but to make pricing decisions on whether to accept or reject incremental business that I think is the most interesting,” he said. “It was amazing to me the level of detail that was put into their ‘activity based’ costing system. Unit costs were computed to five decimal places.”

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Ex-trucker focuses on recruiting new drivers

By Jim Bray

REGINA, Sask. – You could almost call it “Employees R US.”

Prudhomme International, the Regina-based headhunter for the trucking and other industries, likes to call itself “the employment agency unlike any other,” and it may have the chops to back that up.

The company, which says its philosophy is “to place the right people in the right jobs in the right company,” has more than 10 years experience in recruiting and hiring in the global labour market but, despite that, its principal didn't start out merely wanting to help people match bums with seats. In fact, owner Denis Prudhomme was

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

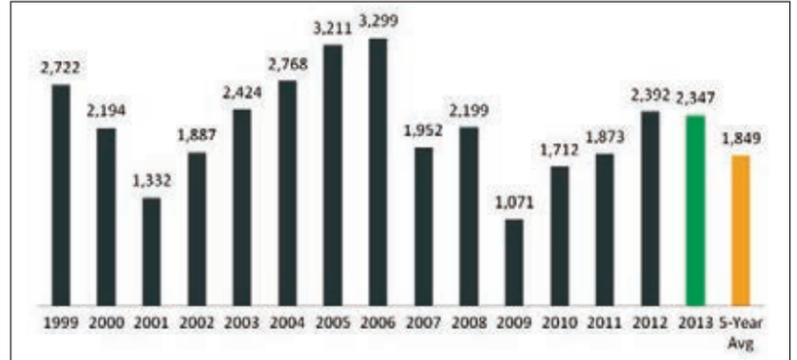
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The 2,347 trucks sold in September were just slightly behind last year's pace. This continues the trend we've seen with Class 8 sales for the first three quarters: good, but not as good as the previous year or on pace with the best years in truck sales. Freightliner, International, Kenworth, and Western Star posted slightly higher figures than the previous year. Going back to 1999, there were only 6 years with better sales results in June. The sales total for the month is also more than 500 above the five-year average.

Monthly Class 8 Sales – Sept 13

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	617	604
International	343	283
Kenworth	417	404
Mack	170	204
Peterbilt	278	384
Volvo	281	312
Western Star	241	201
TOTALS	2347	2392

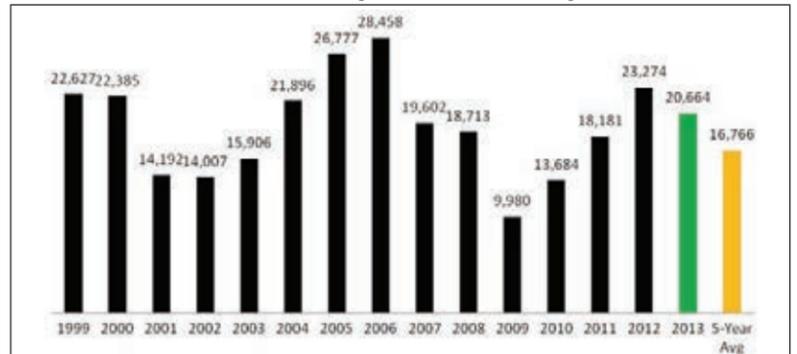
Historical Comparison – Sept 13 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Sept 13) by Province and OEM

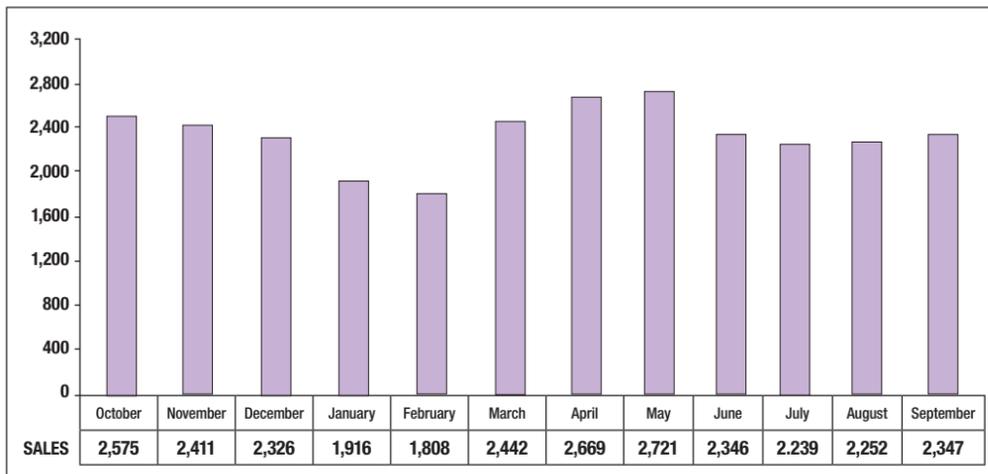
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	442	609	164	290	2,390	873	284	94	21	23	5,190
Kenworth	606	1,331	385	97	623	653	86	0	0	0	3,781
Mack	122	256	150	53	639	291	63	58	0	14	1,646
International	130	521	61	130	1,286	580	93	43	17	27	2,888
Peterbilt	407	980	235	178	459	411	136	48	0	0	2,854
Volvo	280	177	101	158	1,044	587	111	46	0	7	2,511
Western Star	274	561	60	55	344	358	40	79	4	19	1,794
TOTALS	2,261	4,435	1,156	961	6,785	3,753	813	368	42	90	20,664

Historical Comparison – YTD Sept 13



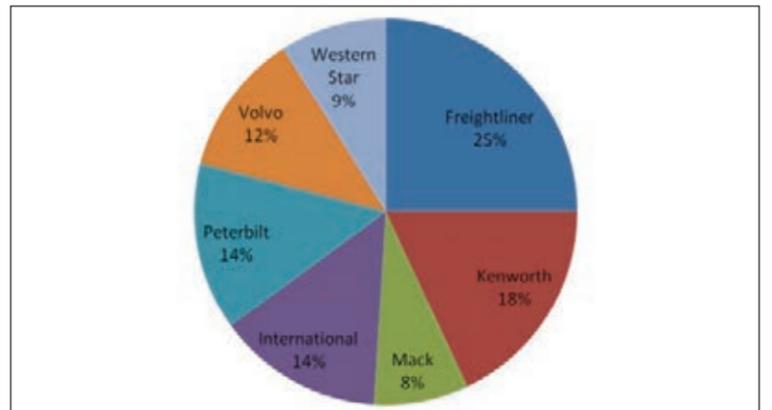
YTD Class 8 sales of 20,664 units places 2013 more than 2,600 trucks behind last year's pace but also more than 3,500 above the five-year average. So far this is the 7th best year in sales going back to 1999 but slippage is occurring. We don't expect a particularly strong second half of the year. Our revised estimate is for Class 8 sales to come in around 28,500 vehicles in 2013.

12-Month Sales Trends



Class 8 sales have come in above 2,000, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years of 2005 to 2007, for seven straight months now. The three-month trend towards increased sales figures month over month came to an end in July but August showed improvement again as did September. The big question was whether sales would hold up over the summer months and they have. Next question now is how they will hold up the final quarter of 2013.

Market Share Class 8 – Sept 13 YTD



Freightliner, last year's Canadian market leader, is solidly in control of the market share lead with a quarter of Canadian Class 8 truck sales. Kenworth finished 2012 in the number two spot for market share and there it still sits with an 18% market share. Navistar International finished the year with 15% market share and is now in a dead heat with Peterbilt with a 14% share of the Canadian Class 8 market. Volvo is the only other OE with a market share above 10%.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Why biodiesel?

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



Ontario is hopping on the biodiesel bandwagon, requiring a 2% blend in on- and off-road diesel by 2014 and ramping up to a 4% blend by 2015. This begs two questions.

The first is, why? Will this industry never get the credit it deserves for reducing its emissions on late-model equipment to near-zero levels? And the second question is, why biodiesel? Are there not more effective and less risky options available? As the Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) has already brought to the province's attention, the trucking industry has other means at its disposal by which to lessen its greenhouse gas emissions, and they are far more effective than mandating biofuel.

Truck manufacturers are committed to significantly improving the fuel economy of the vehicles they produce between 2014 and 2017, by using a combination of currently available and future technologies.

These will include everything from low rolling resistance tires in the early years, to more advanced technologies such as waste heat recovery closer to 2017. The GHG regs which are being enforced by the US and in turn, adopted by Canada, deliver a net benefit to end users

in the form of reduced fuel consumption.

Truckers will burn less fuel and as a result, produce less GHG. It's a win-win situation for the trucking industry and the environment, and should appease legislators – even those who just can't help but to get involved.

Do the lawmakers who support such rules as the one that's being proposed in Ontario even know about how far this industry has gone in recent years to reduce its environmental footprint? Do they know that the latest generation heavy trucks produce virtually no particulate matter or NOx? Do they even care?

What really bothers me about the latest effort to foist biodiesel upon the trucking industry is that this same province does not allow for proven fuel-saving devices such as trailer tails. Many progressive American carriers have deployed trailer tails across their entire trailer fleets.

Here in Ontario, we're told they're too dangerous. Anyone who's seen these devices in person knows you can fold them in with one hand – they don't pose a hazard for traffic.

I've seen flatbed loads of steel coils where the steel hangs off the end of the trailer with little more than a red piece of cloth to warn other motorists of the overhang, yet full-length trailer tails remain illegal here.

How can the province be so slow to approve a safe and proven fuel-saving device such as trailer tails while at the same time forcing upon industry a solution that will have minimal environmental impact and may incur additional costs upon operators?

Biodiesel has been known to gel up in



cold weather and is there any way a 2-4% blend can be introduced without an increase in price? I'm skeptical. If the province really cares about lowering GHG emissions, then there are better ways to go about it. There are other options. Is biodiesel really the best? **TW**

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Happy 30th work anniversary, Kathy!

With this issue we celebrate an important milestone: Associate publisher Kathy Penner's 30th work anniversary.

That's right folks, 30 years. And, yes, she started working for us right out of kindergarten, or so she tells us. Who would doubt her? Who remembers that far back? And last I saw her, she was "taking a break" from the American Trucking Associations conference down in Orlando, Fla. for a midday run under a blistering sun, while supposedly younger folk were complaining of the heat while sitting in an air-conditioned van.

In all seriousness, however, it's that kind of determination over the past 30 years from Kathy that has created the industry's largest Careers section within *Truck News* and *Truck West*.

Trucking is a people-driven industry and it's safe to say the Careers section Kathy has grown and managed so capably over the years has served as the conduit for thousands of successful job hires. Kathy has received a series of promotions within the growing Trucking Group of Transportation Media – which also now includes *Motortruck Fleet Executive*, www.trucknews.com, TMTV, the Surface Transportation Summit, Transportation Media Research, and several newsletters. In her current role as associate pub-

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



lisher, she works in tandem with me to manage all aspects of the business and I can tell you Kathy is the heart and soul of our group. We simply could not have achieved all that we have over the years without her.

She is one of the most determined, capable and hard working people I know. Kathy is also one of the best known faces in the industry, travelling across North America to attend industry events and working tirelessly with industry organizations such as the Toronto Transportation Club and our own annual charity golf tournament.

What makes my new job as publisher a lighter load than would be expected is that Kathy is a shining star on a team of stars. Her 30 years with the Trucking Group is representative of the deep well of experience that pervades every department of the group. Every member of the sales team - Doug Copeland, Don Besler and Brenda Grant - has more than 25 years of industry experience. Combined with Kathy, the sales team has more than 120 years of experience in the industry.

The editorial team, led by James Menzies, one of the most influential

editors in Canada's transportation media, is the most experienced in the industry. The team includes long-time staffers Julia Kuzeljevich and Jim Bray as well as recent hire Daniela Piteo, with more hiring announcements to come. Same goes for our art directors, Carolyn Brimer, Beverley Richards and Roy Gaiot – experience galore.

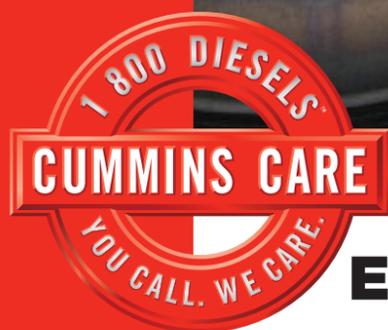
Added to that is the most experienced talent pool of trucking industry writers including former *Truck News* editor John G. Smith, long-time Quebec correspondent Carroll McCormick, on-the-road editor Harry Rudolfs and the most recognized columnists and bloggers in the industry.

In an industry as vibrant and changing as fast as trucking, experiences counts. It takes an experienced team to best integrate all the different media platforms available today and to guide both readers and advertisers through the most effective use of each platform. Whereas others continue to churn through staff in the hopes of finding the right mix, we already know we have a winning formula with the family of staff who have been growing our products for more than three decades now. Kathy's 30th work anniversary is testament to that. **TW**

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Learn from the railways how to boost profits

Continued from page 1

There are several different methodologies which can be used to establish the relationship between costs incurred to provide a transportation service. Colledge went over the most common techniques used by the railways:

Direct analysis: This method is used where the variability of costs is already determined. A unit cost is developed for a certain activity. For example, yard locomotive fuel for switching operations would be determined based on the total yard diesel fuel divided by yard diesel unit miles. In a trucking context, it might be linehaul costs divided by linehaul truck kilometres.

Direct assignment: This method is used for specific cost items where it is implied that the costs are 100% variable. For example, train crew costs that can be developed from crew trip ticket data by train run for specific geographic areas and the application of wage rates from union agreements. For trucking, driver hours can be obtained from logbooks and applying the relevant wage rate per mile or per hour. It is also possible using this method to develop specific costs for linehaul labour and terminal labour that would be applicable to TL and LTL operations.

Regression analysis: This approach is used when the cost variability is unknown. It is applied to multiple years of data to smooth out "lumpy" costs and to determine which costs are variable and which are fixed. An example could be in-house truck maintenance shops or maintenance of terminals. This approach is important when it comes to allocating certain common or overhead costs, such as terminal operating costs.

"In reality, a costing system would be a combination of these three methods," Colledge said.

There are two types of costs, of course, which make up total costs: variable costs and fixed costs.

Variable costs: These vary with changes in traffic volume with a relevant range. They generally include labour costs, fuel and materials. The variability of the costs depends on the time horizon; as the time horizon is extended, more costs tend to become variable.

Fixed costs: These do not change with changes in traffic volume. For the firm as a whole, these costs will continue in the short run even if the firm stops producing. Fixed costs typically include such items as capital costs associated with plant and equipment, administrative salaries, insurance and some taxes.

"The notion of variable and fixed costs is also important when traffic density (or volume) is considered. If the annual traffic volume is low, there is a smaller base over which to spread fixed costs and the average cost per tonne or per unit of cargo is higher," Colledge explained. "This would be important for LTL carriers operating a network of terminals."

Once he provided a thorough explanation of costing techniques and types of cost, Colledge outlined three steps to cost development.

Step 1: Determine the physical re-

source or work units consumed in the shipment of goods from origin to destination. Several factors influence the costs for any particular movement being analyzed, including: route miles; equipment type and ownership; payload and equipment tare weight; average travel speed; wait times and origin/destination to load/unload cargo; as well as waiting time at intermediate transfer points. The payload and tare weight affect fuel consumption rates and fuel costs.

The work units are developed based on the available details of the specific situation as well as accepted industry averages. It is also very important to determine whether there is a return revenue movement. If there is no back-

haul opportunity, the full round-trip cost should be assigned to the headhaul movement.

Step 2: After determining work units, the next step in the costing experience is to apply these output parameters to unit costs. In a truck operation, truck miles would be applied to an average cost per truck mile which could be specific by route. The level of detail can be whatever management deems important and wishes to differentiate. Costs can also be determined for different lines of business, such as general freight, heavy-haul, etc. This is important because different operating divisions involve the use of different types of equipment and would each have somewhat different cost and

competitive conditions at play.

Step 3: There may also be specific miscellaneous and overhead costs to be added. The overall output from the cost mode includes vehicle-based costs such as tractor payments, fuel, tires, maintenance, licences and insurance, driver-related costs and fringe benefits and other costs items such as dispatching, terminal and warehousing costs.

Your costing system, of course, will only be as good as the data fed into it.

"A good costing system depends on having good data," Colledge said. "This is essential to develop accurate costs that can be used by management to make pricing and operational adjustments in response to changing market conditions and opportunities." TW



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Trucking company did what it took to keep wheels rolling

Continued from page 1

Horton's and ran our dispatch for the rest of the day out of there," Johnson said, "and the next morning we brought our motor home in and worked out of it that day."

They also pulled their computers out of the office and had them checked over before distributing them to the staff.

"They worked out of their homes for another week and then we came back in," Johnson said, noting with pride that "the company never missed a load. We were late on about five deliveries, but we never missed a load, never turned down a load."

And since they still had the use of their yard in which to park the equipment, "the drivers would come in, I'd give them their paperwork out of our motor home and they'd take off and do their deliveries," he said. "It never impacted operations from a customer's perspective."

With the staff working out of their re-



Ken Johnson Trucking is still rolling after rebuilding the business following a fire.

spective homes, however, Johnson found himself going back and forth between the temporary headquarters and the various temporary satellite offices.

"We have half a dozen staff members and they were very cooperative," he said, "so it

was actually, as funny as it might sound, a good morale-building exercise. I certainly would not recommend it to anybody else, but for us it turned out to be good. I can't say enough for how all the office staff and the driving staff pulled together, really bend-

ing over backwards to make sure that nothing got dropped, nothing got missed in the weeks following."

Even though it only took a week or so to get back into their office, that wasn't the end of the issues.

"We had no hydro or phone or anything," Johnson said, "so we brought a big diesel generator outside, hooked up a wireless phone system and were back in business."

It took several months before the power was reconnected, he said, "and once that happened and we could get our landline reconnected, then they started reconstruction of the shop."

In the meantime, they rented a couple of bays close to their headquarters to help keep the trucks going. The downside was that "It made it inconvenient because you had to move equipment back and forth," Johnson said. "It's not like you could just pull into the yard and there's a mechanic right there to fix something. So we shuttled stuff back and forth; it became very inefficient because we had only one mechanic with a Class 1 licence, so we had to use drivers."

They persevered, however, and "we're all back under one roof now and everything's back up to 100%."

In some ways, it could be said that the fire was a bit of a blessing in disguise, because it gave them a chance to do some things better.

"The shop was rebuilt totally new," Johnson said, noting there's better lighting now, better doors, better insulation and better heaters. But since the company doesn't own the location, making the upgrades required working with the landlord.

"We did request some changes and the landlord agreed to that," Johnson said, noting that "we also made some changes of our own that we had to pay for directly."

The work included expanding the shop's footprint and making some environmental tweaks.

"We put up a wash bay so we can wash our own trucks properly," Johnson said, "and we got an oily water separator system installed and that should look after our cleaning of the trucks and pressure washing off the frame rails, that kind of stuff." They also have an improved drain system so "it all goes into the environmental control system," he said.

Some of the upgrades were mandated by the building code, such as the sprinkler system and a flammable vapor sensor system. "We also put a covered pre-trip area outside for the drivers," Johnson said, "so instead of having to do the pre-trips out in the yard there's a paved, covered area with lights that they can pull the trucks into and do a better pre-trip. And the actual building itself is much larger and brighter now, so that's a much better working environment for our mechanics."

Rebuilding from the fire also led to some major soul searching. "We realize there were some assumptions made that we can't make when we bring new people on," Johnson said, "so we've tightened up some of our training."

Mop up finished, time to move forward

Johnson's biggest challenge now is "making sure we can attract quality people to our company and to the industry as a whole," and one way he tries to do that is through his work with the B.C. Trucking Association. "A stated goal of our association is to increase the attractiveness of the industry



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to people out there," he said, joining the growing chorus of voices advocating that the industry raise its driving standards. "It may seem counterproductive to make it more difficult to get into the industry, as far as driving standards and such are concerned," he said, "but we feel that if we if we make it more challenging and can get rid of some of the less qualified people out there then there may be other people attracted to it."

He thinks it's necessary to separate out the drivers from the professional drivers. "I don't want to dump on my own industry," Johnson said, "but to me, earning a living in the industry doesn't make you a professional."

The difference between a driver and a professional driver, he said, is "in the manner with which you conduct yourself. There are too many truck drivers out there who have this unprofessional attitude of 'Get of my way, I'm on the road.' It's challenging to get people who go out there realizing that, yes, the general population is playing in our workplace but, as a professional, you're the one who has to make allowances for that."

As for his own backyard, Johnson said "We're very selective in who we hire." He's taken on quite a few people directly out of driving school, but many didn't meet his standards, which meant "We have to let them go or they leave on their own accord," he said. "But we've also had a lot of people who rise up to the challenge of becoming a professional driver and they're with us and doing an excellent job."

Helping these newcomers rise to the challenge are a couple of licensed driving instructors Johnson has on staff.

"We mentor new people with them for many months until we feel they're qualified to be on their own," he said. "My thinking is that we see people coming out of driving schools and no one will hire them; many people say you need five years' experience, but where are these people going to get it?"

That lack of opportunity leads some newly-minted drivers to hire on with what Johnson called "these bottom feeder-type companies," which he said make new drivers "so jaded as to become a poor employee for someone else down the road - or else they just get ticked off and leave the industry altogether. You can't get beaten up and abused and not have it affect you."

To that end, Johnson advised more companies to take people directly out of driving school, mentor them through and give them proper training to "make sure they're out here with a basic safety perspective as the goal - that if it's not safe it doesn't move."

Career move

Johnson came to the trucking industry early. "Back in the early 70s, when I was in high school, my father suggested I get a Class 1 licence because he said it's something you can always fall back on," he said. "So when I got out of high school I got into trucking and never did do anything else."

He started as a company driver, then spent 16 years as an owner/operator before circumstances dictated that he strike out completely on his own. "The company I was working for went bankrupt, so I started up this operation," he said.

Currently, Ken Johnson Trucking has 35 drivers and runs 27 power units and about 65 trailers. No owner/operators are employed in the unionized operation. Though Johnson said they'll pull the occasional van load for certain customers, "basically we are a tanker company; that's all we do and where our expertise is."

They haul across western North Ameri-

ca, though most of their business is in B.C., Alberta, Washington and Oregon. "We're licensed through to Ontario and we run into Ontario a couple times a year and into Manitoba a few times a year and to California once or twice a month," he said, noting they're licensed for 17 states and five provinces.

Despite all the pipeline buzz, Johnson isn't worried about losing business to that technology. "We don't actually haul gas and diesel," he said. "We haul a lot of fracking chemicals for the drilling industry and a lot of lubricating oils and such, so as construction ramps up for the pipelines obviously there'd be a need for the products we transport."

They're also licensed to transport special waste, which turned around and bit them a year ago when a tanker full of flammable waste product exploded and set off the fire.

A fire, it seems, that could actually end up leading to "explosive" growth for Ken Johnson Trucking. **TW**

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Seeking the 'good life.' Is it even attainable in trucking?

Here we are again, another December and another year under our belts. For those of us on the front lines (and that's most of us), it's been a tough year, again. In fact we've had five difficult years in a row. Recent reports in the mainstream media tell us that economies around the world are on the mend but it certainly doesn't feel like any type of economic recovery I've experienced in the past.

Our youth are still struggling to find

Over the road

Al Goodhall



steady work, increasing numbers of people are dependent on food banks, and more folks seem to be only a paycheck or two away from financial dire straits. This is what the talking heads must mean by a "fragile" economic recovery.

Sitting in our den with my two

grandchildren the other night, enjoying the quiet time that comes between bath time and bed time, I was thinking about the fragile state of affairs in the world and I couldn't help but reflect on the quality of life my grandchildren will experience 20 years from now as they move into adulthood. I was reminded that a life well lived is one based in generosity, that to live a good life is to leave the world a better place for future generations, or at least attempt to. There is a richness to a successful life that goes far beyond personal status and material wealth.

My father believed that his eternal life would be lived in the memories of the people he left behind and it was incumbent upon all of us to live a "good life."

The question for many truck drivers today is how do you find the time to live a good life? By that I mean, taking the time to spend with family, friends and community. The majority of our time is spent in the workplace. The trucking industry is no longer the goose that lays the golden egg.

Gone are the days of above-average income for drivers. A full-time truck driving job still provides a good income on which to build the financial foundation we need to live that good life, it just doesn't leave any time for you to live it. So for the last couple of years I've been developing a sense of helplessness.

It's no coincidence that the feeling started to arise shortly after my grandson was born in the summer of 2011 and my thoughts turned to how the world will look 20 years down the road. I'm losing confidence in our ability as individuals to make any kind of lasting positive change in our communities and workplaces.

It's risky to write about this stuff, because it's so touchy-feely. It is easy to come off sounding like a victim or a whiner when we should be pulling up our bootstraps and putting our nose to the grindstone, at least in some peoples' opinion. But the stresses are real.

As drivers we are definitely torn between work and home. So is the answer as simple as, pay us more money so we can spend more time at home? From most of the drivers I've spoken to about this, the answer is a resounding yes. But we're told this is not a realistic solution in today's marketplace. Back to that fragile economy again.

The only steps I see available to drivers to resolve the disparity between time on the job and time at home is to find a job that pays the same money for less work, or reduce your personal and family expenses to the point that enables you to work less and spend more time at home on a reduced income. Or it may be a combination of the two. None of these options are pretty. The final option is to change career paths. That appears to be an option many drivers are looking at.

So this isn't a very good way to wrap up the year, is it? But at the same time, if we don't ask the questions or call a spade a spade, we'll just remain in the same spot spinning our wheels. I don't see the next five years being any better than the last five for individual wage earners.

The global marketplace is still growing and changing as billions of people strive to get to a place we have been enjoying here in the west for many decades. Perhaps we've taken our good fortunes for granted or perhaps we have simply become complacent and allowed ourselves to be led down a path not completely of our choosing.

What I do know is that if we want to live that good life, we need to wake up, participate, and influence change for the better in any way that we can. **TW**

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



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Are 'reality' TV shows helping or hurting trucking's image?

This monthly column is all about opinions. Well actually one opinion, to be more specific, mine. Every now and then I'll throw a few facts in to the mix, but mostly it is my take from behind the wheel on things that are happening in our industry.

Other people have opinions that may or not agree with mine and I respect that; after all, freedom of speech is very important. I have often learned things and changed my own opinions from listening to others. Members of the public also have opinions about our industry. Often they are misinformed opinions because they don't have to deal with the stuff we have to deal with on a daily basis, but they still have their opinions nevertheless. It would be nice if we could educate them and change their opinions to more positive ones, but often we did the things that made them form the negative opinion in the first place, so it is difficult. All it takes is two trucks having a progressive shifting drag race through a stretch of road with stoplights and the people in the following vehicles will form an opinion based on that one experience.

As will those who witness any of the



many other forms of bad behaviour by truck drivers. People who work in offices and factories can also have a negative opinion from late deliveries/pick-ups or goods that get damaged in transit as they can have an effect on their working day.

Then we have people who may have never been inconvenienced by a big truck, their jobs have nothing to do with trucks, but they have watched some of the 'reality' shows on TV, and have formed an opinion about us from that. From what I've seen, it won't be a very good one. I have met a few 'stars' from these shows and having had a good chat with them I'm almost shocked when I see them doing something silly on TV. Take Ice Road Truckers as an example. You have Hugh and Rick clowning around smashing into things and wrecking equipment in every other scene. We all know that it is just Hollywood dramatization, but what does the public think when they see them acting the fool?

As we work in the industry, we know this is not the usual way of doing things, especially out in the bush. Any driver with half a brain cell will know that the truck is the only thing that will keep him or her alive when the weather comes in, so they look after that truck as if their lives depend on it, which they do.

The same applies to the freight they are carrying, your job and the contract between your employer and their customers depends on getting the goods there, on time and in good condition, yet time and time again on this show we see freight smashed to smithereens and a don't care attitude from the drivers.

In the latest season they also have the rivalry between Hugh Roland and his previous employer. I shudder when I see this. It makes it look as though the experienced winter road haulers are a bunch of amateurs that need to be shown how to do it properly by some yahoo from out of town. They have even brought in the 'stars' from the Alaskan episodes to show the local drivers how it is done.

Some of the scenes are so obviously set up it isn't funny, yet Mr. and Mrs. 2.4 Children do not realize this; they are convinced that an experienced heavy-haul driver can get himself stuck at the

bottom of a hill and close the road to everyone, at least until Barbie Doll turns up and joins together a couple hundred feet of straps and chains and drags the stricken truck to safety.

The newest show Highway Through Hell doesn't appear to use such tactics, although the narrator does make a mountain out of a molehill at times, if you'll pardon the pun. Even so, it is an entertaining show. But seeing as the theme is the recovery of trucks that have fallen off the road, it doesn't present the best image for our industry either.

But you know what, I watch every episode. I even PVR them so I don't miss them when I'm out on the road. Ice Road Truckers may one day cause me to blow a gasket. As soon as the introduction comes on, my living room empties. Even the dog retreats to its basket. They know I will be getting bent out of shape at some of the Hollywood madness that I will see on my TV and so do I, but I'm still pleased to see the industry that I am a part of being recognized.

I also realize that they have to Hollywood-ize it. A TV show about a bunch of dedicated professionals going about their business without wrecking things and having confrontations would be about as interesting as watching paint dry. But as they say in politics, there is no such thing as bad publicity. **TW**

A fourth generation trucker and journalist, Mark Lee uses his 25 years of transcontinental trucking to provide an alternative view of life on the road.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TW-126 Dec 2013 M. Jackson

Answers on page 24

Across

- 1 Rush-hour traffic description (4,3,2)
- 6 Tachometer info (1,1,1)
- 8 European big-rig brand
- 9 Obeyed triangular sign
- 10 Home of 407 ETR
- 11 Word on Hawaii's plates
- 12 Name atop Big Stop
- 14 Patronized Penske, perhaps
- 17 '70s Bighorn conventional brand
- 19 Palindromic competition vehicle (4,3)
- 22 Massachusetts "Spirit of _____" plates
- 23 Actor Claude _____, "Movin' On" trucker
- 24 Class A trucker, slangily
- 25 Tractor's diesel containers, often (4,5)

Down

- 1 Change gears
- 2 Exceed safe engine speed
- 3 Wheel-nut cover design
- 4 Trailer type (3,3)
- 5 Goods in excess of Bill of Lading
- 6 Dash option since the '30s
- 7 Dieppe, NB-based carrier
- 12 '90s "Hoosier Hospitality" plates' home
- 13 Isuzu low-cab-forward line (1,6)
- 15 Castrol diesel-engine oil
- 16 Fifth-wheel plate lube
- 18 "Nothing runs like a _____" slogan
- 20 Roll along in neutral
- 21 Succumbs to corrosion

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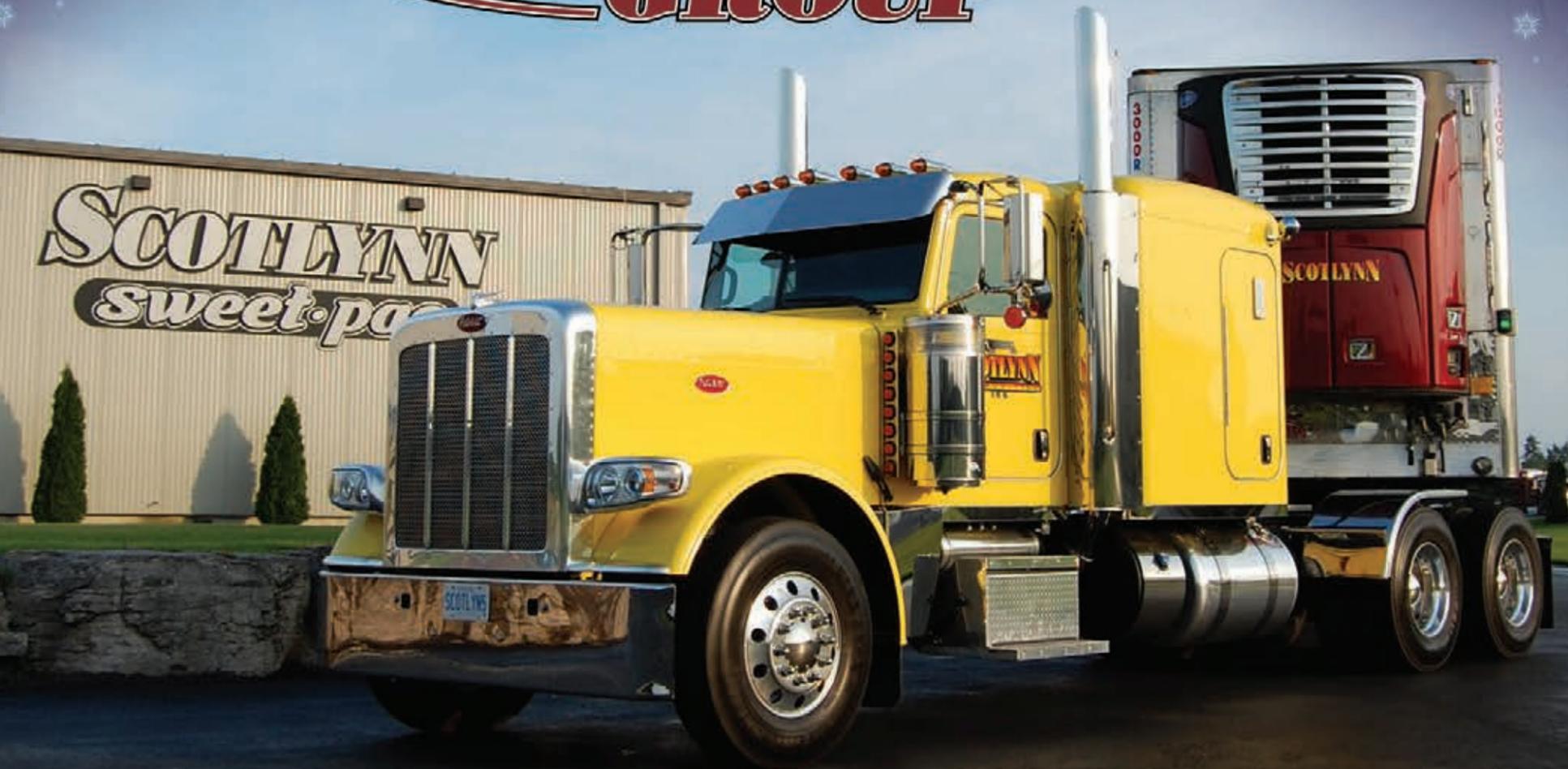
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Shippers and carriers work better when they work together, in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration rather than confrontation. These are more than fancy words; they are the heart of what drives both Transportation Media and Dan Goodwill & Associates, two organizations which have made a concerted effort over the years to bring shippers and carriers together to discuss issues of importance, in an atmosphere that is both respectful of each other's needs and yet spares no sacred cows.

And it's what drove us to again bring shippers and carriers together for our second annual Surface Transportation Summit this Oct. 16th. More than 300 top level transportation and logistics professionals heeded our call for a full day of education and networking at our new venue, the Mississauga Convention Centre.

Our blue-chip lineup of more than 20 speakers dug deep into key subjects such as the economic outlook for transportation, the CEO's view of the coming year, the future of intermodalism, the growth of dedicated transportation; retail supply chains; carrier performance management; effective transportation sales strategies; opportunities in mergers and acquisitions, and a frank debate on freight bids.

We were rewarded with a very insightful exchange of ideas.

But this conversation is too important to allow it to end there. So with this issue we are providing a comprehensive report on the major themes from the conference across all Transportation Media properties – Truck News, Truck West, Fleet Executive and Canadian Shipper, reaching more than 150,000 providers and buyers of transportation services across the country. Look also for our Inside the Numbers and HookedUp e-newsletters for more information as well as future episodes of our award-winning WebTV show, TMTV. We have already provided considerable coverage of the event on www.trucknews.com, www.ctl.ca, Twitter and on our Facebook page and will continue to provide more. This dialogue between shippers and carriers must continue beyond the Summit and we will be doing our best to ensure that it does.

Finally, we would like to thank our growing group of industry sponsors, whose support allowed us to bring the Surface Transportation Summit to a higher level. And don't forget to book Oct. 15, 2013 into your calendar for our next Surface Transportation Summit.

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'Collaboration' becoming more than just a buzzword: Jacquie Meyers

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – The term collaboration, as it applies to the relationships between shippers and carriers, has been “overused and misused in our industry,” but there are finally signs that shippers are truly interested in working with their carrier partners to gain efficiencies.

That was the message from Jacquie Meyers, president of Meyers Transportation Systems, when addressing more than 300 carrier and shipper executives at the Surface Transportation Summit.

Meyers said there has been a commoditization of trucking services in recent years, with many shippers issuing RFPs and making decisions based solely on price.

“What I’m seeing is, that’s changing,” Meyers said. “And it needs to change. Change is often coming from customers who were burned from the tender process or from a low-cost carrier.”

Meyers said progressive shippers are now inviting their transportation providers to engage in meaningful discussions on how to improve efficiencies to the benefit of both parties.

“Customers are now calling in their strongest carriers and working with them to make their supply chain stronger and more resilient, and to drive out costs together,” Meyers said. “We have so many problems facing us, we need to be working together to overcome some of these challenges and we need to find win-win solutions. The conversation is changing, and I’m so thankful it is.”

Meyers issued a call to action to shippers and carriers in the room. To shippers, she urged “Please invite us to the table. We want to come to the party. Let us be a strategic partner.”

And to carriers, she said “When invited to participate in the tender (process), start the dialogue. Talk about how you can impact their bottom line without being the cheapest. Invest in collaboration, show up to meetings, bring your A-team and find ways to do better.” □



Most economic indicators remain in positive territory

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Despite all the negativity on the news, and the uncertainty involving the US debt load and credit rating, most trends are pointing to a steadily growing economy that bodes well for trucking's future.

That was the synopsis from leading economists and industry analysts speaking at the 2013 Surface Transportation Summit here Oct. 17. Carlos Gomes, senior economist with Scotiabank, has earned a reputation for being more upbeat than many of his peers. He remained that way this year.

"I generally have been very positive over the past several years and I still remain positive with respect to the outlook," Gomes said.

Globally, Gomes said the economy has been improving throughout the year, led by emerging markets in China, India and Brazil. "They have moderated as well, but they continue to grow in excess of 5%, while the global economy is closer to 3%," Gomes said of emerging markets.

Even Europe, which has been an economic anchor in recent years, returned to positive growth in the second quarter, Gomes noted.

China saw some moderation in

economic growth last year, but it has enjoyed double-digit growth in late 2012 and into 2013, "which is telling us the slowdown in China that was expected to last several years, is coming to an end."

Job growth is improving in the US, by about 2% year-over-year. That's a leading indicator Gomes watches closely.

"Employment growth went negative a full year before the recession began," he pointed out.

Here in Canada, Gomes characterized the economic picture as "more mixed."

"Coming out of the downturn, we had a significant improvement both in manufacturing shipments as well as building permits," Gomes said, noting growth has since moderated. Canada still relies heavily on the US for 70% of its exports.

Gomes acknowledged Canadian household debt is a valid concern, but that it may not be as dire as it seems. Canadians now carry a debt-to-household income ratio of nearly 160%, which is higher than in the US today, and about equal to where US debt loads sat before the recession.

However, thanks to low interest rates, debt charges account for just 7% of disposable income in Canada,

a figure that was in excess of 9% in 2008 and as high as 12% in the 1990s. Interest rates would have to climb by 100 basis points to bring the debt charges as a percentage of disposable income to its average rate of 8.5%. So while Canadian household debt is high, Gomes said it's manageable as long as interest rates remain low.

Charles Clowdis Jr., managing director, North American markets with IHS Global Insights, said he was "embarrassed" by what the impasse in Congress over the debt ceiling - which was still ongoing at the time of his remarks - threatened to do to the economy. He said a quick resolution would prevent any lasting damage, but that it could interrupt some positive momentum with leading indicators such as housing and consumer confidence.

"Until two weeks ago, we were cautiously optimistic," about the economy, Clowdis said. "We're still cautiously optimistic."

Focusing on transportation, Clowdis said he's seeing evidence of near-shoring, with as much as 5% of manufacturing that was moved to Asia, returning to North America, usually to Mexico. This bodes well for trucking and rail providers, he noted. □

Freight volumes strong, but overcapacity remains an issue: M-O's Munro

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Freight volumes are higher than they've been in "many, many" years, but there remains excess capacity in the marketplace and continued downward pressure on rates.

Doug Munro, president of Maritime-Ontario Freight Lines, told a packed Surface Transportation Summit that strong freight demand isn't yet translating into stronger rates. In fact, he said it's quite the opposite, as there continues to be pressure to reduce trucking prices.

"There is a lot of overcapacity, so though there's been an improvement in freight volumes, it's very hard to get rate increases," Munro said. "Margins are under pressure. We see that on a lot of freight quotes."

Munro said many shippers are continuing to issue RFPs in a bid to reduce their transportation costs.

"It's very difficult to get rate increases in this environment," Munro said. "The volumes are there, but it's hard to get the margins on it."

Maritime-Ontario is taking advantage of low interest rates to refresh its fleet, but isn't adding capacity.

"We're using this time to get new equipment and fund it at very reasonable rates," he said.

Asked what signals Munro is looking for before adding capacity, he responded it would take real demand and healthy rates - not outlooks or forecasts - before shifting into growth mode.

"We respond to demand, rather than looking at outlooks that are hard to predict. We look at actual demand. If demand is growing, we add accordingly. Without demand, we don't add (trucks)," Munro said. "We would like to see continuing growth in freight volumes and freight rates to justify those capital expenditures."

Asked by moderator Lou Smyrlis, Truck News publisher and editorial director, what it would take to bring capacity back in line with demand, Munro said it could be a combination of mergers and acquisitions and insolvencies.

"But until now, we haven't seen a lot of M&A or insolvencies, so it's hard to say," he added.

Looking ahead to 2014, Munro remains cautious. He characterized the US financial situation as "very fragile" and worries about what will happen when the Federal Reserve begins weaning the economy off life support.

"I think things will work their way through, but we can see how it would be a difficult time for the next couple of years, especially if the US doesn't sort through these problems," he said. □

When you 'win' a tender, are you really winning?

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Jacquie Meyers, president of Meyers Transportation Systems, issued a plea to shippers and carriers attending the Surface Transportation Summit, to re-evaluate the tender process that she says has commoditized the trucking business.

"There are lot of challenges inherent to these tenders," Meyers said. "Number one, it reduces the decision making down to price... often times when we win these tenders, you are not really winning. It's not a long-term win. It means you were the cheapest or close to the cheapest. You

have to give something up to be cheap. If you're the cheapest, what are you leaving out? Driver training? Safety? Security?"

Another downfall to the RFP process is that it creates a disconnect between decision makers, and those who'll be most affected by those decisions on a daily basis, Meyers added. A senior executive who chooses a low-cost carrier based on price, leaves the warehouse managers, sales team and other front-line workers to deal with the mess.

She said shippers relying on a tender process to select transportation providers of-

ten focus on the line item transportation represents on their financial statements, but not all the other areas of the business that transportation affects. Lost loads, missed deliveries, unprofessional interactions with a shippers' customers and other possible repercussions of choosing a carrier based on price can cost more to a business than what it saved in transportation costs.

"Transportation managers are judged on that transportation line item, but not the other lines that transportation impacts," Meyers said.

She also said that tenders are onerous and timely to complete and that they often come with heavy-handed contracts attached.

"Within these contracts are unfair and overreaching clauses that, honest to goodness, put a carrier at risk of bankruptcy should something go wrong," she said.

All that said, Meyers acknowledged it's impossible to avoid the tender process altogether. At Meyers, if the tender is geared towards choosing the lowest-cost carrier or if it goes out to dozens of companies, Meyers said her company won't participate.

"If I can't get a human to speak to me, I'm not going to be participating," she said. However, the company will engage in the tender process if there's some human interaction involved, and the possibility of a long-term business partnership developing.

"We're asking to be a strategic partner, not just a line item on your financial statements," Meyers added. □



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Planning an exit?

Start planning early if you want to maximize the value of your company

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Business owners shouldn't wait until they have to sell their business to begin the planning process, otherwise they'll "lose control of the process."

Mike McCarron, M&A consultant with Wheels Group imparted that advice and more during a discussion on mergers and acquisitions in transportation at the Surface Transportation Summit. He was joined on the panel by Doug Nix, vice-chairman, Corporate Finance Associates. Both speakers brought a unique perspective to the discussion; Nix has brokered many major acquisitions throughout his career and McCarron last year sold his own company, MSM Transportation, to Wheels Group.

McCarron said the trucking and 3PL markets are ripe for an escalation in M&A activity.

"I think trucking companies realize that without scale and technology, it's going to be impossible to survive," he said, citing that as one reason he and his partner opted to sell MSM when they did.

"We knew we were too big to be small and too small to be big. We had to decide, do we want to risk everything at this stage in our lives? Do we want to go to ground zero and raise money? The people I've talked to in the business are thinking the same thing, 'What am I going to do to get out?' I think that is going to drive a lot of acquisitions, that state of mind in the industry."

As baby boomers near retirement age, they'll have to devise an exit strategy. McCarron pointed out there could be a logjam of boomers looking to sell at the same time, driving down expected returns.

Asked how business owners will know when the time is right to sell, Nix offered this tongue-in-cheek advice: "Ask your wife."

If you no longer wake up in the morning eager to go to work, Nix said it may be time to prepare your business for a sale. But first, you should determine if it's even saleable. Commoditized trucking companies without an established, steady customer base may be disappointed to find their business has little value in the marketplace.

When considering when to sell, Nix said "I'd say it's better to sell a little too early than a little too late, because you'll never get that time back."

McCarron said the owners of mid-sized trucking companies, and any sized 3PL, will find it difficult to keep pace in the current environment unless they add scale or invest a fortune into technology. American 3PLs are making capital investments into technology that dwarf what their Canadian counterparts can or will afford.

McCarron suggested owners prepare their company for sale even before

they're ready to step aside, so that they are able to begin negotiations as soon as a prospective buyer comes knocking.

It can take two years or more to clean up the minutes books, settle old lawsuits, and clean up the business, and by that time an interested buyer may have moved on to another pursuit.

Once you've been courted by a prospective buyer, it's important to determine if the match is a good fit for your

business. McCarron said he stopped returning calls from a private equity firm when he sensed they were looking to cut costs, strip the company of its culture and then flip it for a quick profit, all while he'd be expected to stay on and assist with the process.

"It was about slashing and burning and ripping the culture apart," McCarron said. "We felt far better with a strategic fit."

But Nix cautioned against ruling out

investment buyers. "We invite private equity groups into controlled auctions, because there's half a trillion dollars sitting uninvested in North America. "You can't ignore that," he said. " Oftentimes, the private equity guys will pay more money if it's the right deal."

However, he added few asset-based trucking companies will appeal to private equity firms.

When a good match is found, McCarron said it's a good idea to solicit the help of an advisor, who acts as a buffer between the negotiating parties throughout the transaction. This helps keep negotiations from becoming too personal, McCarron said. This is important, since in most deals, the previous owner will be expected to stay on for a period of time during the transition, so a cordial relationship must be maintained.

"Where they bring the most value is the intangibles," McCarron said of investment bankers, likening them to

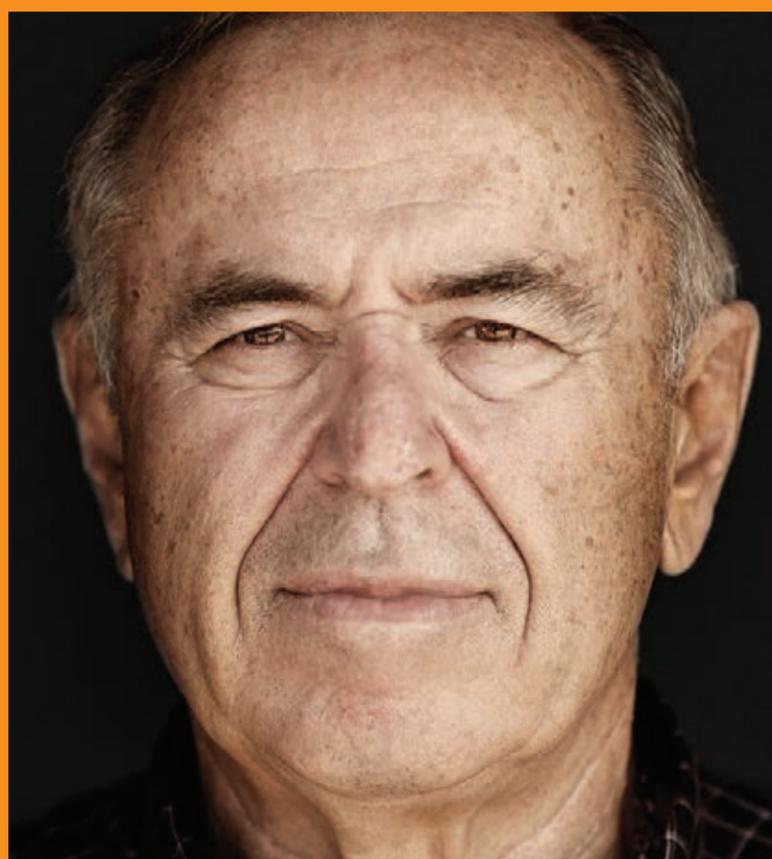
"Who could possibly keep up with all the new trucking regs? Good thing Northbridge keeps me current."

Brian Kurtz, President, Kurtz Trucking, Breslau, Ontario

"I'm old school," says Brian Kurtz. "When I started my trucking company over 30 years ago, you didn't worry too much about the rules. Now there are so many rules and regulations. Every province and state is different. And we're getting more regulated every week."

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"Someone once said that trucking has twice as much paperwork as banking. Too bad

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an agent who represents pro hockey players. Using an advisor also frees up the business owner to continue running the company. McCarron said it's a mistake to think that the dollars attached to a transaction on the letter of intent is the final value of the deal. Any losses suffered during the transaction process will affect the final value of the company at closing time.

"The price you sell your business for is not the price on the LOI," he said. "I was terrified I would lose a large customer during the transaction. The advisor lets you focus on running the business."

Having an advisor on-board also helps protect against "deal fatigue," McCarron added.

"You cannot go through this process on your own," he insisted.

Nix agreed, adding, "There's a ton of emotional expenditure and effort and resources that goes into the sales process. If you're not serious (about sell-

ing), don't pull the trigger on this because it will sap your energy and your business will suffer for it."

When choosing an advisor, Nix suggested asking them what they've accomplished lately.

"A lot of people will tell you what they're working on, but few will actually say 'I did this,'" Nix said. "There's a difference. The reason they're talking about what they're working on is that they don't have anything to talk about that they did."

It's important, Nix said, that both parties trust the advisors they're dealing with. If you're looking to acquire another company, set out to find a target that fits a strategic need, not just to grow top line revenue, Nix suggested. Both Nix and McCarron agreed that buyers should pick up the phone and call a company of interest, even if it isn't for sale.

When a fit is found, Nix suggested moving the transaction along as quickly

as possible.

"Everything that drags gets dirty," he said. "I'm a big proponent of shortening timelines."

As for when M&A activity will pick up, Nix said a dearth of deals this year isn't due to a lack of interest.

"I see in the industry lots of interest and lots of discussion," he said. "But I also see lots of caution. People are hesitant to pull the trigger."

Last year, Nix's firm did 45 mid-market transactions across North America, and this year they've done only 20. He thinks the decline is partly due to the uncertain political environment in the US, and that "once that stability comes, I'm quite bullish on the future levels of M&A activity."

Large-sized 3PLs are expected to be the most sought after targets, and are currently fetching valuations of 6-7xE-BITDA. Asset-based trucking companies, by comparison, are commanding just 3-4xE-BITDA. **TW**

In sales, the 'new normal' is always changing

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Two industry experts at the Surface Transportation Summit examined a new approach to sales. The STS welcomed Jeff Pries, senior vice-president of sales and marketing for Bison Transport and Tibor Shanto, principal for Renbor Sales Solutions. A strategic selling plan, according to Pries, must have three qualities – or the three "Es": Equip, engage, everyone.

"It is important to teach about the sales process," said Pries. "It enables people who aren't typically in sales to branch out and learn the process."

At Bison Transport, everyone is equipped with the knowledge to understand the needs of their clients, he said.

"We also consider how to keep an employee engaged," Pries added. "Many sales reps are motivated by money, but recognition programs are also valuable."

Pries also looked at the difference between a strategic customer and a transactional customer.

"A strategic customer is relationship-oriented, they usually deal with senior management and they are collaborative in nature," Pries explained. "A transactional customer is transaction-oriented and usually reached by customer service or systems connectivity."

It's important for sales representatives to understand the differences in order to service each customer to the level they require, Pries said.

It also goes beyond understanding the customer, but producing best in class sales.

"My list of a best in class sales rep includes being tech savvy, driven, a negotiator, resourceful and honest," Pries said, noting there are many key characteristics that make a sales representative top-notch.

Pries believes the days where sales representatives must wine and dine customers or be the life of the party are over.

"It's understanding your business and your customer's business to make that critical fit," Pries said.

The discussion shifted gears slightly when Shanto took the podium to define the "new normal" in sales.

"Change is constant," Shanto said. "The velocity of change is so rapid it is difficult to assimilate."

Shanto said it is integral to develop a dynamic sales process.

"There are three fundamentals in sales," Shanto began. "Revenue, client requisition and client retention."

A dynamic sales process that focuses on the three fundamentals will align a company to its customers, according to Shanto.

"The value of a process – a defined and dynamic process – results in a high level relationship with the customer," said Shanto. "A dynamic process means less turnover and losses."

The buyer process and seller process require some E.D.G.E: The buyer needs to Explore, Define, Get a game plan and Execute it.

Managing time can also be an effective tool of a detailed process. **TW**

we don't have twice the profits," jokes Mr. Kurtz.

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"Margins are half of what they were 10 years ago," says Mr. Kurtz. "But I know Northbridge will always be there. Heck, they've been around even longer than me."

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Bison Kurtz

Searching the world for drivers

Continued from page 1

in the trucking industry for about 28 years himself.

"I started as an owner/operator for a national company in 1979," he told Truck West, "and with a young family I found I was away a lot and I decided to find a job that was more local, more regional."

That move took him to CP Express & Transport, where he spent a half-dozen years serving communities in Saskatchewan before he and his wife decided to strike out on their own. They formed Prudhomme Trucks and built the business to a fleet of 105 units.

It was during that time when the ugly reality of the driver shortage hit home and Prudhomme decided to do something about it.

"We were plagued with a shortage of qualified drivers, so we started going abroad in recruiting some drivers from Eastern Europe, Ukraine specifically," he said, "and after we sold the trucking company, other owners or HR people would phone us, looking for drivers because they'd heard we'd had lots of success. So they would hire us to go help connect them or find them a source of foreign drivers."

That turned out to be a golden opportunity. Since the Prudhommies didn't have a succession plan for



Prudhomme International isn't just about filling the driver's seat, but finding a job that is an ideal fit for each candidate.

the trucking business in the family, they decided to sell the company and launch Prudhomme International via an office in downtown Regina. And while trucking is near and dear to Prudhomme's heart, his company goes far beyond just looking for new drivers.

"We're recruiting for lots of different industries," he said, "but we're recruiting lots for the trucking industry, too.

We're recruiting heavy-haul drivers, regional, refrigerated goods drivers, lots of different types of drivers."

Prudhomme International has since helped match trucking companies with something in the neighborhood of 250 drivers "and other trades, like welders, truck and trailer mechanics," Prudhomme said, adding that the company has also brought in about 100

welders and painters for companies who manufacture trailers.

"We've really helped companies beef up their workforce," he said.

Prudhomme's experience has also helped him find some shortcuts that can be used to help speed up the recruiting process, a fact that brought his business to the attention of the CBC recently. The Mother Corp reported that if a potential driver recruit coming over as a temporary foreign worker is bilingual, it isn't necessary to conduct a Labour Market Opinion (LMO), which could be a great time- and hassle-saver when recruiting from overseas.

The CBC got it wrong, though. "That doesn't apply to low-skilled trades," Prudhomme said, alluding to the fact that that truck drivers are still considered low-skilled. "CBC did make a mistake on the printed document on the Internet and I contacted them to say that with low skills, it doesn't matter if you speak French or whatever, you still need an LMO."

The bilingual twist can help with other trades, however, and Prudhomme noted there may be even more hope in the future, since "Minister Kenney announced again that they might reinstate the accelerated LMO process."

While recruiting is a big part of what the company does, it isn't where the company's services end.

"We have schools for drivers, too," Prudhomme said, "and it doesn't take that long to recruit drivers because we interview and approve drivers that are ready to go. We do the drug testing, we do all that stuff so when they get here they just have to write and drive their Class 1 and they're ready to go." They have a certified immigration consultant on staff as well, "so we can do the whole process if an employer requires help to do the LMO process. We can do the whole thing."

The growing staff includes Prudhomme's wife (a certified immigration consultant) and business development manager Rob Ruiters, who brings more than 31 yrs of experience with the RCMP to the company. Well known to the trucking industry, Ruiters spent 18 years spearheading the Pipeline/Convoy program, whose aim is to eliminate the use of commercial vehicles (as well as other modes of transportation) for trafficking drugs and other contraband.

He championed attempts to educate the industry in cargo crime and was a catalyst in bringing industry together for the CTA Threat Brief, offering practical advice on what fleet managers can do to ensure their vehicles aren't used for illegal purposes.

Right now, Prudhomme International recruits mostly from Hungary, Romania, Ukraine, Morocco, Tunisia, France, Belgium, and Mexico, but it's broadening its search regimen to this hemisphere as well, looking into South American countries such as Peru and Brazil.

Most of Prudhomme's clients so far have been in Saskatchewan, but "we've dealt with companies in Manitoba, and we're starting to expand into Alberta," he said. **TW**

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Family gatherings: Rules for hiring relatives

There are many reasons why hiring family can be a minefield for business owners, but taxes shouldn't be one them. Bringing a spouse, parent, kid, or other relative onto the payroll even on a part-time basis can generate big savings, especially if you're splitting income among family members who are in a lower tax bracket than you are.

Canada Revenue Agency has specific rules for hiring relatives. Basically, family members must do the work for which they are paid.

The wage or salary must be in line with what you'd otherwise pay Joe Average to do the same job. And the work must be necessary and not some frivolous project that you wouldn't otherwise hire someone to do.

When you hire a relative, you can never lose sight of your responsibilities as an employer. You may have tax and legal obligations including source deductions like Employment Insurance and/or Canada Pension Plan. Then again, you might not.

CRA defines a relative as someone who is connected by blood relationship (like a father and son), marriage, common-law partnership, or adoption. You also can be related to a corporation if you're related to one or more of the people who control the corporation, or when a corporation employs someone who controls more than 40% of the corporation's voting shares.

The Employment Insurance Act states that employees who are related to their employer – be that a sole proprietor or corporation – may not be eligible for EI benefits and should not have EI premiums deducted from their pay because they do not deal with each other “at arm's length.”

On the other hand, some employees who are relatives might indeed qualify for EI. For example, a related employee may be insurable if it's reasonable to conclude that you would have hired a non-related person to do the same job at a similar rate of pay.

What is reasonable? Here are some of CRA's criteria:

Remuneration paid: When the amount of the remuneration and the manner of payment reasonably compare to those that a guy off the street would accept for similar work, an arm's length relationship is suggested. The pay you offer your related employee should be in line with what a non-relative would accept for similar work.

Terms and conditions: Are the terms and conditions of employment substantially similar to the ones in an arm's-length employment relationship?

Duration of work performed: The timing of a job – when it occurs and how long it lasts – should correspond reasonably to the length of time such work should take to perform, and to the employer's normal business cycle and history.

Nature and importance of the work:

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



Are the services you hired your relative to perform necessary and important to the business operation? Have you historically hired an employee to perform this work?

How to request a ruling

If you're not sure whether to deduct EI premiums for your relative-employee, you can ask CRA to rule on your case. Rulings clarify your obligation as the

employer and will define whether your employee is covered should he make an EI claim (due to lay-off, pregnancy, or sickness).

To request a ruling, send a letter or a completed Form CPT-1 to the nearest tax services office no later than June 30 of the year following the year in which the employment occurred. If you have a payroll account and are registered on My Business Account, you can use the “Request a CPP/EI ruling service” online.

Hiring family takes serious forethought.

Don't try to arrange a haphazard payment formula or job description after your year-end.

Do put an employment agreement

in place at the beginning of your fiscal reporting period and be ready to defend the value and worth of your family members' contribution to the business and to the bottom line.

Speaking of family, I hope you're able to set aside work and enjoy time together at this time of year.

Here's to you and yours during the holiday season, and to a successful, prosperous 2014. See you next year. **TW**

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

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A tough act to follow

As the eventual successor to the time-tested T800, the Kenworth T880 has big treads to fill. Is it up to the challenge?

By James Menzies

When Kenworth announced in March the introduction of the T880, my initial reaction was 'But why?' Kenworth has, in its T800, one of the longest-running and most successful vocational trucks on offer. It has served both the truck maker and the industry well for 26 years, over which time more than a quarter million have been placed

into service and, more impressively, an estimated 80% of them continue to be operated.

'The T8 ain't broke,' I felt then, 'so why fix it?' In late October, I finally had an opportunity to drive the T880, which will eventually replace the time-tested T800. To be clear, the T800 isn't going anywhere for a while. It's such a diverse truck, used for so many different things, that it will take some time for the T880 to be configured to fit every application in which the T800 currently performs. So as to not leave any holes in its coverage,

Kenworth will keep both models in the lineup for as long as it takes for customers to become comfortable with the T880 and to stop asking for the T800.

This could take a while, because the T800 has many loyal fans, especially here in Canada. I count myself among them. And it was with that mindset that I stepped into a T880 dump truck just outside the Kenworth plant in Chillicothe, Ohio on Oct. 25. This truck was an Ohio spec' dump truck with three lift axles, a 24-ft. aluminum end-dump body, a Paccar MX-13 engine and Eaton Ultra-

Shift Plus automated manual transmission. The engine produced 485 hp and 1,650 lb.-ft. of torque and the truck was equipped with air disc brakes at every position.

The truck was set up to comply with Ohio bridge law requirements, so the T880 you'll find on dealer lots in Canada will look different. The cab, however, will not. The first thing I noticed upon climbing into the T880 is that the cab is noticeably larger, yet the dash is laid out intelligently so that I never found myself reaching for switches or controls. The bumper-to-back-of-cab (BBC) measurement has been retained at 122.5 inches (a short-hood version with 116.5-inch BBC is also available), but the ceiling is a full two inches higher. Things like headache racks may have to be adjusted accordingly, but upfitters shouldn't have any trouble attaching bodies to the larger cab.

Alan Fennimore, Kenworth vocational marketing manager, told me the new cab platform was designed from the inside out, and proof of this can be found all over the place. Exploring the new cab was like going on an Easter egg hunt; small treats could be found in the most unlikely of places. For example, a coat hook has been placed on the rear wall, a magnet replaces the traditional, breakage-prone sun visor hook over the driver's side window and armrests are built into the doors at just the right height. These are small things that collectively provide a more driver-friendly work environment. Small things shouldn't be underestimated, because they do contribute to a more comfortable, satisfied driver and a happy driver is a safer driver, or so goes the theory.

Speaking of safety, the most obvious and immediate upgrade as seen from the driver's seat is improved visibility. The view from behind the wheel of the T800 was good, but the view from the T880 is even better. A new panoramic windshield and a seemingly slopier hood combine to provide excellent forward visibility. The cowl-mounted side mirrors have even been lowered slightly, to afford greater visibility over top of them, which will provide a better view of the job site, with no compromise in rearward visibility along the sides of the truck.

The T880 has an automotive-inspired dash, which is modern looking and easy to clean. This seems to be a trend in the industry and a welcomed one as far as I'm concerned; I'm no fan of the plastic wood interiors that were the norm for so long.

Having familiarized myself with the interior of the T880, and replaced my cynical frown with a cautious smile, I headed out on the highway for a 40-minute drive on area roads. What really leapt out on the road was the quiet ride of the T880. Paccar would like you to believe this is attributable to its MX-13 engine, and there could be some truth to that. But all diesel engines have gotten quieter, and my hearing isn't supersonic, so I can't tell you for certain the MX is any quieter than a Cummins without driving them back-to-back.

But more impressive to me than the quietness of the engine was the complete lack of wind and road noise audible in the cab. I asked Fennimore how Kenworth achieved this, and he said it's a byproduct of the new stamped aluminum cab construction and the fact the vehicle is more aerodynamic than the T800. An aerodynamic front end that



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slices through the wind more efficiently is likely to create less noise in doing so. Kenworth designers have painstakingly removed from the front end, any place where air could become trapped and in doing so they also eliminated the noise air produces when it smacks up against a flat surface area. Look no further than the flush-mounted headlights for evidence of the attention to detail that went into removing obstructions that lead to drag, and subsequently to wind noise.

The quiet ride was noticeable the moment I reached highway speeds, but noise is more than just an irritant and the true benefit of a quiet cab can be better appreciated over time. Wind and road noise is 'white noise,' the same type that sound machines emit to help people fall asleep. Listening to white noise all day long has the same fatiguing effect on drivers, so I suspect the T880's quiet cab will leave a driver feeling fresher at the end of a workday.

About 15% of Kenworth's vocational trucks are now spec'd with Eaton UltraShift Plus automated manual or Allison automatic transmissions. I'd be perfectly happy with either option - anything but a manual. I know I'm still in the minority, as the stats will attest, but I truly believe most vocational truck drivers who are averse to auto-gearboxes haven't yet tried the latest generation versions.

The UltraShift Plus in the T880 I drove offered features such as Intelligent Hill Start Aid and Creep Mode. Hill Start Aid will hold the truck's position when on an incline without rolling back while you move your foot from the brake to the accelerator. Creep Mode allows the vehicle to crawl along smoothly at low speeds, which is great for precision operations such as laying asphalt.

If you prefer a manual transmission, you'll like the air-assisted hydraulic clutch that's new in the T880. It allows for easier shifting - once you learn to avoid the temptation to mash the pedal through the floor - with considerably less foot pressure required.

There are mixed opinions on the use of automated transmissions in vocational applications. Some fleet owners love them, because it allows them to hire less-skilled drivers. Others hate them because, well, it allows less-skilled drivers to find gainful employment in the industry. But the reality is, vocational truck operators are a special lot. They have to be safe and competent drivers, but just as importantly, they must know how to skillfully operate whatever specialty equipment the truck is equipped with at the job site.

My thinking is, why wouldn't you give your drivers an easier truck to operate, equipped with an automated or automatic transmission, to simplify the driving portion of their job as much as possible? Apparently 85% of buyers disagree with me on principle, or are too cheap, though I can argue all day long that the higher up-front cost associated with an automated or automatic transmission provides a payback over the life of the equipment when in the hands of an average driver.

The T880 I drove was empty, so it was difficult to evaluate the MX-13 engine. However, Fennimore told me that engine has undergone continuous tuning for vocational applications and is just now hitting its stride. Some dump truck operators, he said, are now getting close to 8 mpg with the MX. The MX engine was brought to North America from Europe and then adapted to



The Kenworth T880 will eventually replace the popular T800.

meet our vastly different operating requirements.

"The duty cycles here are so complex, it takes a while to get them all dialed in," he said of vocational applications

in North America. "It's really starting to come into its own."

For an empty dump truck, the T880 rode well on the highway, its suspension system effectively absorbing the worst of

the bumps and providing a smooth and comfortable ride inside the cab.

Back at the Kenworth plant, I took another walk around the T880. I noticed the hood has been redesigned. Instead of the one-piece attached to the T800, the T880 features a five-piece Metton hood. This will make repairs easier and less costly than with the one-piece hood design.

I stepped out of the T880 convinced there is a place for this model in Kenworth's lineup alongside the T800. It is indeed an upgrade. In the T880, Kenworth hasn't taken anything away from fans of the T8.

In fact, it has given them more. More room. More visibility. And while it's too early to say for sure, probably more money in their bank accounts, if the improved aerodynamics translate to actual fuel savings. Saying goodbye is never easy, but the arrival of the T880 makes it just a little easier to bid farewell the T800. **TW**



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For Daimler's new truck boss, it's all about product

By James Menzies

ORLANDO, Fla. – Dr. Wolfgang Bernhard, the head of Daimler Trucks globally, was introduced to the North American trade press during a roundtable discussion held at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition. Bernhard was appointed to his new position in April. He emphasized there will continue to be a strong product focus from Daimler Trucks under his watch. Bernhard already has obtained his European commercial driver's licence, and he will repeat the process in the US so that he can drive the vehicles offered by Daimler and its competitors.

"I think it's very important to know the business from the ground up," Bernhard said. "You need to know what your customers are sitting in."

Bernhard has spent his first few months on the job travelling the world to get up to speed on Daimler's global truck operations. "I'm deeply impressed with what I've seen," he said.

Bernhard said he's fortunate to be taking the reins at a time when Daimler boasts its "strongest truck portfolio" in company history. In the US, Daimler is enjoying Class 8 market share of nearly 40%, driven largely by the Freightliner Cascadia Evolution, for which Daimler has received 20,000 orders. The Detroit DT12 automated transmission is also driving demand for Daimler's products. Martin Daum, president and CEO of Daimler Trucks North America, said

the company has already received 3,600 orders for trucks with the DT12, and it has only been offered since April with the DD15 and since September behind the DD13. Production of that transmission will be brought to the US in 2015, and Daum said it's now expected that there'll be enough demand for the product here that no, or very few, units will be exported to other markets.

Daimler's North American Class 8 market share through September is up 5.4% compared to a year ago.

"Business, I'd say, is going well," Bernhard said.

In North America, 60% of Daimler's orders come from its top 30 customers. The company has been collaborating closely with these customers on new product developments. As an example, Bernhard spoke of a project with Nussbaum that resulted in a 6x2 drive configuration with direct drive transmission that improved fuel economy by 20%. In another example, Freightliner worked with Saddle Creek Transportation to develop a natural gas-powered Cascadia with aerodynamic fairings that will improve range to about 700 miles. Saddle Creek has ordered 10 of these trucks.

Still, natural gas is one area where Daimler executives are dissatisfied with their current position – if you can be dissatisfied with a 45% share of the market.

Daum acknowledged the brand is lacking a 15L natural gas engine and that it needs to broaden its product range.

"It's a good business, but it could be a far better business," he said. "We'll fo-

cus on that more in the future to come up with even better solutions."

Daimler has plenty of reason to be satisfied with its North American business as a whole. It boasts the industry's top market share in the US Class 8, US Classes 6/7, Canadian Classes 6-8 and NAFTA Classes 6-8 segments. However, Bernhard said the truck maker would like to see a more stable political environment

rules, which complicate compliance as a global manufacturer.

"We all need to park our regulatory egos in the loading dock," he said. "Standardization would strengthen our competitiveness."

As for future emissions standards, Bernhard feels that instead of bringing in more stringent rules for new vehicles, that there should be a greater emphasis

on removing old trucks from the highways. Only 40% of the trucks in service today are of an EPA04 or newer vintage.

"You could reduce NOx by 60% if you just replaced all the old trucks with new trucks and you could reduce particulate matter by 99%," Bernhard said, adding that repealing the federal excise tax on heavy-duty trucks would be one way Washington could encourage the removal of old-

er vehicles from the industry. Looking ahead to 2014, Daum predicted truck demand will be slightly better than it was this year. However, a return to boom times for truck makers isn't expected until 2015 at the earliest.

For Daimler itself, Daum laid out several priorities for the next year. They include: maintaining a "dominant market position"; continuing to develop the Cascadia Evolution for ever greater fuel economy; building upon the recently announced Detroit Connect telematics division; and boosting Western Star's presence in the market. **TW**

'You need to know what your customers are sitting in.'

Dr. Wolfgang Bernhard

in Washington.

"It is in our industry's best interest that Washington finds a way to provide a stable budgetary climate," Bernhard said. "Not just brief increments (of stability) with another looming crisis over the horizon. The US economy is too important to the rest of the world to be in a continued state of uncertainty."

Bernhard would also like to see global emissions rules be harmonized. The NOx and particulate matter reductions in most of the developed world have been fairly consistent, yet Bernhard said there are subtle differences between the

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What's in the box?

Utility Trailer recently opened the doors of its Clearfield, Utah reefer plant to the media for the very first time. We were there.

By James Menzies

CLEARFIELD, Utah – Utility Trailer bills itself as the longest running, privately owned trailer manufacturing company in the US, and next year will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The company claims to be the largest producer of refrigerated van trailers, which are produced at Utility's Marion, Va. and Clearfield, Utah facilities.

Utility has a number of proprietary production processes it says result in a better-built, more efficient refrigerated trailer. Recently, Utility allowed a small group of truck journalists to tour its Clearfield plant, where these highly guarded manufacturing secrets were put on display for the very first time. We followed up the visit with an interview with Craig Bennett, senior vice-president of sales and marketing with Utility, to discuss these processes and other trailer industry trends.

TW: Craig, it seems trailer order activity has been up and down throughout the year, with no real sustained increases in demand. How would you characterize the current state of the

industry for Utility, and for the trailer industry in general?

Bennett: The market generally gets softer seasonally in late summer, then a little stronger in the fall. We had a typical seasonal slowdown in the late summer, July and August, and it got better in September and a little better in October, but it's not as good as we'd like to see it and it's not as good as we were hoping it would be.

I would classify it as okay. In the trailer industry, we are all operating at very high production output levels and it's always challenging to maintain those levels with new order intake, once you get the crews built up. That's the challenge we all have. A 240,000-250,000 trailer year would be a good year by any measure – not a great year, but a good year – and that's probably where we're at. We don't see that changing a lot.

There's a lot of activity, with people looking at stuff going into next year, but with so much uncertainty relative to the health care law, and new regulations that face trucking, for-hire carriers especially are challenged in their ability to make new equipment acqui-

sitions. They're having difficulty paying for all the new higher-priced trucks and higher-priced refrigeration units. Even the trailers cost a little bit more – not a lot – but passing the costs along in an environment like we have today, where we're only growing at 1-2% GDP, is difficult.

TW: One of the techniques you showed us at the plant is a dipping technique, in which the entire coupler assembly is immersed into a hot liquid to provide a complete coating that protects against corrosion. I know it's a proprietary process, but coupler corrosion is a big issue for us in Canada. How much can you tell me about the benefits of this process?

Bennett: Before we used this process – this material, this heat and the dipping process to get 100% coverage inside and outside of that assembly – upper couplers would last, in the Midwest or Canada, typically seven to eight years and then they would rust out.

Since we started this process, they basically don't rust out anymore. The life is more than double – somewhere

in the neighbourhood of 18-20 years or more – depending on the environment they're exposed to. That weak spot in the trailer has been eliminated in our trailer. That's an expensive fix when it used to rust out, as you can imagine. You can still beat them up structurally – bang them up, overload them, hit them with a yard jockey – but they don't rust out like they used to.

TW: Another unique manufacturing process you demonstrated was the way Utility insulates the entire trailer, once it has been fully assembled. What is unique about this process and why do you do it this way?

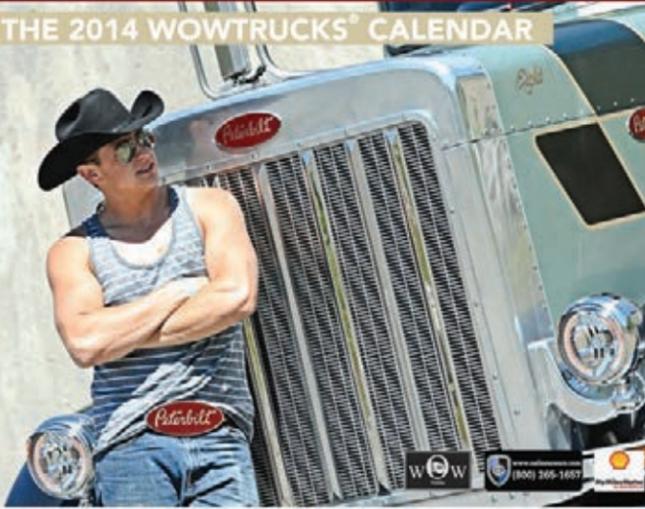
Bennett: You get a better-insulated product, ultimately. Instead of building the sidewalls foamed and a floor that's foamed and a roof assembly that's foamed and bringing them all together and sealing up 53-ft.-long joints from the floor to the wall on both sides and the roof to the wall and the front wall to the sides, rather than having to try to seal all those things up, we let the foam do that in our process.

We build the whole shell, as you saw, the complete body, and then inject the foam using a mandrel process. We inject that foam in there so it goes around all the corners.

It seals it up and expands to six times its original size. We build our box very tight with sealer tape, overlapping joints, etc., to make sure the foam doesn't squirt out on the ground, so we have a complete 360-degree en-

Continued on page 27

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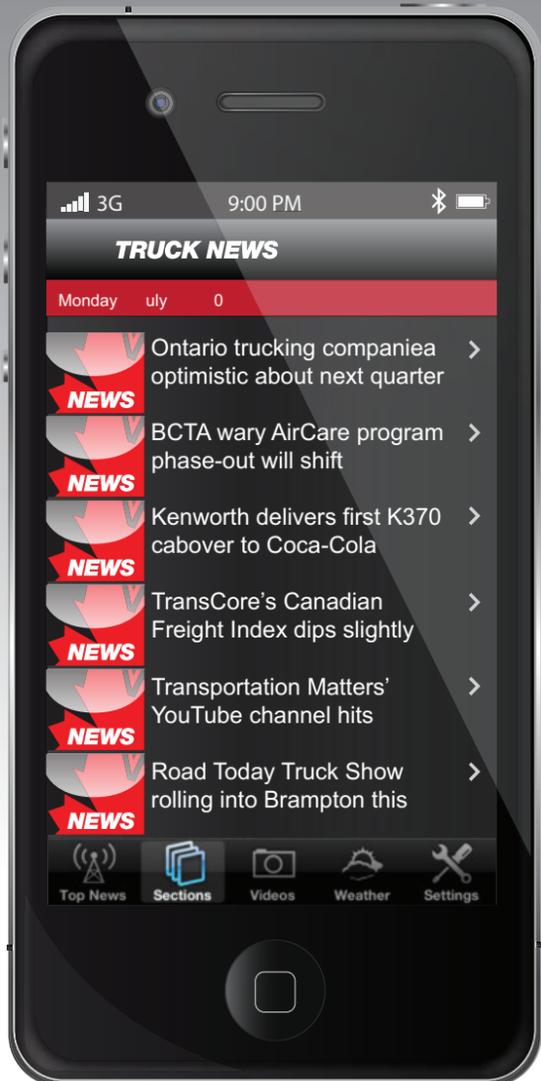
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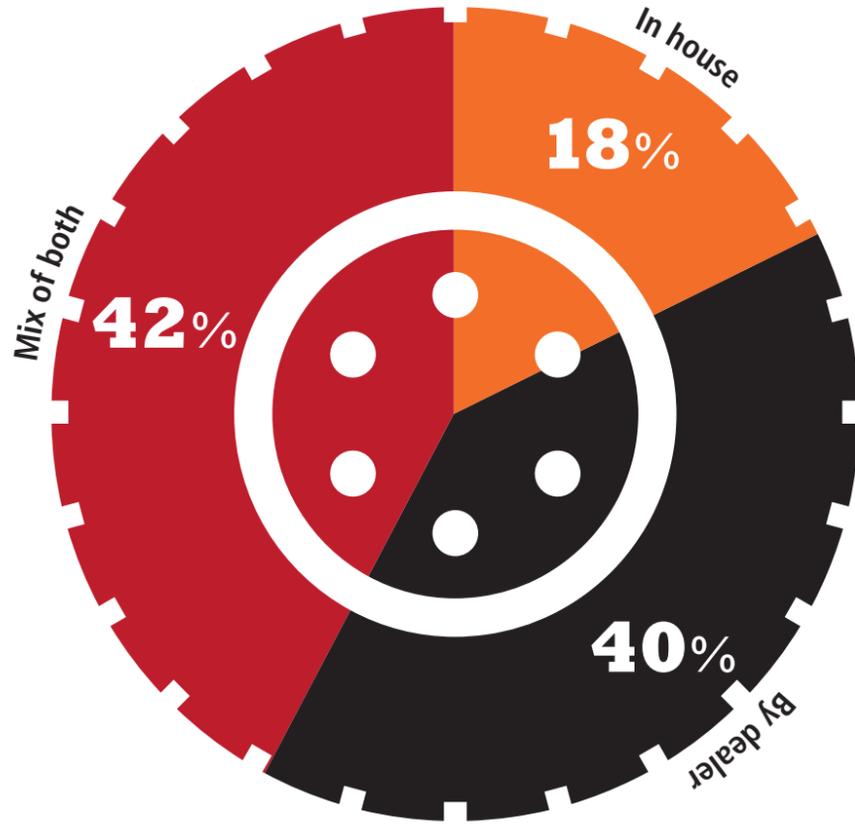
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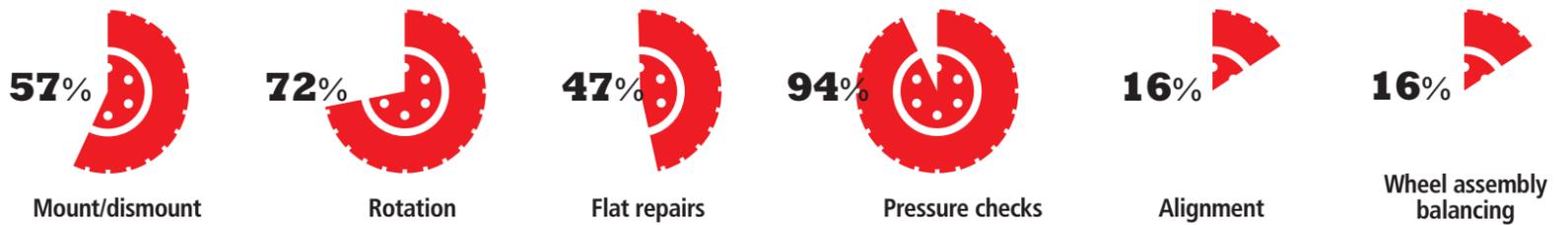
part II

INSIDE WESTERN FLEETS' TIRE MAINTENANCE HABITS

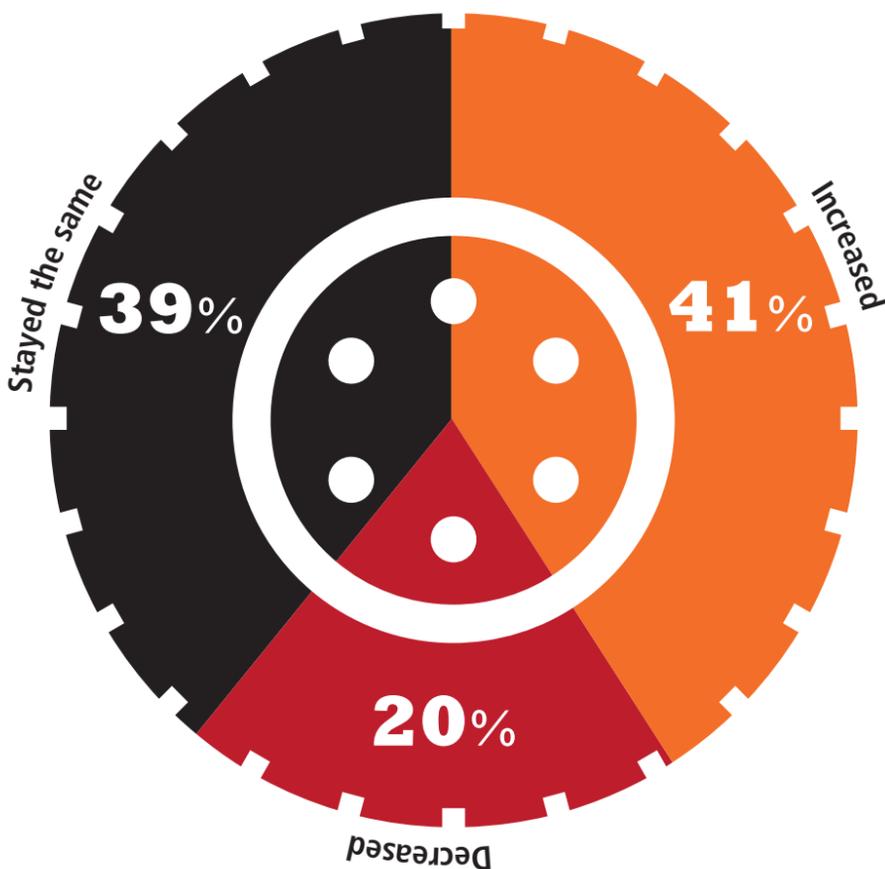
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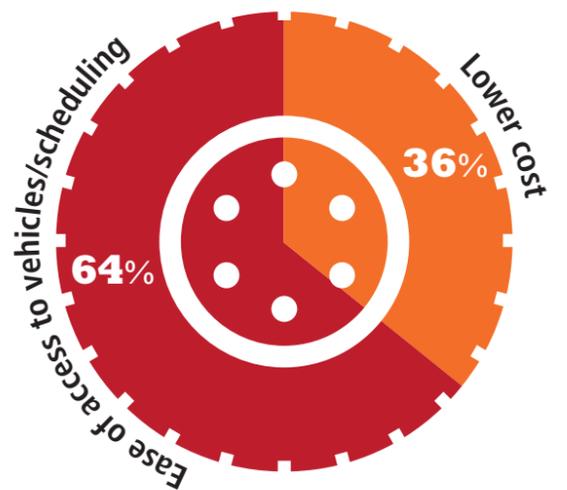
Services performed inhouse



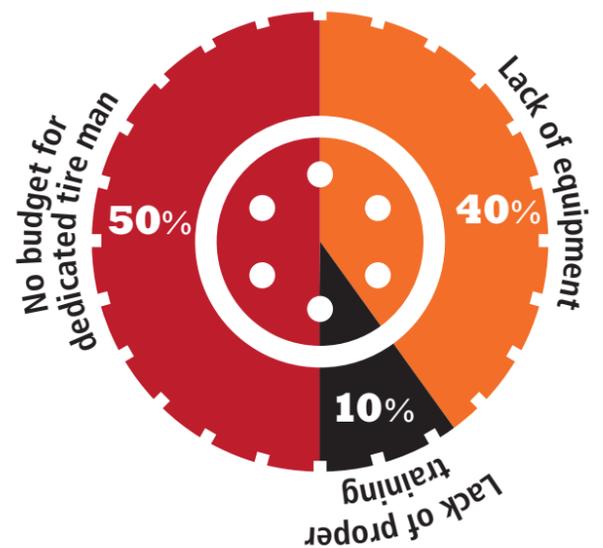
Changes in-house tire work past 5 years



Main reasons for doing tire work inhouse



Main reasons for having service dealer do tire work



Tires are a major expense; staying on top of tire costs can be the difference in a successful year, particularly during difficult economic times. Last issue we focused on owner/operators and how the recession and slow economic recovery forced Western Canada owner/operators to make changes to their tire maintenance practices. This issue we turn our focus on Western fleets. Our Annual Tire Buying Trends Survey, completed this October, indicates that while only 18% of Western Canada fleets handle tire servicing completely on their own (another 42% do a mix

of inhouse and dealer work) inhouse tire work is on the rise. Our survey found that 41% of respondents have increased inhouse tire work over the past five years.

Ease of access to vehicles and scheduling is the main reason fleets give for doing the work themselves but lower costs is also a key consideration.

Pressure checks are by far the most common inhouse tire work done but mounting/dismounting, rotation and flat repairs are also common. Lack of equipment is the most common reason for having the service dealer perform the work. **TW**

By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR...

Mark is attending Truxpo Can, his favourite truck show of all. While he's at a booth he overhears two men talking. One tells a story about how a driver got him in trouble with the police, while the other says a driver put colored diesel into his tanks. Both men would sure like to find the guy. Mark knows they are talking about him and slinks away...

Mark made small talk with the light salesman for a while, constantly looking over the man's shoulder to see if the coast was clear. Finally, when the two men who'd been talking like they wanted to tear a strip off his hide had moved on, Mark turned to the salesman and said, "All this stuff is really cool. Maybe you could give me a card or something and I can give you a call when I want to trick out my truck."

"Certainly, sir!" the salesman said, pulling a business card out of his shirt pocket and handing it over to Mark. "Perhaps we could send you a catalogue or put you on our mailing list?" the salesman said, but by then Mark was gone.

Mark had been shaken up a bit by the experience. After all, it was one thing to call the police on someone who is breaking the law, or exact revenge on someone who did you wrong, but it was an entirely different thing to meet that person face-to-face. And it wasn't as if there had been just one person out for his blood, there had been two of them and each one wanted blood.

Mark walked quickly past the exhibits, trying hard not to look as if he were rushing, or in a hurry, but moving quickly so as not to stay in one place for too long. It was a heck of a way to try and enjoy the show. Just then, Mark's cell phone rang. He pulled it from the case on his belt and brought it to his ear.

"Dalton, it's Bud!"

"Bud who?"

A sigh. "Bud-jet. I'm starting a discount airline and I want you to be my first pilot."

"Nice," said Mark. "I wouldn't mind being somewhere else right now."

"Is there a problem?"

"I don't know, maybe."

Silence.

"Do I have to guess or are you going to tell me."

Mark took a deep breath, then said, "There are a couple of guys here at the show that I've run into on the road."

Bud didn't respond for a while, but when he did it was a soft knowing sort of laugh. "Why don't you sit them down, buy'em a beer and spend the rest of the day telling them it's all your dispatcher's fault and you'll all have a great time."

That would be great, thought Mark, but impossible. "These aren't people I met on the road who want to have a beer with me."

"Oh no?"

"No, they just want to kill me."

"You're being too negative here. What you need to do is look on the bright side."

"Yeah, what's the bright side?"



The Truxpo Gambit

PART 2

"These guys are probably on probation, so if they do anything illegal, like kill you, they'd end up back in jail for sure."

Mark thought about that a moment. "Wouldn't they end up in jail if they killed me anyway, even if they weren't on probation?"

"Look Dalton, I'm trying to make you feel better here."

"It's not working."

"What would work?"

"A load that took me far away from here."

"Okay, I'll call you back in a bit."

Mark nodded, but then a thought struck him. "Bud, why did you call me?"

"You're at the show, right?"

"Yeah."

"And there are all kinds of trucking companies there hiring drivers and signing up owner/operators, right?"

"Always."

"So I'm just keeping in touch in case, you know, someone makes you an offer to come work for them."

"Are you saying you value me as a driver, Bud?"

"Uh, let's not get crazy here, Dalton. You're a driver. Hard working. You answer your phone. And you deliver your loads more or less on time. I need that kind of driver and I'd hate to lose you to a company offering you an extra half-cent per kilometre."

Mark was almost touched by Bud's sincerity. "Don't worry, Bud. I think you and I are destined to cause each other grief till the end of our days."

"That's a comforting thought."

"Now," Mark said, "about my load."

"Give me some time, will ya. I'm sure no one really wants to kill you. Just walk around the show a bit, have some lunch and I'll try to get back to you this afternoon with a load."

"Alright, I'll do that," Mark said, hanging up. He felt a little better about things, but not much. He did have an empty feeling in the pit of his stomach and thought a bit of lunch might hit the spot.

At the show's food court, everything was small-portioned and overpriced. The problem with these shows was that the conference centers were usually in the middle of nowhere, or far enough away from anything else that it would take a car ride and at least an hour to get a bite to eat. So, if you wanted to eat on site, you had to pay for that privilege.

Mark decided on a hamburger and fries because it was a food that was very hard to screw up. The burger might be greasy, the bun a bit stale, and the fries too soft, but after you smothered everything in ketchup and condiments, it would all taste pretty good. Halfway through his burger Mark became aware of two men over at another table having an animated discussion about life on the road.

"Dispatchers always have their favourites," a guy was saying. "They give the best loads to the drivers who kiss their ass, and they leave the other drivers to try and make a living on short-haul and city driving."

Mark recognized the voice as that of Manny Giron, a driver who had worked for Bud for a while, but who was always complaining about the best loads going to other drivers...like Mark. Mark had thought he'd helped to adjust the man's attitude by asking Bud to give him a cross-border load that was too complicated for him to handle, but here he was still complaining. Mark realized that the man would never change and would only grow more bitter in the years to come.

"I hear you, brother," said another man at the table. "There's always someone out there trying to keep you down. Me, I had a nice business going, moving heavy equipment. You know, bulldozers, excavators, cranes...Well, one time I got a new guy into the business, happy to take my cash, but not too interested in working hard for his money. After a couple of jobs he calls the cops on me and puts me out of business."

Mark recognized that voice too. It was a good story, except the man telling it forgot to mention that he didn't own any of the machines he moved, and he'd hired Mark to basically steal them from construction sites around the GTA. "The guy who screwed me over's named Mark Dalton."

"Hey, I think that's the guy who did me in too."

Mark turned his head, leaned forward and put his face as close to the table as he could. **TW**

- Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 3.

Did you know that there are two full-length novels featuring Mark Dalton?: Mark Dalton "SmartDriver" and Mark Dalton "Troubleload." For your free copy, register with ecoENERGY for Fleets (Fleet Smart) at fleetsmart.gc.ca.



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Navistar launches open architecture remote diagnostics platform

By James Menzies

ORLANDO, Fla. – Navistar has announced an open architecture remote diagnostics program that works with a fleets' existing telematics provider and covers all makes of vehicles. The OnCommand Connection program was demonstrated during the American Trucking Associations Management Conference & Exhibition. It is currently being field-tested in preparation for a January launch.

"By partnering with our customers' existing telematics providers, we can pull diagnostics-related data to create easy to understand vehicle health reports," said Nadine Haupt, director of powertrain product marketing. "The visibility into the operational health of the vehicle empowers customers to understand the severity of vehicle issues and determine the appropriate actions – ultimately leading to increased uptime."

Fleet owners or service managers are able to view their vehicles through a proprietary portal.

There, they can identify fault codes and determine the severity of a situation. The program can direct the operator to the nearest dealer location – including competitor dealerships if the vehicle is not an International. Haupt described the Navistar program as be-

ing more "fleet-centric" than existing remote diagnostics programs in the market.

So far, the system has been approved for use with Omnitracs, PeopleNet, Teletrac, GeoTab, XRS Corp., CyntrX and Pedigree technologies, which provide telematics services to the vast majority of International truck customers.

When a problem with a vehicle is identified, the program creates a case file for the vehicle. Included in this file is an easy to understand description of what needs to be done, as well as links to additional reference material.

Hirschbach Motor Lines is currently testing OnCommand Connection.

"Based on my vehicle's location, fault severity and load schedule, Navistar's OnCommand Connection helps me prioritize how and where to implement needed repairs and maintenance," said Jim Coffren, vice-president of fleet management for Hirschbach Motor Lines. "Before my vehicle reaches the dealership, I have already received a diagnosis and a recommended solution, which allows me to make better decisions."

OnCommand Connection will initially monitor fault codes generated by the engine, but can be expanded in time to include the transmission, body controllers and other components. **TW**

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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. We can't run everything, of course, but we'll try to get in as much as space permits...



Rosenau Transport has donated this trailer to the AMTA. It will be used to carry supplies and also to acknowledge the contributions of members.

Leaves changing colour as they do this time of year look pretty, but they sure don't do much for your vehicle's traction once they let go of their precarious hold on trees and waft down to the asphalt.

It's just one more thing to beware of as we head into winter (see below for one more challenge) and one more reason why drivers should be recognized as skilled professionals.

Talk is cheap, of course, but hopefully the increasing talk among industry poobahs will help lead to the long overdue move of calling professional drivers - well, professionals. See my interview with Ken Johnson in this issue for his take on this; he seems to be on the same page as the STA's Al Rosseker and others - that it needs to be harder, not easier, to become a driver. Heck, this should apply to the general public as well: get the oafs off the road!

When I lived in B.C. we dumped on Alberta drivers a lot (now that I live in Wild Rose Country, it's Saskatchewan drivers - the driving public, not necessarily truckers). But everything's relative: I just served a week's sentence in the Centre of the Universe and was once again struck by how bad the drivers there are - above and beyond the clueless.

But I digress. Unfortunately, that lack of driving courtesy extends to a good number of truckers on the 401, who swerve out in front of faster traffic and take an excruciatingly long time to pass another truck that's doing virtually the same speed. It's enough to drive one crazy. To be fair, I've also seen the phenomenon on the QE2 in Alberta, but that doesn't make it any more pleasant - nor does it help professional drivers get recognized a more than just a bunch of yahoos.

But this column isn't about east-erner bashing (though it's certainly a worthwhile pastime). It's a place where I like to focus on the positive, especially since there's no shortage of negativity in media coverage of the industry. So let's turn the Brayings microscope

onto some of the positive western stuff you may have missed. And thanks for sending in your items, it's much appreciated.

Rosenau rides to the rescue

At the risk of this column starting to look like the Rosenau Appreciation Pages, mention should still be made of a kind donation Carl Rosenau, of the transport company that bears his name, made recently to the AMTA. The longtime board member turned over a tractor and trailer to the association to be used to help with its safety and training programs. It'll also be used to transport supplies for the AMTA-hosted annual Alberta Truck Driving Championship.

As you can see from the picture, board members took time out of their regular meeting to gather in front of the rig for a commemorative photo-op (and thanks to Rebecka Freels for inviting me along for the occasion) as well as to thank Carl for "his unwavering 20-year commitment to the association."

And here I thought being committed meant you'd been put into a looney bin! Hmm. Maybe they know something I don't.

To highlight the many member companies who support the AMTA, the trailer also sport logos of companies the AMTA identifies as "key boosters." Not only that, but the trailer's rear doors have been given over to an anti-impaired driving message from MADD Canada, reinforcing the industry's "ongoing commitment to MADD's road safety campaign."

Funny, I used to read MADD magazine when I was a kid, but I don't remember any road safety campaigns then, just a lot of bad puns and jokes. Good thing none of that wore off on me!

I should also give a shout out to Michelin Tire, who contributed a set of super singles for the unit. The AMTA hopes it will help illustrate the viability of the tires, which the group is lobby-

ing the province to allow all over Alberta's roads instead of just on the reduced weight basis that's the case now.

Lowered expectations?

Reader Kevin sent along this e-mail in response to my "Bridge Frustrations" piece in the September issue, about that Pilot Butte bridge on the Trans-Canada Hwy. near Regina. Seems he's PO'd at another bit of bureaucratic oafishness:

"I'm a broker hauling cars across western Canada and the company I'm working under hauls new cars out of the rail head in Regina. As far as I'm aware, nobody mentioned that Assiniboine overpass clearance was reduced to 4.5 metres following the repaving of that section of ring road. One of the other brokers phoned it in to our office and spread around the notice. We have annual permits which allow us to run a max of 4.6 metres in Saskatchewan."

No reports of scraped-off trailer tops littering the roadside through there (well, none have reached me, anyway), but it might help to keep your eyes peeled for such "vertical chicanes" as you drive. Can't trust the government to do things right, you know.

Truxpo looming

Well, a year in the future may not exactly be looming, but the BCTA has sent out a notice of the next trade show, held biennially in Abbotsford, will be held next Sept. 19-20. The organizers promise some interesting new wrinkles as well, and that's not a reference to the aging workforce.

Truxpo regularly exhibits Classes 5-8 trucks and equipment, as well as other industry-related products and services (there are always some neat gadgets there), and there'll be an emphasis on Classes 1-4 vehicles as well. Basically, they say, "If it's a work truck, it will be showcased at Truxpo next September."

The hosts are getting reinforcements next year, too, thanks to the trucking associations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Northern B.C. (as well as the Central Interior Logging Association) climbing aboard as sponsors. The result, according to BCTA chair Greg Munden is that Truxpo will be "a truly western Canadian event."

As if the trucks and related stuff aren't enough, there's also going to be a conference program, Show & Shine, multicultural events and a driver appreciation day.

The popular Recruiting Here feature will be back as well.

For complete details and event updates visit www.truxpo.com.

Remember to book your flights and hotels far enough in advance to ensure you get the best rates. And don't forget to stop by our booth and say hello. No

eggs or tomatoes, please. I'm not allergic; just a wimp.

Award-winning performance

Congratulations to the Trucking Safety Council of B.C., which was triply awarded for its participation in the North American Occupational Health & Safety Week earlier this year.

The group won for: 2013 CSSE - B.C. Achievement of Recognition Award "Safety Specific Non Profit Association"; 2013 NAOSH Special Contribution Award; and 2013 NAOSH Honourable Mention Award

The awards were doled out at a special Safety Forum and Awards Luncheon in Langley this past October. The luncheon was hosted by the NAOSH Steering Committee and Canadian Society of Safety Engineering.

Foggy mountain breakdown?

Okay, it's an obscure reference to the Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs' tune played prominently in the '60s film "Bonnie and Clyde," but it's also a condition that really raises its ugly head during winter, especially (though hardly exclusively) in the mountains of beautiful British Columbia.

So the Trucking Safety Council of B.C. who, judging by its name, takes such things seriously, wants you to know how to handle such instances of severely reduced visibility. Makes sense, since the alternatives can be deadly, expensive and embarrassing.

So here, thanks to their most recent e-letter, are some tips for helping ensure your drivers handle fog safely:

1. Ensure drivers are trained and prepared for poor weather conditions.
2. Ensure drivers are well rested.
3. Hold a pre-shift meeting with all drivers when weather conditions change. Review how driving practices should change with changes in the weather.

4. Establish a check-in procedure for staff who have to drive for long periods, especially in poor weather.

5. Ensure lights, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and other equipment are functioning properly. Check your emergency kits!

These are common sense points, of course (though how common is common sense these days?) and apply to plenty more conditions than just fog. But let's face it - you can't stress this stuff enough! **TW**

That's it for this month. Hey, quit cheering! If you have a gripe, an announcement, a kudo, or something else you think should be covered in this space (not including my grave, please!), fire me off an email to jim@transportationmedia.ca. Yep, we'd like to pick your Brayns! The usual caveats of taste (well, maybe not taste...), legality and the like apply, but we do try to cover as much as we can. See you next time!

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