

TRUCK WEST

Western Canada's Trucking Newspaper Since 1989 • December 2014 Volume 25, Issue 12

Page 14 **Lighting the way:** Truck lights are brighter, lighter and cheaper than ever. We look at what's new.

Page 18 **Report from the Summit:** Four pages of coverage from the sold-out Surface Transportation Summit.

Page 30 **Vantastic:** The Sprinter cargo van is now available in 4x4, making it a good fit for the oilpatch.

Page 32 **Test drive:** We drive a new powertrain from Cummins and Eaton in an International ProStar.

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George Sutherland of Bison Transport has been named the 2014 Owner/Operator of the Year.



Reach us at our Western Canada news bureau

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

'The truck comes first'

Owner/Operator of the year George Sutherland grew his business by treating it like a business

By James Menzies

That George Sutherland even bothered to show up for work on the second day of his new career, given the disastrous nature of his first day on the job, is a surprise. That was 20 years ago. He's been showing up every day since then and piling up the safety awards and accolades along the way.

He has a new one to his name. Sutherland has been named the 2014 *Truck News/Truck West* Owner/Operator of the Year, for his industry advocacy, safe driving, willingness to help others and his business acumen. Sutherland had an interest in big trucks since childhood and decided in 1994 to obtain his A/Z licence. He went to a driving school and after about 40 hours behind the wheel, passed his driving test and was ready to embark on his new career. He applied

for a job and the owner handed Sutherland the keys to a tractor hooked to a tridem trailer.

Sutherland asked which driver would be accompanying him and the owner said, "You're on your own," he recalled. "They said 'If you can make it back by the end of the day, no accidents, you've got the job.' So off I go in this single-axle truck, no idea how heavy the load was because, you know, it didn't really mean anything to me."

Sutherland got onto the 401 and the trailer began swaying like crazy. He was driving just 35 mph and trying to maintain control. When he arrived at his destination another driver noticed the trailer's lift axle had 105 psi when it should have held 55 psi, causing the poor handling. "He says 'How did you even get here? That thing must have been snaking all over the highway! You were running on one axle!'"

Sutherland unloaded and went back to the

Continued on page 10

STA presents awards

By Sonia Straface

SASKATOON, Sask. – Oct. 25 saw the Saskatchewan's Trucking Association's 77th Annual General Meeting and Gala in Saskatoon, Sask.

The event ran all day and kept attendees informed and entertained.

The day began with a panel discussion on the regulatory horizon for the trucking world from industry experts, Blair Wagar, assistant deputy minister for policy and programs of the Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure, Andy Cipywnyk, manager of trucking policy of the Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure, and Earl Cameron, the vice-president of SGI Auto Fund.

The day also saw the STA's annual business meeting where the association's financials and the board of directors were discussed.

After a short break, (enough time for the ladies to get their lipstick on, and the men to put on a tie) the Presidents' Reception took place for an opportunity to network and get settled before it was dinner and awards time. During the reception and cocktail hour, guests were invited to bid on the silent auction, which saw items like classic NHL jerseys and stylish Invicta watches.

The special guest of the evening was Nancy Heppner, the Minister of Highways & Infrastructure who said a few words about the STA and the transportation industry.

"The work that you do is critical to the prosperity of our province," she said. "On behalf of the people of Saskatchewan I want to thank all of you for the work that you do and your continued contribution to our province."

After dinner, the buffet area was transformed into a casino night where a bunch of tables featuring different card games were open to guests who were given funny money to bet with.

The awards handed out at the STA's dinner and gala were as follows:

STA Milestone Awards: Jay's Group of Companies; Redhead Equipment; Kramer; Peterbilt; and Acklands-Grainger.

Dispatcher of the Year Award (sponsored and presented by Cervus Equipment Peterbilt): Joe Chernick (D.J. Knoll Transport).

Driver of the Year Award (sponsored and presented by Volvo Trucks Canada): Lori Franklin (D.J. Knoll Transport).

Service to the Industry Award (sponsored and presented by Shaw Tracking): Dennis Diehl. **TW**

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CLASSE 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

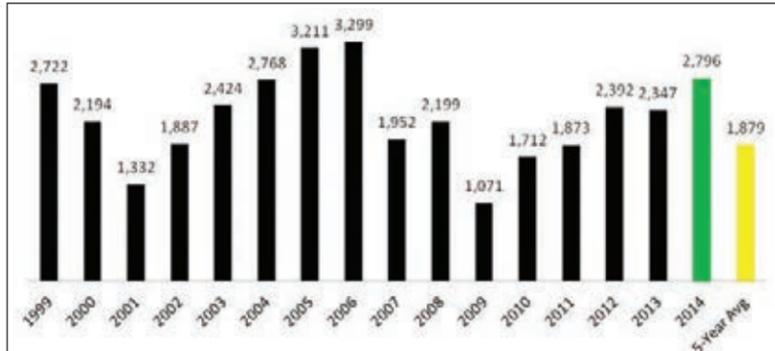
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Monthly Class 8 Sales – Sept 14

After a disappointing August, Class 8 sales rebounded strongly in September. The 2,796 Class 8 trucks sold into the Canadian market during the month made for the third best September since 1999 and were about 900 trucks above the five-year average. Only the heyday years of 2005 and 2006 were better. All truck manufacturers, with the exception of Western Star, enjoyed gains over the previous year. Market leader Freightliner had a particularly strong month.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	861	617
International	370	343
Kenworth	493	417
Mack	172	170
Peterbilt	330	278
Volvo	348	281
Western Star	222	241
TOTALS	2796	2347

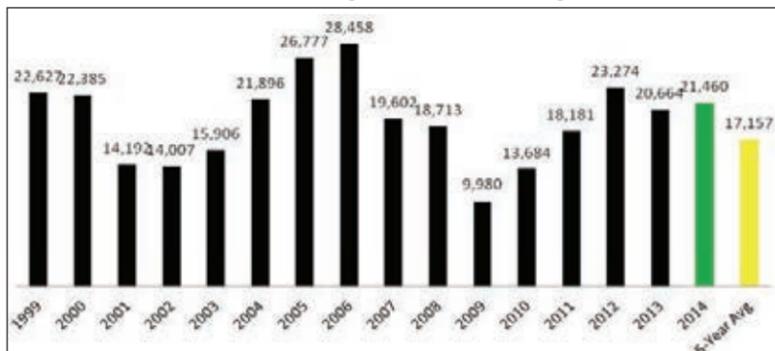
Historical Comparison – Sept 14 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Sept 14) by Province and OEM

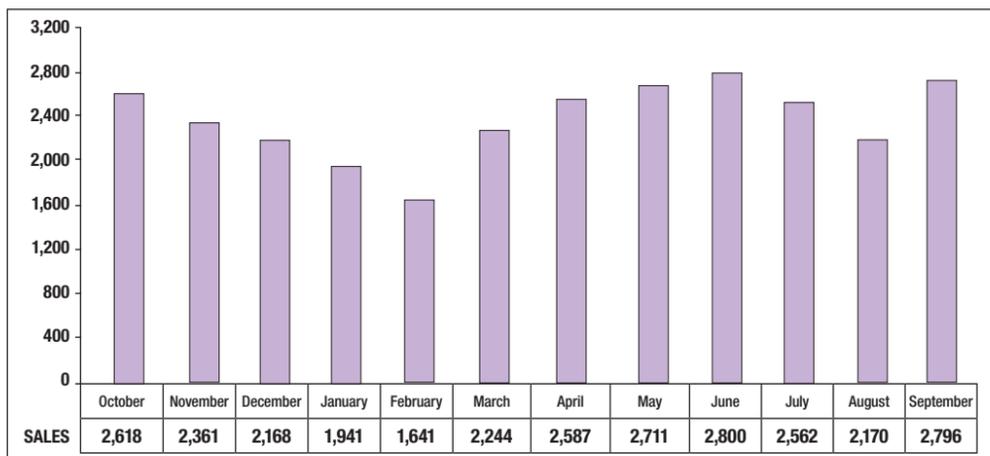
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	456	833	196	256	2,319	846	240	95	8	33	5,282
Kenworth	493	1,445	317	1	648	617	64	0	0	0	3,585
Mack	116	286	130	83	860	198	28	49	5	18	1,773
International	122	443	59	121	1,436	476	136	43	9	32	2,877
Peterbilt	355	1,114	252	156	508	361	114	13	0	0	2,873
Volvo	398	440	104	217	1,460	504	131	60	0	6	3,320
Western Star	250	630	57	93	344	272	40	50	3	11	1,750
TOTALS	2,190	5,191	1,115	927	7,575	3,274	753	310	25	100	21,460

Historical Comparison – YTD Sept 14



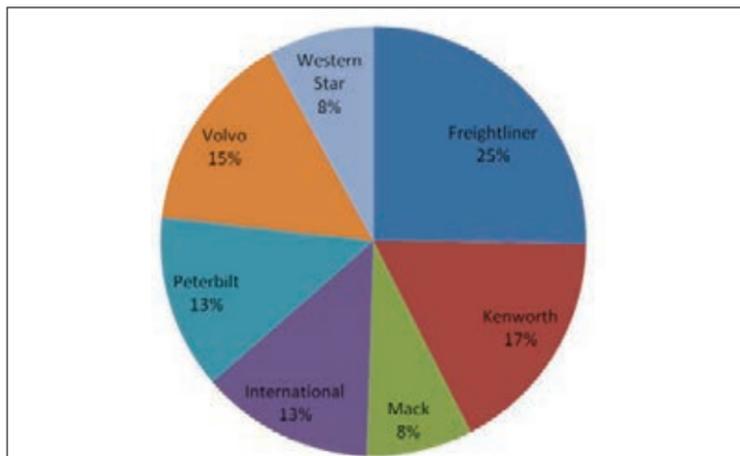
As mentioned last month, despite a weaker than hoped for August, optimism for an improvement in Class 8 truck sales this year has not lost steam and the September numbers quickly proved the optimism is not misplaced. Our research shows small carriers are more willing to purchase new trucks than they have been in years and both carriers and truck manufacturers are feeling more optimistic about the industry outlook. So far 2014 is shaping up to be the seventh best year in Class 8 truck sales since 1999.

12-Month Sales Trends



Truck sales enjoyed a welcomed upward spike in September after three successive monthly drops from the year's high point of 2,800 set back in June. To place sales performance in further perspective, the Canadian market has now enjoyed 7 straight months of sales above 2,000 after suffering through two months of sales below that figure to start the year. Prior to that the market had posted 10 straight months of sales coming in above the 2,000 mark, reminiscent of the industry's capacity boom years.

Market Share Class 8 – Sept 14 YTD



Freightliner's strong month has bumped up its leading marketshare to 25% while Kenworth's market share stands at 17%. Volvo, which has shown the most growth this year after leapfrogging past Peterbilt, is holding on to a 15% market share. Peterbilt's share continues to drop and is now tied with International at 13%. Mack and Western Star are also neck and neck at 8% market share of the Canadian Class 8 truck market.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Has natural gas lost its luster?

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



What a difference a year can make. Last year when I attended the Natural Gas Vehicles Canada Conference, the list of delegates served as a who's who of Canadian trucking executives. It seemed every notable fleet was there to investigate whether or not natural gas was a viable fit for their operation.

Don't get me wrong, this year's conference was well attended and the list of speakers was as strong as last year. The advocates were still advocating and their enthusiasm for natural gas was as strong as it has ever been.

However, what I found lacking was the contingent of curious observers who were there to investigate, to do their homework and to decide whether or not natural gas will be in their fleet's future. For the most part, it seemed, speakers were preaching to the already converted, which was the most notable difference between this year's conference and last year's.

There are several reasons for this. First of all, diesel prices have provided fleets with some relief of late. Also, business for many transportation providers is currently brisk. Freight volumes are up and rate increases are taking hold. For many carriers, the biggest challenge remains finding qualified drivers to seat their trucks.

Then there's been the notable pull-back of the higher horsepower natu-

ral gas engine offerings. Westport killed its 15-litre GX engine last year, Cummins put "on hold" its ISX15 G and most recently, Volvo suspended development of its 13-litre LNG engine.

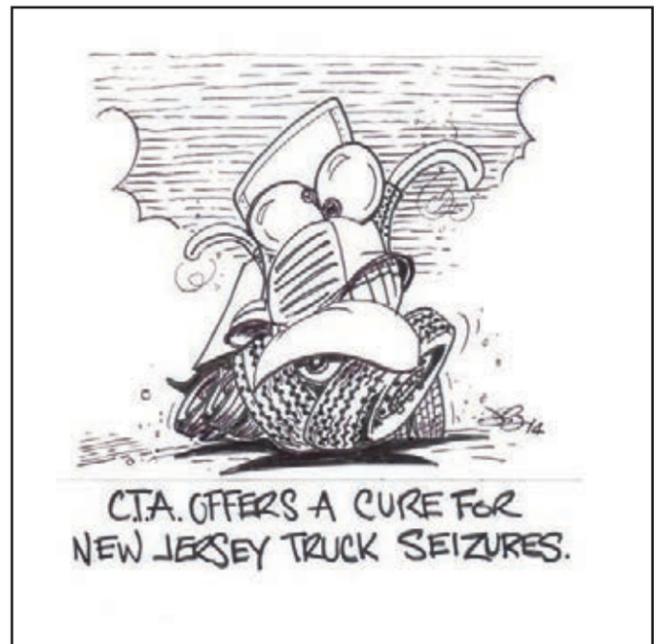
The lack of a high-horsepower natural gas engine was the talk of the conference this year. Some fleets invited to speak did little to support the movement, by sharing their conclusions that natural gas won't work for them until a 15-litre once again becomes available. But other fleets raved about the ISX12 G, which by all accounts performs wonderfully in applications limited to 80,000 lbs.

For the most part, even those fleets relying entirely on the now-discontinued Westport 15L GX engine seem confident something will come along to take its place before those engines must be retired from service.

I'm not so sure. The cost of developing such an engine is enormous, especially considering the meager volumes the Canadian market can support.

Let's face it, the ISX12 G serves the vast majority of US demand perfectly adequately.

I wouldn't declare natural gas dead. There's still a place for it and in the right application it can save



the right fleet big bucks.

Just ask Cold Star Freight, which has slashed its fuel costs by 30%, or C.A.T., which is confident enough to have just announced it will deploy 100 CNG-fuelled trucks out of Montreal.

No, it's not dead by a long shot.

However, the alternative fuel that just a year ago seemed poised to break into the mainstream will remain a niche fuel for the foreseeable future.

At least until a higher displacement natural gas engine comes along – and it could be a long time coming. **TW**

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The unfortunate road reality

As voters, we sure can be a funny lot. The American Trucking Associations certainly found that out when it recently attempted to take the pulse of the American public on the critical issue of spending on their nation's transportation infrastructure.

The ATA's poll, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and comprising 800 respondents, found a surprising amount of support among the American public for spending more on infrastructure. Participants were asked whether the US should spend more or spend less on several priorities, including K-12 public schools; transportation infrastructure; anti-terrorism and national defense; health care; and environmental protection.

While K-12 public schools came out on top, spending on infrastructure came out second with 48% supporting an increase in spending and only 10% wanting to spend less. Seventy one per cent of respondents felt their nation's roadways were only in fair to poor condition. Almost half of Americans (49%) believe traffic congestion impacts the quality of their life.

So it would seem US truckers' long-term plea to improve the nation's infrastructure is in line with the American public. And that can only be good news for fleet executives hoping for the same

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



kind of support here.

Well, not exactly.

When survey respondents were told that "it is estimated that in order to repair, update and modernize their nation's roads, highways and bridges, it would cost \$4 trillion over the next 25 years" and then given several different ways that this money could be raised, their enthusiasm for infrastructure improvements quickly fizzled. Not one of the funding proposals received a better than 36% approval rating.

Crazy Yanks, eh? They want good roads; they just don't want to pay for them.

Well, I'm not sure Canucks are much different.

Everyone I know complains about the state of the roadways; everyone I know also complains about the size of their tax bill.

Add to that our demographic dilemma – significant labour shortages are expected for the multi-billion dollar projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Alberta, raising

costs. Also, as was pointed out a couple of years ago by the Van Horne Institute in a white paper on reforming Canada's transportation policies, our "antiquated constitutional system" continues to toss wrenches into government decision making. Cities are the engines of economic growth and (much as I hate to admit it, since I've been living in the country the last 20 years) from that point of view deserve the majority of the funding available for infrastructure renewal.

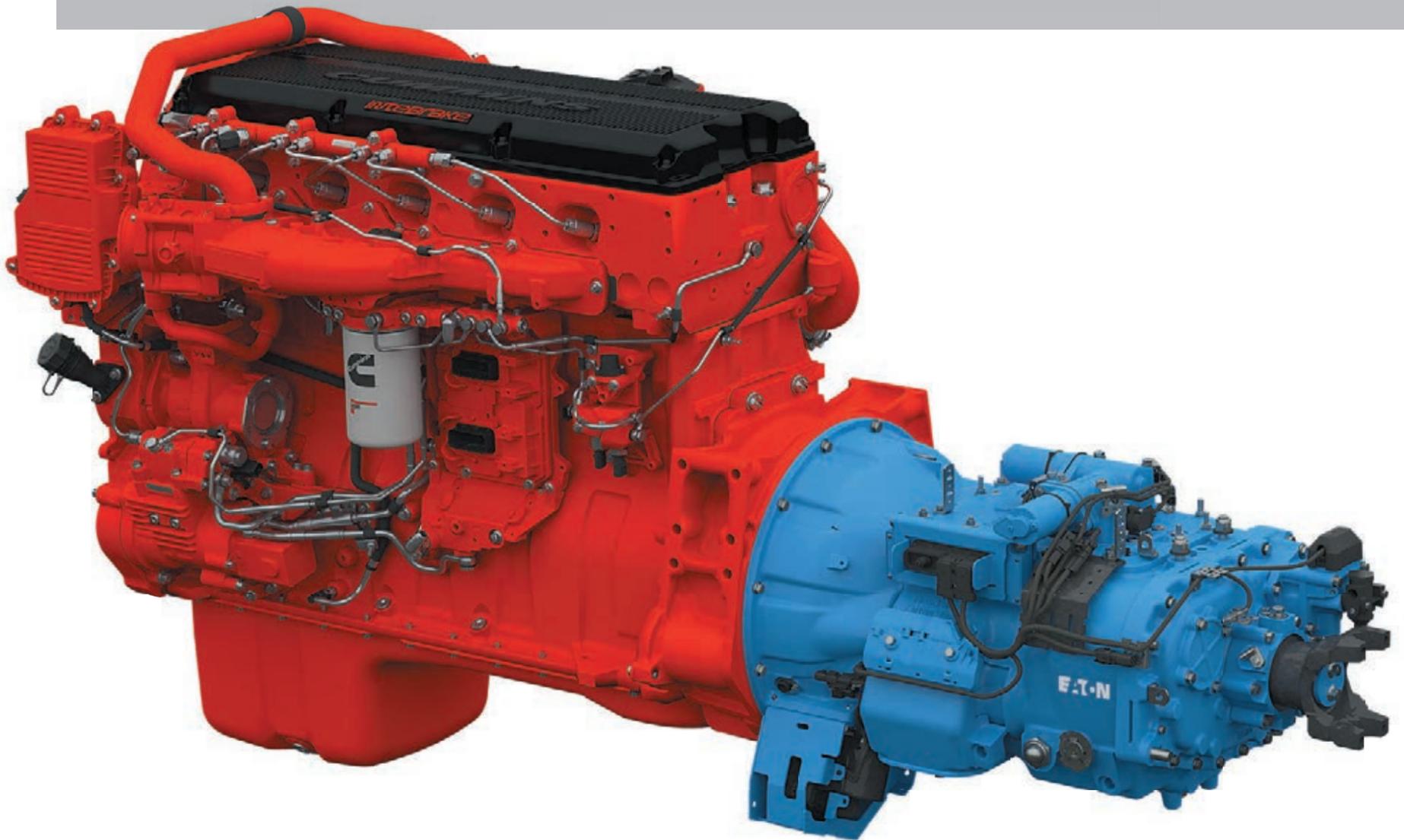
But can rural and small town politicians, egged on by their constituents, ever accept a smaller share of infrastructure money? Likely not.

Perhaps, the time has come to get politics out of infrastructure renewal. Perhaps it's time to consider, as the Van Horne Institute suggests, a new paradigm for building infrastructure. Devolving the ownership of roads to a new network institution entrusted with the responsibility to maintain and improve the network and charge users appropriately, is the Institute's suggestion.

It may seem a radical move. It may also be worth considering. **TW**

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Is B.C. on brink of prosperity?

By Jim Bray

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – The state of British Columbia is strong and full of opportunity, though not without its share of challenges.

That's according to Todd Stone, the province's Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure who, addressing delegates at the 2014 Truxpo exhibition in Abbotsford at a Sept. 19 lunch session, outlined the government's achievements of the past few years and looked ahead to what he said should be an exciting and profitable future.

The Minister kicked off his comments by acknowledging the importance of the relationship between the B.C. government and the trucking industry.

"What you all do is an absolutely vital component of continued economic growth for British Columbia," he said before launching into an explanation of his portfolio and its responsibilities.

"My job is to ensure that we're continuing to invest in critical infrastructure that is going to ensure the safe movement of people and goods across this province, that's going to continue to help us to grow markets overseas and help us create jobs in every corner of British Columbia," he said, claiming that on a per capita basis, B.C. spends more on highways and the overall transportation network than any other province – undoubtedly due at least in part to the province's challenging terrain.

Stone also reminded the audience that the only way such investment can be continued is to "first and foremost work very hard to ensure that we have our fiscal fundamentals in order," adding that last February, the Clark government brought in its second consecutive balanced budget and plans to do it again next year.

"I'm very excited about the fact that we're one of only two provinces who actually have a balanced budget in this forthcoming fiscal year," he said. Stone also expressed pride that the province has "amongst the lowest personal and corporate taxes anywhere in Canada."

But while cash may be king, Stone said there also has to be a roadmap to the future that can target where the cash should go.

"We also need to have vision in government," he said, noting that "our vision (is) about growing our resource industries, about creating entirely new industries such as liquefied natural gas."

Stone claimed there are 17 proposed LNG projects on B.C.'s books currently, most of which are in the Prince Rupert/Kitimat/Terrace regions as well as on Vancouver Island.

"If only five of these projects go forward, and we're confident they will," he said, "this is one trillion dollars of economic activity and

Continued on page 9



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Trucking set to capitalize on a prosperous B.C.

Continued from page 7

100,000 jobs as a result of it. And this was an industry that didn't exist, that we only started talking about two or three years ago."

The Minister was quick to add "We need to prepare for those opportunities now, and that's why there's a tremendous amount of work going on within the industry to apply a second lens to how we prioritize our projects."

The two lenses Stone referred to

"There'll be a number of ways you can... tell us what's important to you."

Todd Stone, Minister of Transport

are safety and economic development. Stone cited the Pacific Gateway Initiative as one of his agency's most important successes of the past decade.

"What makes (it) so incredibly unique and effective is there was nothing like it anywhere else in the world," he said.

"It represents a partnership between the public sector and the private sector, coming together and, in a collaborative way, coordinating our investments to maximize the bang for the buck."

He said that Phase One of the initiative represented combined investments of \$25 billion in roads, rail, airports and ports, including such projects as the South Fraser Perimeter Road, improvements to the Trans-Canada Highway - including the Port Mann Bridge in the lower mainland - as well as significant investments in airports around the province.

This public-private partnership Stone mentioned apparently even led to some unexpected cooperation between, if not mortal enemies, then at least long time competitors.

"One of the really positive developments that came out of this - the type of cooperation that is possible when we all sit down at same table and agree on some common goals - was track sharing arrangements between CN and CP," he said, "whereby they're actually using each other's track at different times of day and days of the week to maximize the throughput of goods to the benefit of both corporations and our economy in general."

Touching again on the vision aspect of the government he represents, Stone pointed out some policy changes that were made to help facilitate the flow of commerce.

"One of the things government can do besides signing cheques is to get out of your way - reduce regulation, challenge the status quo, from a policy perspective," he said.

Looking forward, Stone said Phase

Two of the Pacific Gateway program, which is now ongoing, will see "\$25 billion of combined public and private sector investments, again in every facet of transportation around the province."

The Minister said there'll be more work done on upgrading the Trans-Canada Highway in the Lower Mainland, noting that he would personally like to see it widened to six lanes from Langley to Abbotsford or beyond.

He also said the government will continue investing in the Trans-Canada Hwy. east of Kamloops, an area that features sections of narrow, twisting two-lane highway that is challenging enough for cars, let alone trucks.

He promised there'd be more four-lane sections, more passing lanes and more truck pullouts on that highway, as well as on other major routes through the Interior.

All this work will coincide with what Stone referred to as one of his greatest opportunities as Minister: developing a new, longer-range transportation plan.

"In the throne speech last February, the premier announced a new intermodal transportation plan that will effectively be our roadmap, our vision document, for the next 10 years," he said.

"This plan will focus on aligning provincial priorities with economic development jobs, it will support LNG industrial development, it will support rural B.C., and better integration of all modes of transportation."

Even better for truckers, potentially, Stone said "it will also include for the first time in our province's history, a specific trucking industry

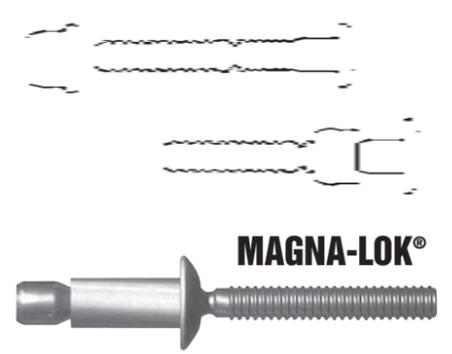
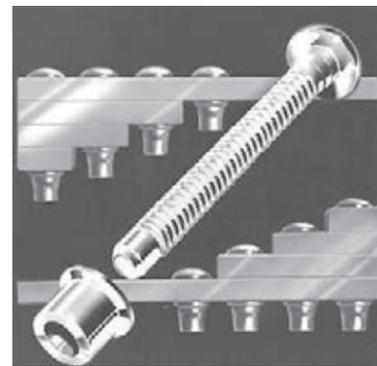
strategy" adding that "there will be a tremendous amount of opportunity in the coming months for engagement across all parts of British Colum-

bia. There'll be a number ways you can feed your input in that process to tell us what's important to you." **TW**



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Start with a used truck, set aside some money: Sutherland

Continued from page 1

office, having spent eight hours to make one delivery.

"I thought there's no way I'm going to have a job," Sutherland recalled. But to his surprise, the owner hired him on the spot.

A lot has happened to Sutherland since that first trip. He worked as a company driver for about five years, but always with an eye towards buying a truck of his own. Those early years he operated the company truck as though it were his and carefully tracked his numbers to determine whether he could make it as an owner/operator.

"To try to jump in with no knowledge of what you're doing, I don't think you can make it," Sutherland said.

"The problem with a lot of guys is that they see that first big paycheque and they end up buying fancy cars, motorbikes, holidays. That money has got to be saved for the truck. The truck comes first. You've got to be able to maintain it. You blow a tire on the road - we blew a tire outside Dryden, Ont. on a Sunday morning. The guy wanted \$1,463 for one drive tire. That's a lot of money when it should only be \$500. So you better have some money behind you."

Sutherland tracked his figures carefully and when the truck was in the shop, he'd ask the mechanics what it cost to do certain maintenance and repairs.

"I kept track of my miles, my hours, my drops, my picks, the fuel," Sutherland explained. "I kept a running tab of the cost of the fuel and the repairs

on the truck, even though it was a company truck. It was a great experience to learn that way."

With nearly five years as a company driver in the books, Sutherland decided to take the plunge and buy his own truck.

sure I made some money so that I could pay repair bills if they came along and to be able to put money on the table for the family and kids at home."

Those early years on the road running long-haul across North America were invigorating, yet being away from

home was also difficult.

Sutherland was married to his wife Cindy and they had two children, Matthew and Cheryl.

"I'd be gone for three weeks at a time," Sutherland recalled. "Back then, we didn't have the use of a cell phone so it was running into a phone booth and contact was pretty limited sometimes."

"They're starting to figure out that drivers are not just numbers."

George Sutherland, O/O of Year

"We started with an older truck, something we could put down a good chunk of money on," he said. "I kept the dollar value down so I could make

Sutherland leased on with Bison Transport in 2006, and around that time was looking to improve the quality of time spent with his family. Bison allowed him to train his wife Cindy to drive and the two drove team for a while. A short while.

"It was interesting," Sutherland said of driving with his wife. "She went to driving school and got her licence and then she came into the truck for about three months and told me everything I did wrong, so I learned a lot from her. Then she got behind the wheel and I got to explain a few things to her. It was a great two years, but it's over. I don't think she wants to come back again and I really enjoy my quiet time now."

While both George and Cindy joke about their time together on the road as being trying at times, they're very much committed to each other, their family and their business. The Sutherlands are a close-knit family despite George's time on the road and away from home. When he received his award, son Matt gave a heartfelt speech that attested to his admiration for his father, who he claims instilled in him his values and work ethic.

Still, the time on the road had taken its toll. Sutherland longed for a more consistent schedule and he found it recently in a local job with Bison, delivering freight to customers within the Greater Toronto Area. The new job pays him an hourly rate for all his work and he enjoys the ability to get out of the truck more frequently throughout the day and to interact more with customers.

"I wanted to have more of a schedule," Sutherland said of the change. "I wanted to know when I was going to work and when I was coming home at the end of the week. I also like getting out of the truck and meeting people. I was finding with the long-haul that you're stuck behind that wheel every day of the week; you're not getting out as much as you should."

Running local also allows Sutherland to be more productive throughout his driving shifts, taking advantage of dock delays to do paperwork or maintenance.

"I do a lot of my business planning when I'm sitting at a customer's dock," he said. "You might as well use valuable time. I've been known to throw on a set of coveralls and go underneath the truck and do a grease job at a dock."

The local gig also allows him to get in a little more exercise, which has become important to Sutherland in recent years. He recognized years ago that his health was failing and he needed to make some changes. He

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was on three blood pressure medications and extremely overweight. Bison signed on for the first Truckload Carriers Association Weight Loss Show-down and when Sutherland saw the notice on a bulletin board he decided to join Bison's team in the competition. He dropped 170 lbs in six months and was able to discontinue all his blood pressure medication. The results came from eating healthier and doing laps around his tractor-trailer.

"That was at the time when my wife was in the truck, so it was much easier when she was with me," he said. "We quit eating in restaurants. We made wise choices. We had a coach that would call us once a week and try to keep us in line - immeasurable help. Bison, as a company, was supporting us. Every time you get out of the truck you do your circle check around the truck. I would usually do 11-15 laps. One tire this trip, second tire the next trip and just keep going."

Sutherland admits he has since regained about 70 lbs of the weight he lost but he has joined the NAL Insurance Healthy Trucker program through Bison and lost another 10 lbs and is back on track. He said he's encouraged and motivated by the attention driver health and wellness has received in recent months.

"These companies are starting to care," Sutherland said. "They're starting to figure out that drivers are not just numbers - we're human beings - and they're worried about our welfare."

While driving locally affords Sutherland the opportunity to get more exercise, dealing with Toronto traffic can't be good for the blood pressure, can it?

"You have to have a different mindset," Sutherland acknowledged. "You don't try and push yourself through the traffic, you just kind of go with the flow of traffic or a little slower. A slow and steady pace will get you farther down the road than trying to be fast and pushy."

He also finds the local job is easier on his truck. He's now putting on about 1,000 miles a week compared to the 3,000-3,200 he was racking up when running linehaul. Sutherland's 2009 Kenworth is getting a little long in the tooth but he hopes to baby it for a few more years.

"We're meticulous on oil changes and grease jobs," he said. "I don't go over 20,000 kms between oil changes and grease jobs usually once a week now. Anything, even the smallest air leak, you have to be on top of it."

New tractors are more expensive than ever, largely due to the emissions-reducing systems that have been put in place over the past decade. Asked if it's even viable for an owner/operator to buy a new tractor today, Sutherland said yes, but it has to be earned.

"As a beginning driver, you have to look at the used market first," he said. "Then pay off that first truck and then get into your second truck, which is probably a little bit newer, and get it paid off. Then put some money aside, so you've got your truck to trade in plus you've got some money. I think you can still as an owner/operator get into a new truck but you're not going to do it on your first or second or third go-round. My first new one was my fifth truck. Get some money put away. Remember that the truck comes first. Without the truck, you're not going to have a paycheque."

Sutherland is a current Ontario

Trucking Association Road Knight, a role that sees him going out into the community to raise awareness about the trucking industry and careers within it. It's a role he relishes.

"Schools are the greatest things," he said. "It's amazing how many kids want to get inside the trailer. They don't realize how big this thing is. We get schoolteachers up there, vice-principals and principals. It opens their eyes."

Asked what would attract more drivers to the industry, Sutherland doesn't hesitate. "More money," he said. "I think that's one of the key issues. Flexibility of home time and having a company that's honest."

As Owner/Operator of the Year, Sutherland won \$6,000 cash, a diamond ring, an evening in Toronto with his family and several prizes from the award's sponsors, Castrol, Goodyear and Mack Trucks. Visit Trucknews.com to watch video interviews with Sutherland in the upcoming weeks. **TW**

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Panel talks regulations at STA's annual meeting

By Sonia Straface

SASKATOON, Sask. – Rules and regulations were all the rage during the Saskatchewan Trucking Association's 77th Annual General Meeting and Gala Oct. 25.

The day began with a panel of experts who talked rules and regulations in the province and what the industry can expect in the next few years as far as legislation goes.

First up at bat was Blair Wagar, the assistant deputy minister for policy and programs, Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure, who spoke briefly before his colleague. He focused his presentation on the growth the province is seeing and how the ministry is working to deal with this in terms of infrastructure.

"Saskatchewan is experiencing some growth at a rate that we have not experienced in the past and it's been happening over a fairly sustained period of time," he said. "From a private sector perspective and a public sector perspective, while it's an opportunity, there's a lot of challenges. There is a growth plan in place, it does have a focus on growth and a focus on quality of life. A big part of that growth plan from government's perspective is infrastructure. And of that overall infrastructure plan we think of hospitals and schools and transportation is seen as that major trade enabler for our province."

Wagar said that the Ministry is focused on harmonization though it could take some time before all the provinces are on the same page, regulations-wise.

"When we think of the work that the Ministry of Highways is doing, harmonization has been key," he said. "I know it doesn't move at the pace that the industry would like it to, and it doesn't move at the depth the industry would like it to either, in terms of being consistent across the provinces and there's work that's been done and we made a lot of progress. There's a lot more work to be done and it's a continually changing environment as the industry evolves and innovates itself, our regulatory environment needs to keep up. So I look at harmonization not as a destination but more of a journey in terms of continually improving and aligning our regulations."

There to expand on Wagar's presentation was Andy Cipywnyk, manager of trucking policy, Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure. Cipywnyk spoke mostly about harmonization of the Prairie provinces, something that the province has been working out for a long time.

"At the end of the day, we all must, as much as it is possible to, have the same rules," he said. "We may never have the same rules. For example, Alberta has a dimensional limit on wide loads, that's predominately because of the heavy-haul in Fort McMurray. They also have a lot more traffic than we do. We're never going to necessarily be exactly the same, recognizing that there are certain re-

straints but we'll do our best so that we make it the same."

He also brought up the pilot program Ontario is running on the Walmart Supercube 60-ft. semi-trailer and if that size of trailer would be making its way to the west coast.

"I know that Walmart and other companies have approached other provinces. I believe Alberta is going to be running a pilot too, so it looks like there's no issues with that vehicle other than it happens to be longer than a regular semi-trailer. Before we adopt that in the province, we're going to have to talk to make sure that if we go there, what I'd like to see happen, and what I've been pushing in the west, is that we all do it together,

so that way there's not one company or industry that has an advantage and that we all approach this the same way. We don't want to see anyone disadvantaged."

Last to speak was Earl Cameron, vice-president of SGI Auto Fund who focused his talk on traffic rules and regulations. He began by talking about the appointment of the province's Traffic Safety Committee last year that made 26 recommendations to better the roads of Saskatchewan. He said that the focus was on harsher punishments for drunk driving, speeding, and not wearing a seatbelt.

Cameron also spoke of the most recent recommendation about changing the practices of roadside impoundments on commercial vehicles. He said the recommendation is to protect owners who have safe fleets and happen to have a driver who isn't following the law.

"If your vehicle is impounded, you

can get an immediate release if you have a safety program and evidence of that," he said. "You also have to have the abstract of that driver. The vehicle will be released back to the owner immediately and the driver will receive a three-day suspension."

He said the recommendation was received well with the association and others in the industry, who have heard it so far.

Finally, commenting on the recent news coverage in Saskatchewan about the implementation of photo radar in the province, Cameron said: "We have a pilot project coming up on photo radar. You've probably seen this in the news. Photo radar is probably one of the most polarizing traffic safety issue. Half the people think it's good and the other half say (they) don't like it. They will be in fixed locations, so they won't be hiding around the corner or in high speed corridors." **TW**

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Brighter, lighter, cheaper

Lighting systems are better than ever before and more advances are coming.

By Harry Rudolfs

Truck lighting systems keep getting better: brighter, lighter, cheaper and more durable. The latest generation of LED lighting is going to have great longevity. Burned out headlamps should become a thing of the past.

GE's LED Nighthawk is designed to last 15,000 hours and replaces the seven-inch round and 5"x7" rectangular lamps. It draws less power than standard halogen lights while providing better road visibility (a 30% improvement, according to GE). No special adaptors required, the sealed beams plug into any existing 12- or 24-volt system. The Nighthawks come with a three-year warranty and offer a spectrum of white light close to that of daylight, accomplished by way of a non-yellowing poly-carbonate lens.

The manufacturer claims its units are particularly durable – and made in the US. Diodes are better at withstanding shocks and bumps than filaments, anyway, and Nighthawk headlamps feature a diecast aluminum housing and epoxy-sealed electronics. They're rated for temperatures between -40 C and 50 C, so extremes of weather shouldn't be an issue. Nighthawks are designed to last for years,

but if you're really interested in lamp longevity, GE's 2-6X Longer Life brand might be for you.

GE also offers an array of turn, signal and stop lights, that are available in standard, 2-6X Longer Life, and Nighthawk varieties, as well as a line of fog lights for on or off-road applications. Brand new to their catalogue is the 4.5-inch round utility light, which is maintenance-free ("except for cleaning the lens"), though I suppose any trailer hook-up light is maintenance-free until it stops working. This one shouldn't though, as it's backed by a two-year warranty.

Reliability and robustness are the watchwords when it comes to stop, tail and turn lights – or any trailer light for that matter. Getting a mechanic to climb a ladder and replace a clearance light is going to mean downtime any way you look at it.

Extreme conditions wreak havoc on electrical connectors, plug-ins and pigtails. So Peterson Manufacturing, with its subsidiary company Maxi-Seal, has developed the Defender System which offers a 10-year warranty against corrosion and defects. The package includes Piranha LED lights along with its modular harness wiring system which they claim to be totally

sealed against moisture and corrosion. This would be particularly of interest to fleets running Canadian provinces like Ontario where brine usage is particularly heavy. Peterson has been testing this "integrated moisture barrier" on 20 trucks running with a large US fleet (they won't say which one). So far, they tell me the parts and assemblies are coming up clean.

At its campus in Grandview, Mo. (close to Kansas City), Peterson has also developed the LumenX series of truck and trailer lights which is touted as being at the forefront of LED technology. Using the standard format of seven diodes per light, they are getting reds 25% brighter than regular LEDs and ambers 100% brighter. Their engineers opted for "white diodes over coloured diodes for their superior thermal management – they don't lose intensity," according to chief project engineer, Jim Hansen. The white diodes provide a consistent look from reds to ambers to back-ups, he says, without dead zones or hot spots.

The new amber lights are a big deal because up until now LEDs haven't been bright enough to be legally used on front turn signals – there wasn't not enough contrast between the turn signals and headlights. But the LumenX LED amber turn signals are twice as bright and compliant with all safety standards.

Peterson has more products up its sleeve. One of them is dubbed "the Cyclops," because of its one separated white lens and beam. This is an integrated stop/tail/turn signal with a

self-contained back-up light.

"The idea of integrating a white back-up light into a red lamp was a feasible extension of the LumenX architecture," says Hanson. Like their other start/stop/tail lamps, the LumenX two-in-one lights are available in four-inch round and six-inch oval configurations. When used in pairs, the two-in-one lights meet DOT standards.

Peterson's 359 series cove lighting system is unique method for lighting the interior of reefer units, dry vans or small box trucks. These are 1"x18" tubes of LEDs that fit snugly in the corner of a trailer or the box of a straight truck. The lights can be connected in series for exemplary illumination and replace the overhead sunken pod lights that are the norm inside trailers and reefers. Refrigerated trailers no longer require sunken light fixtures that detract from a trailer's R-value. No holes required and the cove lights can be retro-fitted to any unit. All Peterson lights mentioned above are US-made and competitive with foreign manufacturers.

Lighting component manufacturer Truck-Lite also has some new products. Just released is the 4"x6" rectangular LED headlight aimed at the heavy-duty market. Marketing communications specialist Mitchell Wilston says, "they will be the industry's lightest 4x6 headlight."

Even more interesting is the debut of a seven-inch round "heated" headlight, which will no doubt please some drivers. I've heard several complaints about ice build-up on LED headlights and this should take care of that problem. According to Wilston, this lamp contains a micro-array of heating coils that switch on when the temperature drops below 50 F.

"Our research and customer feedback indicates that snow and ice build-up on headlight lenses affects a very small amount of users, in very specific and extreme climates," says Wilston. "But that particular product speaks to how willing Truck-Lite is to create targeted solutions."

Wilston suggests that customization is important to fleets and owner/operators alike. "Different trucking applications require different builds, and lighting is a key component to these builds."

To wit Truck-Lite has just released two new lines of products under their Signal Stat brand: one batch of low-diode lamps and another featuring an integral flange. Diodes have gotten brighter and often fewer are required these days. But the choice is really an individual one. For instance Signal-Stat has stop/turn/tail lights available with a 10- or a 24-diode pattern. "It's a different look, really," says Wilston.

The light emitting diode (LED) created a revolution of sorts and has all but replaced the incandescent bulb invented by Thomas Edison some 135 years ago. There are still some heavy truck systems using incandescent filaments, but the LED is going to win this war.

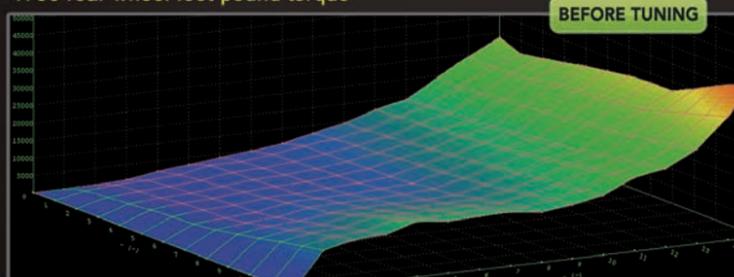
"Every OEM project that Truck-Lite is working on – for truck or trailer – is utilizing LED technology," says Wilston. "There are so many benefits (longer life, lower current draw, brighter and whiter light, impact resistance, less maintenance etc.) that the transition to LED won't slow down anytime soon." **TW**

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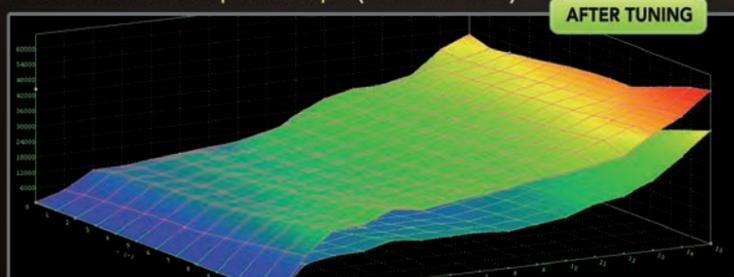
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The 2015 IFTA agenda

When you Google “IFTA” in your ongoing quest for fuel tax wisdom, it’s a little weird to see “IFTA Inc.” at the top of the search results. I mean, what is that?

A company that processes tax returns? Nope.

IFTA Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed to manage and administer the International Fuel Tax Agreement. In short, it helps make sure that all 48 states and 10 provinces that signed on to IFTA are working together. When you think about it, IFTA is a remarkable tax system.

Each jurisdiction collects fuel taxes on its own behalf and also on behalf of 57 other jurisdictions, all the while retaining sovereign authority to set its own tax rates, exemptions, and other rules. With so many different jurisdictions involved, plus those of us from the industry side, someone needs to conduct this band to make sure everyone is playing off the same sheet. That job falls to IFTA Inc.

It’s no easy task. State and provincial fuel tax administrators are debating a wide range of issues right now, including two key items on the agenda for 2015:

Taxing CNG and LNG

While natural gas is moving full-

Permits & Licensing

Sandy Johnson



speed-ahead as a fuel for commercial trucks, the IFTA community is still rounding the learning curve on how to report and tax it.

CNG (compressed natural gas) and LNG (liquified natural gas) are not taxed at the same rate. Heck, CNG isn’t even measured as a liquid. It’s a gas, measured in cubic feet or cubic metres. You have to convert the gas into a liquid in order to calculate the tax, and conversion rates vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Then you have to deal with evaporation rates (liquid vs gas). U.S. and metric measurement systems complicate matters even more.

A move toward uniform tax reporting of natural gas is under way. IFTA members are reviewing a proposal to adopt the IRS conversion factor of 126.67 cubic feet of natural gas to equal a gallon of gasoline starting in July 2016. This should make it easier to convert CNG to liquid volumes and report it on the IFTA tax return.

With LNG, two different methodologies exist to convert the fuel from weight measures to volume measures: straight weight, where one gallon weighs 3.5 lbs,

and energy equivalent weight, where one diesel gallon equivalent (DGE) weighs 6.06 lbs.

In the United States, retail stations want to use DGEs so the public can compare the costs of using LNG with diesel. Also in the US, the responsibility for determining measurement requirements has been delegated to the state level. Currently, 17 states have adopted the definition that a DGE of LNG weighs 6.06 lbs.

In Canada, the federal government determines the units of measure and is strongly opposed to energy equivalents. As a result, all provinces will be required to sell LNG in mass units of measure (ie., kilograms). There are other alternative fuels in development. Ever heard of dimethyl ether? Neither had I. It’s yet another fuel being tested – and one that will need to be measured and taxed if it’s used in IFTA-qualified vehicles, just like natural gas.

GPS-based distance records

The success of IFTA is rooted in cooperation not only among jurisdictions but also between government and industry. Nothing tests (or strains) this cooperative spirit like a compliance audit. For several years, a subcommittee of tax administrators and industry representatives called the IFTA Compliance Audit Working Group (I-CAWG) have been working on a long list of proposed rule changes ranging from the retention and availability of records to the

adequacy of records to conduct an audit. One key topic involves records produced wholly or partly by a vehicle-tracking system, including distance records based on a global positioning system (GPS).

I’ve written about this in previous columns and I’ll continue to beat the drum: there is no consensus among the jurisdictions about how GPS should be used to report IFTA/IRP distance. Once there is consensus, a change may take several years to implement.

If you’re a carrier, this much is certain. First, you have to comply with the rules as they stand today. No matter how you collect the data you use to calculate distance (meaning manual trip records or something electronically generated), it’s up to you to satisfy whatever jurisdiction will audit you. Study its IFTA compliance manual. If you have questions, contact your provincial fuel tax office or seek help from a service bureau with experience managing IFTA compliance.

Second, monitor the issues. One of the benefits of IFTA Inc. is that it’s a clearinghouse of ballot measures, presentation materials, and meeting minutes, all of which are available at the IFTA web site, www.iftach.org. Bookmark it – no Googling necessary. **TW**

Sandy Johnson is the founder and managing director at North Star Fleet Solutions in Calgary. The company provides vehicle tax and license compliance services and also GPS-based fleet management solutions from Verizon Network Fleet. She can be reached at 877-860-8025 or northstarfleet.com.

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B.C. poised for economic boom, but not without challenges

By Jim Bray

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – The state of the province is strong – economic downturns notwithstanding – and should only get stronger in coming years. That was the upshot from the BCTA’s Sector Update, a half-day conference held just before the beginning of this year’s Truxpo exhibition in Abbotsford this past September.

The event saw some 100 movers and shakers from across B.C. and the west who turned out to catch up with various sectors of the province’s economy, including forestry, construction, mining, oil and gas, and intermodal shipping. And while the presenters didn’t spend a lot of time looking at the trucking industry per se, “each of those sectors relies on truck transportation,” said Louise Yako, president and CEO of the BCTA, “and we wanted to give kind of an overview of the next three to five years – and potentially longer for some of them – so the trucking company representatives (on-hand) could begin to think about how they might... take advantage of those situations.”

First up was Ken Peacock, chief economist and vice-president of the Business Council of British Columbia. “The key thing right now for British Columbia is what we view as a (weakly) recovering US economy,” he said,

noting that sluggish growth is a global phenomenon for now, but “we think things will get better in 2015. Interest rates will stay low, at least for another year, maybe more, and the lower loonie will lift B.C.’s exports sector and help many exporters be more competitive.”

Peacock’s bullish on liquefied natural gas (LNG), mostly post-2015, an industry he said is still in its infancy in B.C.

Peacock also cited changing demographics he said are helping move economic activity – and immigration – east, challenging B.C.’s position in confederation. “The dynamic in Western Canada is absolutely shifting to Saskatchewan and Alberta in terms of economic activity as well as population growth,” he said, estimating that the westernmost province will be fifth or sixth in a new Canadian economic pecking order, behind Newfoundland and Labrador and even Ontario.

Rick Jeffery, president and CEO of Coast Forest Products Association, was a bit more upbeat about his sector.

“The economy (has) diversified, which is a good thing for us all. We’re still the second largest exporter, just behind coal, and we’re by far and away the biggest forest products industry in Canada.” Noting that 40% of B.C.’s regional economies depend on forestry, Jeffery credited the industry’s world

-class forest practices and stewardship for helping its success continue. “We do it better than anyone else does, contrary to what you might read,” he said.

Issues affecting continued growth, Jeffery said, include excessive government.

the oil and gas sector, with a particular focus on LNG, which he said is “a big part of the story of the opportunity for B.C. and Canada.”

Morrison said oil and gas is the largest major Canadian product development industry, and noted that B.C. is the second largest producer of natural gas in Canada.

“We employ 12,000 people directly, that’s about 20% of the size of the forest industry overall, but we’re located almost exclusively in the Northeast of the province.”

Morrison said things should only get better as his sector continues to be a significant economic driver and revenue generator in B.C., claiming that over the next 25 years, direct employment could reach 40,000 people, with taxes and royalties

‘This would’ve been a different province if there was a different type of government in Victoria.’

Philip Hochstein, ICBA

“It’s one thing to be regulated, but we are overregulated despite the fact that we have the best...track record across the world in terms of delivering sustainable forest management,” he said. “The government still reaches into almost all manner of our business and has something to say about it and it affects our competitiveness.”

Jeffery also noted the industry has what he called a social license problem.

“If you pick up the paper on any given day, you wouldn’t know that we’re an innovative, greenhouse gas-friendly, carbon-friendly, sustainable industry,” he said, bemoaning “arm-chair quarterbacks” whose perception seems to be that “we just cut the last old growth tree down and killed the spotted owl on the way. It’s just not true.”

Jeffery tipped his hat to the trucking industry, saying “Without you, we can’t do our jobs. You move all manner of things for us, from logs to lumber, containers, supplies, goods. It’s a very close relationship and we’re very happy that you’re around.”

From forestry the focus moved to mining, with Alec Morrison, director of industry relations for the Mining Association of B.C., talking about the opportunities his organization sees.

“We represent the safest heavy industry in the province and one of the most important job creators,” he said. “Our vision and our mission is to ensure we have a thriving mining industry for generations to come.”

Morrison predicted slow, cautious growth over the next few years.

“B.C. is rich in mineral potential and a leader in mineral development, knowledge and experience building mines,” he said, noting that growth in mining would also be good for the trucking industry. “For every project, for every mine, there’s trucking opportunities.”

Geoff Morrison, manager of British Columbia operations for the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, updated the crowd on the state of

paid exceeding \$160 billion, especially if significant LNG development occurs.

“We see the future being very, very positive,” he said, predicting that world demand for primary energy sources will increase 35% over the next quarter century, while natural gas demand will increase 50%. “It is very clear that as a planet we consume a lot of energy and the things that are driving that are population growth and standard of living,” he said, adding that there are a billion people on the planet currently who don’t have electricity. “There is a strong desire and need for energy that improves peoples’ lives, and our challenge as British Columbians and Canadians is how do we satisfy that demand? How do we...minimize the environmental impact it might have on the planet? We think natural gas is a big part of that.”

Shale gas, too, though Canada may have to find some non-traditional customers for it. “It’s abundant and found everywhere,” Morrison said, adding that “our customer base is changing because traditional customers (ie. the US) have their own supply.”

The good news is that the forecast for natural gas consumption worldwide is “through the roof” and accessing non-traditional markets could potentially up the income ante. “We see this huge price differential between North America, where gas trades at three or four dollars a unit and Asia where it’s trading for \$15 or more,” he said.

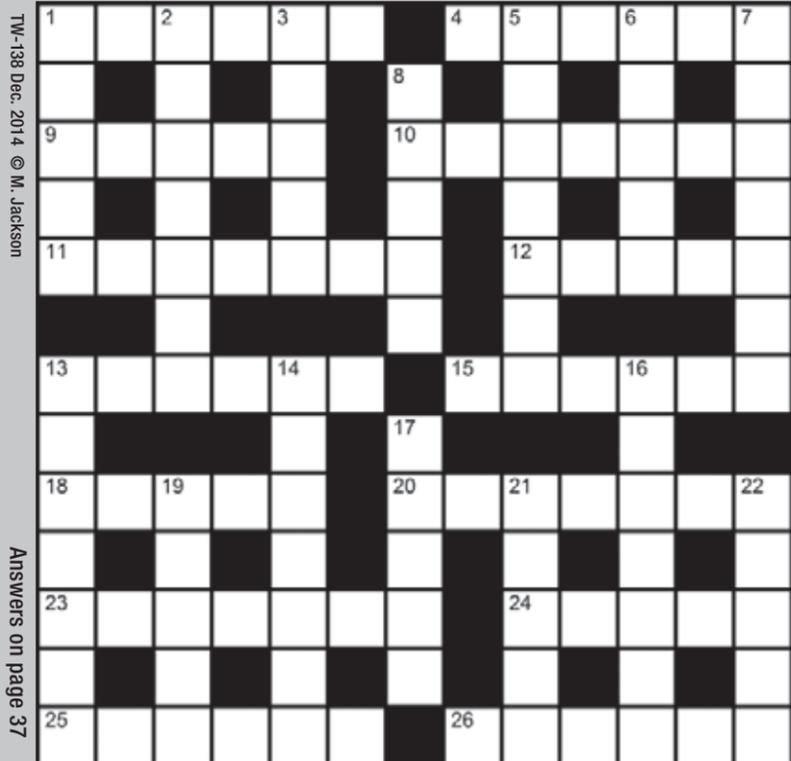
Philip Hochstein, president of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association – which represents and services B.C.’s construction sector – kicked off his segment by lauding the fact that B.C. dodged a socialist bullet in its last election.

“Luckily, the pollsters were wrong and Christy Clark won based on economic development, which was her platform,” he said. “That’s very important to us; this would’ve been a different province if there was a different type of government in Victoria.”

Hochstein cited excavation workers

Continued on page 35

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



TW-138 Dec. 2014 © M. Jackson

Answers on page 37

Across

- 1 With 2-Across, Christmas cargo carrier
- 4 See 1-Across clue
- 9 Cambridge, ON based Challenger _____ Freight
- 10 Castrol diesel oil
- 11 Suspension components
- 12 Diesel pumps' unit of measure
- 13 Truck-insurance document
- 15 Some big-rig pilots
- 18 CB-radio brand
- 20 Engine-incontinence inhibitor (3,4)
- 23 Flexible driveshaft couplings (1,6)
- 24 Windshield trim accessory
- 25 Super _____ tire type
- 26 Rider atop "Beverly Hillbillies" truck

Down

- 1 Convoy constituents
- 2 Arkansas' "The _____ State"
- 3 Ohio's "Rubber City"
- 5 Puslinch, ON based van carrier
- 6 Dash-gauge alternative, _____ light
- 7 Airplane garages
- 8 New-truck document, perhaps
- 13 Perennially popular ranchers' rides
- 14 CB-radio setting
- 16 Manitoba border town
- 17 Supersized road-hazard beast
- 19 UPS truck colour
- 21 Harley clutch or brake control
- 22 UK big-rig term

Five last minute tax tactics that can save you money

Come the New Year, you're not just turning the page on the month gone by, you're taking down an entire calendar and replacing it with a fresh one. For a day or two, life is a series of empty boxes neatly lined up across the page, waiting to be filled.

Until then, you have December to contend with. The weather. The traffic. The commitments. The lists.

The good news is that you have a month to make decisions that can save money on this year's tax bill. Here's where to start:

Keep the dates straight

Businesses use the accrual method of accounting. That means you report income in the fiscal period you earn it, not when you receive it, and you deduct expenses in the fiscal period you incur them, whether you actually paid them in that period or not.

For example, your first broker settlement in 2015 probably will be for a pay period ending Dec. 31, 2014. That income counts toward 2014. Likewise, the cell phone bill dated Dec. 28, 2014, is a 2014

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



expense even though you'll pay it just before it's due in the third week of January. Make sure 2014 income and expenses are reported on your 2014 return.

Make big purchases

If you plan to make a major purchase in the near future, consider doing so before Dec. 31. There's an advantage to loading up on deductible expenses in a high-income year. Spending \$3,000 on tires in December could save you \$900 owed to CRA when you file your 2014 tax return this April. Buying those tires in February, the following tax year, will delay your savings until 2016.

Collect your logbooks

Canadian and US laws require truck drivers to keep their logbooks for six months. Tax auditors have different standards, though. For instance, if you

claim a meal expense, your logbook becomes a tax document. Like any other income tax receipt, you're required to keep it for up to seven years.

When logbooks are used as trip records for IFTA and IRP, an auditor will want to see four years of records for IFTA and five and a half years for IRP. That's not always possible if you use an EOBR or electronic logbook. Find out where your logbook data is stored, how long it's kept, and then download or print out as much of your logbook records as you can. Make a habit of doing it every month. Telling an auditor that you can't access your EOBR data or electronic logs is like saying the dog ate your homework. Or worse, considering the consequences.

Review your tax payments

Installments aren't tax payments in advance. They're paid throughout the calendar year in which you are earning the taxable income.

This month, compare what you paid in installments in 2014 against your estimate for the entire year. If you miss a

deadline or owe more tax than you actually paid, CRA will levy penalties and interest. In fact, not only will CRA add interest to your tax bill come April 30, it will charge interest on your overdue tax balance, which of course includes installment interest. That's right. They'll want interest on your interest.

Plan

What? You haven't been paying your tax installments this year?

Saving money to pay income taxes takes discipline, especially when there's a pile of other bills to pay. We advise our clients to apply their quarterly GST/HST refunds to their income tax installment payments.

CRA can direct-deposit your GST/HST refunds into a separate account from your business operations to make sure the money doesn't get used for everyday activities.

If you need tax planning help, see a qualified accountant, preferably one who's familiar with trucking. Put it on your list while there's still time to do something about your taxes in 2014.

You can start next year out fresh – with peace of mind and a plan to keep more of your hard-earned money in your pocket. **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 800-461-5970.

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION 2014 Summit



More efficient transportation strategies start with a frank discussion of current realities

With the North American economy gaining strength, the focus of shipper-carrier relationships is shifting. The shift is towards more efficient transportation strategies and practices to ensure adequate capacity for the growing amount of freight that needs to be moved and the quality of service that needs to be provided. After years spent dealing with a divisive inward focus on cost cutting it's a welcome sign to see both sides of the transportation equation once again looking outwards and focusing on improvements to our commercial transportation system.

Although the intentions are good, and the economic climate improving, the challenges remain substantial. Success, we strongly believe, is dependent on shippers and carriers finding ways to work together in a new spirit of cooperation and collaboration. And that is what drives us to bring shippers and carriers together every year for our annual Surface Transportation Summit.

Our third annual Surface Transportation Summit – organized once again in partnership with Dan Goodwill & Associates – took place Oct. 15 at the Mississauga Convention Centre. The focus on working together, on collaboration over confrontation, must be resonating with both shippers and carriers as our attendance has doubled since our first year. Almost 400 top-level transportation and logistics professionals answered our call for a full day of education and networking.

Our blue chip lineup included almost 30 speakers and they were able to provide deep and insightful views into the economic outlook, the reasons behind mergers & acquisitions activity, the regulatory and insurance scenes, alternative fuels, insurance telematics, warehouse strategies, human resource practices, and trends that could shape transportation's future. Back by popular demand were sessions that provided frank debates and helpful tips on the shipper-carrier relationship. New this year were two formal "speed networking" sessions designed to help attendees leave the conference with key new business contacts.

The exchange of ideas surpassed expectations but the 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.canadianshipper.com, 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. 14, 2015 into your calendar for our next Surface Transportation Summit.

Lou Smyrlis
Publisher & editorial director
Trucking Group,
Transportation Media

Nick Krukowski
Publisher
Canadian Shipper
Transportation Media

Dan Goodwill
President
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Associates

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Continued economic strength ahead, senior Scotiabank economist predicts Now's the time to fix what's broken in your business, Kriska's Seymour advises

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Leading economic indicators are pointing towards continued economic growth and favourable conditions for motor carriers.

That was the upbeat message from Carlos Gomes, senior economist with Scotiabank, when providing an economic outlook at the sold-out Surface Transportation Summit Oct. 15.

"Despite all the events of the last week in the equity markets, we continue to be optimistic with respect to our outlook," Gomes told nearly 400 motor carrier and shipper executives.

Gomes said global economic growth is expected to accelerate over the next year. New order activity, which tends to lead industrial activity, has been on the rise globally.

"When we look at the global economy, most regions are on an upward trend, especially the US," Gomes said.

The European economy has returned to growth mode, albeit at a modest pace. China's economic growth is expected remain around 7% per year.

While household debt in the US and Canada is high, Gomes said he isn't alarmed because interest rates are low and household finances are actually healthier than in the past.

"In both the US and Canada, the key thing that's important is that household balance sheets have improved significantly," Gomes said.

In 2007, about 20% of disposable income went to paying debt, interest and energy costs. Today it's about 15%.

"While debt is high, the fact rates are low and energy prices are actually declin-

are financially stable and manufacturing activity is up.

Asked if he has any concerns, Gomes said economic conditions in Europe and China still bear watching, as do interest rates in the US and Canada, though indications are that they'll be kept low for the immediate future.

David Newman, equity research analyst, Cormark Securities, agreed with Gomes that economic indicators are strong and so too are conditions facing trucking providers. Newman noted about 20% of US trucking capacity was removed due to the recession, a tougher regulatory environment and the driver shortage. Trucking rates are going up, Newman said, and active truck utilization has reached 99%, giving carriers some pricing power.

Newman pointed out the US economy should remain strong, even if there is turmoil in Europe and China, since 80% of US corporate profits are domestic. The Canadian Purchasing Managers' Index recently hit a nine-month high, which is another indicator of freight volume strength.

Cormark's own North American Freight Monitor points "toward a healthy freight volume environment" as well as pricing increases, Newman said. Canadian ports are "booming," he added, thanks to the diversion of containers from the ports of L.A. and Long Beach, which experienced labour issues over the summer.

The Canadian spot market has seen volumes rise 42% year-over-year and rates have been increasing, which is now cascading over into contract rates, Newman said.

Providing a fleet perspective, Mark Seymour, president of Kriska Holdings, said

'There's lots of work to do around drivers and wages and the way we treat them.'

Mark Seymour, Kriska

carriers need to take advantage of current conditions and a healthy rate environment to fix what's broken within their organizations.

"We've had a good run the last three to four years," Seymour admitted. "It has been a good run but there's lots of work to do around our drivers and wages and the way we treat them. Those are the areas we are working on the most right now."

Seymour also advised carriers to take advantage of the opportunity

to re-assess how they run their businesses now that freight volumes and rates are strong. And this will require working with shippers.

"There are lots of opportunities right now to work on the issues within our business as it relates to profitability and discipline," Seymour explained. "We can take this opportunity to fix things that are broken. There has never been a better time to do that; to tighten our network, charge for things we haven't been able to charge for in the past, to adjust short-term pricing strategies and not lock down into a three-year pricing model because our costs are going up too quickly. We are never able to engineer solutions and get waste out of the system if we're forever going back (to customers) year after year, wondering if we're going to be able to keep the business in certain lanes and certain markets." TW

ing as we speak, means it's not consuming a significant amount of household income," Gomes said. "It leaves significant disposable income for other purchases." This is good news for the auto sector, which has seen demand for new vehicles return to pre-recession levels while the average age of the fleet remains at a record high. "The financial conditions of households are very healthy and the average age of the fleet in the US is about 11.5 years. About 40% of all vehicles in the US are more than 12 years old. That tells you if they're not going to be replaced this year or next year, they'll definitely have to be replaced one to three years down the road, so that gives me confidence we're going to have a decent cycle for an extended period of time," Gomes said. Gomes sees Canadian exports growing 6% in 2015 and is bullish on the US economy, where consumers

Shipper-carrier collaboration and the 'cloud of continuous complaint'

By Julia Kuzeljevich

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – How do you define true collaboration between shippers and their carriers, when it comes to visible characteristics?

That was the question debated by a leading shipper-carrier panel at the 2014 Surface Transportation Summit at the Mississauga Convention Centre.

Jacque Meyers, president, Meyers Transportation Services, said true collaboration is about joint problem solving, long-term commitment and investment in that relationship.

"Give us a commitment of five years that you're going to work with us.

When you get to the step where you're investing and committing together the world is your oyster," she said.

Giving carriers that legitimate seat at the table is important.

"Collaboration saves you far more money than a poorly managed RFQ," Meyers said.

Susan Promane, Whirlpool Canada's director, supply chain, said that in her experience, "There aren't that many carriers who truly operate that way. How we define carrier management is that we make sure we articulate our business goals on a regular basis. We look at scorecards and reward annually. We lock in for two years, which

we consider to be realistic. We do test the market after this. We typically don't have that many changes but what we are really looking for are carriers who do what they say, and who can adapt to change, which is a real opportunity for some," she said.

"From my professional experience we have always taken the approach that the transport company we hire is an extension of our brand," said Anna Petrova, associate director, supply chain, for Ferrero Canada.

"Aligning strategies is an important part of the relationship. Our customers are the retailers who can punish us and fine us. When that happens it's important to stay aligned with the carriers. This is easier said than done, and requires commitment on both sides," she added.

Elias Demangos, president and CEO, Fortigo Transportation Management Group, stressed the communication factor as important to collaboration.

"It's about regular communication, and not letting issues fester. You have to go into this honestly. A lot of our partnerships are multi-year partnerships. A lot of hard work, dedication and straightforwardness has to go into continuing that partnership," he said.

It's a given that issues will arise, Demangos said, so "for me having a

Plan B is critical to how we play in the business."

When you're entering into a rate discussion, said Promane, "everyone has cost pressures but I want to understand a little more about what they (carriers) are doing to drive down their costs. As a true partnership that's what I expect from the other side. But oftentimes this is met with resistance."

"It's sometimes difficult for shippers to be very clear about their execution expectations. It takes only so long to agree on the rates and then it takes two years to cohabitate on this hopefully successful marriage. There's a lot of room for grey areas when the expectations are not defined," said Petrova.

She suggests formalizing them in a document and designating it as a service level agreement, or carrier document, or by something the parties will recognize as such.

"Do you want a dedicated CSR on your account? Do you want regular reports? All those things need to be clarified and transparent. Demonstrating mutual respect and cherishing the partnership is what builds the relationship," Petrova said.

From the carrier side, how do you demonstrate to your partner that you are worthy of their trust?

"Don't ever lie to your customers. If

my dispatcher lies to you they will not last as a dispatcher and I will not last as a supplier," said Meyers. "We are very open with our customers about where our costs are going, about our load balance and about what are we doing to improve our service levels. What do I expect back? Openness, honesty and transparency."

Ferrero's measurement of a carrier's performance, said Petrova, strongly considers the carrier's service capabilities.

"We measure on-time performance, carrier-controllable, safety, and what I would call compliance to administration, ie. billing accuracy, EDI compliance," said Promane.

Positive leadership at the carrier makes a difference, said Petrova.

"I attend lots of (transportation) conferences. They all tend to have that cloud of continuous complaint. We all have our challenges. We need to create more positive leadership for our teams and focus on our wins. I'm sure every transport company in this room has had great achievements. We're hoping for more visible positive leaderships – an industry that is always on the defensive is not very attractive," she said. "It's been very often that we as shippers had to drive the innovation. It so happened that for the most part it was always us." **TW**

'The Americans are coming'

And other reasons consolidation will continue

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – More consolidation within the Canadian trucking industry is coming, including the likely arrival of some major US players, according to experts speaking at the Surface Transportation Summit.

"I think the Americans are coming," warned Mark Seymour, president of Kriska Holdings. "They'll buy their way into Canada or find their way in some other way. Building mass and building scale puts us in a better position to defend against what it is they are likely to do."

Ongoing domestic consolidation and the potential arrival of new competitors from south of the border were a couple of the reasons Kriska chose recently to align with Mullen Group.

"Big customers are looking for capacity right now," Seymour said. "There are more discussions with shippers around capacity now than price."

Seymour said Kriska has tried growing organically for the past three to five years but has been unable to add capacity.

David Newman, equity research analyst with Cormark Securities, agreed that US fleets could be looking for a piece of the Canadian market as the owners of small-to mid-sized Canadian carriers look to sell.

"Smaller carriers face a whole host of challenges and it's going to get tougher," Newman said, citing a tightening regulatory environment and the driver shortage. "You've got US carriers kicking tires."

He cited Celadon's purchase of Yanke and Kenan Advantage Group's purchase of RTL Westcan's bulk division as two recent examples. Newman said he wouldn't be surprised if TransForce is broken up into several divisions and listed in the US or sold, potentially to American firms. But Newman also said there could be more Canadian trucking companies going public as well. Patrick Cain, vice-president of busi-

ness development with Cain Express and Titanium Transportation Group, also addressed the appeal of consolidation, having recently sold his family business to Titanium.

"Growth creates challenges for organizations," he said. "Certainly for a company the size of Cain Express, as we continued to grow we put stress on our people, stress on our processes and systems and stress on our equipment and financing."

Both Cain and Seymour concluded their respective businesses were too small to compete with the big players on their own.

"If we didn't have a significant role with a customer, we were relatively easy to replace," Cain admitted. "Bringing sale to your customers gives you a better relationship."

But while a merger or acquisition may look good on paper, Seymour acknowledged that how the corporate cultures of the organizations involved will mesh

about seven acquisitions, all of which ended up being tuck-ins," Seymour said. "Each time we had a rude awakening about how powerful culture was at the company we

tried to tuck in. Over time, we learned from our mistakes. In this case we will not be putting Kriska and Mill Creek together for that very reason. Mill Creek by itself has significant scale, it's very profitable, safe and disciplined so there's no advantage to try to put them together but there's a tremendous amount of risk to try to do that."

Cain added differences in corporate culture are not necessarily a bad thing - as long as both organizations adopt

the best that their new partner brings to the table.

"In some cases, differences (in culture) will be for the better," he said. "Hopefully you can bring something to the table that helps them with their business." **TW**

'In some cases, differences (in culture) will be for the better.'

Patrick Cain, Titanium Group

is another consideration. For this reason, Kriska and Mill Creek – the Mullen-owned van carrier included in the joint venture – will continue to be run separately.

"Between 1995 and 2008, Kriska made

The three issues facing the trucking industry

By Carolyn Gruske

As executive vice-president and COO of Bison Transport, Rob Penner sees three top issues facing the trucking industry: driver challenges, equipment issues, and the changing freight network. Penner examined these issues during a presentation at the Surface Transportation Summit Oct. 15.

Like other trucking executives, Penner cited the driver shortage as a pressing concern, but said the company isn't so badly affected that it is willing to put just anybody in the driver's seat. Out of every 100 applications Bison receives, the company typically finds five or six job seekers attractive enough to offer them a thorough interview or a road test. And it usually only hires one or two from that small subgroup.

According to Penner, Bison has a turnover rate of approximately 18% and the company forces about half of that number. Of the 9% the company lets go, about half are dismissed before their first year of employment is over. Roughly a quarter of Bison's turnover is due to drivers retiring, dying, or leaving the business due to disability.

Perhaps surprisingly, given his concerns about the driver shortage, Penner said "driver utilization has been a challenge."

Although Bison added 100 drivers over the past year, it didn't add any tractors to its fleet.

"It takes more drivers to do the same job today," said Penner, adding that now there are multiple drivers required per truck.

Pay strategies are also top of mind at Bison. Whereas in the past, drivers would earn 90-95% of their pay based on mileage. Today that figure is down to about 60%.

"Mileage-based pay is not where the business is going," said Penner. How long a load is on a truck and how much revenue each truck can generate per day are they key factors, not the mileage per day.

"The driver is the only way we are going to make money," added Penner.

Beyond the driver, Bison also pays considerable attention to its service offerings and areas it feels it can offer specialized services. It looks for the same in its partners. Saying that most trucks are similar in terms of cost and technology, Penner explained that Bison looks to purchase equipment from suppliers that offer the best service networks in the geographical areas in which the trucks operate. **TW**



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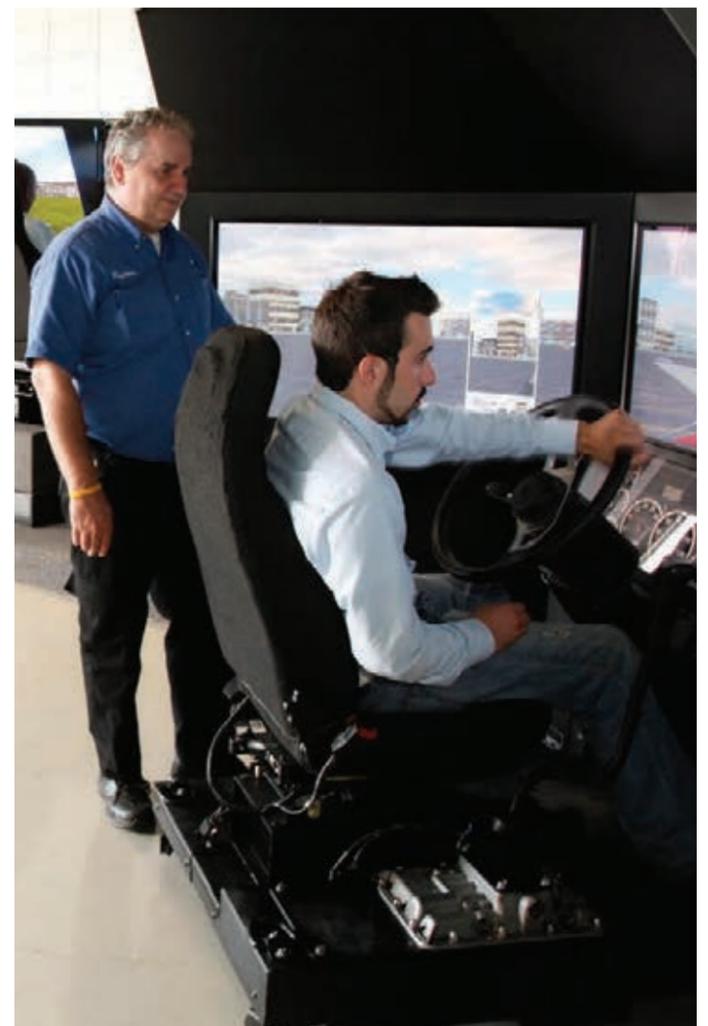
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Following

#2014Summit Susan Promane asks the carrier "what are you doing to offset your cost headwinds?"



Delta Nu Alpha
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Following

#2014Summit - Enjoying Anna Petrova as panelist. She says to stop "complaining" as an industry. Find solutions instead! #fresh

Why Plan B needs to be a part of your business

By Carolyn Gruske

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Although they may feel like opposing forces, evolving technology and changing weather are working to alter both the trucking industry and the people in it. Silvy Wright, president and CEO of insurance provider Northbridge Financial Corp., told the audience at the 2014 Surface Transportation Summit that

trucking companies need to be willing to respond to both the new realities imposed by man-made and naturally generated forces. In discussion with Transportation Media editorial director Lou Smyrlis, Wright began by speaking of the effects of technology on the workforce.

"Technology is reshaping our world but we all know quality people are at the core of our success," said Wright.

"We think about using technology to becoming more efficient and effective, but I see technology changing the service model. A service model which will become more competitive and successful than the traditional service model," she said, citing the example of the ride-hailing app Uber. Not only has the service disrupted the traditional model of calling for a ride, it has changed the way the tradi-

tional taxi drivers think about their jobs.

She spoke of one driver who told her that he loves the way Uber acknowledges him and his efforts behind the wheel.

"When I asked him about Uber, he said, 'I love it. I've been working for Uber for three months. They give me feedback on how well I service the customer. I earn points. I've been working with X cab company for 10 years and they never told me how well I did my job.' Here the technology not only changed the customer experience and the service model, but it changed the driver experience."

She said that the instant feedback the driver received about how well he is doing his job is a facet of employee management businesses will have to consider in the future.

"One of the things I think is changing in this world is people want instant service, instant feedback. With regards to our employees, how do we give them the appropriate recognition in the way they want to receive it? Give them a once-a-year claims-free award? I don't think that will be enough for the younger generation entering the industry."

And that's if they enter the industry to begin with.

"Trucking and insurance have recruiting problems: Part of it is awareness and part of it is image. We probably haven't done the best job we could do in both industries with regards to the professional experience it provides to young people," said Wright.

Along with approaching students who are still in high school and telling them about the opportunities offered by both trucking and insurance, Wright said each industry needs to turn more heavily to social media as a recruiting tool.

In response to a question about climate change from Smyrlis, Wright emphasized that weather is becoming a costly problem.

"The big change now is severe weather is more common than not," she said, referencing a chart that showed the amount of damage claims caused by bad weather each year over the past 30 years. Looking at the chart, she pointed at 1998 – the year of the Quebec ice storm – as a milestone.

"Now what's happening is we are having severe weather. Climate change is creating severe weather and creating damage and creating havoc on property, transportation and automobiles. For the last five years, starting in 2008, we've had a catastrophe north of \$1 billion every year. I don't have a crystal ball, and, knock-on-wood, 2014 is a little bit lighter than the last five years, but one of the things that chart shows me is the frequency of severe weather. We need to be prepared." For Wright, being prepared means having well-formed and ready-to-go back-up plans.

"We need Plan B. Your drivers, your dispatchers, they need to have that Plan B," she told the crowd. "How well are you prepared to change routes? How well are you prepared to deal with certain equipment that gets affected by lower-than-average temperatures? Be prepared. I know that sounds really common, but I highlight the fact it is common. Have those plans, those routes in place, so you don't miss business, you don't lose customers. It's not just having Plan B, in case the day (when it's needed) will come. It's having Plan B as a normal course of doing your business." **TW**



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Whirlpool's Promane: Just saying costs are up and need price increase not enough. "It's not a pass through." #2014Summit

Are same-day delivery services a threat to trucking?

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – By the end of this year, Amazon will offer same-day delivery service to 23% of the US public. It's a trend that could revolutionize the transportation industry, according to Marc Wulfraat, president of MWPVL International, who spoke about same-day delivery services at the Surface Transportation Summit.

"Tomorrow is not fast enough anymore," said Wulfraat.

However, the question remains, are customers willing to pay for same-day delivery service and if so, how much?

"Everybody loves free shipping, that much is clear. Everybody loves same-day delivery, that much is clear. But what's not clear is how much people are willing to pay for it," Wulfraat said.

Amazon charges Amazon Prime members \$6 for same-day delivery on top of their \$99 annual membership fee.

However, Wulfraat said it's not viable to offer same-day delivery service for much less than that. His consulting firm has calculated it would take 150 deliveries on a single truck in order to keep the price to \$4 per delivery.

"So if you don't have mass density and volume to support same-day delivery, you can get into the \$10-\$12 price tag very quickly," he said. "If you're doing 30 stops per load for \$5, it's going to be a money-losing proposition."

Still, same-day delivery services present opportunities for courier companies willing to dedicate a portion of their capacity to a customer who provides the service, Wulfraat noted. On the other hand, traditional package delivery companies like UPS and FedEx stand to lose if the trend continues. Wulfraat pointed out about 4.2% of packages shipped by UPS come from Amazon.

Amazon is using a broad network of fulfillment centres and sortation facilities to organize packages and then drops them off at local post offices or delivery companies for final delivery to the customer. Items ordered between 7 a.m. and noon will be received by 9 p.m. Amazon's goal is to offer the same-day service to 50% of the US population.

"To keep up with Amazon in terms of delivery service levels, every other retailer has to keep up with that raised bar, so there's a mad rush now," Wulfraat said. Other retailers offering or planning to offer same-day delivery in the US include:

Google: Through its Google Shopping Express concept, customers can order things from local retailers, which will be delivered to their home by Google within two hours. The program is being tested in San Francisco with 20 retailers.

eBay Now: Since 2012, eBay Now has used couriers as local valets to pick up and deliver items from hundreds of retailers in less than two hours. It charges \$5 per order with a minimum order of \$25. However, plans to expand the program to 25 cities by the end of this year have been shelved, Wulfraat said.

Walmart To Go: WalMart is testing an online grocery delivery service in Denver. It charges \$5-\$7 per order with a minimum order of \$30 in an aim to convert its stores into logistics centres.

Walmart.com: Operated as a separate business unit, Walmart.com will provide same-day delivery service from its stores.

Target: Not to be outdone, Target is offering same-day delivery in three mar-

kets – Minneapolis, Boston and Miami – with a \$10 charge for rush delivery. Items ordered by 1:30 p.m. will be received between 6 and 9 p.m.

Macy's: Macy's is launching a same-day delivery service in eight markets beginning this fall.

Instacart: This grocery delivery company provides delivery within one to two hours from a variety of grocery retail-

ers including Costco. It charges \$4 for two-hour deliveries and \$6 for one-hour service.

"We haven't seen this in Canada to the same extent it's happening in the US," acknowledged Wulfraat. "Canadians don't order online as much as Americans do. But whatever is going on in the US is definitely on its way here, in certain markets where it makes sense." **TW**



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Why mentorship programs matter

The dry swirling snow had packed itself under my rig. The steady growl of the truck's diesel engine, muffled by the snow, was now a low hum. The road in front of me was a ribbon of unbroken snow. The world had taken on a dream-like quality in the falling snow. The trees on the mountainside were completely wrapped in blankets of white. Solitary, peaceful, and surreal.

It was a perfect night as I cut through almost a foot of fresh snow climbing the last few kilometres to Rogers Pass.

This is when it dawned on me that I had not seen any cars, plows, or trucks since I had pulled out of Revelstoke. I was alone. Was I supposed to be out here? Had I missed a road closure sign in the snow? At this point I didn't care. I had the perfect heavy load for the conditions. It was a beautiful night and I drank up the experience.

When I'm asked what it is about the trucking life that keeps me coming back week after week, the memory of that drive from Revelstoke to Golden is the memory I am quick to share.

I've accumulated many more memo-



Over the Road

Al Goodhall

ries just like it over the years and there are many more yet to be experienced. This is the siren call of the trucking life and the weapon of choice in a recruiter's bag of tricks. Come drive a truck and experience the open road. See the world.

Of course there are a good number of people, probably a majority, that ask me if I'm perhaps a little bit nuts to be enjoying an experience that they can only see as stressful.

It's the challenges we face as drivers and the joy we find in those experiences that define this trucking life. As I look back at the start of my career I can't help but be thankful for the mentorship I received.

Without a good mentorship program the recruiter's promise of the freedom of the open road is an empty one.

The joy of this work is rooted in the confidence you have in your ability to deal with the unexpected.

A good trucking mentor instills you with a confidence in your own skills, a solid foundation on which to build your experience.

I spent nine months with my mentor and I view that time as an apprenticeship. How many first-year drivers will be spending nine months with a mentor after graduating from a driving school and obtaining their licence? Probably not very many.

It makes me wonder how many new drivers are building their experience on a foundation of fear of the unknown instead of that foundation of confidence I described above.

I've always held the opinion that the smaller family-run trucking businesses do it best when it comes to training and mentorship. It's a natural extension of the family dynamic, to take someone new under your wing and share your experience with them. There is as much in the experience for the trainer as for the trainee. It simply feels good to teach and to see someone benefit from that mentoring.

Has this transfer of skills been lost in the now big business, big data world of trucking? I think it has to a large part.

Having spent three years of my career in a mentorship position I feel well qualified to tout its benefits. The drivers I spent time with were grateful for three to four months of intensive finishing.

Not one of the drivers I spent time with would say they would have been better off if they were left to learn the ropes in the throes of a northern Ontario winter, in the canyons of the

Fraser valley, or on the slopes of the Coquihalla.

Intensive training immediately after drivers obtain their licence should be required for everyone entering this profession not just a lucky few. It only makes sense.

Finding well qualified drivers in this business is difficult. Finding well qualified drivers that are also well qualified teachers and mentors is even more difficult.

Where do they come from? Who trains the trainers? Isn't this the root of the driver shortage problem? Many people in the industry feel there are plenty of licensed drivers but they leave the industry after a very short period.

Aren't many of those people simply disenchanted with their initial experience? Would not many of them still be here if there was a greater investment in people at the outset?

Big trucking invests heavily in equipment and technology these days. This is still very much a people based business and big trucking needs to get on that track.

My Christmas wish for our industry is to see training and mentoring become the top priority on our agenda. I wish. I wish. Merry Christmas, everyone! **TW**

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

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I think I may have bought a lemon! There's nothing wrong with my truck mechanically, the fuel mileage continues to impress me and I can't really complain about any of the important things, but there are quite a few little things that I don't have that I've seen on other trucks.

Things like the ability to do a pre-trip without leaving my cab.

I've got a pre-trip assistant that I can use to cycle through my lights and check for air leaks, but I still have to get out and look at the lights and wipe dirt/snow off of them.

I can't check for flat tires or that my fifth wheel is still locked or any of the other checks I need to do.

I also don't have a magic hammer to check my tire pressures, mine just makes a thumping sound.

I recently aired my tires to 105 psi and did the tire thump.

I got the same sound from all 18 tires, yet when I checked the pressures on the trailer they were all at different pressures ranging from 80 psi to 100 psi, yet the noise was no different.

My hammer doesn't check my brakes either. I see other drivers at brake checks walking around banging away their tires with their special hammer and then setting off down the hill.

I have to actually look at my brakes and check their adjustment.

The clock is also not one of the special ones that other trucks have. I can pull over for an eight-hour break and while I'm lying on my bunk reading or messing around on the Internet and a truck will pull in next to me and shut down for the night.

The next morning as I'm getting up that truck will be pulling out already, me I'm still stuck there for another 30 mins to an hour as my clock shows I haven't been there for eight hours yet.

I'm also losing time on the road, I can sit right at the speed limit according to my speedometer, which matches my GPS, but trucks blow by me as if I'm stood still, not just on the highway, but on city streets too.

The thing is, I see those same trucks with their special clocks and magic hammers quite often during the day, quite often I will be passed by the same truck a few times a day.

On the odd occasion that I drive my maximum hours I'm often in the truck stop within a few minutes of them and sometimes I beat them there.

In spite of having the full eight hours off, doing a proper pre-trip, sticking to the speed limit, doing a proper brake check, etc.

I still manage to cover the same ground, so with all the time those guys are saving, surely I could be a lot further down the road if I had the same advantages they appear to have?

The only thing is, I've already done about as much as it's possible to legally do in one day, so what would be the point in getting my clock or speedometer "fixed"?

You say tomato I say tomahto

Mark Lee



And would it be worth the effort trying to find one of those special hammers?

I don't think so, I'm still getting the job done without them.

I may have to suffer the pain and anguish of doing a pre-trip, brake check or tire check by physically doing the necessary things, I may have to drive at the

speed limit and take at least a full eight hours off each night, yet somehow I'm still getting the job done. Crazy, eh?

Okay, so I've been a little tongue in cheek there, but it leads me to where I'm going next, in a roundabout way.

So far I've bought a few accessories for my truck – all practical stuff. I've stayed away from lights and chrome so far. I'm slowly ticking off boxes from my wish list and the next two will help me in my pre-trips and brake checks. I'm considering a tire pressure monitoring system. This way I can know my tires are correctly inflated at all times. It will save having to mess around on my hands and knees with a pressure gauge and instantly alert me if there's a problem, so if I do pick up some debris and start losing air, I know right away and can stop as soon as possible to save damaging the tire any further.

I know it will cost me a lot more than a magic hammer, but I'm convinced it will save me money long term. The other

thing is so simple that I'm amazed it isn't fitted as standard, if not by the manufacturers, by fleets too. That is a set of brake stroke indicators.

Two little pegs that do exactly what it says on the tin, they indicate brake stroke.

One is fitted on the brake pot and the other is attached to the push rod, you only need to apply the brakes, get out and look at the position of the pegs to tell if you're good to go down the hill, a very simple and highly effective addition I'm looking forward to using now that the ground and the underside of my tractor is going to be messy for the next few months. **TW**

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



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Seven tech toys I want on my trucks

We smaller operators have a considerably different wish list than the big trucking companies. Rates, roads, ambitions, etc. are the obvious, but

the one that really comes to mind lately, for me, is the available technological improvements and changes to equipment.

Super-single tires, for example, hold no allure to me, or a lot of other smaller companies. The same tire size fitting the whole fleet, in all wheel positions, provides a financial savings of its own. Add to that the damage that occurs if one of those big fellas explodes, or the fact that you can't gently limp to a tire shop in the event of a flat, or worse, destroying a rim trying to get off the road to a safe repair position, and any fuel savings are lost.

Our company does precious little van work, and what it does do, involves a strange configuration loading dock that would likely destroy side skirts, so again, no interest.

There are a few small technologies that would interest me however, and to my knowledge, nobody's thought of them. With scientific advancements, they could end up in full production



Small Fleet, Big Attitude

Bill Cameron

by the time this goes to print, but so far, there's been nothing. Considering we can already remotely monitor engine operation and reefer temperature, most of my wish list could be easily attainable.

1. A heart rate/algorithm monitor in the bunk. The human rights people would lynch me for this, but the fundamental flaw in electronic logs (here I go again), is they monitor the truck, not the driver. Who cares if the truck stayed stationary for 10 hours if the driver's eyes were open for eight of them? Years ago, I delivered a load of paper to a printing press in upstate New York at night.

The receiver asked if I drew the short straw. He explained: Four trucks came down from Quebec every night. The drivers would draw straws. The loser stayed all night shuttling everybody's trailers, while the other three closed down the neighbouring strip club. After sleeping three hours, they would have breakfast, then go home. An electronic

log would show eight hours off-duty.

2. A remote torque sensor on winches and binders on flatbeds. It would give the carrier early notice when drivers either need further instruction on proper load securement, or need to be replaced with someone more diligent about load security.

3. A 'proper pre-trip sensor.' Another remote download, one connected to the hood, and preferably, the dipstick. It was drummed into my head in my early teens that you never start a sleeved diesel engine without first checking fluids.

On older equipment, the coolant was as apt to be in the pan as in the rad. If you find that out after you start the engine, it's too late. It continues to amaze me how few hoods are opened during pre-trips, even though DOT regulations specify fluid and belt checks.

Maybe a fibre optic-style sensor to show the carrier which lights are not lit, and not being reported or repaired. While we're at it, a full gauge review, so we can see if the truck is taking off at full throttle before acceptable coolant temperature is attained, or being moved with just barely enough air pressure to release parking brakes.

4. A sensor attached to the fifth wheel, measuring the speed the truck is moving at hook-up (haven't we all seen someone slam under a trailer way too fast?), or alerting the carrier when the wheel or pin is too dry? Too much pin-to-pin work breeds dry fifth wheels, and too many drivers don't seem to notice, or care.

5. The next remote read-out toy may be available soon. How about a sensor

that measures axle weights, and if the driver doesn't correct improper settings in short order, alerts the carrier so they can notify the driver before the truck gets to a scale? We've always relied heavily on knowledge of air gauge readings, so we can (somewhat closely) scale the truck right where you load it, as long as you have level ground. Such a weight sensor would alert the carrier to drivers that either haven't learned the gauge, or aren't paying attention.

6. A "multiple direction-change" sensor. This would identify when the truck has to change direction more than the usual three or four times when backing into a dock. It would be up to the carrier to then identify if the driver's skills are lacking, or your customers are giving your drivers some real rat-holes to back into. Either one causes unnecessary extra driveline wear. Which brings us to...

7. A "driveline torque" sensor. Some drivers are on their rare best behaviour during the interview/road test, reverting to their old habits of trying to pull the left front wheel off the ground with every shift after they're hired.

Besides unnecessary wear, it gives a very poor public image of the way your equipment is operated.

Pretty basic stuff, huh? Now we just need people smarter than I am to build it. **TW**

Bill Cameron and his wife Nancy own and operate Parks Transportation, a four-truck flatdeck trucking company. Bill can be reached at williamcameron.bc@gmail.com.



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New Sprinter to offer 4x4, crosswind assist capabilities

By James Menzies

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The Europeanization of the North American cargo van segment has been vindicating to Mercedes-Benz, which has offered its Sprinter van in various incarnations to this market since the mid-90s.

Seemingly emboldened by the arrival of the Euro-style Ford Transit and the introduction of new European-inspired designs from Nissan and Ram, Mercedes-Benz has given Sprinter customers a full slate of new features and options on 2014 and 2015 model year vehicles.

The cargo van segment is booming, with demand for full-sized vans up 15.5% year-to-date, and Mercedes has positioned itself to increase its share of this segment, having in January created a dedicated US van division.

“Our sales are up just about 19% year-over-year, and that’s with seeing a great influx of new products into this market,” said Rob Moran, director of corporate communications during a press ride-and-drive at the Charleston plant where US Sprinters are assembled. “When we started with the Sprinter we were a standalone. We’re now seeing some of our domestic competitors come out with their versions and it has really heated up the segment.”

Just how your Sprinter gets to you is an interesting story in itself. US cargo-carrying Sprinters are assembled in Dusseldorf, Germany, test driven, and then disassembled before being shipped to Charleston where the vehicles are put back together. This process contributes about 7-9% of the cost of a Sprinter, but is necessary to sidestep so-called chicken tax tariffs, which would total 25% of the cost of the vehicle.

Canadian Sprinters don’t have to undergo this ordeal. No such tariff exists in the Canadian market, so Sprinters headed here are assembled in Dusseldorf and then shipped in tact directly to market through ports in Halifax and Baltimore.

Mercedes-Benz has the re-assembly process for US cargo vans down to a science and visiting journalists were able to watch as vans were efficiently re-assembled prior to delivery to US dealers and customers. The entire re-assembly takes just about four hours.

In the US there are 200 Mercedes-Benz dealers approved to sell and service Sprinter vans, and 57 Freightliner dealers who offer the identical vehicle but with Freightliner branding. No such agreement exists with Freightliner dealers in Canada, so only the Mercedes version is available here, through 52 of 55 Canadian Mercedes dealers. Officials told *Truck West* that soon all Canadian Mercedes dealers will offer the Sprinter, but the company has strict training and tooling requirements that must first be met.

“Dealers have got to be trained and have the proper shop equipment,” said



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Claus Tritt, general manager of operations, commercial vans, Mercedes-Benz USA. "We are going to grow our way and do it right."

The global van market is an important one to Mercedes' parent company Daimler AG. It sold 270,100 vans in 2013. The US, for the last two years, has represented the second largest global market for Sprinter vans, behind only Germany.

"The US is a focused market for us and there's still growth potential," said Tritt.

About 60% of Sprinters sold in North America are deployed into the construction trades, while delivery services account for about 15%, retail and wholesale 10% and passenger transport 15%. In Canada, commercial customers can choose between the Sprinter 2500 cargo van, the new 2500 cargo van 4x4, the 3500 cargo van (in RWD and 4x4 configurations) and 3500 cab chassis. (Passenger vans are also offered). The 4x4 versions are scheduled to arrive in March 2015.

Mercedes sold 21,816 Sprinters into the US market last year and so far this year has seen sales grow another 18.6% through September. Tritt said that trend is expected to continue.

"There's a lot of pent-up demand in that segment," he said. "The average age of a van is over 11 years, so I think it's time to replace."

Mercedes-Benz is stepping up its marketing efforts as well, and will be rolling out its first ever TV commercial beginning in November.

The product itself has undergone an overhaul, including everything from a modest facelift to loads of new features and the addition of a more efficient diesel engine.

The 2014 model year Sprinter got a redesigned front end with new bumper and improved aerodynamics. It is now offered with a new OM651 four-cylinder turbodiesel engine that puts out 161 hp and 266 lb.-ft. of torque. This engine is mated to a seven-speed automatic transmission and offers 18% better fuel economy than previous offerings, according to Mathias Geisen, general manager of product marketing, commercial vans, Mercedes-Benz USA.

Geisen claims the new engine can attain mpgs in the "high 20s." The smaller engine mirrors a trend in Europe towards smaller, more efficient engines; 80% of Sprinter vans in Europe have engines that put out 121 hp or less.

Mercedes continues to offer the V6 OM643 turbodiesel with 188 hp and 325 lb.-ft. of torque, coupled with a five-speed automatic transmission. This engine can get up to 24.9 mpg (9.45 litres per 100 kms). There are no current plans to offer a gasoline engine.

Other upgrades rolled out this year include: a new steering wheel and seating for greater comfort and a new head unit with a 5.8-inch screen with standard Bluetooth and optional navigation. Load-adaptive ESP with trailer stability comes standard and other safety features including blind spot assist, lane-keeping assist, collision prevention assist and high-beam assist were also offered for the first time on 2014 Sprinters.

New for the 2015 model year will be crosswind assist, which will be standard on 2500 models.

The crosswind assist feature uses adaptive ESP yaw sensors to detect lateral wind force and then the adaptive



The new Sprinter 4x4 can tackle pretty much anything it will encounter in the field – and a lot that it never will.

ESP countersteers through selective lateral brake intervention to stabilize the vehicle, Geisen explained. The Sprinter becomes the only vehicle in the segment to offer crosswind assist.

To demonstrate its effectiveness, Mercedes assembled three jet boats whose motors were able to produce 90 mph crosswinds. A Sprinter without crosswind assist was visibly moved sideways as it drove through the gusts at 60 mph while the van with crosswind assist cut through the gusts without being blown off course.

This demonstration exceeded any real-life scenarios that would be encountered, unless you were to find yourself driving through a tornado or hurricane at 60 mph. Crosswind assist will give drivers some extra peace of mind when driving lightly loaded Sprinters in areas with frequent wind gusts.

Mercedes also showed off its ESP performance by loading up a Sprinter with about 1,500 lbs of water placed high up in the cargo compartment.

This van was fitted with outriggers so it could be pushed to its limits. ESP, which cannot be turned off on production vehicles, was disabled for the demonstration and an evasive maneuver performed at 30 mph was enough to cause a rollover had the outriggers not been present.

The same maneuver at 40 mph with ESP activated and with the driver's foot far from the brake pedal did not result in the outriggers touching the ground. It was an impressive display of a technology that could come into play many times in real-world driving conditions over the life-cycle of the van.

Also to be offered for the first time on the 2015 Sprinter is a 4x4 configuration, which Geisen says is the first in the segment to be offered with factory installation. Priced at US\$6,500 (for high range only) or US\$6,800 (for low and high range), the Sprinter 4x4 compares favourably to retrofit options that can run \$10,000 or more, Geisen said.

"We think it will be a great offering in the snowbelt region or dealing with challenging construction sites," he added.

An off-road course was constructed

outside the Charleston plant, which was far more grueling than any construction site a Sprinter is likely to visit, and the van handled it with ease, even at times, with just three wheels on the ground. The 4x4 option will be appreciated by customers in the oilpatch, which is a key market for the Sprinter, enough to motivate Mercedes to set up

a satellite facility in Fort McMurray.

Finally, Mercedes also announced it's increasing service intervals on the Sprinter from 13,000 miles to 20,000 (30,000 kms). Canadian pricing for commercial (non-passenger) Sprinters begin at \$39,900 for the 3500 cab chassis and goes up to \$49,900 for the 2500 cargo van 4x4. **TW**

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A versatile, made-for-Canada powertrain

Cummins and Eaton have been collaborating to bring the benefits of integration to their customers

By James Menzies

Cummins and Eaton have been cozying up of late in an attempt to ensure their future success in an increasingly vertically integrated world. The greatest example of this heightened level of collaboration comes in the form of the SmartAdvantage powertrain, which combines the Cummins ISX with an optimized Fuller Advantage Series automated transmission. That package has met with some success in the US market but is currently limited to a GVWR of just 80,000 lbs, constraining enthusiasm in the Canadian market, where greater

payloads are often sought.

A lesser-known example of Cummins integration with Eaton comes in the form of the ISX15 mated to an Eaton UltraShift Plus LSE 16-speed automated transmission, which is approved for GVWRs of up to 110,000 lbs, offering a more practical powertrain for Canadian fleets.

The LSE stands for line-haul small step efficiency, and it's this short 17% step between gears that allows for quick, precise shifting, enabling the driver to spend more time in the engine's money-making sweet spot. The UltraShift Plus LSE was initially offered only in International trucks

with Cummins or MaxxForce engines, but that exclusivity period came to an end in August, meaning we could soon see this combination offered by other OEMs.

The Canadian customers who have been running this spec' seem to like it. Challenger Motor Freight took delivery of 10 International ProStar tractors with the ISX15/UltraShift Plus LSE package about a year ago and they've been run hard, put into service as team trucks running Ontario-B.C.

I had the opportunity to drive one of these trucks and the odometer, after just a year in service, had already

surpassed 300,000 kms. I took to the back roads around Kitchener, looking for elusive hills, and then spent some time on the 401. I was pulling a load of canned peas, grossing just shy of 80,000 lbs, considerably less than what this combination can handle.

Traditional transmissions have a step of about 35% between gears, making each step about twice as tall as those within the LSE. The contrast was noticeable when driving, especially when accelerating from a stop. The LSE charged through the gears, getting up to top gear quickly, usually starting from second gear and then skipping third, fifth and seventh along the way.

During my drive, Brent Talbot, territory sales and service manager with Eaton rode along in the bunk. He told me the traditional strategy of getting into top gear quickly and staying there as long as possible has been replaced with the idea the driver should instead focus on getting into the sweet spot and remaining there, even if it means running in 15th gear at times. I spent most of my drive in 16th, so these aren't mutually exclusive scenarios.

When we think of manual or automated transmissions, we tend to think in terms of 10-, 13- and 18-speed gearboxes.

But the 16-speed UltraShift Plus LSE strikes a nice balance for Canadian fleets looking for a versatile transmission that performs admirably and is well integrated with the Cummins engine.

The ISX/LSE combo provides fleets with the versatility they require when hauling loads ranging between 80,000 and 110,000 lbs; there's less risk of dispatch deploying the wrong truck to pick up a load that's heavier than what the truck is rated for.

The ISX/LSE doesn't downspeed to the same extent as the SmartAdvantage. While the SmartAdvantage allows the engine to cruise at just 1,200 rpm, the ISX15 I drove cruised at 62 mph at a higher 1,380 rpm.

Still, the integration between engine and transmission runs deep enough to provide a high-performing alternative to the SmartAdvantage while a more robust version approved for 110,000-lb GVWRs continues to be developed.

The ISX15 I drove produced 450 hp and 1,650 lb.-ft. of torque, which was more than enough for southern Ontario and also sufficient to conquer the Rocky Mountains, one would presume - otherwise Challenger wouldn't be sending it there every week.

Downspeeding aside, there are a couple of factors that contribute to the efficiency of the ISX15/UltraShift Plus LSE package. For starters, the UltraShift Plus LSE is a direct drive transmission, which generally improves fuel economy by 2% compared to an overdrive, since parasitic losses within the transmission are eliminated. Customers who've spec'd the ISX15/LSE powertrain have seen fuel economy gains compared to say, an ISX15 with a 13- or 18-speed automated overdrive transmission, according to Adam Whitney, national account executive with Cummins, who was also along for the ride.

Cummins contends its ISX15, despite its higher displacement and

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greater bulk, is generally more fuel-efficient than a 13L, especially in Canada where a 13L has to work hard when making cross-country trips.

"A lot of that comes down to, it's not working at its maximum efficiency – it's not working as hard as a 13L," Whitney said of the ISX15.

Cummins and Eaton have collaborated in an unprecedented manner to ensure this engine and transmission are optimized to work together and this partnership has translated into noticeably improved performance.

"Historically, we wouldn't have shared our fuel maps but now we do with Eaton," Whitney explained. "They know exactly where we want to be rpm-wise, where it's going to be more fuel-efficient and they have optimized the shift points."

The UltraShift LSE makes smooth, quick shifts at just the right time, allowing the ISX15 to run in its intended sweet spot to perform to its full potential.

Unlike the new Fuller Advantage Series automated manual transmissions, from which Eaton has eliminated the oil cooler to save weight, the LSE still requires a cooler.

"It has a higher capacity gross weight, rated up to 110,000 lbs, and at that level if a customer were to maximize his gross weight he's going to need a cooler to maintain the transmission's operating temperatures," Talbot explained.

The ISX15 in the ProStar I drove was incredibly quiet, which I'm sure is appreciated by whichever team driver occupies the bunk at any given time.

Whitney says the Cummins high-pressure common rail fuel system contributes to its low noise output.

It also features a highly effective engine brake, which is assisted by the variable geometry turbocharger to maximize its braking power.

If you want to get the most available engine braking you can put the transmission into low gear when approaching a stop. (It's an automated, but you can still override this transmission by selecting M for manual or L for low on the shift console. When doing so, the transmission will defer to you – as long as you don't try something stupid that would hurt it).

Why shift to low gear when approaching a stop? "It's going to move your downshift rpm points out to the governed rpm where the engine brake is strongest and it will continue to downshift right down to first gear," Talbot explained. "You can take it out of low and put it back into drive or manual and continue driving at any time."

This feature works exactly as advertised. Just ask the guys in the bunk, who asked me to give them a warning next time I put it in low.

Other features of the UltraShift Plus LSE that contribute to its drivability include a grade sensor that's integrated into the electronic control module. This allows the transmission to hold the truck's position on hills for up to three seconds to eliminate rollback when the driver is moving his foot from the brake to the accelerator.

"It also allows us to make much better shift selections because knowing what the horsepower and the torque maps of the engine are



Challenger is running 10 of these trucks from Ontario to the West Coast in team operations.

as well as the throttle position, we can calculate the weight of the vehicle to within a couple thousand pounds," Talbot explained. "And if you know the weight of the vehicle and you know the grade you're on and you know the torque and horsepower maps, you can make very intelligent shift decisions."

The ISX15 delivers peak torque right down to 1,000 rpm, often preventing the need for downshifting.

The ISX15 I drove did not have SmartTorque enabled, which would have provided another 200 lb.-ft. of torque in the top two gears when needed.

The UltraShift Plus LSE skip-shifted readily in the lower gears and why not?; the short step means it can jump gears like Eric Lamaze jumps fences at Spruce Meadows.

Navistar International has had its detractors in recent years, resulting from its ill-advised emissions strategy that backfired in a big way. But throughout its ordeal, no one had an unkind word to say about the ProStar.

It's been a while since I've driven one and I was reminded that this is a nice, comfortable truck to drive with good visibility, a quiet interior and a steady ride. The quiet, steady attributes are likely what make it a popular team truck.

The UltraShift Plus LSE gave International a differentiated product, even though its exclusivity was just temporary. It seems to have done a decent job of getting this truck out into the market.

"International has done a tremendous job of selling it," said Whitney, noting other well-known fleets such as Contrans have recently been taking delivery of ProStar trucks featuring this same powertrain.

As OEMs continue to espouse the benefits of vertical integration, independent component manufacturers such as Cummins and Eaton have not sat idly by and watched demand for their products erode.

They've been working more closely together than ever before to ensure they can deliver the benefits of integration, even as separate suppliers. The ISX15 with UltraShift Plus LSE is another example of this conjoining of expertise, and it's one that seems right at home here in Canada. **TW**



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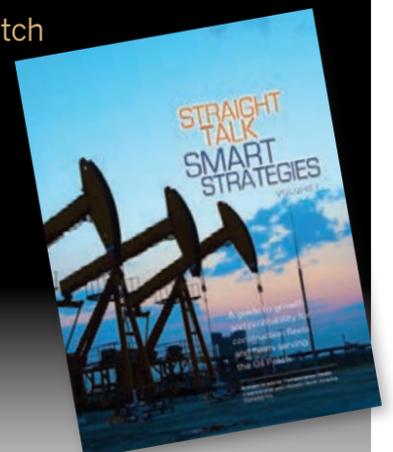
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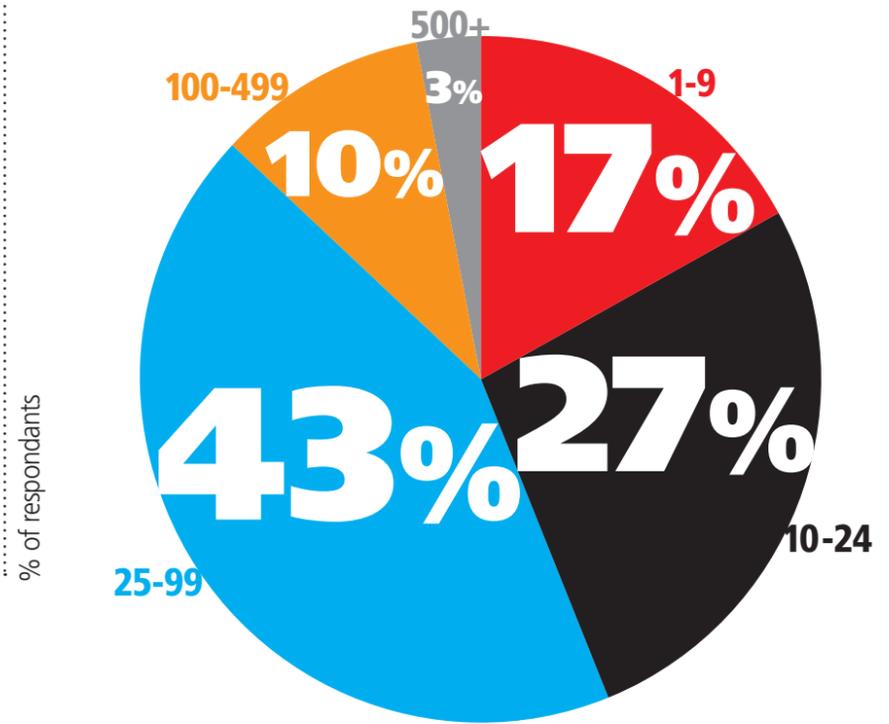
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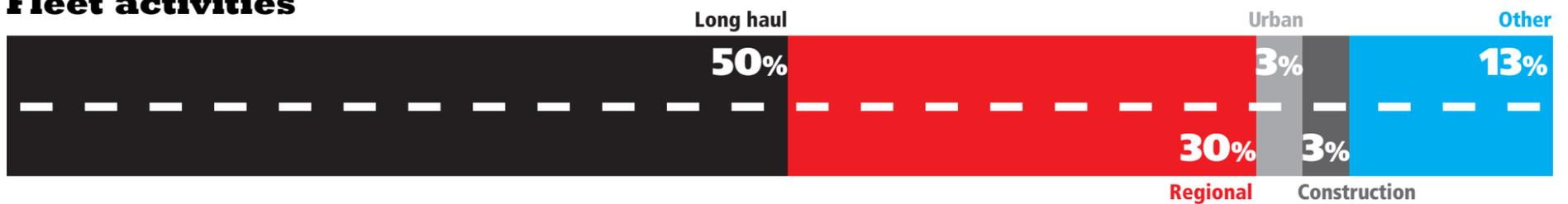
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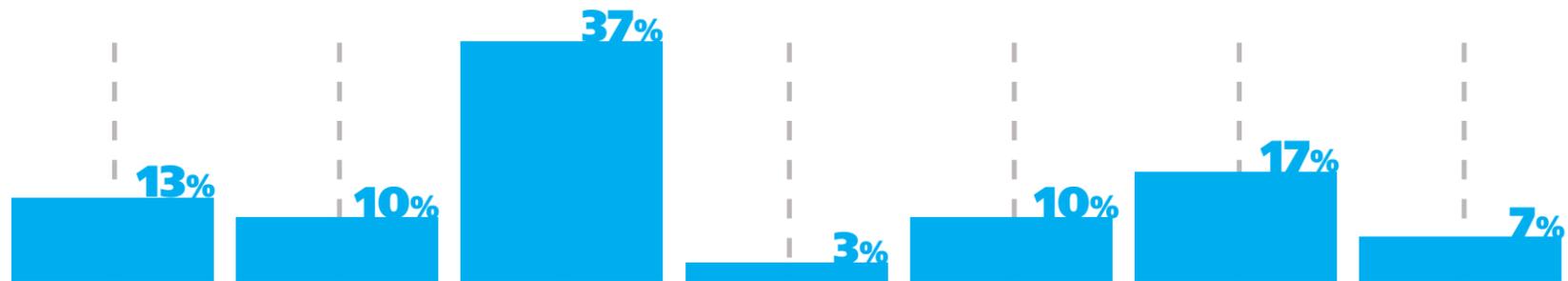
Number of HD vehicles in fleet



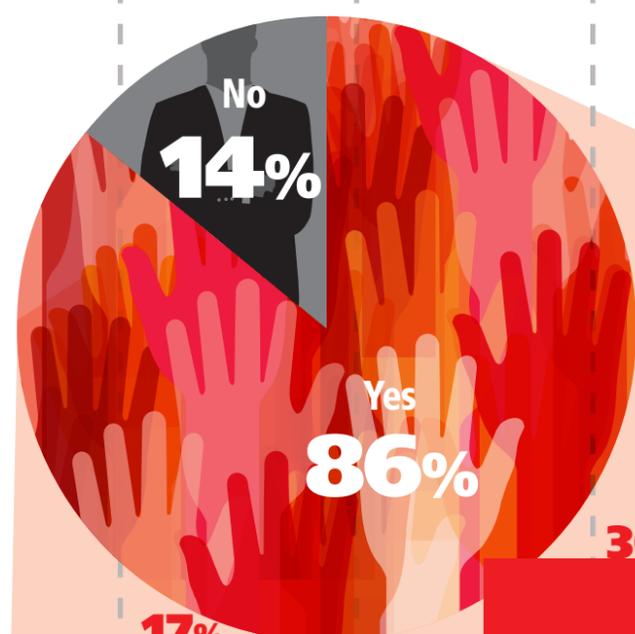
Fleet activities



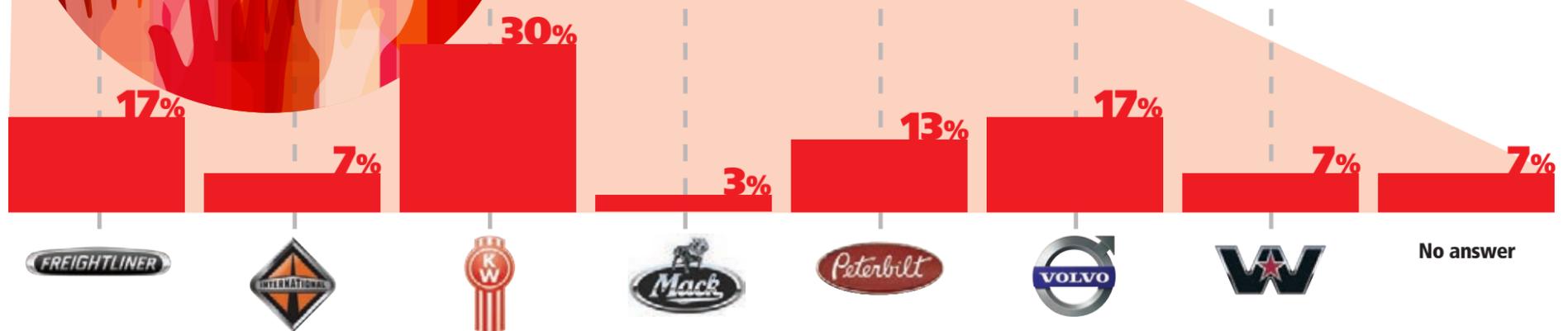
Main brands of HD trucks currently in fleet



Planning to purchase new HD trucks in 2015



Brand most likely to consider when buying new HD trucks



Western Canada motor carriers, we believe, are a unique breed with buying preferences at times different from the rest of Canada. The carriers responding to our annual Equipment Buying

Trends Survey are primarily mid-sized with 43% of this year's respondents operating fleets of 25-99 Class 8 vehicles. Half of them run long haul and their choice of truck does not fit with the na-

tional brand share model. Kenworth rules here with about a third of carriers naming that as the top brand in their fleet now and in the future. Volvo and Freightliner also score high. **TW**

Industries across B.C. optimistic about the future

Continued from page 16

as “the canary in the coal mine” of his industry, saying “if they’re busy digging holes then we know the industry going to be busy for a while – and the excavation workers are among the most optimistic about the future.”

Growth brings challenges, of course, and Hochstein noted that one of his industry’s is – as with trucking – finding boots to put on the ground.

“Ultimately (finding new workers is) our job, not the government’s job,” he said, “and the industries need to figure out a way to market (themselves).”

He suggested companies focus on job security and career development instead of focusing only on the amount of money that can be earned.

“Clearly, young people are interested in advancement and fulfillment,” he said, noting that “in trucking there’s fleet managers and safety managers and logistics people – that’s the goal – and you can sell people on that.”

He also said that getting people to move where the work is – the north, for example – requires more than just offering big paycheques.

“They also want to go where their friends are,” he said, suggesting a program with the theme “come up north and bring a friend with you.”

The final speaker was Peter Xotta, vice-president of planning and operations for Port Metro Vancouver. Xotta updated the assembled multitude on some of the port issues that affect the trucking industry on the Lower Mainland, noting that “our job...is provision of capacity and I’m pleased to say with the leadership of the federal and, in particular, provincial governments with regard to highways in the last decade or so, I believe we’re really starting to build a foundation for your sector and others who rely on the Port to have a really significant long-term opportunity.”

Xotta noted that \$6 billion worth of investment will have been delivered by the end of 2014, including 17 road/rail separations as well as new bridges and highways, and he touched on the “Smart Fleet Strategy” – a three-year plan designed to achieve “supply chain excellence” by targeting turnaround times at terminals and offering extended hours, as well as introducing a GPS program to help measure and monitor performance.

When asked during the Q&A about the current moratorium on independent operators accessing the Port, Xotta noted “that was introduced...as a means of encouraging a better balance between owner/operators and company-owned trucks. There’s been a generally held belief that there are too many trucks serving the amount of business that’s available and so that moratorium has remained in place.”

He admitted they’re getting a lot of “attention” about that particular issue, however, and said “I think part of the path forward will be answering the questions around (the moratorium). Is it fair? Should it remain in place? Should it be removed? Those are some of the changes that are be-

ing contemplated.”

After the conference, the BCTA’s Yako said she was struck by how all the presenters talked about the great opportunities in the province, despite there being real risks and challenges, and she noted that one of the biggest challenges is perception.

“Some people don’t understand how important it is to our economy and our province that we are capable of participating in trade,” she said. “It’s clearly something that’s not well understood by many people in our communities and it’s really important for people like (truckers) to be having those kinds of conversations.” **TW**

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By Edo Van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark gets a nice gig shuttling the contents of a factory and warehouse from Montreal to Toronto. Among the trucks making the runs with Mark is a green rig with an off-colour door and fender that is driven by a team and making outstanding time between the two cities. At a stop in Montreal, Mark learns that the green International has done nearly three times as many loads as he has. That's because there are three drivers in the truck and - after watching one of their circle checks - it's obvious they are cutting as many corners as they can...

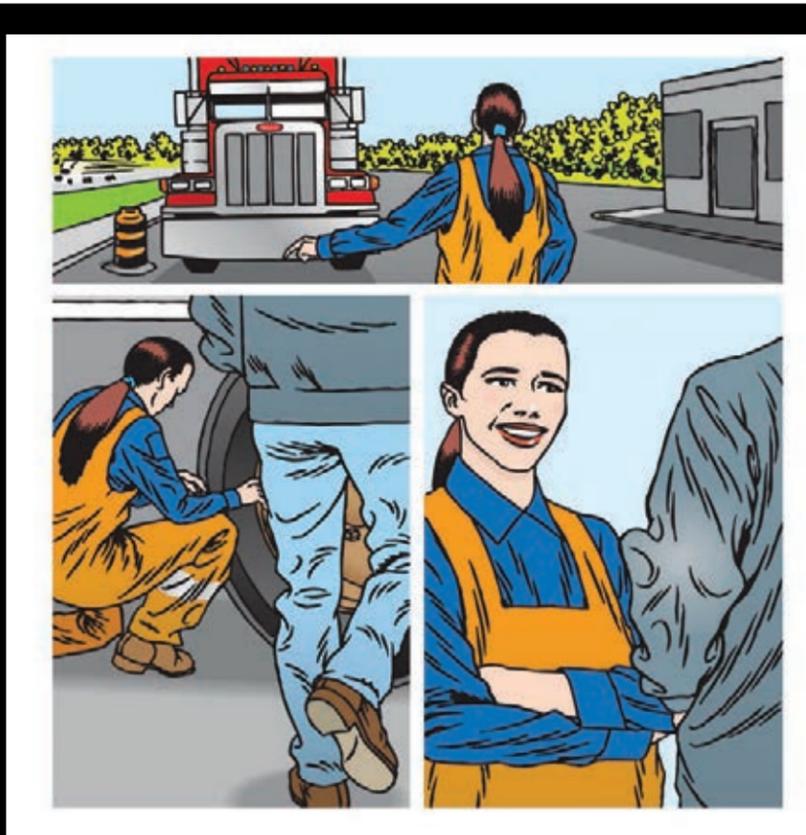
By the time Mark left Montreal, he had forgotten all about the team driving the green International and was worried only about himself getting to Toronto safely and on schedule. He'd heard from Bud and some of Bud's other drivers that the provincial Ministry of Transportation, or MTO for short, would be doing an inspection blitz along the 401 all week long. Mark was of two minds about inspections. On the one hand they served a great service to the trucking industry by ensuring that trucks were safe and not a danger to their operators and other people sharing the roads. Of course, the MTO blitzes couldn't check every truck in the province, but if the inspections were random enough and checked more than a token number of trucks, the checks provided a tangible reason for a driver to keep his truck safe and in good repair. On the other hand, the blitzes themselves could be a pain in the seat. It never seemed to fail that a blitz occurred whenever Mark was running behind schedule or trying to make up for lost time. They also seemed to happen whenever Mark decided he could go another week before getting something fixed. Getting repairs done took time - not to mention, money - and like every other driver both those commodities always seemed in short supply.

Sure enough, soon after Mark had passed Kingston, he was squeezed off the highway by a series of orange cones that led him right into a temporary inspection station outside of Odessa. He was confident his truck was in good shape and all of his paperwork was up to date, but he still hated the feeling he got in these situations. It was the same thing crossing the border into the US. Even though all the paper was good, and you had nothing to declare, there was always the chance that the officer dealing with you was having a bad day, or didn't like the way you answered a question, or didn't like the colour red. Mark knew in his heart that the officers doing the inspections were professionals with a job to do. They were also probably just as happy - if not happier - to find no violations with a truck than a truck with a laundry list of defects. Still, sometimes it sure felt like they were picking on you.

"Morning," Mark said as he eased up to the point where the female officer wanted him to stop.

"Morning," she responded. Then, without missing a beat, she said, "Driver's licence, registration, CVOR, and insurance?"

Mark smiled and handed all of the documents over to her in a bundle. After glancing at his driver's licence, she took it over to a nearby cruiser and where he passed Mark's license through a card reader. When she re-



Puttin' on the blitz

PART 3

turned, she handed Mark his licence and asked for his daily inspection report and copy of his inspection schedule. Mark gave those to her gladly, knowing he was all up to date. "And now I need your daily logbook for the past 14 days."

"No problem," Mark said. He climbed into Mother Load and grabbed two books, including his current logbook, which had recorded the past five days, and his previous book that showed the previous nine days in addition to the past few months. These she barely glanced at, probably since everything else he had given her was proper and up to date.

"Everything's in good shape," Mark said, as she set about doing her inspection of Mother Load and the box trailer behind her.

"Uh-huh," she responded with a tone of voice that told Mark she cared little for what he'd found out this morning and a lot about what she would find out right now. Mark was confident about Mother Load passing inspection, but he'd only been driving the trailer for a few hours and even though he'd done a full circle check before he'd left Montreal, in these situations something always popped up that you never saw coming. After an uncomfortably long time looking at the trailer brakes, the officer pulled her head out from behind a tire and asked, "You inspect these brakes before you headed out?"

"Yes," Mark answered. "Of course. Is there a problem?"

"One of your brakes is a quarter inch out of adjustment. If you had a second one, I'd take the trailer off the road."

Mark breathed a sigh of relief. He'd inspected the brakes fully in Montreal and they had looked fine. As well, the trailer was equipped with auto-slack adjusters,

is this blitz running?"

She looked at him, smiled and said, "I'm here all week - try the veal."

At first Mark didn't get it, then she laughed and he realized that - despite what most truckers thought about MTO officers - she actually had a sense of humour.

"We're up and down the 401 all week," she said. "Westbound, eastbound, day and night, so...no, I don't know where I'll be tomorrow or the next day."

"Maybe I'll see you again, then."

"If you get pulled over again, show the repair verification form, it'll help move you along."

And with that she was onto another truck. As Mark pulled out of the inspection area and got back onto the 401, he noticed a familiar sight in his rearview mirror. The green International was cruising westbound, obviously lucky enough to be passing the inspection when it was already full of trucks. Mark laughed under his breath. They might have won this round and avoided an inspection, but they would be making upwards of 10 or 12 more trips over the next few days and they were bound to get stopped sooner or later.

Mark just hoped he would be around to see it happen. TW

- Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of Puttin' on the blitz.

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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Prov/State _____ Postal/Zip _____ Email _____
(THIS WILL BE YOUR USERNAME ACCOUNT)

Home Tel _____ Cell _____

BEST WAY TO CONTACT ME: Home Tel Cell Email Other _____

WORK PREFERENCES:

Owner Operator Local Hwy Team Hwy Single/Company Driver

Lease Purchase Moving Driver Trainer Other _____

TOTAL TRUCK DRIVING EXPERIENCE _____/yrs

OWNER OPERATOR? Manufacturer _____ Year/Model _____ Engine/Size _____

PREFERRED DRIVING REGION: North America Canada only

WORK EXPERIENCE:

Last Employer _____

Start/End Date _____ City _____ Prov/State _____

Contact Person _____ Tel _____

CERTIFICATION / TRAINING: Can you lift 50lbs? Yes No

Name of School _____

Name of Course Completed _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ Start/End Date _____

Doubles/Triples
 Air Brake Adjustment
 Over-Size Loads
 Hazmat
 Air Brake (Drive)
 Tankers

I am able and willing to cross the Canada/U.S. border to haul loads. Yes No

I am FAST approved (for expedited border crossing). Yes No

Would you like to be contacted by driver agencies? Yes No

Has your license ever been suspended? Yes No

By filling out and signing this application, I agree to abide by Driverlink's terms and conditions and consent to the use of personal information according to the Driverlink privacy policy.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Driverlink is proud to protect the privacy of your personal information as required under federal privacy laws. If you would like to see a copy of our privacy policy, please go to www.driverlink.com/privacy.asp. If you would like a printed copy of our privacy policy, please call us at 1-800-263-6149 and we will be happy to mail one to you.

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...

Just flew back to civilization (and boy, are my arms tired!) from a week or so in Ontario, covering the Canadian Car of the Year TestFest at Niagara Falls and, with my brother and sister-in-law, visiting my Dad in Ottawa. And once again it hit home as I drove from Pearson to the Falls, to Ottawa and back to Pearson, just how great we have it here in the west.

Along the 401 and the QEW they have these big electronic signs over the highway, signs meant originally (probably) as ways of imparting traffic and road condition information to motorists – if there's a collision ahead, or a detour, or icing conditions, whatever. You know the type – big black electronic beasts. Of course most of the time things are tickety boo on the road, so the signs have no reason to be lit. Ah, but in Mother Ontario they either feel the need to justify the signs' expense or just to nanny-state Ontario drivers to death by displaying helpful messages advising, among other things, for us to be smart commuters by carpooling, or ensuring our child car seats are installed properly – that type of thing. I've also seen some of this in the west, but it doesn't seem nearly as bad – yet, hence this cautionary tale.

It's stupid, annoying and unnecessary and – here's the rub – it's very distracting, especially when you're trying not to bounce off oaf-driven vehicles in that high-traffic area.

Yeah, distracting. There's a big push on now for distracted driving legislation in a variety of venues. Here in Alberta we have such things. For example, we can't use our cell phones but we can watch police using theirs. So it's okay for the powers that be to distract us, we just can't distract ourselves. Do as I say, not as I do. Hypocrites.

The problem isn't distraction, it's lousy drivers – and they're everywhere. Ontario has more people than we do, of course, but while in the west we seem to have our share of stupid drivers, Ontario seems to have an extra heaping helping of recta as well. Not necessarily bad drivers, but ignoramuses who think they own the road.

It's nice to be home!

In Memoriam

Sad news from Al Rosseker of the STA, who reports that the organization's training and compliance manager, Glen Morrison, has died at age 64, after a valiant battle with cancer. "Glen was diagnosed with the disease more than four years ago and had undergone a number of treat-

ments and procedures," Rosseker said in a release.

Glen joined the STA in 2006, after working in a variety of occupations with the agriculture and truck transport industries. He also spent a number of years as an owner/manager of Agro Tech Fertilizers, and he farmed as well. "During his time with the STA, Glen served as a driving instructor, curriculum developer, classroom trainer and training & compliance manager," Rosseker said, noting that "he was instrumental in restructuring some STA business lines and heading up the professional truck driving championships provincially and nationally."

Glen is survived by his wife, Bev, and her family; his children from a previous marriage; his parents and siblings. A memorial service was held on Oct. 18 at the Pense Town Hall. Obviously, Glen will be missed.

Road Knight showcases trucking

From the AMTA comes word that more than 10,000 adult and high school career-seekers from Alberta's capital city and its surrounding area turned out for a two-day Alberta Employment & Career Fair 2014, held at the Edmonton Expo Centre on Oct. 3-4. The event included guest speakers and a wide variety of employers and industry sector representatives who provided invaluable insight into trucking industry careers, behind the wheel and "behind the scenes."

The AMTA's career information booth generated considerable interest, according to Kay Flavelle, who was there with her Road Knight husband Reg, of Reilly Transfer. "We were both losing our voices by the end," said Kay. She and Reg talked with hundreds of folks, discussing the importance of the transportation industry and the multitude of rewarding career opportunities to be found here. Attendees also received take-home educational and career handouts, as well as keepsake items provided by AMTA.

Speaking of Road Knights

The AMTA is looking to assemble a new team of Alberta's finest (truck drivers, of course!) to join the Road Knights program for the 2015-2016 season. Road Knights are the industry's ambassadors to the public, promoting road sharing and raising

awareness – both of career opportunities and the vital nature of the trucking industry.

If your company has a particularly safe driver, one who exemplifies the best qualities of today's professional truck driver, why not nominate him, her or it? Better do it quickly, though; nominations close on Dec. 1.

You can get a nomination form and brochure on the AMTA's Web site at www.amta.ca.

An unabashedly successful bash

From Al Rosseker again – busy fellow, he – comes a report that this year's STA Management Conference, AGM and Gala (presented by SGI & SGI Canada) was a record breaker. The bash, held at Saskatoon's Hilton Garden Inn on Oct. 25, was one of the largest in recent years, surpassing the 200 seat mark, according to Rosseker. He also said the event's format seemed to hit the mark, with a number of people commenting that the event was "bang-on." I guess the shooting contest went well. Talk about high-calibre events!

Rosseker paid special note to the team who pulled off the event, including the STA's Nicole Sinclair, Cecilia Taylor and Nadine Witwicki, as well as the Board of Directors he said "stepped to the plate to buy tickets and sponsorships."

And, as usual, the Associate Trades Group stood strong. "An organization like ours is only as good as the sum of its many parts," Rosseker said. "On (the day of the event) those parts were running like a well-oiled pre-2010 diesel engine! Thank you!"

The AGM saw the election of new board members as well. Congratulations to Heather Day (C.S. Day Transport), Brett Marcoux (AFI Distribution Group), and Ray Milne of RDK Transportation. As Rosseker said, "we all look forward to working with you as we enter our 78th year of operation." Thanks were also extended to (now retired) board member Harvey Stewart, of A&S Transport Ltd., Yorkton, for his decades of service to the STA Board.

Anyway, if you missed it you have a chance to make good, but not till next year. So get out your 2015 calendar and mark down Sept. 12. The event will be held in Regina to coincide with the National Professional Truck Driving Championships, so it should be interesting and fun.

B.C. on the move

The BCTA is urging motor carriers and their employees, family members and transportation contacts to get involved in the public consultation for the provincial government's new 10-year transportation plan, called "B.C. on the Move." The organization says it's a golden opportunity to put commercial road transportation needs front and centre in the province.

According to the BCTA, "the results of the B.C. on the Move consultation will set short, medium and long-term priorities for, among others, moving goods and people safely and reliably and growing B.C.'s economy as it relates to transportation.

The government is collecting public input via an online survey until Dec. 12, so head over to the survey (which you can find at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/transportationplan/regionalinfo/> – the survey link is near the top right of the page) and get involved. Burn their ears!

The BCTA has a helpful page at its Web site, www.BCTrucking.com.

From Ice Roads to the doghouse

Kudos to the Winnipeg-based stars of Ice Road Truckers – Polar Industries – who are trying to help thousands of homeless northern canines.

They're hauling dog houses to help Norway House Animal Rescue (NHAR) after the organization sent out a plea for such shelters, which are needed before winter comes a-roarin' in.

The area, just north of Lake Winnipeg, is estimated to have some 4000 dogs, according to the Winnipeg Free Press, hundreds of which are strays.

Polar Industries is going to take up the first load of dog houses and owner Mark Kohaykewych says they'll keep transporting the things as space allows. I guess you could say it's dog-gone nice of them. As if their job isn't ruff enough! **TW**

That's it for this month. As always, feel free to fire me off an e-mail with any items, kudos, whines – whatever you think your industry peers need to see. You can reach me at jim@transportationmedia.ca and my inbox is always open and never full. Sometimes these pages are, however, so while we try to print all the stuff you send there's just so much space in the magazine. See you next time!

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