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Tremcar demonstrated it believes in Alberta, by moving into a larger facility.

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A comprehensive report from the Surface Transportation Summit.

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Professional driver Al Goodhall addresses a tough subject that affects drivers.

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Daimler CEO Martin Daum projects demand for new trucks will stay strong in '16.

trucknews.com



Flatdeck carrier Searcy Trucking of Winnipeg was named one of North America's safest fleets at the ATA MC&E.

The view from Sask.

Rider Nation healthy, with few Calgary stampeders, Rosseker says

By Jim Bray

REGINA, Sask. – Speculation that the election of an NDP government in Alberta could lead to a flood of companies hightailing it to greener pastures a province to the east appears to be unfounded, at least so far.

That's according to Al Rosseker, executive director of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA), who sat down with *Truck West* to outline the current state of the province's trucking industry.

"We haven't had a lot of inquiries from Alberta trucking companies saying they want to (relocate)... maybe one or two," he said, "but I think it's not that they're running away from a government, it's more just straight business."

That said, Rosseker noted that "NDP governments have a reputation for tax and spend and we'll see what happens in Alberta."

Unlike the vaunted "Alberta Advantage" that's based mostly on one sector of the economy – the resource sector – Saskatchewan's economy is more diversified.

"We have fallbacks," Rosseker said. "We have wheat, we have potash, we have uranium. We certainly have oil and natural gas."

And, it appears, a premier willing to go to bat for the province.

"We've got a premier here who's at least pitching our oil and, by way of extension, Alberta's," Rosseker said. "Alberta's new premier is not as proactive, but I can also see that she's new to the whole deal...so let's give her some time and see what she does."

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Winnipeg fleet wins top safety award

Searcy Trucking recognized by Volvo as one of North America's safest carriers

WINNIPEG, Man. – A Canadian fleet has once again been recognized by Volvo Trucks as one of the safest in North America.

Searcy Trucking was named a winner of the 2015 Volvo Trucks Safety Awards at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition. It receives \$25,000 to put towards its safety programs, courtesy Volvo and co-sponsor Michelin Americas Truck Tires. Searcy, a Bison Transport subsidiary based in Winnipeg, Man., won the division for fleets travelling less than 20 million miles per year. Winner of the 20 million mile-plus category was Ruan Transportation of Des Moines, Iowa.

Companies are selected based on their safety records and training programs. Qualifying carriers must have at least one Volvo truck in their fleets.

"By making safety a priority every day, Ruan Transportation and Searcy Trucking were able to deliver an outstanding safety performance during the past year," said Göran Nyberg, president, Volvo Trucks North America. "Their investments in industry-leading safety programs and training show a dedication to

driver safety, and we congratulate them on this achievement."

This is the seventh year for the Volvo Trucks Safety Award program and Canadian fleets have traditionally fared well.

Searcy is an 88-truck flatbed trucking company that says it manages its safety programs with the same attention to detail as its finances. Drivers are provided with simulator training that reflects real-life experiences.

It employs a "Right to decide" policy, which allows drivers to deem when it's not safe to carry on, allowing them to discontinue a trip until conditions improve. Its drivers racked up more than 6.8 million miles last year and had an accident frequency rate of 0.58.

"Safety has been a core value at Searcy Trucking for as long as we've been in the trucking business and that was a key factor in Bison's interest in acquiring Searcy back in 2013," said Norm Blagden, president of Searcy Trucking, who accepted the award. "Searcy drivers are some of the best in the business. That, combined with a leading safety program, ensures our drivers return home safely at the end of each and every trip." **TW**

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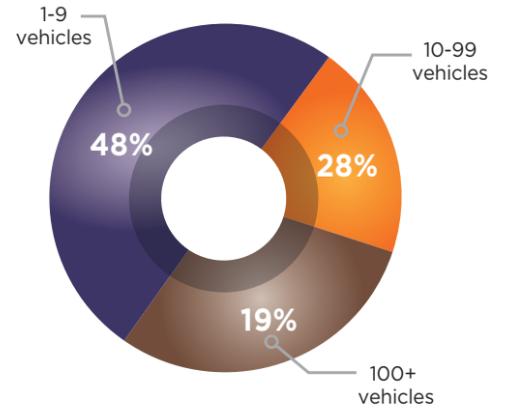
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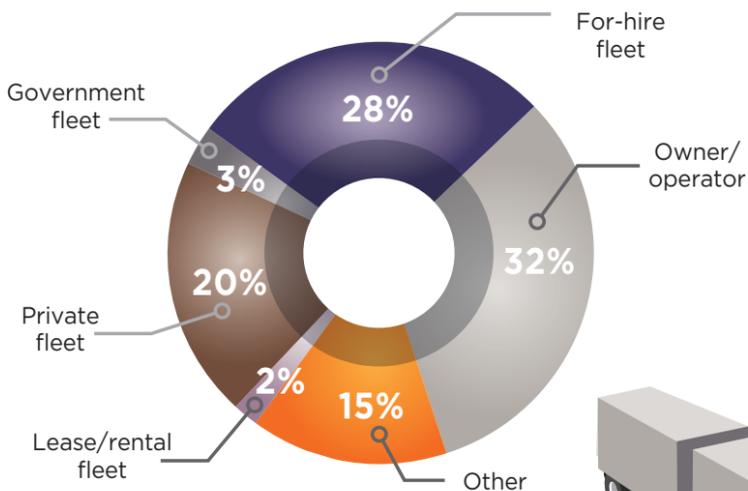
SIZE MATTERS

Our annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey, conducted across Canada earlier this summer, sheds light on the equipment purchasing habits and intentions of the nation's motor carriers. The survey includes responses from every region and fleet size as well as from for-hire, private, government and lease/rental fleets. Last year carriers of all sizes started re-investing in fleet renewal. Small carriers began investing in new equipment to a large extent for the first time since the Great Recession. Class 8 truck sales up to May in the Canadian market have been strong enough to make for the fifth best sales results YTD going back to 1999. But plans for next year's Class 8 truck purchases appear dependent on fleet size. Large (over 100 tractors) and medium sized (10-99 tractors) fleets appear to be staying the course for 2016. Only 6% of large carriers and 9% of medium-sized carriers have no plans to purchase new trucks next year, similar to their 2015 responses. But small carriers (fewer than 10 trucks) are showing a considerable difference from the previous year with 55% having no plans to purchase new trucks compared to 22% who said likewise last year.

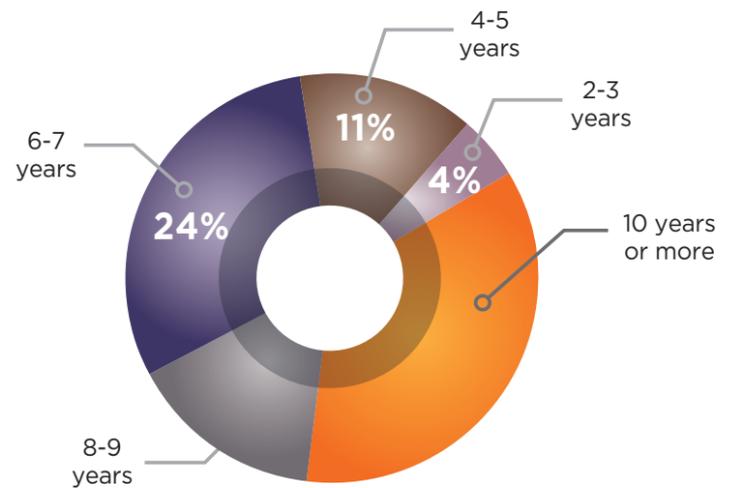
Size of fleet



Type of operation

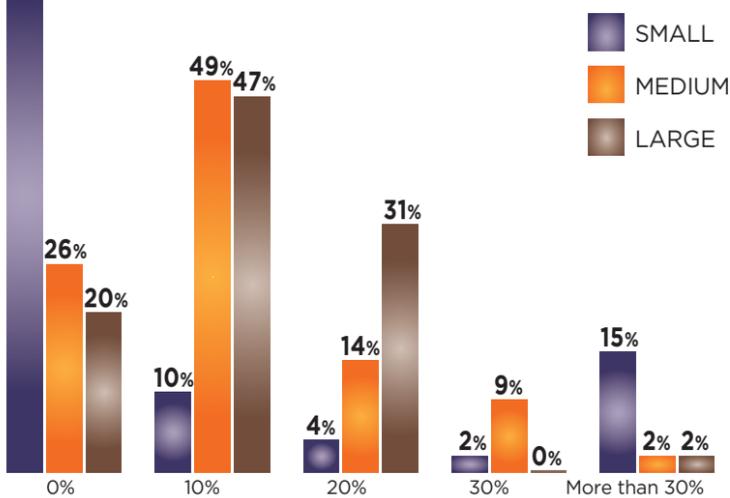


Current trade in cycle for heavy duty vehicles

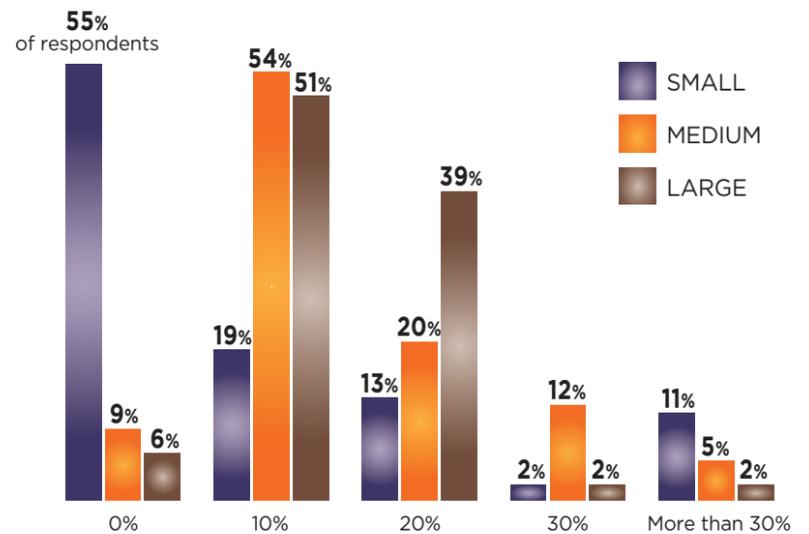


69% of respondents

Percentage of heavy duty fleet expect to replace remainder of 2015 comparison by fleet size



Percentage of heavy duty fleet expect to replace in 2016 comparison by fleet size



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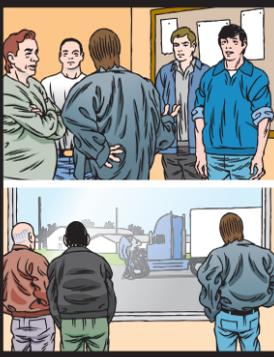
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Why your company needs a pot policy

The Canadian trucking industry is beginning to wake up to the fact that marijuana use – legally or otherwise – among truck drivers is an issue that needs to be addressed.

Even before Justin Trudeau won the federal election in October, having already hinted at the complete legalization of marijuana, Canadians have been using marijuana for medical reasons in increasing numbers. In fact, Health Canada projects 450,000 Canadians will be using medical marijuana by 2024. If you don't think there'll be truck drivers among them, you're smoking something more potent than pot.

If you think *your* truck drivers won't be among them, well, what have you done to ensure that?

The guidelines around the use of medical marijuana in Canada are hazy at best. (In the US they're black and white – don't do it. US regulations categorize marijuana as a Schedule 1 narcotic regardless of whether or not a doctor approves).

But what about domestic drivers in Canada? Should they be allowed to operate a commercial vehicle when using medical marijuana while off-duty? The

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



College of Family Physicians of Canada says patients shouldn't drive until more than four hours have passed since inhalation. But Health Canada says impairment can last up to 24 hours. So what gives?

Employment laws in Canada tend to favour the employee. If a driver tells you he or she is using prescription marijuana while off-duty, do you allow that driver to continue driving within Canada or do you give them a desk job? Do you have enough desk jobs available? If you fire them outright, you may have a human rights complaint on your hands.

To further complicate matters, there's currently no test available that measures impairment. Tests in use today only determine past use. If Trudeau comes through with his plan to legalize marijuana, recreational use could soar as well. You may see a surge of applications for domestic driving jobs while fewer are

prepared to run cross-border, depending on how these drivers like to spend their weekends. Recently, the Private Motor Truck Council held two seminars that explored this issue in detail, featuring Dr. Barry Kurtzer of DriverCheck. You can read a wrap-up of his seminar on TruckNews.com.

The key take-away was, your company needs to develop and implement a medical marijuana policy. And it should be developed with the input of qualified legal counsel.

Whether or not you agree with the use of marijuana is beside the point. Its use is going to increase – both medically and recreationally – and some clear guidelines need to be in place. And don't look to the government or medical authorities for clarity. Trying to sort through the vague and often contradictory guidance from bodies such as Health Canada



and The College of Family Physicians will leave you feeling dazed and confused. **TW**

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See you at the Women with Drive Summit

Much of the discussion about attracting more women into the industry has focused on the driver position. It's a no brainer considering women, who make up about half of the Canadian workforce, represent only 3% of drivers.

Yet the discussion needs to evolve beyond this. The reality is trucking needs women in all positions – in maintenance, in dispatch, in management and in the boardroom. After a recent *USA Today* article zoned in on the underrepresentation of women as board members of publicly traded companies, the Women in Trucking Association (WIT) partnered with the University of Memphis and Dr. Stephanie Ivey to investigate the make up of board members in the US trucking industry.

It found that of 15 carriers listed as publicly traded companies, seven have no women serving on their boards of directors.

Ten of the 15 show no women in

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



the executive suite.

Were they to examine the boards of Canadian-based publicly traded trucking companies would the results have been much different? I doubt it.

We already know that only 11% of trucking managers are women.

Yet the visibility of women in executive positions – it's executives who often get to speak at industry events and are quoted in industry publications – is a key element in attracting more women to the industry.

As Ellen Voie, WIT's president and CEO, points out: We have a long way to go to find equity in the board rooms and C-Suites of carriers.

But as the famous Chinese saying goes, a thousand mile journey starts with a single step.

And that critical first step is education: educating women about the opportunities and challenges to be found in the trucking industry; and men in decision-making positions about what women must see before considering trucking as a viable career option.

Trucking HR Canada's first Women with Drive Summit last year provided an illuminating overview of the issues involved with attracting and retaining women in the trucking industry along with practical solutions.

But there was one thing clearly missing: Men. The male employers in attendance could be counted on one hand. (And, to be honest, I didn't attend myself, wrongly thinking this was an event for women).

The second annual Women with Drive Summit will be held March 3,

2016. There will be female speakers from across Canada who are emerging leaders in this industry, and will be sharing their thoughts about challenges and opportunities for women in leadership roles.

There will also be other panels exploring workplace diversity, compensation, life on the road, and an array of career development topics.

This is an event for *everyone* and I won't be making the same mistake and not attending.

In fact, I'm honoured to be hosting the opening session on workplace diversity.

I hope to see you there. To learn more about Women with Drive, visit www.truckinghr.com. **TW**

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Tremcar moves full steam ahead with Alberta expansion

By Derek Clouthier

EDMONTON, Alta. – Tremcar West is steering its company forward through Alberta's uncertain economic waters, opening a brand new, expanded service facility in Edmonton, Alta.

The family-owned manufacturer and servicer of tank trailers held a grand opening event Nov. 4 at its new location in Edmonton, and the company is hoping the larger facility will mean better and greater services for its customers.

"It was not easy to find a building to fit our size and needs, and we decided to make our home building here," Tremcar president and owner Jacques Tremblay said of the new location. "Here we realize (that) we could start a service center to be closer to the customers, to give them support when they need it."

Prior to Tremcar's move to its new locality – a facility the company owns and invested \$12 million into – it had rented a much smaller building about 10 minutes away. With around 68 current employees (close to 800 company-wide) at its Sherwood Park site, Tremcar will be hiring more to help staff the 10-acre spot.

"It's over three times the size of what we had, and that's because of customer demand," said John Sadoway, general manager of the new Alberta location, who added that the new facility boasts 11 bays compared to the four they had prior (with one of the bays having to be used for offices and parts, leaving them only three to repair equipment).

"One of the biggest things was that in a three-bay facility we were turning down work. We just didn't have the room, we couldn't get enough people into the building," Sadoway said. "We've got a great staff and great people, but there was only so much we could do. That was part of the reason why Mr. Tremblay thought it was

a great idea to invest in Edmonton, because it is a hub, it's a busy economy for what we do. I don't see any problems filling this facility with equipment to be worked on."

Sadoway added that each of the 11 bays could hold two sets of equipment, one on each side, so depending on how you looked at it, Tremcar could say it has 22 total bays at its new shop.

Although one might question Tremcar's decision, not only to relocate and invest in a facility, but also expand during what some believe to be a downturn in the Alberta and Canadian economies, Tremblay said Albertans have been down this road before.

"This is nothing new under the sun. There is some downturn and we've seen this in the past," Tremblay said, adding that he estimates there to be around 15,000 trailers hauling crude in the province today, and that they will always need to be maintained and repaired.

"Oil is still producing and trailers are still on the road. One day they will be older and they will need maintenance. We don't have any problem serving the market here and we are very confident (in the future). I don't have a crystal ball, but sometime down the road, it's going to turn around."

Tremcar West's vice-president Darren Williams agreed.

"We inspect, test and repair everybody's trailers, not just our own," Williams said. "Hopefully at some point the sales (of new tanks) will drive the service...they kind of go together."

Although he said crude oil sales are presently very soft, business was not too bad in other areas.

"Luckily, Tremcar is diversified enough that we make milk tankers and chemical trailers. If we were solely crude oil and petroleum we'd be dying right now."

Transport Canada mandates that all tankers transporting dangerous goods must be inspected every year to avoid



Tremcar president/owner Jacques Tremblay speaks to attendees at the company's grand opening event Nov. 4 in Edmonton, Alta.

any leaks or damage.

Tremcar had been selling and servicing products in Alberta long before the company had a presence in the Wild Rose province, but with its recent investment into its own facility, fervour about the business's future in the west has grown.

"With this (new facility) it's showing that Tremcar is here to stay," said Williams. "Now (customers) see that Tremcar has a vested interest in what happens in Alberta."

Sadoway believes Tremcar has hit the nail right on the head with its new location.

"Collectively we did this one right... from previous history and past experience," he said. "This wasn't an easy process. This started out with drives in the country to figure out where can we go, where can we service people, where do we need to be? We didn't find this place in a day. Location was really big."

"We found a location that is centralized to our customers."

That locale is about to get even better, as Edmonton Ward 4 councillor Ed Gibbons pointed out in his speech during the grand opening, saying that current construction of the Anthony

Henday highway was expected to be complete in the next year, meaning access to Tremcar's Sherwood Park site would get even easier.

Gibbons also highlighted that the Edmonton area continues to grow at rapid pace, seeing an additional 30,000 added to its population just last year, and that Tremcar would help contribute to the ongoing prosperity of the area.

"The energy sector is key to the prosperity of Canada," Tremblay added. "What's good for the west is good for the east."

During his grand opening speech, Tremblay attributed much of his success to what he learned from former Alberta premier Ralph Klein, saying the late-politician taught him a lot about politics and business and that he would be missed.

The Tremblay family purchased Tremcar in 1990, which was originally founded in 1962 by Alde and Leo Tougas, a pair of welders who began by manufacturing tankers to transport milk between the farms and dairies in Quebec. The company has come a long way since the '60s, as it is now the largest family-owned semi-trailer manufacturer in North America, and the fourth largest overall.

"I can tell you right now that this is probably the nicest tank shop in all of Western Canada," Williams proclaimed. "We have everything that a production facility would have, and it's a service facility."

And on the significance of being family owned?

"The reason people should care about that is because the family cares," said Williams. "You don't end up with 800 employees working for you if you're just an accountant. It's the attitude of how people are treated, like family members, and the customers can see that in the quality of the equipment and how they are being treated. It rolls down the hill straight from the top with Mr. Tremblay."

Tremcar's Sherwood Park location is its largest service facility, and though they do not manufacture tanks at that site, the company does sell trailers from the location and services all types of equipment.

And the company seems to have discovered the right recipe for success in business.

"The key to being successful in business," Tremblay said, "is people." **TW**

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18 Wheels of Christmas campaign now accepting donations across the west

CALGARY, Alta. – The 18 Wheels of Christmas campaign is once again accepting donations for food banks in Western Canada. The campaign kicked off on Oct. 1 this year, and its purpose is to fill several decorated trailers from top to bottom, front to back with non-perishable food items for food banks in the community in which the donations are collected.

The campaign was launched by Rosenau Transport in 2002 and has grown every year since its inception.

“This is our thirteenth year going,” said Colleen Nickel, co-founder of 18 Wheels and customer service representative at Rosenau. “Everything we collect stays in the community it is collected in. So all of Calgary’s donations stay in Calgary. Okotoks’ in Okotoks and Edmonton’s in Edmonton.”

This year 18 Wheels has several trailers across Western Canada that are looking to be filled. Mostly the campaigns’ supporters are Rosenau’s customers (who are very generous and eager to support the food banks, according to Nickel) and the general public across Western Canada.

Nickel says she looks forward to the campaign each year because of the giving spirit it promotes.

“When you see families come out when the trailer is parked, and little kids are bringing donations in their tiny arms, it just means the world to us,” she said. “It could be the coldest day in Calgary but it warms your heart because that child is learning how to give.”

To date, in Calgary, 18 Wheels has donated more than 360,000 lbs of food to local food banks.

This year, Nickel says its goal isn’t measured in pounds, but rather to have the trailers they have in B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan completely filled.

“Trucking goes by volume, so our main concern is we want to have at least 50 skids per trailer,” she said. “We want it filled from the front to the back door of the trailer.”

Nickel added that the program also accepts monetary donations in the form of cheques.

She said organizers of 18 Wheels, like herself, then use the money to buy groceries to fill the trucks.

If your donation exceeds \$1,000, your company’s name or your name will be on the trailer to which you donated.

“Everyone can donate until Dec. 22 this year,” Nickel added about the cut-off for this year’s campaign. “They can donate food up until that point, but we prefer monetary donations to be at least a week prior to that date, so we have time to grocery shop.”

For information on how you can help donate, contact the following, depending on your location:

- Dawson Creek, Fort St John: Chris Richards at 250-719-7528
- Fort Nelson: Brandon Jensen at

250-500-2071

- Grande Prairie: Rosa Harnett at 877-746-7447

- Edmonton: Sandra Bottorff at 800-371-6895

- Calgary: Dale Hart at 800-640-9602

- Medicine Hat: Dillon Rosenau, 403-548-6704

- Saskatoon: Carrie Willey, 800-448-4594

You can also follow 18 Wheels of Christmas on its Facebook page or Web site. **TW**

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Saskatchewan truckers enjoying business-friendly government

Continued from page 1

In Saskatchewan, the STA finds itself busy playing catch-up when it comes to its own digs.

"We're looking to put together a concept for either a new building

or renovating another building," Rosseker said, noting that the current building, which they've owned for 38 years, is "tired" and not situated well.

"We want to move out of the zone

we're in right now. We're in kind of an older industrial zone in the city and we'd like a cleaner image."

He said the STA isn't looking for a "Taj Mahal or anything like that," just a modern building in a light industrial area. Its decision on where to put down new roots will, as such things often do, depend in great part on money.

"We don't have a lot of cash to play with," Rosseker said. "We receive no government funds other than through sponsorships and things like that."

The STA has a good working relationship with the province right now, but Rosseker said that wasn't always the case.

"My board members have told me that with this government, the Saskatchewan Party government, we have realized more positive change in the first four to five years than we had in the whole 16 years of the former administration," he said.

He said the NDP regime seemed to look at truck transport as "a hindrance and an expensive way to move goods that wreck roads," but the current Brad Wall government is "a pro-business government and it looks at truck transport as an economic partner and as an economic driver."

Rosseker admits that heavy trucks do have consequences in wear to pavement and such, but said the Wall administration is building those factors into its planning.

The New West Partnership (NWP), which Rosseker said was spearheaded by Wall, has B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan working together on "all kinds of regulations," and its sphere of influence could expand eastward.

"The Saskatchewan government quite some time ago reached a memorandum of understanding (MOU) – for transportation only – with the Manitoba government," he said, and, while he noted that Manitoba hasn't signed on to the NWP as a whole,

"the four provinces' truck transport associations and the provincial governments have hammered out a Western Canada MOU on reducing a whole bunch of regulatory red tape and nightmares just on LCVs, particularly turnpike doubles, that have saved our industry hundreds of thousands of dollars, maybe millions. So it can work. We've got a great working relationship and I think we're quite envied by some other regions of Canada."

One area in which the STA's lobbying in its home province has so far failed to bring satisfactory results is the issue of wide-based tires.

"There just continually seems to be no movement," Rosseker said. "They say there's road damage and we ask to see the studies, but they don't really have them. We know there are fuel efficiencies, safety efficiencies, tire recycling efficiencies – this generation of wide-based tires has a softer compound and it doesn't need to be inflated as much; it's a really good tire."

Governments, he said, seem to worry that there will be 100% uptake on the wide-based tires, but that in Saskatchewan, "probably less than 20% of the fleets (will adopt them). You aren't going to see courier trucks running wide-based tires. They're long-distance tires."

Rosseker said the goal is to set up a super trade corridor from the Port of Montreal to the Port of Vancouver, "and we want to run wide-based tires. If they want to run duals that's fine, too, but we think the efficiencies are there."

Speaking of efficiencies, Rosseker noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the US is set to inflict a new set of rules on the industry and, given the recent history of such rules, chances are it may not go smoothly on this side of the Canada/US border.

"When the EPA says 'let's do something,' they don't really think about Canada," he said. "They don't think about our harsh conditions."

Rosseker said the truck manufacturers and their engineers find ways they think can make the rules work – in California or Florida – "but not in Edmonton at 40 below. So that's a major push for us right now."

The failure rate of the current post-2010 truck technology has reached the point that, "in western Canada we've come to the conclusion that fleets are now increasing their size by 10% just to make up for all the engine breakdowns," Rosseker explained.

Rosseker mentioned a Manitoba company he'd heard of that has actually bought its own wrecker because it's cheaper to tow one of those extra trucks out to wherever the first truck has broken down, then swap them.

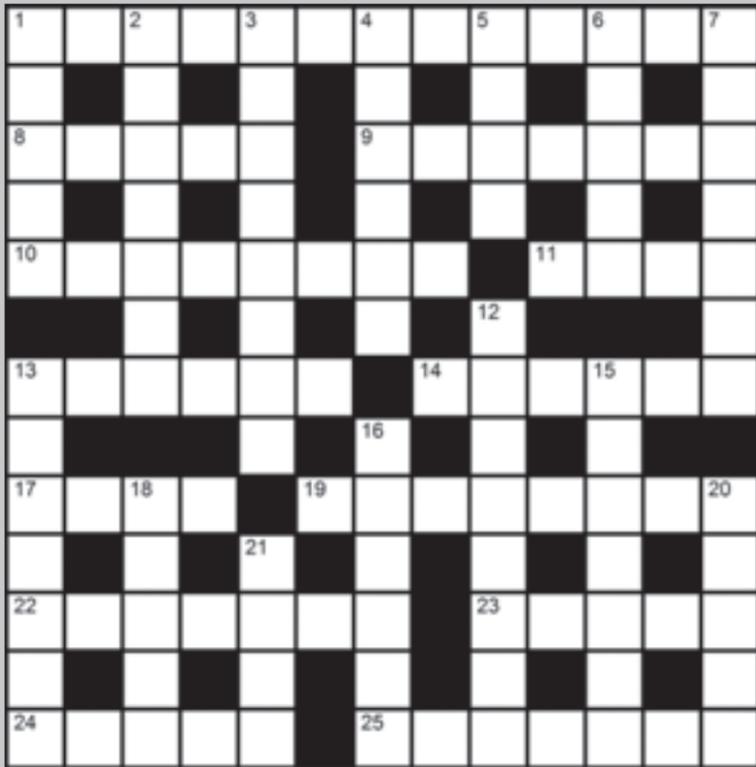
"He'll take the broken truck and he'll give the driver the other truck and he'll tow his own (broken down) truck all the way back to his own shop," he said. "He's found that cheaper than...putting it in a (far-away) shop where they're going to say they don't have the parts and it'll take two to three weeks to get them."

Rosseker said the fact that the current engines haven't been working

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TW-150 Dec. 2015 © M. Jackson

Answers on pag 32



Across

- 1 Brand on 9900i conventional
- 8 Singles, tandems and tridems
- 9 Routine multi-stop trip, slangily (4,3)
- 10 Engine or transmission rebuild
- 11 Clean _____, cop-free road slang
- 13 Unexpected route revision
- 14 Trucker's CB name
- 17 Truck dealer's "pre-owned"
- 19 Tractor to trailer links (3,5)
- 22 Trucker's daily diary
- 23 Truck back-up warning
- 24 Tractor tire type
- 25 Dead axles ahead of drive axles

Down

- 1 Potato-promoting plates state
- 2 Low, heavy-haul trailer brand
- 3 Urban traffic-congestion period (4,4)
- 4 Moncton based carrier
- 5 Break truck-stop rule, perhaps
- 6 SK border crossing, _____ Portal
- 7 Pintle hitch eye
- 12 Commercial carrier consignments
- 13 Two-trailer rigs
- 15 Cargo protection material
- 16 Crew cab or dually
- 18 1-Across model interior trim
- 20 Heavy highway haulers, briefly
- 21 Electronic onboard recorder, briefly (1,1,1,1)

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Ontario Trucking Association

well isn't just costing owners money; the situation has the potential to cost human capital as well.

"There's all kinds of stuff going wrong with them and when a guy is on an ice road and that engine quits and he doesn't even have cell phone service - now we've got a real life and death concern. Is he supposed to start shooting flares, like the Titanic?"

He said these issues have to be addressed, because "our drivers' safety is number one in this industry, always has been and will be. So we have to get the ear of Washington and (Canadian Trucking Alliance chief) David Bradley and his crew have been doing a good job."

Whether Washington listens is another matter, of course.

Despite the many challenges, Rosseker said he has a positive opinion of the Saskatchewan trucking biz.

"Things are good relatively speaking, and we'll get through this economic downturn," he said. "There will be a few casualties, but we're looking forward to continuing to be the voice of truck transport - in Saskatchewan at least - and working with our colleagues across Canada to make the industry better." **TW**

Saskatchewan allows longer B-trains, full-size trailer tails

REGINA, Sask. - Saskatchewan has announced increases to B-train double trailer combination lengths and the highways on which they can travel in an effort to harmonize its regulations with neighbouring provinces and boost truck efficiency.

The province will now allow B-train double trailer truck combinations to extend 27.5 metres, up from 26 metres. It has also added 300 kms of highways on which these combinations can gross 63,500 kgs, bringing the province's full network to 6,400 kms.

"Better regulation of commercial trucking supports our economy by lowering costs, allowing more efficient movement of products across provincial borders and making our exporters more competitive," Highways and Infrastructure Minister Nancy Heppner said. "Our government has helped to pave the way for these changes through significantly increasing the length of the primary weight network and harmonizing regulations with our New West Partners and across the country."

Other changes include increasing the allowable length of aerodynamic devices that can be attached to the back of trucks to improve fuel efficiency.

The changes were welcomed by the truck transport industry.

"It's a win all-round," Saskatchewan Trucking Association executive director Al Rosseker said. "It shows what positive results can be achieved when government and industry work together to bring about more efficiencies in freight transport." **TW**



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A December resolution

In December, people start thinking about how they're going change their act come January. If we're talking about managing fleet taxes, though, why wait? There's still time to tie up loose ends for the current calendar year while re-focusing your fleet tax compliance efforts for 2016.

Here are some tips to help you get on track this month:

Make a list

The term "fleet taxes" covers a huge range of taxes and fees that fleets typi-

Permits & Licensing

Sandy Johnson



cally must pay, including fuel taxes, vehicle licensing fees, and use taxes.

These taxes and fees can be federal, provincial, state, or administered by other levels of government. It sounds like a lot to manage – and it is. A missed payment or late return can strip you of your credentials when you need them

the most.

You need to be organized and systematic about meeting every filing date, paying what you owe (or collecting refunds), and reporting and storing accurate information.

Get a big calendar and mark down the deadlines for all the various forms and fees you pay. Account for everything, from quarterly IFTA returns to the annual fee for your US Customs transponder.

Who is in charge?

If you're reading this, you're probably responsible for fleet tax compliance at your company. Also, your job title probably is not "Fleet Tax Compliance Manager." You're more likely an accountant or CFO or owner or bookkeeper. Few companies have a person on staff who is dedicated solely to this type of work.

Make one person responsible for fleet tax compliance. Even if you hand the work off to a service bureau, they're

counting on you to provide the necessary details about where you run, the distances you travel, what you haul, how many trucks you have, and how those things might change as your company evolves.

IFTA questions

I get more questions about IFTA than any other fleet tax compliance topic. A lot of calls come in when the quarterly fuel tax return is almost due and there's a mad scramble for receipts and trip sheets to support the return.

Instead of waiting until the filing deadline, summarize your IFTA data every month and make it easy for your drivers to write and file the trip reports and receipts you need. Taking these two steps will do wonders for your compliance and sanity around filing time. Speaking of which, have you filed your three quarters of IFTA so far?

If you haven't, or you have amounts owing, you're in for a surprise when your base jurisdiction decides not to renew your IFTA license. Even tiny amounts of interest outstanding can derail your renewal.

Another thing you might not realize is that you can't display your 2016 IFTA decal until one month before the expiry of your old one.

Most jurisdictions don't pay any attention, but some, like Nevada, will write you up if you've covered up your old 2015 decal with a new 2016 decal before Dec. 1. Best to keep both years displayed.

IFTA has a grace period to Feb. 29, 2016, for you to display next year's decals, but only if you've renewed your license by Dec. 31. Sometime in December, IFTA will post the grace period letter on its Web site (www.iftach.org).

UCR & URS

The UCR (Unified Carrier Registration) is a state-based registration program that allows you to register your fleet and pay fees through your base jurisdiction. Did you know that you can pay your UCR online with the State of Indiana (www.ucr.in.gov/ucrHome.html)? I see they now have a mobile version of this site allowing law enforcement to verify anywhere, anytime.

UCR is not the same as the Unified Registration System (URS), which will consolidate several different registration processes and do away with MC numbers. Instead, carriers will be identified only by their USDOT number. After a delay, the FMCSA released new implementation dates for carriers to use the URS: Dec. 12 for new entrant carriers and Sept. 30, 2016, for carriers that already have a USDOT number.

Get help

If you want to make fixing your fleet tax compliance problems a New Year's resolution for 2016, you're missing an opportunity.

There's still time in 2015. If you work with a service bureau or fleet tax consultant, ask for help during the remaining days of December. Then start planning for the year ahead. **TW**

Sandy Johnson has been managing IFTA, IRP, and other fleet taxes for more than 25 years. She operates FleetTaxPro.com, which provides vehicle tax and license compliance services for trucking operations ranging from single vehicles to large fleets. She can be reached at 877-860-8025 or FleetTaxPro.com.

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How times have changed

After helping quite a few clients incorporate over the past few months, it got me thinking about how times have changed. Fifteen years ago, in 2001, 36% of our owner/operator clients were incorporated and employees of their business while 64% were sole proprietors. Today, the percentage who are incorporated is 67% and 33% are sole proprietors. Almost an exact flip-flop.

Our clients are not unique. Whenever I speak to owner/operator groups I ask for a show of hands to see how many in the audience are sole proprietors versus how many are incorporated. Incorporation is always more popular. So what has driven this change?

There have been many market forces over the years, everything from insurance to employment and liability issues to tax advantages. The meal deduction issue is one reason we have seen more owner/operators incorporate. Once CRA decided that sole proprietor owner/operators could not use logbooks to support their meal claims and had to use actual receipts, a landslide of owner/operators changed their business model.



Tax Talk

Scott Taylor

They were willing to accept a more complex filing process for the tax advantages of creating a corporate entity that's separate from their personal finances.

Meal claims

An owner/operator who travels far enough and long enough away from home can use the simplified method (logbooks and TL2 form) to substantially save on taxes and eliminate the hassle of keeping receipts for each individual meal away from home.

Let's look at the numbers. If you're away from home five days a week and 50 weeks in a year, your maximum meal claim would be \$10,200 (50 weeks times \$51 times 80%). What's the total dollar value of meal receipts you think you'll collect in a year? There's no way its even close. You could be paying \$2,500 to \$3,500 more in tax by not incorporating and claiming meals this safe and proven way. Some sole proprietors con-

tinued to use the simplified method to claim meals anyway and hope to not get caught. A meal claim of this size getting denied will surely lead to big reassessments.

Travel allowances

Those of you looking for a further benefit beyond the traditional TL2 may want to consider paying yourself a travel allowance or per diem.

Once again, this is only for incorporated owner/operators. A per diem paid to you by your corporation is a tax-free benefit. You don't report it as income on your personal return.

As a truck driver on the road 50 weeks a year, it can really add up. Let's say your company policy on meal and travel expense reimbursement is \$80 per day. That could put as much as \$400 a week - \$20,000 a year - into your pocket tax-free.

You can reduce your taxable income. You would have to earn at least \$24,000 in gross salary to net \$20,000 take-home pay. If your household budget requires you to bring \$40,000 or more into the home, you can lower your taxable income from salary or dividends and make up the difference with the non-taxable travel and meal allowance.

Your corporation would save payroll-related expenses (CPP and WSIB) because it would pay you less taxable income even though the net amount you take home - salary plus per diem - would be the same.

Like any other strategy designed to reduce your tax obligation, you need to take steps to make sure your actions will

stand up in case of audit. For example:

- The per diem amount must be reasonable. Is \$80 reasonable? Maybe it should be more. Or less? That's for you to judge, but our own federal government uses \$95 per day to compensate civil service employees for travel expenses. A CRA auditor or a scientist with Environment Canada may not be away from home 250 days a year like you are, but the same principle (and per diem amount) applies.

- There should be policies and procedures for expenses. Your corporation should require you to complete travel expense forms and submit them in order for the allowance to be paid. You need to be diligent about following these procedures and not just write cheques to yourself or take cash for allowances. A proper paper trail will prevent CRA from poking a hole in this strategy.

If you have employees other than yourself, you must pay the same allowance to all who qualify. It cannot be just for you. Cutting your taxable income in this manner could save you thousands of dollars in tax each year.

If your accountant tells you incorporating does not have any advantages or benefits for you, times have changed. Time may be running out on 2015, but it's definitely not 2001 anymore. **TW**

Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, a Waterloo, Ont., company that provides accounting, fuel tax reporting, and other business services for truck fleets and owner/operators. For information, visit www.tfsgroup.com or call 800-461-5970.

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2015 Summit



Let's keep the conversation around shipper-carrier relationships going

When we first came up with the idea of the Surface Transportation Summit four years ago it was with the intent of creating a forum where shippers, carriers and other transportation industry stakeholders could come together to discuss and debate issues of key importance. Our focus has been on working together, on collaboration over confrontation. Our aim has been to provide shippers and carriers with information that promotes intelligent decision making. This approach must be resonating as our attendance has more than doubled since the initial year. This year more than 400 top-level transportation professionals accepted our invitation to a full day of education and networking, a new record for us.

Our fourth annual Surface Transportation Summit – organized once again in partnership with Dan Goodwill & Associates – took place Oct. 14 at the Mississauga Convention Centre. And we were proud to announce a new partner this year, the Freight Management Association of Canada.

Our blue chip lineup of speakers provided insights into the economy, shipper-carrier relations, mergers and acquisitions activity, benchmarking, outsourcing and the future of transportation in the retail sector.

As with past Summits, the conversation initiated at the Summit is too important to allow it to end there. 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. We are also providing a comprehensive report on the major themes from the conference across most of our Newcom 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. You will also find considerably more coverage on the Summit in a series of future episodes of our award-winning WebTV show, TMTV.

Open dialogue between shippers and carriers that leads to intelligent decision making must continue beyond the Summit and we will be doing our best to ensure that it does. **TW**

Lou Smyrlis
Publisher & editorial director
*Truck News, Truck West,
Fleet Executive*

Nick Krukowski
Publisher
Canadian Shipper

Dan Goodwill
President
*Dan Goodwill &
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Canada's recession is over, stronger growth ahead: Gomes

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Canada's recession is already over and its economy should grow through the rest of the year and into 2016.

That was the assessment of Carlos Gomes, senior economist with Scotiabank, when speaking Oct. 14 at the Surface Transportation Summit.

"Yes, economic conditions did weaken in the first half of the year. We had two negative quarters, but it was a decline that was fairly concentrated within a couple sectors," Gomes said. "In particular, the oil and gas sector accounted for most of the decline."

Gomes said the oil and gas sector saw business investment spending drop by more than 30% this year.

In 2016, Gomes said consumer spending is likely to strengthen and he noted Canada's employment picture has improved this year.

"That is setting up conditions for improvements across Canada as we move into next year," Gomes said. He is projecting economic growth of 1.7% in 2016, up from about 1% this year.

However, he said he's still concerned about the metals/minerals sector and the machinery sector, which has seen a sharp drop in demand because of low oil prices. "But I think overall manufacturing activity should start to pick up and that's a definite positive," Gomes said.

Globally, Gomes is also expecting stronger growth next year from most nations, including the US, Canada, the Euro-zone, Japan, India and Mexico – the notable exception being China, which could see growth slow further.

Still, China is growing at about a 6% clip and its consumer segment is strengthening and playing a stronger role in the country's economy, helping offset manufacturing declines, Gomes

pointed out.

Global growth has moderated to about 3%, but Gomes said it should pick up to about 3.5% in 2016.

Canada's economy and its exports should be buoyed by continued strength in the US, Gomes said. US employment is advancing at its strongest pace since 2000 and US leading indicators "remain very positive," Gomes said. US consumers have deleveraged and the combination of low interest rates and low energy prices has given them more money to spend.

"Coming into the downturn (of 2009) the US was overextended and that has changed significantly," Gomes said.

Canadian manufacturers have significant backlogs to work through, which should bolster freight volumes as those goods are ready to be shipped to market. And the auto sector, experiencing a record year in Canada and the second best year on record in the US, is expected to remain strong in 2016, Gomes said.

"The improvement in household balance sheets in the US is enabling them to go out and make major purchases," he said.

Looking specifically at truck and rail transportation, Walter Spracklin, equity research analyst, RBC Capital Markets, said he expects carrier profitability to improve, even though there's adequate capacity in the market. Spracklin said the driver shortage could tighten capacity but he hasn't seen it translate into a strong pricing environment for carriers to this point.

Spracklin said it's difficult to predict pricing in the trucking sector, but rail can pass on rate increases of 3-4% annually "like clockwork."

Variables such as segment, region, lanes, etc. will have a major impact on trucking profitability in 2016, Spracklin concluded. **TW**

Fleets feeling sticker shock thanks to low loonie

The challenges brought on by a low-value loonie was among the topics that came up several times during the Surface Transportation Summit on Oct. 14.

David Zavitz, senior vice-president, sales and marketing with Canada Cartage, pointed out a \$100,000 truck bought in 2010 costs 38% more today just due to currency fluctuations. In 2010, the loonie was worth more than the US greenback, so that same \$100,000 truck would effectively have cost 97,000 loonies. Today, that truck, with a 75-cent Canadian dollar, costs \$134,000. And that doesn't include the 8% or so that OEMs have tacked onto the cost of a new truck over the past five years.

"The dollar today is creating some pretty significant sticker shock for asset-based carriers," said Zavitz.

He said it's particularly difficult for smaller carriers that may have to replace a large portion of their fleets in a single year, whereas most large fleets tend to replenish a smaller portion of their fleet every year. He also noted interest rates are higher today than they were in 2010.

Wes Armour, president and CEO of Armour Transportation Systems, said his company will continue to add new trucks, despite the weakness of the Canadian dollar.

"We upgrade our equipment every year," he said. "I get upset over a 75-cent dollar."

However, Armour said he still sees a benefit to buying newer, more efficient trucks.

"New trucks are giving us 8 mpg. Before that, we were lucky to get 6, 6.5 mpg. So there are some good things happening and as fuel prices increase, that benefit becomes bigger for us," Armour said.

Mark Bylsma, president of Spring Creek Carriers, said the higher cost of new iron also means used trucks will fetch more on the secondary market.

"It's important to have a modern fleet," he said. "We are getting more on trade-ins than I thought we would've, so that offsets a little bit of the ratcheting up of overall cost of capital." **TW**

Shippers, carriers discuss common issues

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Representatives of leading shippers and carriers shared a stage at this year's Surface Transportation Summit, where they discussed key trends affecting their businesses.

Doug Munro, president and owner of Maritime-Ontario Freight Lines, said one trend he's noticed is ever-increasing service expectations among customers, driven by IT systems and software and technological enhancements, which are driving greater accountability.

"We're seeing a lot of demand from customers; they expect almost perfection. That's where it's going technologically," he said. "They expect higher levels of services and mistakes, if we have them, we pay for them through compliance penalties or freight rates."

Munro noted it's a challenging environment for carriers, with a slowing economy putting more pressure on rates.

Dan Einwechter, chairman and CEO of Challenger Motor Freight, said carriers need to be cautious about reducing their rates, a practice that was rampant during the Great Recession.

"It's easy to cut your rate by 25%, which we saw during some of the tough times," he said. "But that's a 50% increase to go back up and psychologically, it's hard for your customers to accept that."

"The rates are not where they should be," agreed Jason Dubois, president of Len Dubois Trucking. "A lot of carriers don't have the negotiating skills, or don't even know what they need for a rate. They don't know what their costs are. We have matured as a company over the last few years using software, industry benchmarking and really understanding what the rates need to be – not just what we think we can get."

Munro said it's difficult to project where rates are heading.

"It's going to be based on the economy," he said. "If the economy picks up, we will probably get some movement with rates, especially with equipment costs and labour going up. Rates are dictated by the market. We believe rates will have to go up. Most of the larger carriers are not making sufficient returns, especially in LTL, to invest in new trailers and technologies."

Alex Boxhorn, logistics manager, Loewen Windows, said shippers are more likely to accept rate increases if the carrier has done a good job at communicating why an increase is necessary and proves all steps have been taken to eliminate inefficiencies in their own operation.

"As a shipper, my first question will be what you as a carrier are trying to do to improve efficiencies within your own fleet to address costs and mitigate increases," he said. "Then, how can we as shippers help you eliminate waste in your processes?"

Another factor driving up costs is the shortage of qualified truck drivers, Dubois noted, which is limiting growth.

Einwechter agreed, noting Challenger is investing heavily into employee engagement.

"If we engage them better, we may not have as much trouble (keeping them)," Einwechter said. "That means changing how they work or what they do."

Ginnie Venslovaitis, past director, transportation operations, Hudson's

Bay Company, said capacity is not affected by the number of trucks and trailers available, but by the people available to operate them.

"I think the challenge is more about the driver," she said. "The carriers have all the tractors and trailers sitting up against the fence but if there's not a warm body to put in the seat, there is a capacity issue."

She said she's not seeing a lack of capacity in the marketplace currently, but "if we start to turn around and come back and grow, are carriers going to be investing in more tractors, trailers and equipment, or not replacing what they have and letting it die on the vine? It's borderline, I think."

Boxhorn agreed capacity isn't an issue at this time.

But Dubois said capacity varies from week to week and from region to region. He doesn't foresee any drastic peaks or valleys in Manitoba. But Dubois urged shippers to work collaboratively with their carriers to lock in capacity before it becomes limited.

"The shippers that want to share information and work together are the ones that are going to benefit (when capacity tightens)," he warned. "The ones strictly based on price may be the ones left with the leftovers."

Einwechter said Challenger is operating at near capacity on most days.

"Usually it's 100 loads and 55 drivers available that day," he said. "I'd rather run my business that way. We've always been able to stumble through it. Because I've seen the other side of it where there are 100 drivers and 55 loads and it ain't pretty. From our perspective, we bought 425 new trucks this year. We believe in the future and we believe capacity is going to tighten up and he who has the drivers and the trucks is going to win."

Munro said rates will have to improve to justify capital investments in new equipment by carriers.

"I don't think there's a capacity issue at all," he said. "It's just going to take recognition that we have to get rates to a level to replace equipment and meet our customer demands."

With equipment costs skyrocketing due to a weak Canadian dollar and new government regulations, moderator Lou Smyrlis, *Truck West* publisher, asked if small fleets and owner/operators will continue to be viable in the future.

"I feel positive the small carriers in their niche markets should be able to maintain their business," said Venslovaitis. "I think a lot of small carriers do an amazing job in a region, or even in a city. I think there are some opportunities for some of the larger carriers to pick up smaller carriers in a market where they need to strengthen their bench."

"There's always going to be a place for us small guys," Dubois agreed. He also sees a bright future for owner/operators, who have more skin in the game than company drivers and can be extremely useful in augmenting a fleet.

Boxhorn said he expects shippers to continue divesting their own fleets and outsourcing their transportation requirements.

"Smaller shippers will continue to outsource their delivery service to carriers," he predicted. "Ten years ago we had our own trucks and now we don't have any trucks at all."

Kim Wildenmann, traffic coordinator for Lantic Inc., said her company eliminated its own fleet because it "couldn't maintain the level of service clients wanted for the price they were willing to pay."

However, Munro said he sees shippers

– especially larger ones – looking to eliminate the middleman in freight brokers and work directly with their carriers.

"We deal with a lot of third-party middlemen that assist customers," he said. "For smaller clients that don't have a transport department, they serve a valuable purpose. However, I see the trend differently now, changing back towards direct relationships. (Brokers) are a middleman and they have to take margin out and it tends to increase costs at the end of the day. Relationships with carriers are becoming very important."

When asked if there are any emerging trends or threats to the transportation sector, Einwechter sounded off on government regulations.

"I've done this for 40 years and not too much surprises me anymore," he said. "But government intervention surprises me to some degree. I am amazed that reasonable, good people can do stupid stuff time and time again. Their intentions are honourable but the outcome is invariably more likely than not counterproductive to our industry's needs, society's needs and to moving freight safely and efficiently."

When asked about emerging technologies, such as autonomous trucks, panelists were lukewarm about the potential.

"I think autonomous trucks are a long way away and they will never eliminate the need for a Class A driver," said Munro.

Einwechter agreed drivers will still be required, but said he's intrigued by the concept.

"It will change the roles, responsibilities, training requirements and job descriptions of the drivers," he said of autonomous trucks. "In some major markets, between major points, I see it working, whether it's autonomous, semi-autonomous or platooning. I think it's exciting. Maybe we'll haul freight and offer a travel company at the same time and (customers) will get to go see the world and they'll be paying us!" **TW**

Fleets big and small share same challenges

Are small or large carriers better equipped to deal with economic slowdowns and recessions? That was one of the questions posed by *Truck News* publisher Lou Smyrlis when addressing a fleet panel at this year's Surface Transportation Summit.

Wes Armour, president and CEO of Armour Transportation Systems, says the diversity of a large fleet can help it adjust to declines in freight volumes.

"I think coming out of a recession for large carriers is easier to do," he said. "We usually have more resources and more variety of customers."

For example, Armour said his company hauls both potato chips and beer – two products that typically see an increase in demand during recessions. However, Mark Bylsma, president of Spring Creek Carriers, countered that smaller fleets tend to be more nimble and able to adapt more quickly to changing customer needs.

As for the Canadian recession that set in over the first two quarters of 2015, Armour said his company didn't suffer, thanks to its diversity. Port of Halifax volumes remained strong and Atlantic Canada doesn't tend to experience the economic volatility that's seen in other parts of the country.

"We looked at 2015 as being a very positive year," he said, with the exception of winter weather-related issues.

Bylsma said his company "held our own" through the downturn in early 2015.

"The first four or five months (of Spring Creek's fiscal year) we were tracking well then the wheels fell off somewhere around February," he said. "I'd say we're pleased with our year-end results, given the recession. We were able to maintain previous years' numbers."

Looking ahead, both Armour and Bylsma are fairly confident about the Canadian economy in 2016. Bylsma noted that in 2014, manufacturing GDP outperformed real GDP growth, which was the key to healthy freight volumes. That reversed in 2015 but with the weak Canadian dollar, Bylsma is expecting manufacturing to strengthen, which should translate into stronger freight demand.

Armour is encouraged shippers are seeming to place more value of late on building relationships with their carriers than putting their freight up for bid.

"We are seeing less tenders than we have before," he said. "A tender doesn't give you an opportunity to use imagination, to give new ideas. We can't say, 'We could do this with LCVs, through intermodal, short sea shipping' – the tender doesn't allow it. We're finding now small and large shippers are sitting down with us and saying 'I can't afford much of an increase,' and we get creative. Many times they end up with no increase, maybe even a decrease (in rates), because the shipper was flexible...we really look for savings rather than rate increases but in tenders you don't have that opportunity, it's what's the guy down the road going to bid?"

While Bylsma and Armour agreed capacity isn't tight at the moment, they both expect that to change as the industry continues to face a dearth of qualified drivers. Shippers that secure long-term agreements with their carriers will be the ones that have trucks available to haul their freight when the economy picks up steam, Armour pointed out.

"If things get really tight, you're going to stay and deal with the customers that treated you right and did contracts with you long-term," he said. **TW**

See your accountant before the new year

It's that time of year again and this is a very important time for owner/operators. There are a number of things to do before the new year arrives that can have a positive effect on your business. The number one thing you should be doing is meeting up with your accountant.

If you don't have an accountant, then get one – and get one that knows the trucking industry. A good accountant may cost a few bucks, but they will save you a lot more. They will know all the deductibles that a trucking business can claim and there are thousands of dollars at stake there, so you need a professional on the job.

With only a few weeks left in the year, you will have a pretty good idea of how much profit you've made this year. How much of it you decide to give the taxman is now in your hands. As I said, a good accountant will be aware of the deductions available and you should be using every one of them. Our tax code allows these deductions and they are there for legitimate business expenses, so it's perfectly legal to claim them.

Once all of your business expenses have been accounted for, you will be

**You say tomato
I say tomahto**

Mark Lee



left with a figure – basically your profits. This is the amount that you will be taxed on and you can adjust that figure to lower your tax liability. You do this by lowering your profit or increasing your business expenses. You know what big-ticket items you're going to need in the near future – a set of drive tires, for example – so buy them now and the tax savings you'll make will go towards their purchase price.

I must again stress that anything you claim must be for a legitimate business expense. The rules on this are very clear and you'll be in hot water if you try to beat the system. A business expense is a business expense and there are thousands of legitimate claims for small businesses. A good accountant will play by the rules.

Once your adjusted profits and tax liabilities are figured out, there are now other decisions to make. Have you reached the point that incorporating

makes sense? Should you carry on as you are or are you at the point that it would be a good time to sell that truck and get a job? Your accountant will know all this and will offer advice as to which direction you should take.

Business is all about money – if you're making it then all's well and good, but if you're not, then you have some important decisions to make.

Either way, you need to sit down with all of the numbers and make decisions. You will know how much you've earned in gross revenue. Is this an area you need to address and what do you need to do to improve things, if that's the case? It doesn't matter how good your rate is if you do not earn enough from it to cover all your costs and make a profit.

Do you need to put a few more miles in next year instead of having every weekend at home and spending the winter in Mexico? The other side of that coin is are you working too hard?

As you make more profit, you pay more tax, so once you pass a certain tax threshold you may find you're working harder to keep less of the money you earn. In that case you may be able to hit the beach for the winter and spend every weekend at home next year.

You should also concentrate on expenses. Break them down into categories; some you can change, some you can't. Ignore the ones you have no control over and look at the ones you do. You need to figure out how to reduce these.

One area that really needs attention is fuel. It's a huge expense and you can reduce your spending on that with a few

easy steps. First is where you buy your fuel. You need to learn how IFTA works and optimize your fuel purchases. When you buy fuel, you're actually paying for two things: fuel itself and provincial or state tax.

If you're responsible for your own fuel tax then the best method to use is to completely ignore the tax and buy the cheapest-priced fuel. The taxes will all be figured out by IFTA and you will either get a refund or have to send them a cheque, however that doesn't matter as the tax costs are based on how many miles you travel in each province or state and you cannot change that.

Nett fuel price is different though. There's a huge difference in nett pricing, take Alberta and Saskatchewan for example – if the pump price is a buck a litre in both provinces, Saskatchewan fuel is \$0.05 cheaper than the same stuff in Alberta because of the different mileage tax in the provinces. Studying your profit and loss statement will show you what you need to pay attention to as you move forward.

If that is not something you feel comfortable with, book an hour with your accountant and get them to go through the numbers with you. Not only will it help you minimize your expenses, it's tax deductible too! **TW**

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

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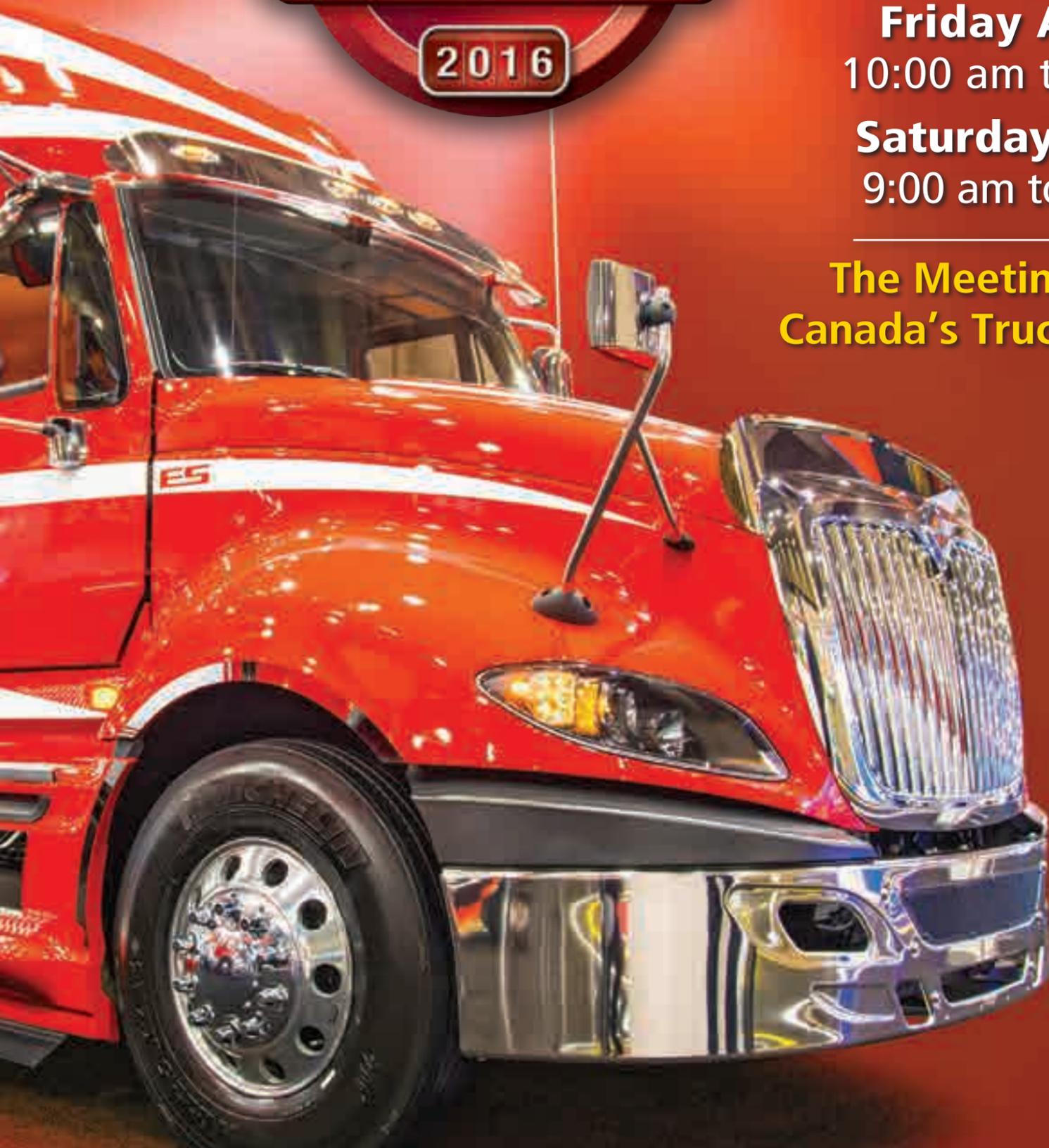
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Good dispatchers focus on more than equipment

Not everyone has the skills to be an effective dispatcher. I know one fleet that recently learned this the hard way after re-assigning an injured driver to the all-important deskbound duties. Once off the road, he began playing favourites. Some of his former peers were given profitable loads and favourable lanes; others were assigned the toughest routes and were pushed to complete deliveries at all costs, no matter what any regulations required.

They're the types of decisions that threaten everything from a carrier's safety profile to driver retention efforts.

A dispatcher's job clearly involves more than grabbing a headset and tracking equipment. These employees are the conduits between managers, operations teams, customers and drivers alike, ensuring that freight arrives and rules are followed. When things go wrong – and they will – they are also the people who have to step in as referees and protect relationships. It's why strong interpersonal skills are a dispatcher's most valuable tool. A sense of empathy will help to address calls from a frantic customer

Ask the Expert

Kevin Brandon



looking to re-route a load, and even the message from a driver's spouse who is looking for guidance on a home repair. Active listeners who offer ongoing feedback during a discussion will also be able to identify the real challenges behind a driver's complaints.

As important as these skills will be, dispatchers need the support of senior managers, too. They should be confident that they will not be penalized for following rules that might sometimes lead to delays. Besides that, any dispatcher pushed to break laws, policies or standards is bound to become a witness in a court case after a collision or spill. That's when any differences between written and unwritten rules will lead to expensive judgments and fines.

Of course, effective dispatchers will need to understand a broad array of rules and regulations in the first place. Hours-of-service limits will dictate the times a driver can turn a wheel, while

weights and dimensions regulations will determine if equipment can even travel specific routes. Every commodity in the trailer will also face its own restrictions, whether they come under the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act or the rules that govern food and livestock. Looking to take anything across the border? There are Customs regulations and procedures to consider as well.

Informed dispatchers schedule routes accordingly, avoiding challenges that include delays and outright cargo seizures.

But the required understanding is not limited to regulations. Dispatchers also need to know how their decisions fit within the context of fleet policies and customer requirements. Every trip needs to be planned with all of this in mind.

To compound matters, there are other barriers that can arise. Changing weather and road construction can certainly wreak havoc with trip plans. But dispatchers who understand the need to stay informed will avoid many related issues.

Vehicle locations and delivery times are just the beginning. There is room on every computer screen for a window devoted to information about traffic delays and weather reports along specific routes. The dispatchers who know about a scheduled parade or construction activity will be able to re-route equipment before wheels grind to a halt. A TV monitor in a dispatch office can also be tuned into the Weather Network to warn everyone about changing storm paths.

The dispatchers equipped with a list of approved repair facilities and towing

companies will be ready to address any unplanned breakdown. A list of available truck stops and secure yards can guide drivers to safe locations when available hours-of-service begin to dwindle. Carefully structured checklists and emergency plans will ensure that no step is overlooked if they receive a call about a collision.

It can also be helpful to recognize that some drivers will require more attention than others. A few extra calls to new or inexperienced personnel can identify emerging challenges before they lead to larger errors. This simple step will help to reinforce that the fleet truly cares about people behind the wheel, limiting the frustrations that often cause people to look for new jobs. It will enhance the relationship between drivers and dispatchers, too.

Fleets that include dispatchers in team meetings will ensure that everyone receives the same details about changing regulations, policies and procedures. And as every experienced dispatcher knows, information is a powerful thing. **TW**

This month's expert is Kevin Brandon, risk services specialist. Kevin has served the industry for more than 25 years in loss control, transportation safety and insurance risk engineering. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer built on the strength of four companies with a longstanding history in the marketplace and has been serving the trucking industry for more than 60 years. You can visit them at www.nbins.com.

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Focus on Agriculture & Livestock trucking



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Saskatchewan agriculture, livestock sectors having healthy year

By Jim Bray

SASKATOON, Sask. – A dry spring doesn't appear to have messed up this year's harvest in Saskatchewan, and that has the provincial government predicting that, rather than being a sub-standard year, 2015 will produce a "very near average crop."

"It's an interesting time," Rick Burton, assistant deputy minister, policy, for Saskatchewan's Department of Agriculture, told *Truck West* magazine, estimating that as of mid-October about 85% of the harvest had been completed. "The year started off a little bit challenging in terms of dry weather in parts of the province, but we had some timely rains later on."

Burton estimated the harvest would be in the neighbourhood of 29 million tonnes, which is slightly above the province's five-year average, and he noted that cereals make up the lion's share of province's inventory, particularly spring wheat and durum, along with canola, peas and lentils.

Saskatchewan's livestock sector has seen decent incomes over the last few years and Burton thinks such opportunities as provided by the newly-signed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) should help make things even better.

"Cattle prices have been good," Burton said. "Our livestock receipts are growing and we have lots of opportunity – not just cattle, but hogs, sheep and bison as well. Most of our agriculture goods are exported, so any trade agreements or enhancements in terms of market access for the province are

very important to us."

Most of the province's exports currently head south of the 49th parallel, but Burton said the province was looking toward the Far East even before the TPP came along.

"Japan is a big trading partner for us, along with China and Europe," he said. "The TPP...has 12 countries in it

that the good news about Saskatchewan products gets out to the world. We're investing in those activities as a province, supporting what the federal government and industry is doing in those markets."

Much of Saskatchewan's products leaving for export goes out on rail, bulk grains in particular, but Burton said trucking is vital as a go-between, to move the product to the rail sites in the first place.

"There's a lot of trucking in the province, obviously," he said, adding that, in terms of livestock, trucks also deliver product to slaughter plants in Alberta and the United States.

And as far as the ag side of the equation is concerned, "we continue to see growth in agriculture products and, so I would assume, that translates into increased trucking of agriculture products."

Burton was reluctant to blue sky any predictions for next year's harvest, but he did say, "we have good moisture conditions right now as a result of some late summer and early fall rains and so...there's no reason to think that we shouldn't be able to produce a good crop again next year."

On the livestock side, "we continue to undertake actions to promote the industry and, hopefully, we'll see some expansion of our livestock sector over time," Burton said, adding that, when

it comes to farm income numbers in recent years, "the farmers have experienced very good levels and we certainly project that both our output and our income will increase over time."

The message coming out of Saskatchewan's agriculture sector currently is basically similar to that of other sectors in the province: Saskatchewan is open for business and all systems are go.

"We (have) the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth, which was initiated a few years ago and really sets out some aggressive targets for agriculture in the province," Burton said. "We expect to see up to 10 million tonnes more crops produced by 2020, (which means) more exports."

He said the province expects its exports to increase from \$10 billion worth of agriculture products a year to \$15 billion.

"We have a target for increased livestock sales and value-added processing as well," he said. "We think there's tremendous opportunities to increase our value-added sector in the province."

Accomplishing this, Burton said, can be done through "a combination of investments in research and the adoption of technology by our producers."

He noted that producers can't merely grow their products; they have to get them to market as well.

"It's the transportation system, it's trade agreements, it's market access," he said. "It's a combination of a lot of activities and of course a competitive business climate." **TW**

'Hopefully, we'll see some expansion of our livestock sector.'

Rick Burton, ast. deputy minister

and 800 million consumers. (It represents) over 40% of the global economy and top export destinations for many of our Saskatchewan products both on the grains and the livestock side."

Burton noted the province doesn't do any branding initiatives for its products, preferring instead to be part of the larger, regional whole.

"It doesn't matter whether you're in Saskatchewan, you're in Alberta or Manitoba in terms of high-quality cereals and oilseeds and livestock," he said, "so we don't brand a specific Saskatchewan product, but we're certainly active with other provinces and with (the federal government) in ensuring



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Keeping it clean

Steve's Livestock Transport offers a healthy helping of clean service

By Jim Bray

BLUMENORT, Man. – Steve Brandt started off with a single truck nearly 30 years ago and since then has built the business to the point where he claims on his Web site that his company has become “the largest commercial livestock carrier in North America,” moving some 2,500 heads of cattle and 150,000 pigs each week.

That's some growth, but to listen to Brandt tell it, getting to this point wasn't all that big of a deal.

“We were sort of at the right place at the right time,” Brandt told *Truck West* in a recent interview. “The pork industry was taking off and was crying out for bio-security and the industry was not willing to provide that option for people (at the time) – and we were. We were just getting out of the gate and the pork sector was asking for something – and we basically provided what they were asking for: whatever it takes to clean the equipment to their standards.”

That strategy has taken Brandt and his company from that solitary truck to today's empire of 135 power units with a staff of about 375 spread across the company's operations from Manitoba to Alberta, driving and supporting them.

Brandt hasn't strayed too far from his roots in building the biz, however, despite growth and a certain amount of branching out.

“I started off trucking mainly dairy cattle and some feeder cattle and show cattle,” he said. “My wife was dispatching and doing accounting and running the household and I was in a truck – and that's how we started.”

Now, the company trucks cattle, pigs and even some dry freight, and has also spun off a division known as Dawson Road Transfer, which services customers in Winnipeg and southeastern Manitoba. Brandt credits the success to the fact that “we have a bunch of good people” as well as the company's focus on healthy hauling.

“I think (the disease prevention focus) has probably been the biggest thing,” he said. “If you can help somebody keep a disease out of a facility and we keep our Canadian herd health strong, that's something that we try to provide and that's how we try to separate ourselves from everybody else.”

Another competitive advantage Steve's Livestock Transport can claim is that the company is certified by the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT), which means its trucks require minimal cargo inspections and can receive priority status at North American border crossings – kind of a “Nexus-type thing” for livestock, Brandt said. The company also adheres to standards set by the Canadian Border Safety Agency, which can help ensure fewer hassles at the 49th parallel.

Steve's Livestock Transport now hauls across eastern and western Canada as well as the mid-US states.

Despite the company's steady growth, however, Brandt thinks business this year has been pretty flat.

“Not a big change (from last year),” he said, noting that while the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease) scare of years past has mostly come and gone, “the latest disease that we've fought with is PED (porcine epidemic diarrhea, see the Alberta Pork feature on this page). We try to keep it out of Canada, so...we've been scrapping with it.”

Brandt tries to foster a closely knit atmosphere among his employees, treating them as an extension of his family to help ensure they stick around.

“I think we have a real family feel and not the big corporate feel, and I think that's partly where we're different (from other companies of our size) – people feel like we actually care about them and their families. Trucks, equipment, tractors, trailers buildings; all that stuff is pretty easy



Steve's Livestock Transport was able to grow, by providing the industry a cleaner service, which it was asking for.

to deal with, but (the business) is really all about the people. It's all about having the right people together to accomplish your end goal.”

Brandt noted that his son also works in the company, dispatching, and since his wife was involved in the earlier days of the business as well, there's real family to help maintain that family feel and image.

Not surprisingly, safety is also a priority for Steve's Livestock Transport.

“We want to be known as a company that's compliant on all fronts, so running compliant is high on our

list,” Brandt said.

Besides a safety foreman, the company also has its own wash bay facilities and does its own repairs and maintenance at its locations.

Brandt said the biggest challenge currently facing his company is that the fall rush of cattle movement is about a month-and-a-half behind schedule from normal.

“Cattle movements generally start in the middle of August, and they're moving (now) but extremely slowly,” he said, “so we'll be moving a lot more animals in a lot less days. It's going to create a real bottleneck.” **TW**

Alberta's 'other white meat' doing well in province famous for its beef

By Jim Bray

RED DEER, Alta. – Judging from the bumper stickers, plenty of people ‘heart’ Alberta beef already, but producers of another popular Alberta meat aren't sitting back and letting themselves be eclipsed in the marketplace by their more well-known sister product.

Pork – raised mostly on farms south of Red Deer – is also an important product in the province, with some 70% of it exported to about 100 markets around the world.

As with other livestock products, however, getting pork to market requires special attention, including ensuring that the trucks that carry the pigs are spic-and-span as to prevent disease transmission. And while there hasn't been a mad cow-like outbreak that wreaks havoc on the pork market, porcine production can and has been affected by a different ailment acronym: PED, or porcine epidemic diarrhea.

PED, according to Geoff Geddes, communications coordinator for Alberta Pork, doesn't transmit to humans, but its presence could be a costly conundrum for producers.

“It's strictly a pig disease, but it has a 100% mortality rate in nursery pigs and wiped out several million pigs in the United States,” he said, noting that the disease raised its ugly head in the US about three years ago and, since then, has also hit about 60 farms in Ontario, a few in Quebec and a few Manitoba. “We've managed to keep it out of Al-

berta so far, but it was pretty devastating for a lot of producers (elsewhere). The only silver lining was that it drove prices up because it reduced the supply, so it helped our producers pay a few bills.”

Geddes noted that PED's effects can go beyond mere money. “To have 100% mortality in the nursery pigs, it's difficult financially and emotionally to see that happening on your farm,” he said. “We really felt for all the producers who had to go through that.”

Geddes noted that PED can also affect older pigs but is generally not fatal, but pigs can't be sold or slaughtered once they've been infected.

The disease appears to have initially jumped the Canada/US border in feed, “and then from there it spread from farm to farm, especially in Ontario, where the farms are really close together,” Geddes said.

Transporting the pigs poses a huge risk for spreading PED, which is the main reason behind a special focus on truck washing, as outlined in a new program – the Western Canadian Swine Transport Wash Program – a joint effort between the pork producer organizations in the western provinces that's designed to help set, maintain and publicize standards for the washing of the trucks that carry the product.

“The biggest transmitter of PED was the trucks that arrived at the barns because they weren't clean enough or there were some other issues,” said Javier Bahamon, animal care and quality assurance specialist with Alberta Pork.

Bahamon said there have been enough protocols and processes implemented over the years, but the problem was that “nobody was checking them. No one was asking what the standards were or the implication of the protocols.”

He said some of the confusion came because ‘clean truck’ could mean one thing to one person and something else to another, depending on circumstances.

“Sometimes clean can mean you just need to scrape the truck,” he said, “but from my perspective, clean means you wash and disinfect properly the truck.”

Muddying the washing waters was a loosening of regulations that had required trucks to be washed in the United States before they crossed the border.

“They had sort of suspended that to allow people to come and wash them in Canada, where we tend to get more of a thorough washing (because) a lot of the truck washes in the States use recycled water,” said Geddes. “Now, because of PED, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has decided that... starting in January, they're going to be enforcing that again and requiring the trucks to be washed in the States.”

He said his organization is encouraging people to wash the trucks in Canada as well. “I know it's extra time and extra expense, but it's so important to make sure you're getting a proper wash, disinfect and dry to avoid not just PED but the spread of other dis-

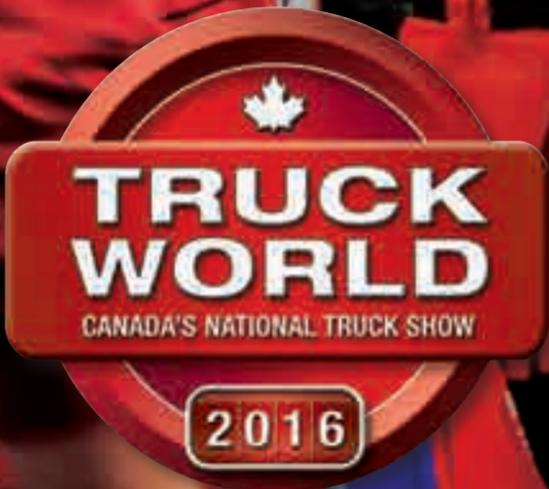
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TRUCK NEWS

Alberta's meat industry more than just beef

Continued from page 21

eases as well."

Bahamon said he's heard some producers claim they can clean a trailer in 20 minutes, but such a quick wash isn't sufficient. The voluntary program will set up a system of audits to help ensure cleanliness.

"The truck wash companies can have these individuals going through with (the paperwork) that we developed," Bahamon said. "After we have the results of that visit and can benchmark that facility and the procedures, (the company) will see where they stand among the other people in the program."

The trucking industry appears to be embracing the concept.

"It's really good for the trucking industry that they've engaged with us and have been very helpful in doing what needs to be done in order to get the herds free of any kind of diseases," Bahamon said. "It's not easy to do it with everybody, but I'd say that 90% of producers will engage and government is very supportive, so I think we have the resources and the willingness from everybody to do it."

The goal is to set the biosecurity bar higher, and it appears to be working so far.

"A couple of those facilities weren't aware that they weren't doing the best job at washing, but now they're willing to do it and we are getting to the point where everybody's doing (the washing) at the same level," Bahamon said.

Geddes noted that pork is a big part of the Alberta economy, accounting for thousands of direct and indirect jobs as well as millions of dollars in revenue.

"People don't realize, because the number of producers is small - there's about 400. But...we're the fourth largest pork producer in the in the country, behind Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba."

Geddes didn't have estimates for this year's harvest, but estimates that it'll be similar to last year's production.

Perhaps, with this new washing initiative, pork producers will have a chance to really 'clean up' in the marketplace. **TW**

Minister says Manitoba agriculture sector on track for a solid 2015

By Jim Bray

WINNIPEG, Man. - By the time you read this, the 2015 harvest in Manitoba will have come and gone, capping what the province's agriculture, food and rural development minister said has been a relatively standard and straightforward year, though not one without its issues.

"We have certain pockets that have gone through some pretty challenging times," Minister Ron Kostyshyn told *Truck West*, noting that earlier this year there was frost in some areas that doesn't usually worry about such things.

Fortunately, Kostyshyn said, "The re-seeded crops have actually turned out fairly well based on the latest report. We have the right amount of moisture, maybe some places not enough, but overall I think the cereal crops have done well."

He said the harvest was about 95% complete overall across Manitoba as of mid-October, with oats, barley and canola leading the way, followed by the flax and soybean harvest, sunflowers and, lagging behind the other commodities making its way to market, the grain corn harvest.

The bad, or at least not as good, news is that "in certain areas, the overall forage production (feed for livestock) is considerably lower than normal years, probably due to a combination of the frost and a lack of moisture in certain areas," Kostyshyn said. Traditionally, forage and hay "love to have excess moisture in the spring so it gets a good start," he said, "and...the forage has been a little less than normal - not across the entire province of Manitoba but in some areas."

Prices, Kostyshyn said, have remained "relatively comfortable for producers, and that's always the challenge when you have a good yield; a lot depends on the commodity prices."

On the livestock side of the ledger, things are definitely looking up after about 10 years of angst over BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy - popularly known as mad cow disease).

"In the beef sector...the (BSE) hang-over still continues, but the price has recovered very comfortably and it's hopefully payback time for the producers who suffered," Kostyshyn said.

The minister said he's heard from con-

stituents recently that "they're getting prices about the same as they received last year on marketing calves in the five to seven hundred pound range, but overall, I think the beef producers are very pleased with the returns they're getting on their investments and the hard work that they do."

Getting all these products to market means there should be good days for the trucking companies that haul the livestock to feed lots, not only in Manitoba, but also in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and the United States.

Kostyshyn said it's a welcome break for them as well.

"When the BSE hit, unfortunately, a lot of the trucking individuals had to get out of it because the numbers of animals

Kostyshyn said, "but I don't think I would say it's a warning."

The province isn't planning any fancy new marketing campaigns to convince consumers to chew more Manitoba meat, but that doesn't mean the province is sitting on its hands.

"We're always working with industry, whether it be the trucking industry (or) the farm organizations," Kostyshyn said. "We're kind of the centregoo of the hub, and we work with all different departments and organizations that are directly and indirectly linked into agriculture. We are forever looking for opportunities to expand and add value in the industry and we continue to be focused on that."

Kostyshyn praised the trucking industry for the great job it does in helping get Manitoba's product to its eventual consumers.

"You see a lot of trucks on the road," he said, "and to those who do the due diligence as far as workplace safety and the like, I think they're doing an excellent job."

The minister also claimed the province has a good working relationship the Manitoba Trucking Association and predicted that the influence of the trucking industry would continue to grow.

"We have rail lines that exist to service the grain sector," he said, "and in certain areas the rail has somewhat been removed and the (slack is picked up by the trucking industry), which is a very key part of the logistics in the agriculture sector."

The minister also noted that the Province has made a commitment to invest \$5 billion to help facilitate the movement of goods.

"The (Trans-Canada Highway) and a number of the main artery highways are being resurfaced," Kostyshyn said, "and we continue to work on the road infrastructure - because if you've got reasonably good infrastructure, it makes life a lot easier for the truckers who go down these roads. We're very committed." **TW**

'I'm starting to see some new trucks on the road, so that's a good sign.'

Ron Kostyshyn

dropped and the movement of animals dropped, so the (number of) truckers in the livestock sector had to decrease."

That was then, however. Now, the minister said, "I'm starting to see some new trucks on the road, so that's a good sign."

A possible fly in the ointment is an apparent trend in the industry toward lower breeding counts.

"The breeding numbers that I was hearing in Canada were at the 1960s (level)," Kostyshyn said. "The US is much similar, so supply and demand will trigger deceleration of price barring an outbreak of some sort, which we don't ever want to hear again."

The reason for the slump may be, at least in part, that demand for some meat may be moderating.

"Maybe consumption on a regular basis has dropped a bit and gone to an alternative type of meat source - such as chicken or turkey versus pork or beef,"

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The toll trucking takes on drivers

Every driver brings a different perspective as to how this trucking life affects them today and how it has affected them in the past. I re-invented myself in mid-life as a trucker.

I wasn't born and raised in this profession. So it was a privilege for me to sit down and shoot the breeze with a couple of drivers that cut their teeth as drivers driving B-model Macks in the early seventies. Our conversation wasn't a trip down the memory highway, reliving the glory days of the past.

It was a conversation about the lifetime effects of trucking on the individual and where it leaves you as you end your career and move into retirement.

So I thought I would share some of the thoughts that came out of that discussion. I've known both of these drivers for quite some time; for privacy, I'm just going to call them Joe and Bob.

Bob is now working part-time, about 40 hours per week (which is full-time in any other profession) and taking a couple of months each winter to head down south with his spouse. Bob is at the age of retirement and despite planning well financially is concerned about whether his self-administered savings and investments are going to last through retirement. Should he keep working?

This is a question faced by many drivers at retirement age. Can we afford to retire? But it is compounded by something else that weighs heavily on Bob's mind. He talked about a phone conversation he recently had with his wife – he could tell there was something wrong by the tone of her voice.

"What's wrong, sweetie?" he asked.

"I'm just sitting here thinking this is another day that we're not together and we'll never get it back," she replied.

We don't often talk about the touchy-feely stuff in this macho alpha-male dominated industry. It was great to hear Bob express the deep abiding love he has for his wife and how heavily the separation from our loved ones affects drivers on a much deeper level as we age.

Joe added to that. After so many years on the road, you find yourself detached from your community. You don't have close friendships outside the trucking community. It can be difficult to socialize with people that aren't in your close circle of family. When you live on the road, you quickly lose touch with the people you may have grown up with.

Life on the road is about trucking and very little else. Where does this leave you when your trucking career ends? It is no wonder that so many drivers find themselves back on the road shortly after they retire. For a lifetime trucker, life is trucking and trucking is life. There is often not enough to fill the emotional void when a trucking career comes to an end.

Joe talked about how nothing is left at the end of a hard career like this. The

Over the Road

Al Goodhall



cupboard is basically bare. There is no pension. There is no support system in place to make that transition from trucking to retirement.

After all the years of hard work, commitment and loyalty, should drivers not have an expectation of support from the industry?

The easy answer to this is to say that it is up to the individual to look after themselves. I disagree. The trucking industry has been built on the backs of hardworking individuals and flourishes because of that ongoing commitment by those individuals.

The trucking industry could easily repay all that sweat equity by ensuring that drivers receive the training they need over the course of their career to plan for a smoother financial and emotional transition into retirement.

When I asked why drivers have not spoken up about these issues over the course of their career, the reaction from Joe and Bob was basically the same. We've always waited for someone at the top to fix it. The expectation has been that if you work hard you will be looked after. Not so, after all.

Both drivers are happy to see more women in the driver's seat because they're much more aggressive in taking a grassroots approach to bringing these problems to light, from poor working conditions to health issues, to driver compensation, to painting a true picture of what it is like on the road to deal with the stressors drivers face on a daily basis.

The conversation I had with these

two drivers was not about trying to run the trucking industry down. Both of these drivers love this business and their jobs. It is their passion.

For the past few months I have been writing about leadership in the trucking industry. It's a no brainer. If we want to attract, recruit and retain new blood for the driver's seat we need to

change how we treat people. I believe it is that simple. **TW**

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

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Another strong year for new truck orders in store: Daum

By James Menzies

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. – As one of the strongest years in history for new truck orders winds down, Martin Daum, CEO of Daimler Trucks North America, predicted demand will soften somewhat in late 2015 and in 2016, but will still remain healthy and above normal levels.

He cautioned against reading too much into order numbers in the latter part of this year, which will be well short of last year's extremely robust numbers but still well above 2013 levels.

"October and November order intake will be significantly lower than last year, but last year was not normal," Daum told trucking journalists in mid-October, citing "monster" orders in October, November and December 2014. Those strong months created a 100,000-plus unit backlog and customers had to wait more than six months to receive their trucks. Daum said that's not ideal.

"For me, the October we'll see this year is far healthier than October of last year," he said.

For 2016, Daum feels demand for new trucks will fall somewhere between that seen in 2014 and 2015. This year will see 435,000 Classes 6-8 trucks sold into the NAFTA market, up 13.4% compared to 2014. A "normal year" represents about 375,000 units. As fleets begin placing their orders for next year, Daum said "I'm confident to say it will be less than 2015 but better than 2014 – somewhere in between."

Daimler has just approved a new record for research and development spending, and will invest US\$563 million into R&D next year.

Daum, speaking to the trucking press at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition, said DTNA delivered on all of this year's corporate goals with one exception. While it achieved its targets regarding: unrivaled integration, world-class R&D, service evolution and growing its market presence, Daum said he wasn't entirely satisfied with the rollout of the new Western Star 5700 XE. So far, 582 units have been delivered but Daum wanted to see 1,000 or more units de-

ployed by now. Still, he said customer reception of the truck has been excellent and it's performing extremely well, with fuel economy close to that of the Freightliner Cascadia.

DTNA is pleased with the market share growth it achieved this year. It now has 38.7% of the NAFTA Classes 6-8 market. In Canada, it has grown its Classes 6-8 share by 2.7% to 34.4% and it also owns 39.5% of the US Class 8 market, according to Daum.

Daum was especially proud of Western Star's growth in Canada. In September, it experienced one of its best months in its history, outselling Mack and Peterbilt and coming just 49 units shy of eclipsing Navistar, Daum said. And all this in a down market for oil and gas, where Western Star has traditionally been strong.

Asked by *Truck West* what was driv-

ing this growth in Canada, Daum attributed it to the versatility of the product line and the excellent Canadian dealer network.

"Western Star dealers are amazing with what they can do on the body side with the Western Star truck," he said.

Canada's overall Classes 6-8 truck market is up 3.7% this year, at 36,000 units, well ahead of a "normal year" which would see 32,000 trucks sold. Daum said he continues to see Canada as a "balanced and strong" truck market.

Looking to 2016, DTNA's goals are to: continue its growth; deliver superior customer service; unveil the next Evolution; accelerate connectivity; and complete the integration puzzle.

The company will also be working towards achieving the looming GHG Phase 2 standards. While Daum said DTNA supports the objectives of the

program, he also pointed out truck makers have no control over the biggest environmental culprit: congestion.

The EPA/NHTSA GHG Phase 2 standard aims to reduce fuel consumption by 1.8 billion gallons over the 10 years of the program, but Daum noted 2.2 billion gallons of fuel are wasted every year due to traffic congestion. Traffic bottlenecks cost 1.4 billion gallons of fuel each year and another 800 million gallons are wasted due to traffic accidents, many of which can be avoided using currently available safety technologies.

Daum urged regulators to go after road congestion and not just vehicle manufacturers, to reduce emissions. He also warned against a further NOx standard, which he said would only drive up the cost of new trucks with no customer or societal benefits. **TW**

Trailer Wizards expands in Regina

REGINA, Sask. – Trailer Wizards announced it has moved its Regina, Sask. location to a larger facility and turned it into a Total Customer Care Centre. The new centre is located at 2361 Industrial Drive, Regina Sask. on 2.5 acres of land. It is right off Hwy. 6.

According to Trailer Wizards, the Total Customer Care Centre will provide customers with trailer solutions, including rentals, leases, new equipment, service, and storage. The facility replaces the 445 Winnipeg Street branch, where Trailer Wizards served the Regina market for nearly four years.

"We are proud to say that it is because of our relationships with our customers and the community that Trailer Wizards has grown in Regina," said Gary Myroniuk, vice-president of Trailer Wizards' Prairie region. **TW**

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Mack consolidates axle production in Hagerstown

By James Menzies

HAGERSTOWN, Md. – Mack Trucks has recently completed a long-term goal of consolidating all powertrain production at its Hagerstown, Md. plant.

Drive axle production has been brought to the plant, which also produces Mack engines, its manual and automated transmissions and Volvo engines and transmissions. Previously, Mack's drive axles were outsourced to American Axle Manufacturing. Bringing production in-house, the company says, will improve integration, simplify the supply chain and shorten lead times for new truck orders.

Mack invested US\$30 million into the plant to add the axle assembly line and necessary tooling. Mack also brought engineering to Hagerstown as well as a centralized aftermarket warehouse. The company added about 100 jobs in the process.

"This investment is very important for our customers, dealers and for Mack Trucks," said Stephen Roy, president of Mack Trucks North America during an inauguration at the plant in October. "It gives us the ability to oversee all critical aspects of the axle manufacturing process in one place. It also makes us less dependent on third-party suppliers. We know we can get what we need here in Hagerstown."

Roy said bringing axle production in-house helps Mack achieve greater integration.

"Integration is extremely important today, with EPA regulations and more constraints on fuel economy and more focus on performance," he said, adding that building its own axles will allow seamless communication between the axles, engine and transmission.

"When all components are made by one manufacturer, they simply work better than if you have independent components," Roy said. "There's no guesswork involved."

Mack claims to be shipping more trucks out the door with the gold bulldog on the hood, symbolizing a fully integrated powertrain with Mack engine, axles and transmission. This has been driven by its mDrive automated manual transmission, which Roy said is spec'd in about 70% of Mack highway tractors. With the mDrive HD brought on-board earlier this year, Roy said he expects the company to sell more gold bulldog-adorned vocational trucks, too.

While the contribution of the engine and transmission to fuel economy is obvious, Stu Russoli, highway and powertrain marketing manager with Mack, said the axles have an equally important role to play.

"A lot of it's the rear ratios," he explained. "Especially with downspeeding. As we tweak that more and control the rpm of the engine, we can look at the rear ratio and set everything up right through the path of the driveline, so the axles do play a big role in getting the best fuel economy."

Mack has built some attributes into its drive axles that differentiate it from the field. Russoli said its spiral bevel gears with helical gear inside result in greater efficiency than industry-standard designs. And the power dividers are only active when required, reducing fuel consumption.



(L-R): Pierre Jenny, Stu Russoli and Stephen Roy talk to the press about bringing axle production to Hagerstown.

"Industry-standard power dividers are always active," he said.

Mack drive axles can be spec'd with a 2.66:1 rear axle ratio to allow engine downspeeding for improved fuel econ-

omy, Russoli said.

Mack drive axles are standard but third-party axles continue to be offered. Mack also offers steer axles but production of those is still outsourced.

Hundreds of Mack employees participated in the axle line inauguration at the Hagerstown powertrain plant on Oct. 12. They were joined by Mack executives, members of the media and local politicians.

"Bringing axle production to Hagerstown allows us to oversee the manufacturing process – from design to assembly – and deliver the high-quality components our customers depend on," Roy said. "Building Mack engines, transmissions and now axles under one roof also demonstrates our continued commitment to integrated powertrain design."

"Everything has come back to Hagerstown – axles, engines, transmissions," Russoli added. "The engineers design it here, test it here, we cut the gears here and assemble the axles here, so it's born here and it's born ready." **TW**

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New International vocational truck coming in February

By James Menzies

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. – A new International vocational truck, which will replace the PayStar, will be unveiled in February and will start hitting dealer lots in April. Jeff Sass, senior vice-president, North America truck sales and marketing with Navistar, told *Truck West* at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition that the new truck will be called the HX series. It will make its debut at World of Concrete and will be available for purchase by April 2016. The new series will include a full line of options and configurations, including: set-forward axle; set-back axle; long hood, short hood, 13-litre power; 15-litre power, front and rear power take-offs, etc.

"Everything that's needed for construction and vocational markets," Sass

said. "It's been a while since we had a full product line, since we shifted to the SCR system."

The truck has been developed by Navistar, but drawing on "synergies" that existed under its previous alliance with Caterpillar. The truck will feature an aluminum cab and brand new interior. It will replace the PayStar immediately upon its launch.

Sass, who was recruited in June from Paccar, where he spent 20 years serving in 11 roles across five divisions, said he's been travelling extensively since joining the company, meeting with fleets and dealers in the US and Canada.

One of the products the company has been pushing is its OnCommand Connection remote diagnostics platform. It's an open architecture system, allowing fleets to monitor all their vehicles – not just International brand trucks.

Sass said the company now has 150,000 trucks covered by OnCommand Connection.

"Only half of them are Internationals," he said. "We have 23 different telematics providers that have integrated with our OnCommand Connection and we

that before we go commercial," he said. "First is security. We can't have a 12-year-old in Norfolk, Nebraska on her laptop reprogramming trucks – it has to be secure. Secondly, if you have your truck at a dealership and a software glitch happens, someone is there

taking care of it. If we do it over-the-air and it's in the fleet's yard, there has to be a 24/7/365 technical support hotline they can call that will have someone on the other end who will know what the fix is, because the last thing we want to have happen is a glitch and not be able to run that truck

'We can't have a 12-year-old in Norfolk, Nebraska reprogramming trucks,'
Jeff Sass, International

are able to therefore monitor Petes, Kenworths, Freightliners, Volvos – whatever the case is. One fleet just told me they have half Internationals and half another brand, but all of them are on OnCommand Connection."

Sass said the ability to monitor an entire mixed fleet through one portal is the biggest benefit to fleets and differentiator from other remote diagnostics systems in the market. Navistar is now looking to bring over-the-air engine reprogramming to its customers, so that engine updates can be done remotely.

"Instead of having to bring the truck into the dealership and get hooked up and do an engine re-flash, we can do that through a WiFi connection at a fleet's terminal," Sass said. That offering is entering the pilot testing stage with select fleets. The goal is to commercialize it in the first quarter of 2016, but Sass said there's still some work to be done.

"Two things are mission critical with

the next day because no one is there to take care of it."

Typically, engines require a couple software updates per year, so fleets will immediately benefit from being able to update their engines without taking their trucks to the dealership. Over-the-air programming will also reduce congestion at dealer service bays, which should improve throughput. Further down the road, more spectacular benefits are possible, Sass said.

"In the future, a customer driving from L.A. to Green Bay, Wisc., where you go through the desert, through Vegas, up over the Rockies, and into the plains states – what if we can send them before they take off, a fuel map that optimizes based on its GPS coordinates so that it changes as they head into the Rockies? That way, you can optimize your fuel economy not just of that truck, but for that actual route," Sass said. **TW**

Mack revamps service processes in bid to reduce downtime

By James Menzies

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. – Mack Trucks is rolling out a network of Certified Uptime Centers, dealers that have taken steps to expedite repairs and improve uptime. To qualify for the certification program, dealers have to rethink their approach to service.

The program standardizes workflow and does away with the traditional first-come, first-served model that often means it takes longer than necessary to complete simple repairs.

Stephen Roy, president of Mack Trucks North America, discussed the program at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition. He said industry-wide, downtime events average four days even when the average repair time sits at just 3.5 hours. Mack Certified Uptime Centers will prioritize quick repairs by dedicating bays and technicians to this work so that customers needing minor repairs can get in and out of the shop more quickly.

Roy said this type of job represents about 40-50% of service events.

David Pardue, vice-president of aftermarket business development with Mack Trucks, said "Certified Uptime Centers are about improving the workflow and the workshop processes within the service bays at our dealerships. It's not a program, it's not a campaign, it's something that's intended to drive and secure true process changes from the check-in point, when the customer arrives, to the time they leave the dealership."

At a Mack Certified Uptime Center, quick jobs will no longer get bogged down behind major jobs, Pardue explained. Certified dealers will dedicate one or more bays to the quick jobs, depending on the market and size of the dealership. But Roy said the pilot project, involving more than 20 dealers, has improved overall throughput and has not resulted in the bigger jobs taking longer to complete.

But, "Dealers have to change the way they do business," Pardue acknowledged.

"This certification goes beyond just improving diagnostic times," said Roy. "We're increasing customers uptime by changing our approach to the service process, ensuring our customers' trucks are diagnosed and repaired efficiently and returned back to them as quickly as possible." **TW**



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Kenworth adds options, introduces new dealer program

By James Menzies

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. – Kenworth took time at the American Trucking Associations' Management Conference & Exhibition to celebrate a "wonderful year" marked by market share growth and the addition of new products.

Preston Feight, Kenworth general manager and Paccar vice-president, said Kenworth's 15% heavy-duty and 8.6% medium-duty market share are both trending towards new records for the company as 2015 winds down. He also said Paccar's MX-13 now has a 40% penetration rate in Kenworth trucks, which is being validated by customers re-ordering the engine, introduced in 2010, during their second purchase cycle this year.

Also this year, the company launched the MX-11 Paccar engine, which will be available in January 2016, its TruckTech+ remote diagnostics platform and a new 76-inch mid-roof sleeper for the T880 and T680. Feight said the new MX-11 offers a B10 life of a million miles, meaning 90% of engines will reach a million miles without needing a significant overhaul. It can be spec'd with 355-430 hp and 1,250-1,550 lb.-ft. of torque. It offers a weight savings of about 400 lbs compared to the MX-13, making it an ideal option for weight-sensitive applications, including LTL, regional, ready-mix and tanker, Feight said.

Kenworth also announced avail-

ability of a 40-inch sleeper, which will be offered beginning in March 2016. This will reduce weight by 250 lbs compared to the smallest currently available sleeper, Feight said, and is ideal for applications where the driver may be away overnight on occasion. Heavy tow and oilfield services are a couple of the applications that will be targeted.

Feight also touted Kenworth's fuel economy improvements on the T680 achieved over the past two years, amounting to about 10% thanks to enhancements including: predictive cruise control on Paccar and Cummins engines; neutral coast mode; auto start/stop for its idle-management system; wheel well close-outs; optimized chassis fairings; and new T680 Advantage options including day cabs and 52-inch sleepers.

Kenworth's TruckTech+ remote diagnostics platform is now installed in more than 5,000 trucks and Feight said it is proving to be the most user-friendly system in the market.

"Right out of the gate, people are saying this system sets the benchmark for how remote diagnostics systems should operate," he said.

Kenworth also announced at the ATA MC&E, a new PremierCare Gold program for dealers that recognizes those that take extra steps to improve service and reduce downtime.

"Dealers have to have a focused approach to how they maximize uptime," said Feight. Some of the re-

quirements include: a PremierCare ExpressLane offering two-hour triage; 24-hour roadside assistance support; a high-end driver's lounge; additional hours of operation, including on weekends; all technicians must be MX-certified; parts availability must be outstanding; and dedicated personnel must be available to support TruckTech+.

"They need to be monitoring fleets operating in their area and know who is having issues so they can jump on those issues as soon as possible," Feight explained.

He said the new program will build on investments Kenworth's dealer network has already made over the past five years, amounting to about \$500 million and an 18% increase in service bays. He said 25 Kenworth dealers have invested more than \$1 million into their facilities in the past year.



Kenworth expanded its product portfolio this year with new options, including this 76-inch mid-roof sleeper for the T680 and T880.

Feight also confirmed for the first time that Kenworth will not participate in the 2016 Mid-America Trucking Show. Now all OEMs have announced their intentions to skip the show. **TW**

B.C. approves fabric alternative to chains

VANCOUVER, B.C. – AutoSock's Alternative Traction Device (ATD), an alternative to tire chains, has been approved for use in B.C., according to the company.

AutoSock says its ATD has been granted provincial approval, following an amendment to the B.C. Motor Vehicle Act, which redefines "traction device" to include textile tire covers. The device can be used on Classes 3-8 trucks.

"We are pleased to see this amendment to the rules regarding traction devices in British Columbia," said Bernt J. Rosli, CEO of AutoSock Operations AS. "Now, any truck or passenger vehicle can be fitted with AutoSock when traction devices are required by the province. For US and Canadian motor carriers that travel in British Columbia, this change in the Act means AutoSock can be used as a legal and cost effective traction device."

The device can also be used in states that have no specific device exclusions when chain requirements are in effect, including Washington and Colorado.

"This is fantastic news for our US customers that travel into Canada," said Chuck McGee, president of McGee Company, the US distributor for AutoSock. "The popularity of textile traction devices is rapidly increasing so it's nice to see the regulations keeping up with the trend."

The textile covers use fibers and a specially designed surface pattern to maximize friction on snow- and ice-covered roads by making the total contact area exposed to dry friction as large as possible. Installation takes less than five minutes per wheel and the devices, weighing just five pounds per pair, provide a total weight savings compared to chains. They can also be easily stored inside the cab or tool compartment, the company says.

For more information, see www.AutoSock.us. **TW**

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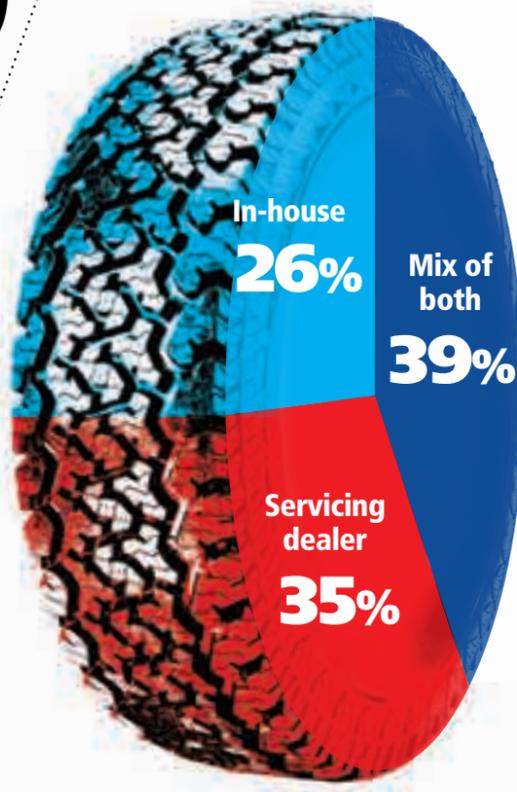
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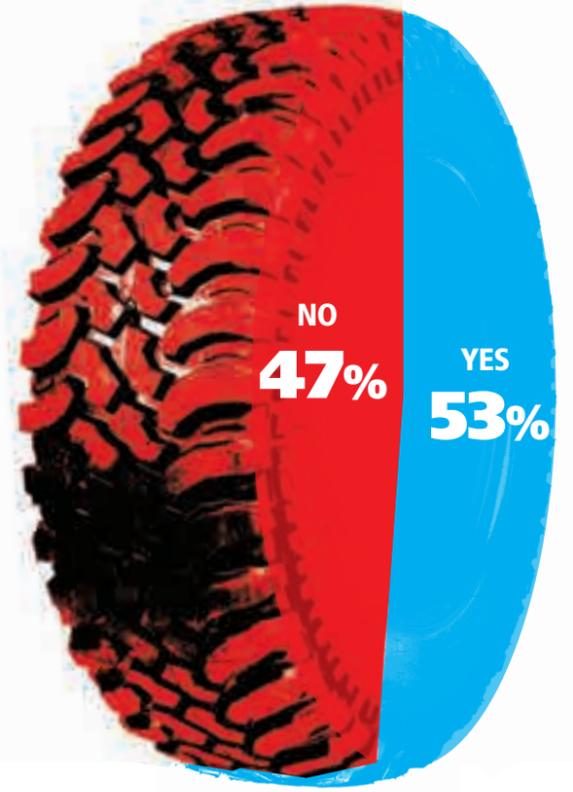
WHY WESTERN CANADA'S FLEETS ARE TURNING TO THEIR OWN STAFF FOR TIRE WORK

% of respondents

Tire service location



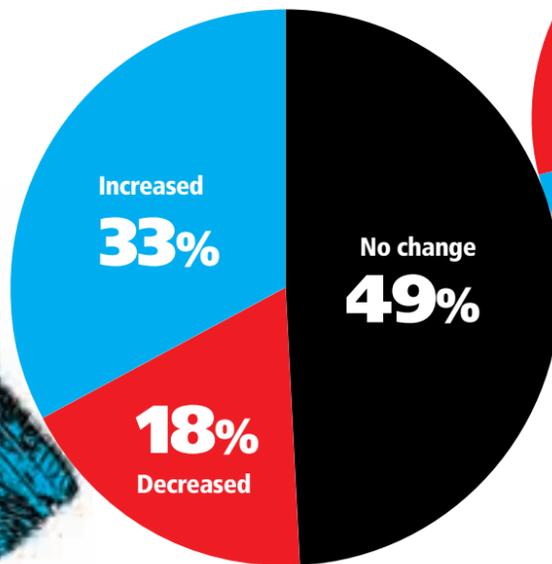
Have dedicated tire staff



Main reason for doing tire work in-house



Trend in tire work done in-house past five years



Services performed in-house



More than a quarter of Western Canada fleets are handling tire work in-house and more than half have dedicated tire staff, our latest annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey indicates. Only 35% handle tire-related repairs exclusively through their servicing dealer while the majority (39%) combine a mix of

dealer and in-house work. The trend towards in-house tire work has increased over the past five years, according to a third of survey respondents while about half say it has stayed about the same. The main reason for keeping tire work in-house is ease of access to vehicles and scheduling. **TW**

By Edo van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark has some time to kill in Saskatchewan and comes across a local paper advertising a truck rodeo that weekend. Mark enters, but right away he's labeled as a city driver and wonders if he's even welcome here.

Mark does the written test and is surprised to learn he doesn't know as much as he thought he did. Even more surprising is that the old man who looked to be struggling with the test the whole way got the top score.

After the written test, the drivers were escorted back into the room where the driver's meeting had been held. They were told to make themselves comfortable and a short while later the first driver was called out and taken out into the parking lot to do the second part of the competition, the pre-trip inspection. Goldrick was the third driver called out and Mark watched him walk across the lot with one of the judges and begin his inspection. He was smooth, methodical and seemed to be able to do the check in his sleep. After just a few moments, Mark moved away from the window and focused his attention on the drivers left behind in the room, all of whom had an opinion on how the inspections needed to be done.

"The pre-trip is the hardest part," one overly large man in the corner said. "Every one of us probably does a great pre-trip out on the road every day of our lives, but here everything is by the book. Something you might not care too much about on your own truck is a fail on this inspection. You can't overlook anything."

The other drivers nodded and muttered their agreement. Mark took the advice to heart.

"You gotta think dirty too!" someone else said.

Mark raised an eyebrow, but the others were again nodding in agreement.

"Around the turbocharger, hoses, power steering pump, gear box...anywhere fluids should be inside rather than outside."

Mark thought that was good advice too.

"I came in second one time because there was a dirty window, a worn wiper blade and a reflector missing. I thought, I can still see through the window, it wasn't raining out and I was driving during the day so all that stuff shouldn't matter."

A few chuckles circulated the room.

"I was wrong."

Mark nodded, understanding how exacting the pre-trip inspection was going to be. He couldn't take anything for granted or overlook anything. If something even looked like it might be wrong, he needed to bring it to the attention of the judges. The door to the room opened.

"Mitiuk!"

The old man stood up. Then as he ambled toward the door everyone else in the room, except for Mark, wished him well.

"Thanks fellas," he said, tipping his faded ball cap.

Mark moved back to one of the windows that overlooked the parking lot and watched Mitiuk go through his paces. He seemed to stumble along, walking past things, then go back once or twice before moving on. Then, to Mark's disbelief, he struggled to get down on his knees to look underneath the truck. There's no way this guy is getting a high score on this part, Mark



Not his first rodeo

PART 3

thought. This is where I move past him.

An hour later, the door opened and someone called out, "Dalton."

"Good luck, buddy," someone said.

"Thanks," Mark said. "I'm probably going to need it."

When Mark reached the truck, he hesitated waiting for one of the judges to say "Go" or "Start" or something that would let him know it was all right to begin.

"Anytime you're ready," someone said at last.

Mark took a deep breath and began. When he pulled back the cowling he systematically scanned all of the engine's vital areas, making sure he got the biggest potential problem areas by remembering the word COP: Coolant, Oil and Power Steering. And then, because he'd used the word COP, he reminded himself that pre-trip inspections were the LAAW: Leaks, Air Compressor, Alternator Belt, and Water Pump Belt/Compressor.

That little trick helped him get through the engine compartment without a snag and when he was done, he moved on to what was underneath the truck. Just a moment after he got down on his knees he saw a stain on the pavement underneath the steering box. It was an obvious sign of a leak in the box itself, or along one of the hoses that fed the box fluid. Mark noted verbally, then indicated that since the fluid level was still good, this was a leak that needed to be fixed, but wouldn't keep the truck off the road.

With a nod from one of the judges, he took out his flashlight. Although it was a bright sunny day and he could see pretty clearly under the truck, it didn't hurt to show the judges that he did a thorough inspection. And so, with his flashlight shining light into the darkest corners, Mark checked the axles and hub oil seals.

When he got around to the brakes, he noticed something was wrong.

"There's one slack adjuster out of alignment," he said.

"Just one?" asked a judge.

Suddenly Mark doubted himself. Had he missed something? He checked them all again and came back with the same conclusion. Only one of the adjusters was out of alignment. "Yeah, just one."

The judge made a note and nodded. With everything under the truck checked out, Mark made his way around the outside of the truck. He used one of the mallets provided for the competition and did a thump test on all the tires. In the end, just one tire on the trailer was underinflated. He used his own pocket tire pressure gauge to verify the pressure and found it was at just 20 lbs psi.

"Oh, and there's a reflector missing on the other side of the truck."

Another nod. Mark then got into the truck, started it up and went around once more checking for any leaks in the glad hands or brake lines. Everything seemed to be in order and the truck's regulator seemed to be keeping the pressure constant. He shut down the truck and hopped out of the cab onto the pavement. "Done," he said.

"Wait over there with the rest of the drivers."

"Thanks," Mark said, and was on his way.

A short while later, they posted the results and while Mark thought he'd scored near perfect, he was shocked to find that he'd missed out on six points. What's more, the old man scored the highest of anyone.

Mitiuk 99.

Goldrick 96.

And several spots further down the list...

Dalton 94.

"Excuse me," Mark said getting the attention of one of the judges. "I thought I scored really well. What did I miss to get 94?"

"Dalton, right?"

Mark nodded and the man flipped through some pages.

"There was a u-bolt missing on the trailer, a lug nut was loose and the horn wasn't working."

"The horn?"

"Yeah, that was an easy one to miss because it wasn't working, no one heard it go off during the inspections to remind them to check it."

"That's it?"

"No. You jumped out of the cab. You need to climb out with three points of contact with each step."

"You're kidding me."

"No, most of the others did it that way."

Mark shakes his head, convinced the whole competition is fixed. After all, how does an old frail man outscore them all, including the defending champ? **TW**

- Mark Dalton returns next month in the conclusion of *Not his first rodeo*.

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy



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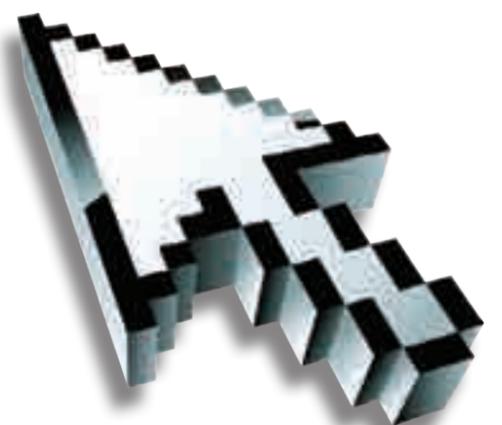
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The Adventures of NEWLAND TRANSPORT

By Edo Van Belkom

Vic agrees to be the spokesperson for the container drivers in the Greater Toronto Area as they stage a strike to protest working conditions that have made driving containers a job that earns minimum wages. Because he's been a truck driver most of his adult life, Vic is uncomfortable speaking to the media at first, but he soon gets the hang of it and after a few interviews he's speaking like an old pro, never deviating from the message the drivers want to deliver.



"We have not received an increase in pay for 10 years. In that time ALL of our costs have gone up: fuel, insurance, road tolls, licenses, maintenance, taxes... When we have to wait for our loads, no one is paying us for our time."

The strike turns out to be an easier sell to container drivers in Ontario than Vic had thought. On the day of the strike some 800 drivers get on board, all refusing to carry any container loads in or out of the rail yards in Brampton and Vaughan resulting in a 90 per cent reduction in container movement in the GTA. And with so many drivers fed up with the current situation and willing to stop working to prove a point, there is no shortage of trucks available to clog the entrances to the yards and create miles long convoys. There are also plenty of drivers more than willing to man the picket lines.



But at the end of the first day, while they've generated a lot of interest, nothing has happened. Vic did what was asked of him and is now ready to get back behind the wheel and drive as far away from the strike as he can, but the others won't let him.

"If we go back to work, we've lost."
 "We need to stay on strike longer."
 "You can't leave now, you are the face of the movement."

Vic needs to get back to work because he's not earning anything when his truck isn't moving. But everyone is in that same boat and if they are willing to remain on strike, how could he possibly turn his back on them or quit after they've come this far.

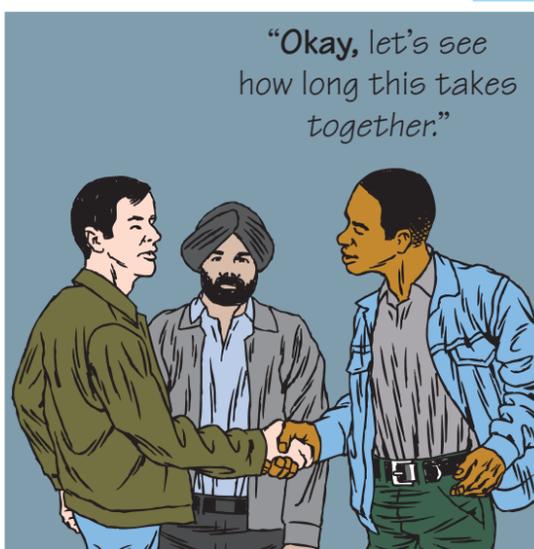


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Trucking growth helps Mullen offset oilfield services declines

OKOTOKS, Alta. – Mullen Group continued to grind out a profit in the third quarter, despite continued weakness in the oil and gas industry. The company's third quarter profit came in at \$7.3 million, down 30.5% year-over-year, on revenues of \$304.7 million, down 14.7%.

The drop was due to an \$88.8 million decline in revenue for the oilfield services segment, offset in part by a \$36.4 million increase in the trucking/logistics segment. Mullen's trucking/logistics segment achieved its highest level of quarterly revenue ever attained, thanks to incremental revenue added with the acquisition of Gardewine Group and Bernard Transport.

"Our strategy of operating a diversified business model is certainly validated today. In one of the most challenging markets I have witnessed, our operating and financial performance is very respectable," said Murray K. Mullen, chairman and chief executive officer.

For the nine-month period ending Sept. 30, consolidated revenue was down 14.4% compared to the same period in 2014. Mullen's net income over this nine-month period was \$11 million, down 84.8% over the same period in 2014.

"Acquisitions focused on the trucking and logistics sector of the economy were both timely as well as accretive to our financial results this year. However, there are real challenges associated with the steep declines in crude oil and natural gas prices," Mullen said. "Drilling activity levels along with other forms of capital investment projects by the oil and natural gas companies are down significantly, negatively affecting many of our operating entities and our people in western Canada. And while I expect the next few quarters to remain challenging for the oil and natural gas service industry, Mullen Group is well prepared. I am not sure our competitors are." TW

Trimac names new CEO

CALGARY, Alta. – Trimac has named Mathieu Faure as its new CEO. He'll replace Jeffrey McCaig, who will stay on as chairman. Faure takes over the CEO role Jan. 1.

He has more than 20 years' leadership experience in the transportation industry, most recently with CP's intermodal business. He has also held senior roles with Group Paquin and Groupe Robert. TW

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Redline Transport flourishes after former boss takes back control

By Jim Bray

RIVERS, Man. – Al Lepp credits his success to high calibre drivers and modern, efficient equipment, but that might be a tad modest of an assessment. That's because Lepp, who owns the Rivers, Man.-based Redline Transport, is a success story in his own right.

Lepp got into the business early. "I started trucking in 1980, six days after turning 18," he told *Truck West*. "I got involved through the gravel industry for the first little bit and then on to Arnold Brothers transport as a lease-operator."

Opportunity for ownership knocked when a local general freight company went up for sale.

"I grew up on a farm in the community of Rivers," he said, "and we decided to go with (the purchase) because we only lived a few miles outside the community, so it was a nice fit."

From that point in 1986, Lepp threw himself into building the business, though there was a period when he thought he wanted to get out of it and actually sold off the company – for a while.

"We had made a deal with a carrier in the area and sold the operating name and the assets of the company," he said, noting that the plan at the time was for him to start farming full-time.

As happens, however, the lure of the open road kept beckoning.

"The trucking roots were too deep," he said. "I love it, I enjoy it and there was something missing when I wasn't in ownership of it."

Before Lepp relinquished control in 2005, the company had grown into a fairly diverse operation and "some things didn't turn out as expected and that's why we had decided to try the sale," he said.

But taking the company back gave him an opportunity to make some changes to Redline Transport, to kind

of re-envision it.

"We're very focused on just grain now," Lepp said. "I do all the dispatching, mechanical, sales, more or less everything, and my wife is the accounting department. It's a very simple operation."

Redline now has three Super-B units hauling grain across the prairie provinces, primarily Manitoba and Saskatchewan, with plenty of room to expand.

"We're licensed for Alberta and British Columbia and Ontario," he said, noting that they really haven't exploited them yet, however.

Business this year has been "quite brisk," Lepp said. "June and July were tough months in some areas of the province, in drought, and the opposite in others, (with) flooding, but overall the crop is coming off in quite good quality, fairly average to above-average yields, and it's almost all in the bin."

The company does a lot of its hauling between the elevators and the crushers or from elevator to elevator depending on where the commodities are needed.

"If a 120-car train comes in and an elevator is 30 cars short of grain and another elevator in the region has that product," he said, "they'll sometimes call on trucks to transfer grain from one elevator to another because that's what trucks can do quickly compared to rail."

Besides keeping things simple, Redline's focus on hauling grain also helps enhance the lifestyle of the people who actually do the hauling.

"The whole idea (behind) primarily hauling dry bulk commodities is that it's a good life for drivers who aren't really looking for long-haul, where they're out on the road for inconsistent hours," Lepp said. "You're usually within three to four hours of home – and sometimes you're home every night during the week."

Redline doesn't have specific programs to award employee perfor-



Al Lepp, owner of Redline Transport, sold his company years ago to farm full-time, only to return to trucking and buy it back a while later because "the trucking roots were too deep."

mance, but the small size of the company allows management stay close to employees all the time.

"I'm doing my recognition program every day," Lepp said, "hopefully treating the drivers with respect and being honest with them - and leaving them to make many decisions on their own on the road."

Lepp noted that Redline keeps ahead of its competition because "we service the heck out of our customers. We have drivers that I believe are the best in Western Canada, we put them in good equipment that we feel is competitive with anything out there on the road and we try to pay them fairly, treat them with respect."

That way, he said, "when the customer meets the driver, the driver is hopefully on board with the company as much as I am and anxious to get that business."

Redline concentrates on repeat business, which Lepp said means the company has to prove itself worthy of being called back.

"Our goal is to be the first call when a customer is looking for a truck to haul dry bulk," he said.

Running a small company poses its own challenges in trying to differentiate yourself from the big guys and of course it also limits the resources it has on hand.

"We have to go above and beyond in the service to our customers and show why it's worth giving a call to Redline Transport," Lepp said, noting that it all comes down to the

grassroots. "If the drivers and the equipment can do the job needed to adequately meet all the safety regulations, food regulations and quality standards, there's no reason we can't compete. You have to be brave enough to take the work and work hard enough to get it done, but you also have to do that honestly and not take on more than you can handle."

Safety is a huge challenge in any trucking business, but since Redline works in what's basically the food chain, things can be even hairier.

"With a lot of the products we handle there's zero tolerance on contamination, whether you're going to a food grade product or switching commodities in the seed industry, fertilizer etc.," Lepp said. "That's a big challenge, but it's also worth doing right, so it's a rewarding challenge."

As for the health of his chosen industry, "it's a very rewarding industry, but it's also a tough one. It's very competitive and it takes a lot of long hours to do it right and make it happen – but whatever blood you've got flowing through, you put it to the best use you've got, and for me the trucking and agriculture scene have been where I chose to use my skills."

Lepp is also very much at home in his home province.

"Sometimes you call it unexciting to live in Manitoba," he said, "but I'm very proud to live here and very excited about the pace of the economy." **TW**

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