

Page 12 **Rock slide:** B.C. rock slide wipes out section of Trans-Canada Highway, costs industry thousands.

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Page 16 **STA gala:** Saskatchewan Trucking Association holds annual gala, addresses industry issues.

truckwest.ca



Many believe that the use of airships, like the one depicted above, to deliver cargo to Canada's northern region would bring business to the trucking industry.



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Ice road truckers needn't fret

How the use of airships would help the trucking industry

By Derek Clouthier

WINNIPEG, Man. – It's not something from the front cover of a Led Zeppelin album, but it's just as innovative as the legendary hard rock band. Look up and someday soon you could see a zeppelin-like airship floating across the Canadian skyline, transporting goods to remote northern communities.

Aerospace company Lockheed Martin, which manufactures airships, have been advocating for the use of airships, mainly to service Canada's mining industry, but also as a means to transport freight into northern communities, which the company believes would help bring down the cost of food and increase supply in the segregated region.

California-based hybrid aircraft operator Straightline Aviation has a contract for the first 12 airships from Lockheed Martin, and the company has indicated that Canada would be an ideal testing ground. Production of the

airships is set to begin in 2018.

If the idea of moving cargo into northern Canadian communities comes to fruition, it would certainly alter the landscape of the trucking industry, which is the primary mode of transportation of goods in Canada's north with the use of ice roads – made famous by the show *Ice Road Truckers*.

Alan Handley, CEO and chairman of Varialift Airships out of the U.K., which also manufactures airships made of aluminum, said the idea of utilizing such a mode of transportation would mean a 'bright future' for the trucking industry.

"Using the Varialift would mean that truckers would be able to continue to bring their loads to marshalling yards close to where the ice roads would have started, and then transfer their loads to the airship," Handley explained. "The airship would then transport their loads to the other side, just like a ferry at sea or on a lake."

Handley said his company has been in talks with Canadians for the past five years during

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Safety on winter roads

Winter driving conditions can pose challenge to even the biggest rig

By Derek Clouthier

REGINA, Sask. – Don't be fooled by the balmy mid-November temperatures that hit Western Canada this year – winter is just around the corner.

And whether you're trucking through mountainous terrain in British Columbia or making your way across the prairies of Saskatchewan, slippery roads and reduced visibility can wreak havoc.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure urge truck drivers to conduct thorough trip inspections, and to give extra time during the winter months to complete.

"Checking your truck, trailer(s), tires, brakes, lights and other equipment before you start a trip is always important," the ministry informed *Truck West*. "With cold weather, extra care should be taken with these regular inspections. Allowing extra inspection time to catch any potential defects can save you time in the long run."

The ministry also said checking out the Highway Hotline for information on current road conditions is a good habit to get into.

"Although provincial highways are treated throughout the winter for ice and snow conditions, it's key to check the Highway Hotline, Saskatchewan's road information system, before heading out," the ministry advised. "The Highway Hotline provides the most currently available road condition information, such as if a highway is icy, snow packed or not recommended for travel."

Drivers can find the Highway Hotline online at www.hotline.gov.sk.ca. General tips are also available on the hotline's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/SaskatchewanHighwayHotline, while closures and travel not recommended notices are on the hotline's Twitter account under the handle @SKGovHwyHotline.

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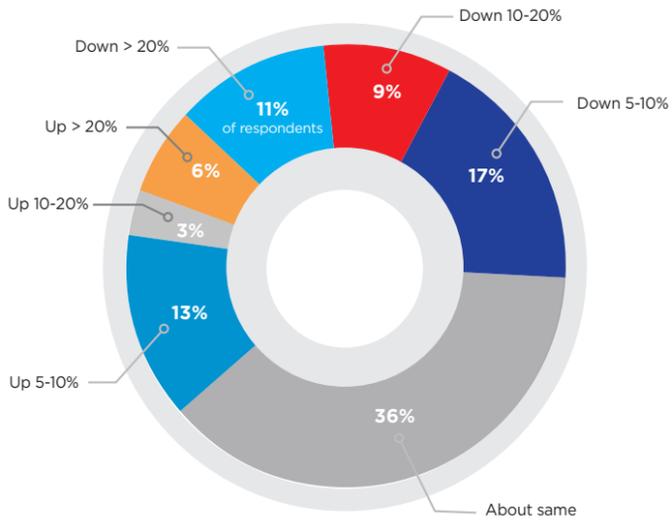
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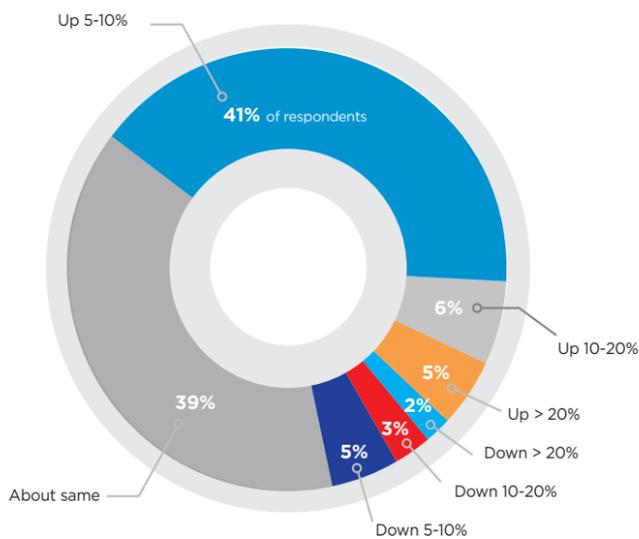
WHAT FREIGHT VOLUME PROJECTIONS REVEAL ABOUT WESTERN CANADA

When freight is moving, so is the economy. What do freight volume figures reveal about Western Canada's current economic performance? Our recently completed Transportation Buying Trends Survey found that only 22% of Western Canada buyers of transportation services surveyed increased their freight volumes in 2016 compared to the previous year while 37% decreased their freight volumes. But there is better news ahead with 52% of Western Canada respondents expecting to increase their freight volumes.

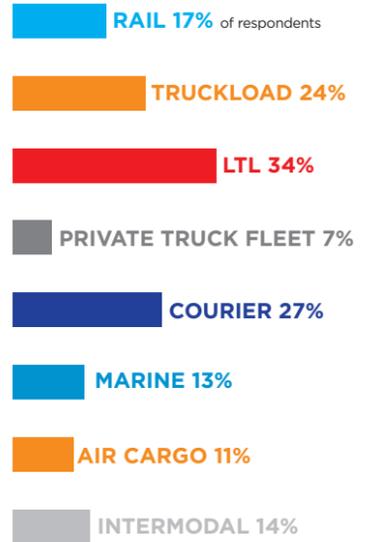
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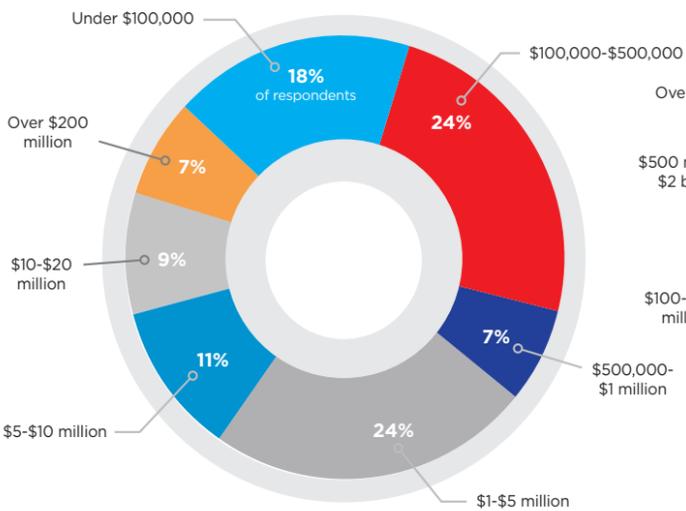
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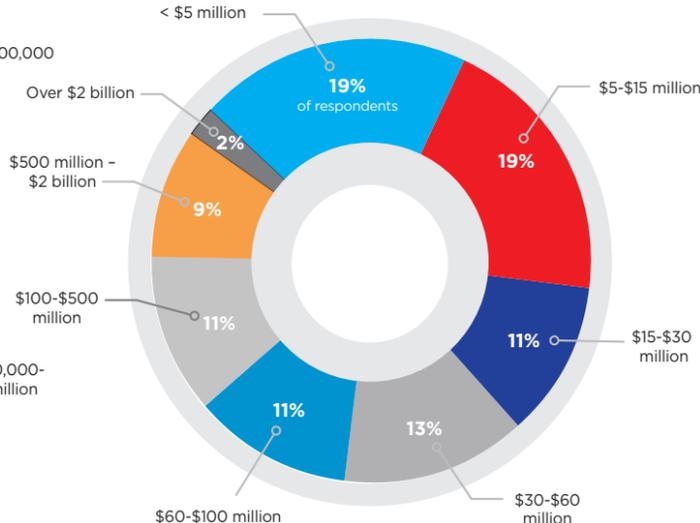
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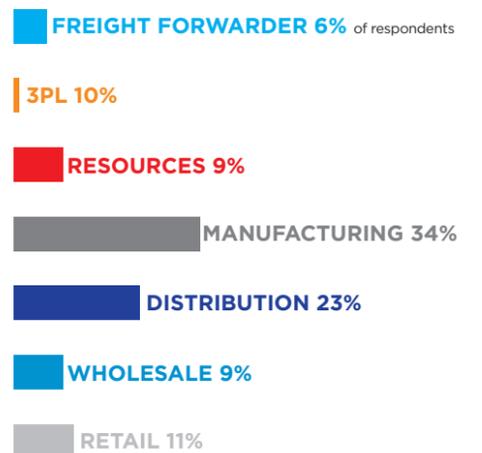
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Lisa Kelly on History® Network's Ice Road Truckers®
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Tapping into the pulse of the industry after one year at the helm

Wow...it's been a year.

Last November, I walked into this job with a strong confidence in my writing ability and an equally strong apprehension with my lack of knowledge of the trucking industry. I've learned a lot in the past year, thanks in most part to you industry people who have been so willing to answer my at times seemingly obvious questions.

If I could pinpoint what I feel are the Top 3 issues facing the trucking industry moving forward, mostly because they have dominated what I've been hearing from readers and industry people and writing about for the past year, it would look like this (in no particular order):

1) Electronic logging devices (ELDs) - On one hand you have several trucking company owners/managers, government officials, trucking association heads and even a handful of drivers, mostly younger drivers mind you, but still some of the old guard, saying how ELDs make driving safer due to the monitoring of hours-of-service; make doing their jobs simpler and more streamlined with not having to use paper logs and all that they entail; and reduces illegal activity when it comes to hours on the road...after all, who wants a driv-

Derek's deliberation

Derek Clouthier



er behind the wheel of any type of vehicle who has been awake for the past 18 hours and is getting by on a six-pack of Red Bull? But on the other side of the coin, I have heard gripes about government intervention, increased downtime, hours-of-service regulations that do not make sense and truckers stranded an hour from their destination because their ELD says they can't go on... among other grievances. Again, I am not a driver, but yes, I do have an opinion on the matter despite receiving letters to the editor (which were perfectly acceptable, understandable and polite) saying that if I'm not a driver, I shouldn't have an opinion on ELDs. To me, that's like saying if you're not a politician, you should not have an opinion on politics. My opinion is this: if something like ELDs will make the trucking industry safer, reduce accidents and ensure all employees, not just drivers, follow the rules, then there shouldn't be anything wrong with them.

2) Driver shortage - The idea of a driver shortage comes down to three things. The first is that we live in a changing world, one where technology is forever going to take control and every computer savvy teen or twentysomething out there has an idea for the next big app that will make them a billionaire who will be island shopping in the next five years, if not sooner. Truck driving is not easy. It's a difficult life, difficult on your body, your mind and your family, and it doesn't make you rich. Therefore, it's a difficult sell on today's young people. Which brings me to the second thing: recruitment. I have heard from many who believe there is no driver shortage, just a lack of financial motivation for people to get behind the wheel. Perhaps if truck driving were to be recognized as a skilled profession by the government, the pay scale would tip in the drivers favor, and more people would take it up as a career. And the last thing with relation to the driver shortage is...

3) Collision mitigation/automated trucks - Self-driving trucks are a strange concept, but so were airplanes, automat-



ic tractor-trailers and 'tweeting' when we were first introduced to them. Perhaps the biggest thing about the idea of automated trucks is that it would certainly help mitigate the driver shortage. **TW**

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No free lunch on infrastructure spending

The federal government is pushing ahead with plans to create an "infrastructure development bank" - an arm's length organization tasked with attracting and bringing together public and private money to help in financing major projects across Canada such as bridges and highways. The infrastructure bank would be capitalized with \$35 billion in federal funds.

As I write this editorial, the Liberal cabinet is preparing a major sales pitch for a mid-month gathering of large institutional investors hosted by BlackRock, the globe's largest asset manager. The aim: to attract private capital to invest in Canadian infrastructure. Several cabinet ministers will be making presentations and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau himself will be in attendance.

In other words, this could be a big deal. As an industry whose productivity is so reliant on efficient infrastructure, should we be getting excited? Is this in-

The view with Lou

Lou Smyrlis



frastructure development bank a better way to finance large infrastructure projects? Would it allow construction to proceed more quickly and with less uncertainty than is the case currently? Would it allow us to more effectively deal with our considerable infrastructure investment gap - the difference between what is needed to maintain the national infrastructure and what is actually being spent - than we have in the past?

First, let's be clear about the enormity of the infrastructure spending challenge we face. Estimates vary, but they all paint a bleak picture. The Canada West Foundation recently pegged Canada's accumulated infrastructure debt

at \$123 billion for existing infrastructure and \$110 billion for new infrastructure. That's similar to an older TD Economics estimate of \$125 billion for existing infrastructure. The bleakest picture is painted by a McGill University civil engineering professor, who believes the infrastructure investment gap to be closer to \$400 billion with 30% of Canada's infrastructure close to 100 years old.

Compounding this daunting investment gap is the fact that the recovery from the Great Recession has been slow and the traditional ways of funding infrastructure projects - through gas and property taxes and government grants - are not so easy to find. So our infrastructure needs are exceeding the capacity of our governments to shoulder the cost on their own without significant tax hikes.

Yet major Canadian institutional investors such as the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) are quite enthusiastic about investing in infra-

structure - just not in Canada so far. For example, CPPIB has invested in infrastructure projects in Peru, Chile and Hong Kong. The Liberals believe creating the infrastructure investment bank will provide a more concentrated and strategic way to attract such investors and ease their mind about the risk involved (future governments cancelling infrastructure projects.)

But such investors are also particularly interested in investing to build assets with a clear revenue stream, like toll roads. The improvements in congestion and transit times delivered by a more modern infrastructure will be paid by more tolls and user fees. There is no free lunch when it comes to infrastructure spending. The only questions are how hungry are we and what do we want on the menu? **TW**

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Snow build-up can impede visibility

Continued from page 1

Tim Brown, director of Motor Carrier Enforcement (MCE) programs, Motor Carrier Division of Manitoba Transport, said though MCE officers focus on road safety year-round, winter does pose some unique hazards.

"Drivers need to be mindful of the impacts of this weather and pay attention to their tires, ensuring adequate tread depth for traction and also making sure they are properly inflated to compensate for sub-zero temperatures," Brown said. "Another concern is frozen brakes, which can result in trailers being dragged for considerable distances before the driver is aware. This can shorten tire life and impact vehicle handling."

Brown added that snow and ice build-up on trucks can become an issue for a few reasons.

"It can add to the vehicle weight, resulting in situations where the weights on axle units, or the total gross weight, exceed prescribed limits," Brown explained. "MCE officers recognize that snow and ice can make a legal vehicle overweight while on route, and assess each instance on a case-by-case basis before deciding on a course of action. Drivers need to be diligent about the risk of snow and ice falling from their vehicles, especially if it can be removed safely before heading out after a rest break. Drivers also need to be mindful of snow and ice buildup on decks of trailers (flat deck and van body), as the friction between pallets and floors can result in load securement concerns."

One issue Brown said officers deal with on a regular basis during the winter is the prevalence of LED lights on a truck's rear.

"The older incandescent bulbs generated heat through the filaments and were able to melt a lot of the snow that would land on them from the swirling effect behind vehicles," he said. "The new LEDs don't have this heat, and MCE officers regularly have to stop drivers and advise them to wipe off the lenses so that they're visible to approaching motorists."

Brown recommends drivers stop on a regular basis when driving in snowy conditions to ensure their rear lights are visible and not obscured.

In Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure cautioned all drivers, including truckers, to be careful when traveling near a snowplow.

"While clearing snow, snowplows create mini blizzards, called the snow zones," the ministry explained.

"If you come across snowplows in operation - when their blue and amber lights are activated - slow down, stay back and stay safe. Operators pull over about every 10 kilometers, or when it's safe to do so, to give you an opportunity to pass."

The ministry said that in 2015-16, the province's snowplows were involved in five vehicle collisions, eight the year prior and six in 2013-14.

Shorter days and longer nights also poses a challenge for motorists, and means not only do truck drivers need to make sure their rear LED lights are visible, but their headlights as well.

Longer periods of dark can also lead to fatigue.

"Drivers need to ensure they listen to their bodies and get proper rest, so

they can remain alert when driving," Brown said, adding that poor visibility and tough driving conditions can be taxing. "Slow down and drive for the conditions."

All four western provinces are members of the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) and apply the North American Uniform Out of Service Criteria in accordance with CVSA directives. This standardization makes it easier for commercial vehicle enforcement officers in all the western provinces when enforcing safety practices and regulations.

"Undoubtedly, there are nuanced differences that exist in truck regulation," said Brown, "but Manitoba regularly engages with other provinces to find commonalities and streamline regulation where possible." **TW**

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Happy IFTA returns

In what seems like another life ago, I worked as a salesperson at a jewelry store.

Of course, December is a big month for jewelry sales because people are buying Christmas presents. Inevitably there would be last-minute shoppers who arrived after we had closed down for the holiday. Their initial panic turned to dejection as they moved on to the next shop.

I felt worse for the ones who actually got into the store. Flustered and desperate, they'd spend too little time and too much money on a ring or earrings that, more often than not, came back as soon as the doors opened on the next shopping day.

In the tax compliance world, December is a month when many of the licenses you need to legally run your truck fleet are up for renewal. Like a stressed-out shopper, the closer you get to the deadline, the more prone you are to making an expensive mistake.

Take, for example, your International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) renewal. IFTA licenses are valid between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 of each year, with renewal applications due by Dec. 31. While easy to procure, the IFTA license can be hard to keep unless you follow the rules. First and foremost, your account must be up to date with no outstanding returns or taxes owed, or you won't get your IFTA license renewed. Pretty simple, eh?

Well, not really. Let's make a list – and check it twice – of what you should remember in order to put a bow on your IFTA renewal:

Holiday schedules

Because of the Christmas holiday, government agencies either run on a skeleton staff or, like Alberta, close down entirely for the last 10 to 12 days in December. Familiarize yourself with your province's renewal deadline and procedures. Then get your application in early to allow time for processing prior to the close of the year.

Amended returns

Heaven forbid that you file an amended IFTA return and owe money from previous quarters. Amended IFTA returns fall outside the norms of processing and sometimes get the 'we'll look at it when we can' treatment. I've seen mere cents owing delay the issuance of an IFTA license renewal.

Grace period

You've heard about the two-month grace period, right? If you don't receive your new license and decals in time for Jan. 1, 2017, you can display your valid 2016 credentials and still be covered.

But the grace period covers the display of IFTA credentials only. You can only take advantage of the extra time if you have submitted your application for renewal before Dec. 31. Then again, if you miss the deadline, who's gonna know? That highway patrolman in Mississippi has to take your word that you filed your IFTA renewal with Saskatchewan.

Permits & Licensing

Sandy Johnson



But the times, they are a'changing. There's a movement to make this information available electronically to roadside inspectors.

In the not-too-distance future, that Mississippi highway cop is going to be able to pull out a smartphone or laptop and see whether or not you've filed

those returns or submitted your renewal application.

Not just IFTA renewals

If you operate in a mileage tax state like New York, New Mexico, Oregon, or Kentucky, you have to file these tax returns on time and there is no grace period. UCR – Unified Carrier Registration – also has a Dec. 31 renewal deadline. And depending on where you're based, you may face an IRP renewal deadline.

In December, there's just no time to mess around. If you're a small company, you actually need to drive that truck to burn that fuel and generate those IFTA miles. If you're part of a big operation, it's easy for that IFTA assessment to get set aside because Sue in accounting is on Christmas vacation in Mexico. She's thinking about ordering a margarita and not whether a 50-cent fuel tax assessment could shut down the fleet.

Now is the time to sit down and file

that third-quarter fuel tax return if you haven't done so already. Pay attention when the renewal application arrives and mail it back as soon as you can.

Ask your accounting department about any outstanding amounts that could keep your trucks parked while your co-worker is cha-cha-chaing on the Mexican Riviera. And don't leave compliance until the last minute.

You'll be like the desperate, panicked shopper peering in the window of the closed-up jewelry store asking yourself, 'Now what do I do?' **TW**

Sandy Johnson has been managing IFTA, IRP, and other fleet taxes for more than 25 years. She is the author of the free book, 7 Things You Need to Know About Fleet Taxes, and operates FleetTaxPro.com, which provides vehicle tax and licence compliance services for trucking operations. She can be reached at 1-877-860-8025 or FleetTaxPro.com.

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Truckers sent on 200-km detour, adding to HOS

By Derek Clouthier

FIELD, B.C. – A rock slide that occurred in Yoho National Park closed the Trans-Canada Highway, forcing commercial truck drivers south on an over 200-km detour.

A single lane reopened Oct. 27 allowing vehicles through, but delays continued, and motorists and truckers alike were forced to deal with traffic congestion and extended wait times.

As of Nov. 2, Marnie DiGiandomenico, senior communications advisor, highway engineering services, strategic policy and investment directorate for Parks Canada, which is the authority over the section of highway affected, said they expected both lanes of the highway to open Nov. 3.

“However,” DiGiandomenico added, “motorists should expect occasional single lane alternating traffic and periodic delays of up to one hour between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. from Nov. 2 to Nov. 4. In addition, a full road closure of three to four hours will be required at a date and time to be determined later this week for a large rock blast that will further stabilize the rock face.”

The slide sent truckers south on Highway 93 toward Radium, B.C., a route that added 210km to their trip, and, as Andrew Barnes, director of compliance and regulatory affairs for the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA), pointed out, affected their hours-of-service as well.

“A lot of them were coming out of Calgary and going to Vancouver,” Barnes said, “and what they can usu-

ally make in a day legally under the federal hours-of-service they couldn’t make in 13 hours driving, so they had to stop. So it turned out to be a pretty big cost increase to the carrier, which then dribbles down to some of the shippers...and even consumers were affected.”

Barnes said around 400 Alberta trucks were diverted around the rock slide each day the Trans-Canada Highway was closed, and estimated a \$75,000 a day cost to the industry as a result. Barnes said the detour created an extra three to four hours on the road for Alberta drivers looking to make their way west.

“This rock slide really did bring into light how it really does hamper the industry,” Barnes said of the effect when a national highway is closed due to an incident.

Barnes did add that he feels the trucking industry is adaptive when it comes to these kinds of roadblocks, and drivers find a way to get their cargo to its destination.

Parks Canada was advising motorists to expect traffic congestion and up to one hour delays between Oct. 31 and Nov. 2, and that longer road closures would be required for rock blasting to further stabilize the rock face and prepare the Trans-Canada Highway for two-way traffic.

The rock slide occurred 16km west of Field, B.C. the night of Oct. 24 while work was underway to clear rock and debris from the highway several hours after the daily rock blast on a nearby rock slope re-profiling project.



A rock slide near Field, B.C. temporarily closed the Trans-Canada Highway, forcing truckers to detour south through Radium, B.C.

Two excavator operators working at the site were transported to hospital with minor injuries and later released.

Parks Canada said early indications of the cause of the slide are that

the slope failed below the drilling and blasting elevation along natural seams in the shale bedrock.

Approximately 10,000 cubic meters of rock was released in the slide. **TW**

Truck parking area in South Surrey could be no more

SURREY, B.C. – Plans for a new 77-acre truck parking area along the Little Campbell River in South Surrey could be in jeopardy.

Peace Arch News reported that proponents behind the plans have withdrawn their rezoning application, and that the company that owns the land is now looking at other uses for the site.

Environmental groups in the area

voiced opposition to the plan for a truck parking area, citing concerns for pollutants near the Little Campbell River.

Traffic issues and food security along 16 Ave. near 192 Street were also points of contention against the plan.

Langley Township council voted to delay making a decision on the project until they were presented with a more detailed plan. **TW**

“The City of Surrey prohibits the parking of heavy commercial vehicles from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. on any street in Surrey.”

City of Surrey website



Truckers Christmas Group accepting nominations

Charity takes donations to help the lives of trucking families in Canada and US

WICHITA, Kan. – It's getting close to that time of year again, and the Truckers Christmas Group is hoping for another good season collecting donations and helping trucking families in Canada and the US.

With more than \$66,000 raised in seven years, helping 112 families during the Holiday Season, Truckers Christmas Group is entering its eighth year, and Mark Abraham, president of the group, said they started accepting nominations Nov. 24 (US Thanksgiving) for families in need of assistance, through till Dec. 17.

Completely volunteer based, all the

money raised by Truckers Christmas Group goes to the families of truck drivers in need.

"Once a family has been nominated and vetted, they are added to our voting list," Greg Manchester, director of public relations and co-founder of the group told *Truck West* last year.

"How many families we help depends on how much we are able to raise each year."

Each family that the charity helps is sent a minimum of \$500 in cash and can use the money any way they choose.

Abraham said once they receive the list of nominees, the group will

call the families and possibly even their employer to find out their story and verify that they qualify for the program.

Each family is placed on a scale of one to 10 based on their need, and depending on how much has been donated will determine on how many families will be provided with assistance during the Christmas Season.

On average, the group brings in around \$7,000 a year, with last year's total being just shy of that mark at \$5,150.

But as Abraham pointed out, it was their first year branching out on their own.

The group was on hiatus in 2014, and did not proceed with its fundraising efforts, as it was in the process of seeking approval of its own license as a charitable foundation after the organization it was affiliated with prior suggested the group go off on its own.

"We applied for our charitable status but did not receive it in time for (the 2014) season," said Manchester, adding that once they did get the license in February 2015, Christmas had passed, and they wanted to ensure they were operating legally.

Manchester said the group started when a driver was looking to donate \$500 to another driver in need and did not know how to go about imparting the funds.

"A bunch of us stepped up to the plate," said Manchester, "and that was the beginning of what we have now."

Twelve families were helped in 2015, and Abraham is hoping to do even better this year.

Anyone looking to nominate a family or donate to Truckers Christmas Group can visit their website at www.truckerschristmasgroup.org.

People can also shop at the group's online Christmas store, with proceeds going to the cause.

Abraham also said they are in need of volunteers to donate their time to the effort, doing tasks like conference call meetings, vetting families and taking calls from those looking to nominate a family. **TW**

Uber pulls off first-ever commercial delivery with self-driving truck

DENVER, Col. – Uber's autonomous truck made its first delivery last month, traveling 200 kms from Fort Collins to Colorado Springs hauling Budweiser beer.

The event was a milestone, not only for the companies involved, but for the trucking industry itself as it marked the first-ever shipment by a self-driving vehicle in the world.

The self-driving truck was made by Otto, owned by Uber. And the journey was part of a partnership between the company and Budweiser.

In total, the truck hauled 51,744 cans of beer though downtown Denver to Colorado Springs using cameras, radar and Lidar sensors. Otto said its system completely controlled the vehicle (acceleration, braking and steering) to carry the beer, "exit-to-exit without any human intervention."

The truck did carry a driver, however he simply monitored the truck's progress from the sleeper berth.

"This shipment is the next step towards our vision for a safe and productive future across our highways,"



Uber's Otto completed the first-ever shipment by a self-driving vehicle in the world last month when it hauled Budweiser beer across Colorado.

Otto said in a statement. "With an Otto-equipped vehicle, truck drivers will have the opportunity to rest during long stretches of highway while the truck continues to drive and make money for them. When you'll see a truck driving down the road with nobody in the front

seat, you'll know that it's highly unlikely to get into a collision, drive aggressively, or waste a single drop of fuel."

Otto added that Budweiser was the best fit for the milestone, as it is committed to safe driving and reducing carbon emissions. **TW**

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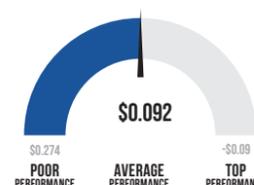


DECEMBER EPI: NET FUEL EXPENSE PER MILE WHAT IS YOURS?

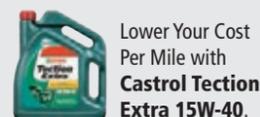
TO CALCULATE:

$$\frac{[\text{Gross Fuel Expense} - \text{Fuel Surcharge Revenue}]}{\text{Total Miles Driven}}$$

NET FUEL EXPENSE PER MILE



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Use media buzz to promote your brand

Many trucking companies work hard to stay out of the media by doing everything they possibly can to avoid collisions, and generally keep a low profile when it comes to reporters. While paid advertising is one way to promote your brand and raise awareness, public relations tactics that deliberately put you in the media spotlight can deliver real results.

What is PR? Public relations is the practice of managing the spread of information between an organization and the public. Public relations involves an organization gaining exposure using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment.

Effective PR can have your organization looked upon favorably by prospective and existing customers, employees you already have and ones you want. It can build brand recognition and get people to visit your website and social media pages.

Eight ways to get in the media spotlight

1. Reveal something newsworthy about your business, or customer trends:

Communicating strategically

Rebecka Freels



Media want to report what's new, what's different and what's trending. Is there something unique or special about your business or service that sets it apart from all the rest? Are you noticing a trend in shipping patterns, or some other aspect connected to your customers? Are you an early adopter of technology? But to capture media interest, it's actually got to be newsworthy. To really stand out in a crowd, find something that no one else is doing.

2. Be available to reporters as a subject matter expert: Introduce yourself to the media and industry (trade) reporters and tell them you are available as a source of information about your area of expertise. Be ready to outline your credentials and back up why they should talk to you instead of someone else. Reporters are always looking for people to provide the local angle who are subject matter experts on topics they are writing about. It's a good idea to make sure

you've got the facts and figures correct, so get involved with your industry association so you are always on the forefront of leading issues.

3. Hijack existing news events: Is there a timely issue or topic that is capturing the headlines? Hop on the bandwagon while the story is breaking and make yourself available for comment. Create Google alerts for 'fuel prices', 'ELDs', or other topics you wish to comment on. When that topic is trending in the media, contact reporters and let them know you are available to comment.

4. Timing is everything: If you want to draw attention to how your company employs female drivers or mechanics, or is owned by a woman, it helps to connect it to some other event or initiative that is taking place. Events like Canadian Trucking Alliance's National Trucking Week and Trucking HR Canada's Take Our Kids to Work Day are all anchor events that might make it easier to pitch your story idea to a reporter.

5. Use social media: Reporters monitor social media networks and that is another reason your business should be there. Develop a strong content strategy that will help you connect with influencers and thought leaders in the trucking industry (and media). Thoughtful, genuinely helpful posts will build a following. Before posting anything, every marketer should ask him or herself: "Why is this important information for my audience?" If the post just serves you, then think again about posting at all.

6. Go for medals: When companies or its leaders win awards, celebrate major

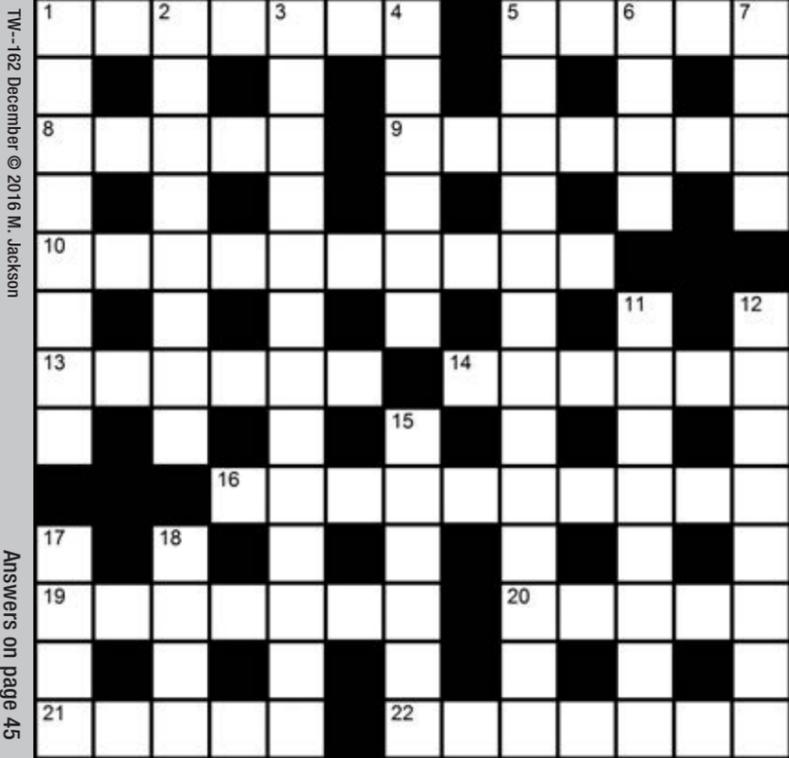
milestones or are recognized for philanthropic endeavors, you give the media a reason to mention your business' name. Significant industry awards like Top Fleet Employers among others can actually elevate not only the status of your business among your peers and customers, but also attract the kind of employees you want working for you.

7. Host a business or charitable event: Invite your local chamber of commerce, trade association, or economic development office to use your facility as the venue for their next major announcement, press conference or business meeting. (Make sure there is some sort of logical connection between your business activity and the reason for the event). Inviting charitable groups to use your terminal as a venue is not only kind, it connects you with an activity that supports positive work in the community.

8. Celebrate a customer's story: If you have a customer who is doing something unique, special or unexpected, and your business plays a role in that activity, it may be of media interest. Maybe your customer is doing something that is good for the environment and you were somehow involved. Being part of a good news story, even if you aren't the subject matter directly, is also good PR. **TW**

Rebecka Freels, former CTA and OTA communications director, operates a Calgary-based marketing, communications and events practice with clients in the transport industry. Reach her at Rebecka@beyondwordscommunications.com.

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

- 1 Raises lube level (4,3)
- 5 Airtronic bunk heater brand
- 8 New truck deal factor, perhaps
- 9 VIN, a.k.a. ____ Identific tion Number
- 10 December 24th cargo carrier (5,5)
- 13 Rolls in neutral
- 14 The nation's capital
- 16 Smokey's ambush points (5,5)
- 19 Truckers' daily irritation
- 20 Hiring condition, ____ abstract
- 21 Nerve-racking event, ____ stop
- 22 Commuter's ticket to ride (3,4)

Down

- 1 Textile winter traction tire cover (4,4)
- 2 DIY oil change receptacle (5,3)
- 3 City street feature, perhaps (3,3,7)
- 4 Check fluid ____ maintenance task
- 5 Chromed, vertical rig features (7,6)
- 6 NHL game necessity
- 7 "Smokey . . . Bandit" trucker, actor Jerry
- 11 Jan & Dean's little old lady drove here
- 12 Canadian petroleum source (3,5)
- 15 Sleeperless rig
- 17 Octagonal sign order
- 18 John Deere garage



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IN-BRIEF

Doug Harvey acquires majority interest in Trout River Industries

WINNIPEG, Man. – Doug Harvey, president of Maxim Truck and Trailer announced the acquisition of a majority interest in Trout River Industries Oct. 27.

According to the deal, Darrin Mitchell and Harvey Stewart will continue to manage Trout River's operations out of its current facility and will continue to be shareholders of the company.

"From the formation of Trout River Industries in 1999, I've had great partners," said Harvey Stewart. "I believe today's announcement represents an unbelievable partnership that's going to take us to the next level."

The acquisition of Trout River in Eastern Canada complements Doug Harvey's ownership of Arne's Welding Ltd, a Winnipeg manufacturer of resource industry dump and lowbed trailers with a strong presence in Western Canada.

To capitalize on the respective strengths of both trailer manufacturing companies, Manco Manufacturing has been established to oversee the manufacturing arm of Doug Harvey's enterprises. Heading Manco Manufacturing will be André Granger, who has a track record of designing and implementing global sales and marketing plans and executing corporate growth strategies.

"I'm excited at the opportunity of marrying a manufacturer like Trout River in the East who make the best live bottom trailers with a manufacturer like Arne's Welding in the West, who make the best steel dump and lowbed trailers," said Doug Harvey. "It is my experience that great people make great products." TW

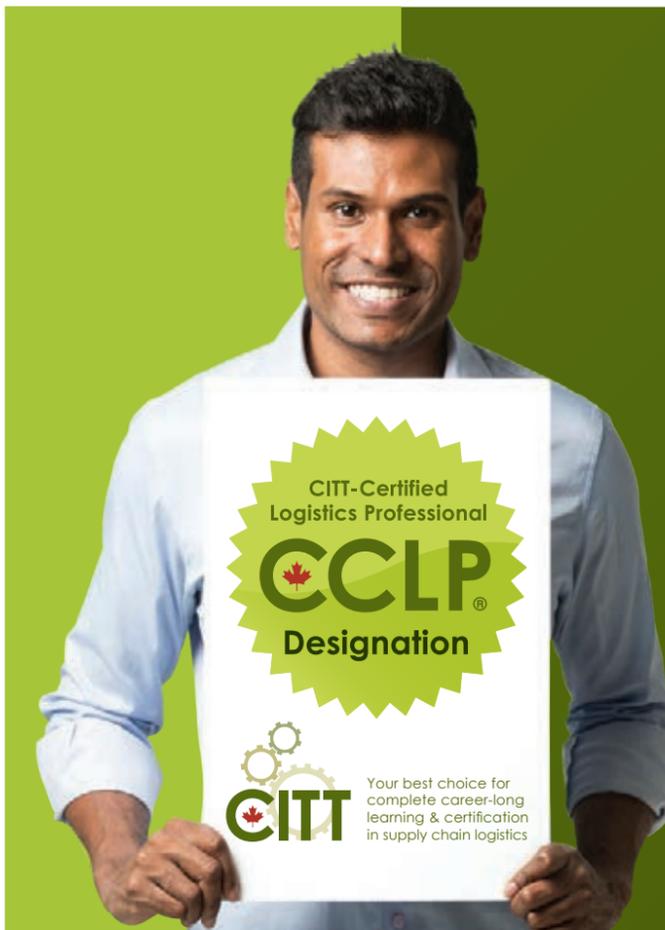
Fastfrate investing millions into western Canadian expansion

WOODBIDGE, Ont. – Consolidated Fastfrate is investing nearly \$20 million to purchase a new \$10 million facility in Edmonton, a \$1.5 million expansion in Winnipeg and \$5.5 million to add 238 intermodal chassis to its container transport operations.

"These are exciting times for our company," said Fastfrate CEO Ron Teper. "We believe in our future and continue to invest in our Canada-wide network of asset based LTL road and rail services. But more than that, we are putting our considerable knowledge and experience into creating 'thinking solutions' geared to our customers' more sophisticated transportation and distribution requirements."

Fastfrate will also soon be announcing its expansion south of the border.

"No privately held transportation provider has our particular combination of facilities, resources and talent," Teper said. "We are truly a multi-faceted transportation and distribution network, coast to coast in Canada." TW



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Trucking HR Canada focuses on skills, knowledge and recruitment

Stories by Derek Clouthier

SASKATOON, Sask. – The Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA) held its annual AGM and Awards Gala Oct. 22, offering a trio of speakers to address the state of the industry both in provincially and nationally.

Angela Splinter, CEO of Trucking HR Canada, highlighted a handful of initiatives her organization has endeavored to achieve, all with a focus on three key areas – skills, knowledge sharing and recruitment and retention.

With relation to skills, Splinter spoke about the National Occupational Standard for drivers, which is a document that defines the knowledge, skills and abilities required for certain occupations.

“For us, a big accomplishment was the development of a National Occupational Standard (NOS) for truck drivers,” said Splinter. “It was a year-long process; we had engagement and support of each provincial association, which included Saskatchewan. We also had a national working group that had representation from Saskatchewan.”

Splinter said sessions were held across

the country to best determine ‘what a driver actually does’ on a national scale, which can help better inform where the industry is going with regards to its training programs.

“Identifying that required knowledge, skills and abilities required of the driver is an important thing for us to do,” Splinter said. “(The NOS) really is the best document that we have that dispels the myth that just anyone can be a truck driver.”

Splinter said Trucking HR’s NOS is what served as the foundation for mandatory entry level training in Ontario.

A lack of skills recognition for truck drivers is another Trucking HR effort Splinter underscored.

With the government classifying around 40,000 occupations from skill level A to D – A being most skilled and D lowest – truck driving currently falls into the C level.

“It’s an issue within the industry, because this classification limits our access to training and retraining funds,” said Splinter. “Experienced drivers from other countries cannot be recruited through the traditional immigration channels.”

One of the first steps in moving truck driving up the skilled trade ladder starts with how job ads are posted.

Splinter said career ads help those who establish whether a profession is skilled or unskilled determine what the industry is demanding from the potential employee.

Splinter pointed out that she could go online right now and find hundreds of job ads for truck drivers that state, ‘no education required’ and ‘no experience necessary,’ both of which do not help the effort to make the profession a skilled trade.

Getting more young people behind the wheel is another point of interest for Trucking HR Canada.

Splinter said they have a new national committee that is looking at the lack of millennials in the trucking industry, despite the age group making up the largest portion of today’s workforce.

She also mentioned the ‘National Take Your Kids to Work Day’ program, where every child in Grade 9 is encouraged to go to work with a parent, as an initiative Trucking HR supports in the industry.

Splinter also announced that Trucking HR would hold a Western Women



Angela Splinter

With Drive event in Calgary May 10, 2017 in partnership with the Alberta Motor Transport Association.

The effort, like the Women With Drive event in Toronto, is to inspire more women to get into the trucking industry, whether it be as a driver or otherwise.

The Top Fleet Employers program is one of the largest Trucking HR initiatives, which started three years ago to recognize fleets that have good practices in place.

Splinter said the program is one that promotes the industry as an employer of choice. **TW**

Trucking companies must update marijuana and drug policies, says expert

SASKATOON, Sask. – Issues surrounding the possible legalization of marijuana in Canada continue to create waves within the transportation industry.

But it’s not just about marijuana; it’s about all substances that can hinder an employee’s job performance.

Barbara Butler, an expert on alcohol and drug policies in the workplace, said alcohol is still the number one drug used in Canada.

She pointed out that substances like cocaine, methamphetamines and ecstasy are either cheap, difficult to detect or highly addictive, and can cause issues for employers when it comes to establishing a workplace policy.

Butler said Canada was a ‘world leader’ when it comes to exporting and transit of drugs into the US, and

with higher potency marijuana and new synthetic drugs being introduced every year, employers must bring a balance between workplace safety and human rights, and that human rights cannot trump the safety of others.

“The bottom line is having that balance,” she said. “Human rights is important, but it does not override safety.”

Butler said that in Saskatchewan, medical professionals who authorize

someone to use medical marijuana must also be treating the patient, but that most people are getting approvals for use from B.C. She added that

‘Human rights is important, but it does not override safety.’
Barbara Butler

because marijuana is not a cure for anything, but simply used to soothe a patient’s symptoms, there is always

an alternative option for treatment.

Employees must be able to ask their doctor and determine whether they can perform their job functions while using medical marijuana, such as drive a truck, and if not, ask if there is another option to treat their condition.

Alcohol and drug policy plans should include consistent procedures on how to manage the choice of drug an employee is using and include referrals from an independent medical evaluation.

It should be intended for both for current employees and future applicants, as well as drivers and other company employees.

STA executive director Susan Ewart said the Canadian Trucking Alliance has sent a letter regarding concerns over the legalization of marijuana and its impact on the safe operations of vehicles, and until a clear understanding of what constitutes impairment is determined, the trucking industry should employ a zero-tolerance policy for its use. **TW**

FAST FORWARD

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PART II

A DEEPER LOOK INSIDE THE FUTURE OF TRUCKING

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MANITOBA

MTA hands out 2016 awards

WINNIPEG, Man. – The Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) held its annual Fall Awards Gala Nov. 4, honoring several industry professionals for their stellar track record and accomplishments in 2016.

“Tonight we celebrated the great accomplishments of some of our members as well as the achievements of our industry as a whole,” said Terry Shaw, executive director of the MTA. “It’s an exciting time for our industry and I look forward to the future alongside our members.”

The evening’s winners were:

- RBC Service to Industry Award – Greg Arndt of Jade Transport
- Shaw Tracking Distinguished Member Award – EBD Enterprises
- Payne Transportation LP Associate of the Year – Lori Cumming of Manitoba Public Insurance
- 2016 Manitoba Driver of the Year, sponsored by Volvo Trucks Canada – Roger Maltman of Bison Transport
- Manitoba Trucking Association Pioneers Award – Rob Penner (Bison Transport), Omer Desjardins (Custom Truck Sales), Darrell Wonnick (Professional Transport Driver Training School Ltd.). **TW**

Manitoba weigh scale bypass program possible

WINNIPEG, Man. – The Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) is looking for some of its members to volunteer to participate in a working group to move toward implementing a weight scale bypass program in the province.

The MTA said it is encouraged by the progress that has been made toward bringing in the electronic screening (e-screening) program, which uses intelligent transportation systems technology to allow carriers with approved safety records to bypass highway inspection stations.

The MTA and Manitoba Infrastructure will establish the working group, which will collect information, identify and assess the different options available and recommend to the association’s board and province the preferred option for implementation.

The MTA will initially represent the provincial trucking industry as part of the working group. It has solicited other Canadian trucking industry associations to participate in potential regional or national e-screening initiatives and will encourage external participants once the plan is released to the public.

Also part of the process is the collection of information from jurisdictions that are supporting similar programs, such as Alberta’s Partners in Compliance program.

The information will be used to develop options for starting a similar program in Manitoba, develop a consensus among working group members on the preferred option and obtain endorsements from the MTA board and approvals from government to begin implementation.

An initial meeting was held Nov. 30 from 1-4 p.m. for the group; members are encouraged to contact the MTA at 204-632-6600 for details. **TW**

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Preparing for winter weather driving

Driving on dry roads is as welcoming as a beautiful fall day. Leaves add a touch of color to the landscape. Temperatures fall somewhere between the need for air conditioners and bunk heaters. Road surfaces are clear and dry. All seems right with the world.

It's enough to make an experienced fleet manager cringe.

They know these surroundings are simply the warning signs of an approaching winter. In a matter of weeks, or even days, the once clear surfaces will be coated in snow or ice, doubling or even tripling usual stopping distances.

The early days of the winter driving season can be the most treacherous of all because many drivers are poorly prepared. A trip that begins during a clear fall day may quickly take a turn for the worse as the truck heads into higher elevations or the path of an oncoming storm.

This is the time to prepare drivers and equipment alike.

Valuable seasonal supplies include jugs of de-icing washer fluid and a shovel. This is also the time of year to test bunk heaters, change wiper blades and test batteries to ensure that everything is ready to roll when temperatures begin to plunge. In the coldest climates, it may even be time to switch engine oils to a formula that will flow more easily.

But some of the required supplies are specifically for drivers, such as seasonal coats and boots. Having extra waterproof gloves are always a good idea to ensure that hands will be protected.

They aren't the only things that will make a big difference if someone is stranded because of a collision or closed highway.

It's a good idea to stock enough food, water and coffee in a truck to last at least 12 hours. And regularly topped-up fuel tanks will ensure that bunk heaters still generate warm air while the truck is waiting for a tow.

As valuable as the supplies will be, some additional training may be the most important resource of all, particularly when it comes to newer hires. Recently licensed drivers may have never worked in winter conditions and have no idea what to expect.

The same person who was uncomfortable traveling through the mountains earlier this summer will likely need some extra coaching before winter arrives. Even experienced drivers can be caught by surprise with the changing conditions.

If you're traveling to areas where chains are required, keep in mind that tire chains will only be helpful if drivers attach them properly and drop road speeds to 35 km/h in deep snow. Booster cables need to be properly connected. Fleets that stock trucks with airline antifreeze or other

Ask the Expert

Shelley Chayeski



will need to carefully instruct employees on how the substances should be used.

Are drivers aware that air tanks need to be regularly drained, and air dryers properly maintained, to keep brakes from freezing?

The rules of defensive driving certainly apply, but there are clearly win-

ter-specific techniques to learn, such as easing off the brakes if a trailer begins to jackknife. Circle checks need to include extra time to clear accumulating snow from mud flaps, reflective markings and lights.

Trailers with LED lamps will have to be cleared more often than their older counterparts as well, since the bulbs don't generate the heat that radiates from incandescent versions.

Fellow drivers often provide much of the guidance. Newly hired drivers certainly benefit from the coaching of formal mentors.

Dispatchers may also be able to schedule trips so trucks can travel together and to ensure help is always nearby.

It isn't the only way dispatchers make a difference. Those who schedule loads can always keep a closer eye on weather reports for any traveled routes. Drivers are responsible for

monitoring the updates and conditions along the way, but when they are on the road they are not surfing the Internet.

Reports from fellow drivers, meanwhile, can be shared over CBs and satellite systems alike.

The safest trips, after all, involve knowing about potential dangers that are on the way. **TW**

This month's expert is Shelley Chayeski, risk services specialist. Shelley has served the transportation industry for over 20 years in OS&D, claims, inside sales, operations, and as a manager for driver retention, driver services, and safety. Northbridge Insurance is a leading Canadian commercial insurer. Working with its broker partners, its focus is on understanding the needs of its customers and on creating solutions that make a difference to their success. You can visit them at www.nbins.com.

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It's incorporation season

Lots of owner-operators see the new year as a good time to shift from sole proprietorship to incorporated entity.

When it comes down to it, the act of incorporating is easy but choosing a business structure is a big decision. It will affect how you report your income, the type of returns you file each year and how you support expenses.

With a sole proprietorship, there's no mistaking who's in charge. You own the company operating either as an individual ('Scott Taylor') or as a registered, unincorporated business ('Scott Taylor Trucking').

You're responsible for all profits, losses, expenses and legal obligations.

You also assume all risk: claims may be made against you personally in order to settle business debts and lawsuits. Incorporation makes your company a separate entity.

You're still the boss, but your relationship with the business is different: you're a shareholder, director and/or employee (your income comes from the business in the form of a salary, bonuses and dividends).

Your company has the contract with the carrier, load broker, or customers. Your company collects the checks and pays expenses and payroll. From a tax and legal standpoint, you and the company are distinct.

Getting set up

Corporations are created by registering with either your provincial government or with the federal government.

The governing body will issue a certificate of incorporation – think of it as your company's birth certificate (and no, you can't back-date it).

Next, your company will need its own business number (BN) to file GST/HST returns, make payroll deductions to and for filing its income tax return.

If you're a sole proprietor now and converting to a corporation, you would close your GST/HST account and if you have one, your payroll account as well.

Federal or provincial?

A qualified accountant or business advisor can discuss the pros and cons of incorporating federally and provincially.

Don't decide based on cost alone. It's probably cheaper upfront to incorporate federally (\$200 versus \$350 for most provinces) but would be more expensive in the long run because of additional filing fees and other requirements.

What's in a name?

I run into people who think that registering a trade name is the same as incorporating. Not true. Unless the business name has an Ltd., Inc., or Corp. on the end of it – meaning it's officially incorporated – you and your company



Tax Talk

Scott Taylor

are legally one and the same.

That said, the various endings all mean the same thing. Having one or the other is a matter of personal choice.

Share alike

Your business is controlled by its

shareholders. Typically, with each share comes one vote. If your company has 100 common shares and you own 51 of them (maybe your spouse owns the rest), then you're the controlling shareholder.

Once a year, the shareholders are to have a meeting to review the performance and direction of the company. (Personally, I would have the meeting at a nice restaurant; the company can pick up the tab).

The shareholders elect directors and the directors hire the president, secretary and treasurer.

As the majority shareholder, you can vote yourself director and then hire yourself as president.

So, you get to have a meeting with yourself, decide whether or not you are doing a good job and then re-appoint yourself as director. Then of course you have to decide whether to hire yourself again as president.

All of this may seem formal to you, but running a corporation involves obligations that you don't have when you're a sole proprietor.

With good advice, it's nothing you can't handle.

There are enough incorporated owner-operators out there who are living proof.

And if you're a long-haul owner-operator then incorporating can almost definitely benefit you with better meal claim strategies.

If your accountant tells you incorporating does not have any advantages or benefits for you, give me a call to get the real answer. **TW**

Scott Taylor is vice-president of TFS Group, providing accounting, bookkeeping, tax return preparation, and other business services for owner-operators. Learn more at www.tfsgroup.com or call 1-800-461-5970.



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Both interest and funding for airships has returned

Continued from page 1

conferences in Calgary, Winnipeg, Yellowknife and Toronto.

Varialift's 'monocoque' all-aluminum airships will be manufactured and assembled in Chateaudun, France. They are designed for short and long range trips and can carry loads from 50 to 1,000 metric tons. Handley said the total operating cost is 17 cents USD per ton kilometer for the 50 ton capacity model, the ARH50, and it can land on any flat surface in temperatures down to minus 60 degrees Celsius.

Truck West contacted Lockheed Martin several times seeking information on the company's airships, but did not receive a reply.

Dr. Barry Prentice is a professor at the University of Manitoba's I.H. Asper School of Business's department of supply chain management, and he has long had an interest in airships and even became part of this master's thesis while in school in Guelph, Ont.

In the 1980s when funding for airships diminished, Prentice went on to work more on other forms of transport, with a particular emphasis on rail, air and truck.

"Around the year 2000, news was emerging that climate change was happening and we could see it in the reducing length of the ice road seasons in the north," Prentice said. "It occurred to me that cargo airships would provide an ideal solution."

Prentice attended a conference on airships but was disappointed that there was no focus on the a business case for implementing such a mode of transportation to Canada's north, so he organized his own business conference - Airships to the Arctic - bringing together potential user and providers of airships to discuss whether the idea was a viable solution to Northern Canada's supply chain woes.

Prentice notes that despite the fact that there are currently around 12 airship developments currently taking place, there are no commercial cargo airships that exist, but there could be in the next three to four years.

"The problem in every case is the lack of funding," Prentice said. "The two airships that are closest to development are the AirLander in the U.K and the SkyTug by Lockheed Martin in the US.

"It is worth noting that unlike the 1980s, the collapse of oil prices has not dampened interest in cargo airships. The difference in 2016 is the concern

about climate change. International agreements to curb carbon emissions have been signed and carbon taxes (and) cap and trade programs have been created."

Prentice said airships burn far less fuel because they use no energy to



A rendering of a Varialift 'monocoque' all-aluminum airship. Airships are said to product 80%-90% less carbon emissions than conventional aircrafts, and, if used to transport cargo into Canada's northern region, would help bring business to the trucking industry.

lift, and can use alternative fuels like methane and hydrogen without compromising cargo space due to their large size.

"Lighter-than-air airships have much higher fuel efficiency than heavier-than-air aircraft," said International Air Transport Association spokesman Jean Baptiste Meusnier, as noted in 'Sustainable Transportation' report provided by Prentice. "This makes them ideal for the use of cargo, as seen with some of the super heavy lifters already in operation.

"An airship produces 80% to 90% fewer emissions than conventional aircraft. They also fly at the lower altitude of 4,000 feet instead of 35,000 feet, which means their water vapor trails contribute almost nothing to global warming."

Prentice also agrees with Handley that airships would be complementary to transport trucks.

"As the current case, all freight will begin or end on a truck because it is hard to envision door-to-door airship

delivery," said Prentice.

Prentice said airships would never compete head-to-head with trucks where roads already exist, as the cost to move freight would significantly higher for an airship. He estimated that an airship moving 20 tons could cost around \$25 million versus a tractor-trailer being around \$250,000 or less.

But in areas where there are no roads, and the price tag to build such infrastructure for truck use being approximately \$3 million per kilometer, Prentice said airships would be bene-

"This would be much faster than ocean container movements, and much less expensive and polluting than airplane movements," Prentice said. "It could also create a huge increase in trucking activity that is complementary to the airship."

The idea of airships is no longer some 'wild-eyed idea,' Prentice believes. He pointed out that there have been a number of 'old' technologies which have become new again - electric cars, wind turbines and hydrogen fuel cells - not because they did not work when originally released, but because at the time, they were not economically viable given the alternatives.

And Prentice said airships are much the same.

"Airships crossed oceans on a scheduled service 80 years ago and set endurance records that still stand," he said. "They were discontinued because jet engines came along and became the dominant technology of the 'jet age', which not only dominated the skies, but eliminated ocean liners and passenger trains."

But with many today focusing heavily on fuel and greenhouse gas emission reductions and sustainable transportation practices, airships have reemerged as a practical environmentally-conscious option - one that both Handley and Prentice believe would bolster the trucking industry.

"One day, people will look back on this era and ask, 'Why did it take so long'," said Prentice.

"I predict that when the cargo airship matures - in about 40 or 50 years of growth - it will be as large and important as the airplane industry is today." TW

official to both the communities served and the trucking industry.

"Year-round access is denied to remote communities and mining operations," he said. "If we had airships to serve the north, a lot more freight in general would be required. All this additional freight would be on a truck and transhipped to an airship. Hence, more business for trucking, once airships become available.

"It does not make economic sense to move goods in airships where highways and trucks are available."

The notion of international trade, moving freight across oceans and over the polar shipping routes is another dynamic Prentice addressed.

Goods being traded between China and Europe would transported over Arctic routes to a distribution center like Winnipeg, Prentice said. The cargo would then be shipped on trucks for delivery to metro regions like Chicago or Dallas, and the airship would then be reloaded in Winnipeg and head back to China.

Statistics (may vary depending on model and weight)

- **Flight altitude:** 4,000 feet
- **Cruising speed:** 80 miles/hr (129 km/hr)
- **Freight:** mostly cargo (but some passenger space being considered)
- **Cargo capacity:** 20-1,000 metric tons
- **Operating costs:** 17 cents USD per ton/km for a 50 ton capacity airship
- **GHG emissions:** 80%-90% less than conventional aircraft

Trucking tycoon donates to Alzheimer's center

WINNIPEG, Man. - Trucking mogul Paul Albrechtsen has donated \$4 million for the creation of a new, state-of-the-art Alzheimer Centre of Excellence.

The *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that Albrechtsen, who owns Paul's Hauling, made the sizeable donation to the Riverview Health Centre Foun-

dation, which recently kicked off its \$7.6-million capital campaign to build the 60-bed unit.

The new facility is designed to offer residents access to therapeutic and recreational support and meets a growing need to support those with dementia.

Albrechtsen's contribution was an-

nounced during a gala last week.

The truck owner has donated to Riverview in the past, as well as the St. Boniface Hospital and Reh-Fit Centre.

Albrechtsen was born in Denmark and moved to Canada in 1954, working as a mechanic prior to purchasing his first truck to haul oil and water for the drilling industry. TW

Reason for optimism

Why truckers should return to the driver's seat when it comes to rates

Stories by James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Economic growth will accelerate and impending regulations should give carriers the ability to increase rates next year, according to speakers at the Surface Transportation Summit Oct. 13. Carlos Gomes, senior economist with Scotiabank, predicted global economic activity would strengthen in 2017, as will GDP growth here in Canada.

“Canada and the US will see increased growth in 2017,” Gomes said. “It will be a little bit stronger than what we’ve seen.”

He added emerging markets, including hard hit Brazil, should also fare better next year. Gomes said consumer spending is helping to offset a dearth of business investment. However, with an inventory cycle showing signs of recovery and oil prices returning to levels where investment is viable, Gomes said the overall economy and business investment should get a lift.

“As we move into 2017, we will start to see business investment in the oil patch begin to improve modestly,” he said.

In the US, Gomes said the jobs picture is “very healthy” with growth of 2% year-over-year. And consumers there are spending less of their money on energy and debt – a record low of 13.5% of their income, compared to 19% in 2007.

“This is one of the reasons we think the US will do quite well going forward,” Gomes said.

In Canada, manufacturing levels are

increasing, but that’s been mostly driven by the auto sector, Gomes explained.

“Outside the automotive sector, we have not seen much improvement,” he explained. “Our expectation is, as we see demand strength in the US we will see a broadening out of manufacturing activity.”

Gomes is also encouraged that oil supply and demand are coming in line, which should support oil prices at about \$55 per barrel next year.

“This will help Alberta and Saskatchewan stabilize and move from negative growth to seeing some small increases next year,” he said.

John Larkin, managing director and head of research with Stifel Financial Corp., gave Surface Transportation Summit attendees an economic outlook specific to transportation. Larkin noted spot market rates have fallen 10-20% over the past year, “to the point where many small carriers who participate in the spot market are really getting hammered and having trouble making truck payments.”

Contract rates began coming under pressure earlier this year.

“Anyone who is telling you their rates are up this year is probably telling you a

fib,” Larkin suggested.

But that could be short-lived.

“Going forward, we think with all the regulations coming down the pipeline, we will see a tightening of supply and demand as 2017 develops and by mid-2017 we should be back into an up-cycle on pricing, provided the economy continues to click along at at least 1.5-2%,” Larkin predicted.

One big driver will be the mandate for carriers to use electronic logging devices (ELDs) to manage driver hours-of-service in the US, beginning in December 2017. Larkin said this could remove 3-5%

‘(Drivers) are told what to do every minute of the day while living in a little metal box hurtling down the highway at 63 mph.’

John Larkin, Stifel Financial Corp.

of trucks from the road.

“It’s top of mind for everybody that 50% of the industry has ELDs, the other 50% does not. They’re still using manual logs. What you find is many of those companies using manual logs are in the 600-mile length of haul range, which you can’t do with a solo driver,” Larkin explained. “When they convert over to ELDs their productivity will be down 6-10%. So, 50% of the industry down 6-10% implies 3-5% of capacity will come out of the industry. That assumes all the small carriers will be able to survive. We think quite a few will exit the industry so it could be worse than 3-5% when all is said and done and the dust settles.”

Larkin said there are “enlightened shippers” who see this coming and are working to lock in rates, and “Neanderthals” who are focused solely on price.

Another factor that could drive up rates is the inventory glut is showing signs of easing. “That inventory glut is being drawn down somewhat,” he said.

As volumes increase, a lack of quality drivers will limit the industry’s ability to add capacity, Larkin noted.

“Drivers are still very difficult to find,” he said. And he offered little hope that drivers will start flocking to the industry. “It’s tough to find those people who are willing to sacrifice their lifestyle to be out on the road.”

In order to micromanage their cost structures, Larkin said fleets have removed any freedom and autonomy from a line-haul driver’s job. Their carriers tell them how fast to drive, which route to take, where to fuel up, how much fuel to put in the tank and even when to take their breaks.

“They are told what to do every minute of the day while living in a little metal box hurtling down the highway at 63 mph,” he said.

Larkin predicted that between the second quarter of 2017 and Q2 2018, there will be a return to the environment seen in 2014, when there was more freight to move than there were trucks to move it, “and the spot market will go from being godawful to being quite attractive.”

Asked what smart carriers are doing to succeed in the future, Larkin said they’re diversifying.

“Diversify across a range of related services so you can offer your customer asset-based truckload, intermodal, dedicated fleet and truck brokerage to handle the peaks in volumes at the end of the month or quarter,” he suggested. “That seems to be resonating with shippers who like to purchase a lot of services from the same core carrier.”

He also suggested collecting and analyzing data so that troubling trends can be identified and corrected early. **TW**

Fines, RFPs among contentious issues discussed by shippers and carriers

TORONTO, Ont. – You can’t bring shippers and carriers together under one roof without discussions turning, sooner or later, to the contentious subject of requests for proposals (RFPs). So it’s no surprise that talks at this year’s Surface Transportation Summit, as in past years, once again returned to RFPs.

“This tendering process, in my opinion, they’re a waste of time,” said Rolly Uloth, president of The Rosedale Group. “You get these huge tenders of 6,000 lines, you’re the incumbent, you put in your rates then you’re told in round one that you’re 25% high and you should rebid. This goes on and on. You may get told you’ve been awarded five lanes, but then the freight never shows up. We’re not interested in the tendering process.”

Uloth said Rosedale will participate in few RFPs. “In the tendering process, everything is one-sided,” he contended. “There are fines for being late, fines for being early.”

However, Martin Pedre, director, logistics and supply chain with Glencore Canada, reminded carriers that many large shippers have no choice but to tender freight.

“We are a large company that has to engage in the tender process,” he said. “It’s actually a legal requirement for larger organizations to engage in ten-

ders. So that type of process isn’t going away for many companies.”

He also said the tendering process allows shippers to get a feel for market rates if they’re not in touch with them.

Ken Rosenau, director of operations for Rosenau Transport, said pricing pressure has been especially intense in Western Canada, where shippers connected to the oil patch have been demanding 20-30% reductions in freight rates.

“Most of us in this room don’t have 20 points to begin with,” he said. He added, however, that conditions in Western Canada – especially in Fort McMurray – are improving. Still, carriers are having trouble increasing, and in some cases even sustaining, rates because there’s an abundance of capacity.

“We’re not seeing a capacity issue at this point in time,” confirmed shipper Heidi Syer, division freight manager, Canada, with PepsiCo.

“There doesn’t seem to be a lot of concern out there amongst shippers (about capacity),” agreed Michelle Arseneau, managing partner, GX Transport. “Nobody seems to be worried about it. Nobody’s struggling like they were a couple years ago.”

But carriers were quick to remind shippers in attendance that can change quickly. Arseneau said more ship-

pers should be planning for capacity to tighten next year when electronic logging devices (ELDs) are mandated in the US. Earlier in the day, trucking economist John Larkin said the legislation could pull 3-5% of US trucking capacity out of the market due to an inability or unwillingness to comply (see story above).

“Capacity is going to get really tight, really fast,” warned Trevor Kurtz, general manager, Brian Kurtz Trucking. He said many carriers will be unable to absorb the cost of implementing ELDs or fully complying with hours-of-service rules.

He also said carriers will likely be cautious about adding more trucks.

“We agreed (at Kurtz) in 2008 when things died off and everyone right-sized, that we would only grow when rates would allow us to grow,” he said. “With respect to growth, we’ve been really cautious. In years past, we were way too quick to grow. If it’s not going to be profitable, why grow?”

Arseneau agreed. “When we have an opportunity to secure more business we make sure a contract is in place – a decent length contract – so we can manage that and will add capacity to our fleet as that business comes on-board, as opposed to adding it and hoping the business will come.”

Carriers on the panel stressed the need for stronger partnerships between shippers and carriers. This means being realistic when it comes to fines that are levied for missed deliveries.

“The fine thing, and the appointment times that are out there, they just don’t add up,” Arseneau said. “You can’t predict traffic on the fly or when another shipper or receiver is going to tie you up. So if you are at an appointment and you are there on time and the shipper held you up for three hours and that makes you late for your next appointment, you are going to get fined for the next one. You’ll get \$50 an hour waiting time but that doesn’t add up to the \$1,000 fine you’re going to get on the next appointment. So the math doesn’t add up.”

Valerie McSween, vice-president, eastern region, for 3PL Mactrans Logistics, was empathetic.

“I haven’t met a carrier that intentionally decided not to make a delivery on time,” she said. “There is no other mode out there that matches the service level that trucking does.”

And Pepsi’s Syer said she feels fining carriers is unproductive, and prefers to implement systems and technologies that help improve on-time delivery rather than simply making carriers pay. **TW**

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*Skip Zimbalist, chairman and CEO of Active Interest Media (AIM), which publishes titles like Backpacker, Black Belt, Arts & Crafts Homes, Better Nutrition, Ski Magazine, Vegetarian Times, Power & Motor Yacht, and Yoga Journal, told FOLIO's recent Growth Summit that AIM is investing in circulation marketing including direct mail.

“We have not found declining yields in mail over the last 10-15 years,” he said.

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The important role mental health plays in trucking

Stories by Sonia Straface

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Mental health is a topic some people are not comfortable discussing.

However, studies show that one in five Canadians are suffering from mental illness each and every day, and most are doing so in silence.

At the Fleet Safety Council's 25th annual educational conference in Mississauga, Ont., Nitika Rewari of the Mental Health Commission of Canada enlightened fleet executives on mental health and the role employers play when it comes to mental illness.

"Sixty per cent of the time, we are in the workplace," Rewari said. "And people take conversations and stresses from work home with them so workplaces do have a place in terms of mental health employees."

Rewari said many mental health issues that employees suffer never get brought up to management, because of the stigma attached to illnesses like anxiety, depression and PTSD. She asked those in the room to pick out words that they associate with mental illness – "inability to cope," "street people" and "faking it" were shouted out.

But then when asked if people personally were affected by a mental ill-



Nitika Rewari of the Mental Health Commission of Canada explained to fleet executives the important role employers play when it comes to mental illness at the Fleet Safety Council's annual educational conference.

ness or if they've have known someone who has suffered from a mental illness, nearly everyone in the room confirmed they had.

"It's true that 500,000 Canadians aren't going to work this week due to a mental health problem," she said. "If it's affecting all of us, how come we treat people who have a mental

illness with words like 'You just need to buck up?'"

Rewari stressed that workplaces, including those in the trucking industry, need to implement a mental health plan into their workplace so employees can feel safe discussing mental health issues without fear of being judged.

"Workplaces have a role to play," she said. "Employers to have a duty to care. There's seven branches of law...that tell us that you do have a responsibility to your employees to address their health and safety concerns which includes mental health. By not doing that, we're costing employers, individuals and Canadian society on the whole a lot of money."

"This is a very male-dominated industry. Also an industry where you're driving for hours and hours in length. So issues that come up: loneliness, boredom, fatigue, obesity, PTSD, depression and because this is an industry that is so focused on the safety and health of the driver...a lot of times, I've been told that drivers undermine their illness because there's a lot of stigma. If they do speak to their illness, they are scared they won't be able to work."

Rewari said employers should start researching ways to help support drivers at the terminal level but also have a way for them to connect with someone in the event they are on the road when mental illness strikes.

"If you're on the road and there are ways to support your driver psychologically, let's look at that," she said adding that drivers can simply feel less stressed through recognition in the workplace. **TW**

How video can save your bacon

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Being in a collision is always a startling and stressful experience. Even when no one is seriously injured, drivers have to rack their brain trying to remember what exactly happened to cause the situation, the police are involved, premiums are raised as soon as a phone call is made to insurance and damage to your vehicle means you just lost some money in the bank.

And in the case of the professional driver, that stress is multiplied considering they just got into an accident on the job, where the name of the game is safety. The way motor vehicle incidents are handled is changing thanks to technology. Today, some trucks can be equipped with dash cams, or video technology that can record the moments leading up to, during and after a collision.

To talk about the topic at the Fleet Safety Council's 25th annual educational conference at the Centre for Health and Safety Innovation was Hernan Medina, director of enterprise sales at Lytx.

He spoke first about how video allows fleets to identify risky behavior within the cab, so executives can adjust driver behavior before it develops into an accident.

"What a lot of companies do today, the ones who are not using video technology, they go bottom down," Medina said. "They start with the collision, and then try to understand what happened to cause the accident in the first place. But with video, we go the other way around. We are proactive and don't wait for the accident to happen before we react."

Medina reminded attendees that

commercial vehicles are safe for the most part. According to research from the American Automobile Association Foundation, 75% of accidents involving Class 8 vehicles are not the fault of the professional truck driver. So another benefit of the video system is that it could exonerate a driver in the event of a collision.

But though there are a lot of benefits to putting video in your trucks, like preventing insurance claims, keeping your drivers accountable, promoting ongoing driver training, and overall saving the company money, drivers are Lytx's biggest obstacle.

"The biggest challenge is how do we sell this to drivers?" said Medina. "Many think it's big brother watching them, but it's not that."

Medina said that the Lytx drive cam only collects 12 seconds of recorded data and only if it is triggered by an event. So if there is an accident, fleet executives only have access to the first eight seconds leading up to the collision and four seconds after the collision.

"It's not meant to be an invasion," Medina said. "It is exception based... only used to improve safety and nothing else."

Ironically, once implemented, drivers become the camera's biggest fan as they see the results. Medina played several testimonials from real drivers who said the camera helped exonerate them in the event of a collision and showed them some behavior that had to be fixed.

"Drivers become our best advocates," Medina said. "As soon as they understand what (the video system) is and how it is going to be used." **TW**

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Disc brake adoption on the rise

There are a lot of reasons to switch to air disc brakes. Just don't think they're maintenance-free.

One of the primary advantages driving the more widespread adoption of air disc brakes are the reduced maintenance requirements and associated costs with disc brakes when compared to drums. But there should be no expectation that disc brakes are maintenance-free.

"The level of maintenance is less on air disc brakes than on drum brakes, but they still require some attention," warned Keith McComsey, director of marketing and customer solutions, wheel-end, with Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake. He said there's a perception among some users that disc brakes are practically maintenance-free, which is a fallacy.

"There's no such thing as maintenance-free," agreed Jim Kennedy, vice-president of maintenance for 275-truck tanker fleet McKenzie Tank Lines. To say McKenzie Tank Lines is an early adopter of air disc brakes is an understatement. The company deployed them in their first go-round in the 1970s, before the technology was ready for prime time.

It went back to disc brakes in 2011 and now makes it a standard spec' on new tractors and trailers. Kennedy said the maintenance savings are impressive, even though they do require regular inspections.

"One of the first test units we had was a vehicle that ran nitrous acid. It was a team truck that runs 23,000 miles a month, loaded both ways, and I know that the disc brakes on that unit were right at 290,000 miles before we had to do a pad change. If you run that back to the standard,



tions," Kennedy explained. "You want to make sure the slide has free movement. If it's sticking, you're going to accelerate wear on the rotor and pad. We check the gap clearance between the rotor and the shoe. Nothing in this world is maintenance-free."

"They are not maintenance-free, but it's more of an inspection-type procedure," added Roger Jansen, product manager, SAF-Holland. "During PM cycles, we like them to go in and check the pads for wear, check them for even wear and check the slide pins for any slack. Put a crowbar between the carrier and the caliper and check for excessive play. Check the slide pins and brake pads for wear

and the rotor for the proper thickness. We recommend doing this every three months."

Bendix suggests making a visual inspection of the air disc brake part of any routine PM cycle.

"There are a lot of fleets that think that because you don't have to grease them and measure brake stroke, that there is no maintenance to them," said Kevin Pfof, coordinator, technical services with Bendix Spicer Foundation Brake. "There is nothing that's truly maintenance-free. But with disc brakes, the nice thing is, when you do PM on a tractor or whenever

you are underneath the tractor, you just need to visually inspect the brake to make sure that parts are still fastened properly, that nothing came loose and look at the pads to make sure the inboard and outboard pads are wearing evenly. Look at the rotors to make sure they're wearing evenly."

Wear indicators on the rotor will inform a mechanic when it's time for a pad change. Even when pads do need replacing, it takes up to 50% less time than a drum brake job typically requires, McComsey said. Pfof also suggests checking the caliper to ensure it is sliding along the guide pins.

"If a guide pin gets contaminated, it won't slide," he warned. "Then you will find one pad is wearing more than the other. That's an indicator you need to do a wheel-off inspection."

This is especially important in applications that include off-highway usage. Oilfield fleets, for example, can run into problems with disc brakes if mud and debris isn't washed away daily.

"The mud and everything gets caught in the wheel, it impacts the cooling fins on the rotors and it hardens," McComsey explained. "When they get in at night, they really need to pressure wash the wheels out to get the mud out of them, otherwise it hardens and cakes in there."

Disc brakes, though they have some axle weight restrictions, are increasingly being spec'd on a wider variety of applications, including logging and heavy-haul. In addition to reduced maintenance, they offer better stopping performance as well.

"You're still getting 15-20 feet less stopping distance than what you see on RSD (reduced stopping distance) drums," said McComsey. "When you couple that with the maintenance advantages, quicker pad changes, longer service life intervals, fleets are seeing that added value."

Also, maintenance managers have the opportunity to simplify their parts inventory.

"With drums, you need two different sizes of brakes and two different frictions for steer and drive. With disc brakes, one set of pads does steer, drive and trailer. That's a bonus because it's less inventory sitting on your shelf," said Pfof.

Disc brake users also have a lower risk of running afoul of enforcement agencies, since they don't need to be adjusted.

"Usually when trucks get taken out of service on the road under DOT inspections, it's because they're out of adjustment," Pfof said. "With disc brakes, you don't have that."

They're also less susceptible to rustjacking, in which corrosion forms where the friction block is riveted to the shoe. The shift toward disc brakes continues, even with better performing RSD drum brakes now on the market. This is largely driven by the standardization of discs by certain OEMs, McComsey said. Due to their better braking performance and reduced maintenance requirements, the widespread use of disc brakes is a positive - as long as end-users don't mistakenly think it's a 'set it and forget it' product." **TW**

'The level of maintenance is less on air disc brakes than on drum brakes, but they still require some attention.'

Keith McComsey, Bendix

where you're loaded only 50-60% of the time, you can extrapolate that to greater than 500,000 miles, maybe even 600,000," Kennedy said. "For maintenance, I can sit there and watch guys slip in new pads in no time. I've never had any rotors fail through the first change."

Still, McKenzie Tank Lines is vigilant about inspecting and maintaining disc brakes, even though pad changes are infrequently required.

"We're inspecting them during every preventive maintenance (PM), every 60 days. We have certain commodities that are on 30-day inspec-

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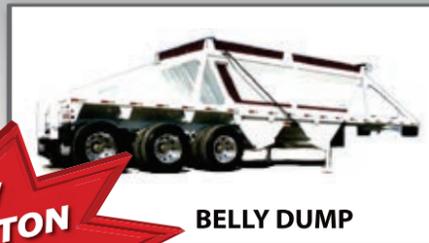
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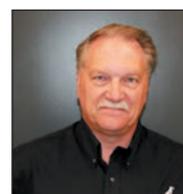
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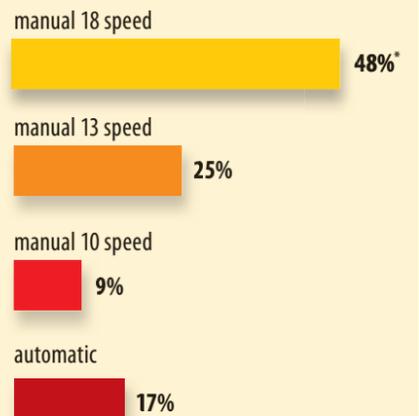
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*percentage of respondents

Source: Equipment Buying Trends Survey 2015, Newcom Trucking Group

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2017 KENWORTH T880 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
DAYCAB SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX-13, 500 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 14.6K/46K AXLE(S), 4.10 RATIO, AG460 SUSP; 205" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, GRAY VANTAGE INTERIOR, 11R24.5 TIRES 4 WAY LOCKS. FINANCING AVAILABLE O.A.C. STK#HJ987377. -295364



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2012 KENWORTH T800 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
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2011 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, CUMMINS ENG; ISX15, 525 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 4.10 RATIO, AG400 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R24.5 TIRES 702,190 KMS, STK#BJ948223. -273667 **\$57,500**



2011 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, CUMMINS ENG; ISX, 485 HP, 13 SPD TRANS; 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 3.55 RATIO, G380 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R22.5 TIRES, 3 WAY LOCKS, GRAY DIAMOND INTERIOR, 1,471,082 KMS, STK#BJ945840. -266563 **\$31,000**



2013 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX, 485 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 3.73 RATIO, AG400 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R22.5 TIRES, 228" WB, 4 WAY LOCKS, 796,891 KMS, STK#DJ962541. -266562 **\$62,500**



2012 KENWORTH T800 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, CUMMINS ENG; ISX15, 500 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 3.91 RATIO, AG400L SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R22.5 TIRES. FINANCING AVAILABLE O.A.C., 831,780 KMS, STK#CJ951335. -262117 **\$59,900**



2012 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX13, 485 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 12K/40K AXLE(S), PB LOW AIR LEAF SUSP; 244" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R22.5 TIRES, FINANCING AVAILABLE OAC, 838,200 KMS, STK#CJ951979. -174324 **\$59,900**



2011 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX13, 485 HP, 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 3.73 RATIO, AG400 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, TAN IN COLOR, 863,475 KMS, STK#BJ948887. -149595 **\$45,000**



2012 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX, 485 HP, 13.2K/40K AXLE(S), 3.73 RATIO, AG400 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 11R22.5 TIRES, GRAY SPLENDOR INTERIOR 4 WAY LOCKS, 1,193,473 KMS, STK#CR949467. -142790 **\$42,500**



2012 KENWORTH T800 DAYCAB TRACTOR
DAYCAB SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX13, 485 HP, 13 SPD TRANS; 12K/40K AXLE(S), 3.90 RATIO, AG400L SUSP; 186" WHEELBASE, 684,109 KMS, STK#CJ955183. -133365 **\$57,500**



2013 PETERBILT 388 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
63" ULTRA SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX13, 455 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 12K/40K AXLE(S), PB LOW AIR LEAF SUSP; 244" WHEELBASE, 11R22.5 TIRES, 3 WAY LOCKS, TAN PRESTIGE INTERIOR 771,946 KMS, STK#CD143893. -101667 **\$59,900**



2012 KENWORTH T800 HEAVY-HAUL DAYCAB
PACCAR ENG; MX13, 485 HP, 13 SPD TRANS; 12K/40K AXLE(S), 3.90 RATIO, AG400L SUSP; 186" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, 458,000 KMS, STK#CJ955184. -117086 **\$62,500**



2012 KENWORTH T660 HIGHWAY TRACTOR
72" ACAD SLEEPER, PACCAR ENG; MX13, 485 HP, 18 SPD TRANS; 13K/SUPER 40K AXLE(S), 4.10 RATIO, AG460 SUSP; 228" WHEELBASE, WHITE IN COLOR, OFF-LEASE, 11R24.5 TIRES, 4 WAY LOCKS, 888,590 KMS, STK#CJ952512. -114898 **\$52,500**

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The image shows a collage of two items: a magazine advertisement on the left and a website screenshot on the right.

Magazine Advertisement (Left):

- Truck and Trailer**: Canada's #1 Source for Heavy Trucks and Trailers. Truck Trailer.ca. MAY 2016, VOL. 20 - NO. 5.
- LOADSTAR**: LOWBEDS - TAG-A-LONGS - TRANSPORTERS - SPECIALIZED LARGE OR SMALL LOADSTAR - PARON OFFERS THEM ALL. "Leading in trailing!"
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- 75/65 TON**: OUR THANKS TO LACROIX CONSTRUCTION, SUDBURY, ONTARIO. (Image of a white and red truck with a trailer)
- 40 TON**: OUR THANKS TO RUDAK EXCAVATING, WINDSOR, ONTARIO. (Image of a white truck with a dump trailer)
- 75/65 TON**: OUR THANKS TO SPG HEAVY HAULERS, BOLTON, ONTARIO. (Image of a blue truck with a trailer)
- 75/65 TON**: OUR THANKS TO DVC CONTRACTING, HAMILTON, ONTARIO. (Image of a black truck with a trailer)
- 60/60 TON**: OUR THANKS TO DL MACDONALD CONSTRUCTION, CORNWALL, ONTARIO. (Image of a white truck with a trailer)
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By Edo van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Bud asks Mark to start taking loads for a new company. At first, Mark isn't interested, but Bud convinces him it would be good for Bud's other drivers, many of whom are looking for regular, steady loads...

Mark followed the customs officer into the office. He'd been through the Fort Erie border crossing enough times that a couple of the officers recognized him when he entered.

"Oh, oh," one of them said. "Here comes trouble."

Mark smiled at the remark, but wondered if that was really how he was known at the border.

"So what's the problem?" he asked when he was settled into a seat.

"Well," the officer began, "our system is telling us that there is no entry on file for your load."

"Which means..."

"The broker never created a file for this load."

"And?" Mark pressed.

"Basically, your load doesn't exist in our system."

Mark was a bit surprised, but not exactly shocked at this turn of events. After all, this was the first load the new brokerage was sending across the border - first load for the shipper, too - so there was bound to be a mistake or two. But having no entry on file went beyond being a simple mistake. This was total incompetence. "Do you mind if I look over the paperwork?" Mark asked.

The officer slid the paperwork across the desk and spun it around so Mark could read it. Mark looked it over closely, first looking for any obvious mistakes, then studying it to see if there was a detail that might have been overlooked. In the end, it all looked good to his eyes. "I don't see anything wrong with this."

"You shouldn't," said the officer. "All this paperwork is good, but it's for another load on some other truck."

Mark felt the words in his stomach like a punch from a champ. "Different load," was all he said.

"That's my best guess."

"I see."

"Even so," the officer continued. "The file for the load on your truck did have an entry on file at some point, but it has since been canceled by the broker."

"Why would they do that?"

A shrug. "I don't know. That's something you're going to have to ask them."

Mark looked the man in the eye for a long time, and then finally said, "I'm not getting across the border, am I?"

The officer smiled. "Not today you're not."

"So, what's going to happen to my load?"

"Your trailer has been bonded back to Canada."

"Which means?"

"You've got to turn around and head back to where you came from."

Mark let out a long breath through clenched teeth.

He'd had plenty of problems at the border before, but this was unacceptable. Not only was the load late, he'd also been held up in traffic only to be turned around at the border. There was no way he could salvage this load and he likely wouldn't be compensated for the kilometers he'd already driven.

That's what you get for doing a guy a favor, Mark thought as he took the long walk back to Mother Load. Inside the cab, after a few deep breaths to calm his nerves, Mark took out his phone and made a call to Bud. But his anger slowly transformed into confusion as he realized the phone in his hand had been off for who

"Me and a whole lot of other people. Where the heck have you been?"

"I've been at the border where they've told me the entry for my load has been canceled."

"You don't say."

"Yeah," Mark said in a huff. "I expected there to be a problem because it's a new company and all, but there wasn't even an entry on file. Why in the world would they do that?"

"Well," Bud said. "The reason they canceled the entry and the reason everyone's been trying to call you for the past couple of hours is because you took the wrong trailer!"

"Oh," was all Mark could say, his face feeling hot and no doubt turning red as a pepper. "I've never made that mistake before."

"No?"

"Well, not in the last couple of years anyway."

"Right," Bud said with a sigh. "Just get back here as quick as you can and I'll try and convince them that you really are the best driver I have."

"I'm on my way."

By the time Mark got back to the yard, there were several people waiting for him, including the shipper and another man who was from the brokerage company.

"Sorry, man," the shipper said. "I tried calling you - a lot - but there was no answer."

"You don't have to apologize," Mark said. "I'm the one who made the mistake. This one's all on me."

"I guess I should have been more careful about pointing out the trailer, making sure you got the right one."

"You and me both," Mark said.

This time, the shipper walked Mark over to the trailer he'd be taking and when he did, Mark realized how he'd been mistaken. The right trailer was identical to the wrong one with only a single digit (an eight instead of a three) and a single letter (an E instead of an F) difference in their identification codes.

"It was an honest mistake," the shipper said.

"Thanks," Mark said. "But I pride myself on not making these kinds of mistakes."

The broker stepped in then and handed Mark a new set of papers. "Let's hope this one gets across without a hitch."

"You're not sure?" Mark asked.

"I'm sure I've done everything right. Who knows what happens between here and the border."

Mark didn't like the sound of that, even though he knew it to be true.

He shook hands with the two men, hooked up the right trailer - triple checking that the numbers all matched up - then settled in for the night. He'd wasted so much time waiting for the load, being stuck in traffic, then getting turned around at the border that he was out of hours for today.

After a good night's sleep, he'd be ready to take another run at the border. **TW**

Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 3 of *Truckers without borders*.

Truckers without borders

PART 2



knew how long? He turned it on, watched it start up and then quickly turn off again because it was out of power.

"Damn!" Mark said, plugging the phone into its charger. "I wonder if anyone's been trying to call me."

But before the words were even out of his mouth, his phone came alive with a string of texts - one after another - followed by a message informing him that he'd missed 12 calls, several from Bud and the rest from numbers he didn't recognize. An empty feeling washed over Mark as if all the anger and fury inside him had been sucked from his body in a great big whoosh. Mark dialed Bud.

Bud didn't even bother saying, "Hello." Instead he said, "Well, look who's figured out how to work their phone."

"Have you been trying to call me?"

Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

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Mullen Group CEO more optimistic about oil and gas industries

OKOTOKS, Alta. – Murray Mullen is more optimistic about Canada's oil and gas industries than he has been in two years.

The CEO of Mullen Group told analysts during a conference call Oct. 20 that "Today, for the first time in a very long time, I'm beginning to see signs of what I hope will be a period of sustained recovery."

Mullen was discussing the company's third quarter results. Revenue was down 15.1%, due to a \$35.2 million decline in the oilfield services segment and a \$9.8 million drop in the trucking/logistics segment. However, the company grew its net income by 141.1% year-over-year, to \$17.6 million, exceeding Bay Street expectations for the second straight quarter.

Rates under pressure

Mullen said trucking rates continue to be under pressure due to excess capacity but he predicted that will change next year. The trucking/logistics segment now represents two-thirds of Mullen Group's business.

"Because there has been an influx of cheap money into the transportation sector over the last two years, today we have a situation where capacity exceeds freight demand," Mullen said. "It's an ultra-competitive market and pricing pressures are intensifying."

He predicted carriers unable to adjust their cost structures will have trouble staying in business.

The oilfield services division continued to be hurt by a lack of drilling activity in Western Canada.

"The good news is oil and gas prices have recovered quite nicely and it's reasonable to expect drilling activity will continue to recover from these depressed levels," Mullen said.

When discussing Q2 results three months ago, Mullen hinted at a recovery and said the time was right to start positioning the company for growth.

It quietly made three small tuck-in acquisitions over the past few months "at compelling valuations."

These included: Motrux, a B.C.-based truckload carrier with 17 owner-operators, which was integrated into Mullen Trucking; Northern Frontier Logistics, previously known as Central Water and Equipment Services, which will be integrated into Mullen's Canadian Dewatering business; and Calgary-based Caneda Transport, which provides LTL, TL, dedicated and intermodal services throughout Canada and the western US. It runs 55 power units and 110 trailers and will continue on as a standalone business.

Mullen Group sits on more than \$261 million in cash and is well po-

sitioned to make more acquisitions, Mullen said.

"The amount of deals we're seeing today is unprecedented," he said. "We have the balance sheet and we have the opportunities, but we want good deals, not just a deal."

He added the company is likely to pursue more tuck-in acquisitions rather than mega-deals, but said the company is always interested in buying well-run companies. In many cases

it's unlikely mega-projects in the oil-sands or major pipeline projects will be started anytime soon.

"There needs to be a sustained period of higher commodity prices before these capital-intensive projects are sanctioned," he said.

However, he did predict the Alberta economy would strengthen in 2017 and more so in the years to follow. Mullen also predicted the Canadian economy would continue on its current slow growth path. But he said impending fleet failures and consolidation would "set the stage for a rebalancing of the pricing of freight services later in 2017."

People getting back to work

The next few quarters will remain challenging for the trucking/logistics business, Mullen warned.

"We can't get pricing leverage right now," he said. "I think pricing leverage starts to come back once a little bit of growth in the economy comes."

With steadier oil prices and a potential increase in drilling activity, comes wider-spread employment.

"The good news is, people are getting full hours now and that's good for our people," he said, adding Grande Prairie employment is pretty much at capacity.

Acknowledging he's been labeled a pessimist in the past, and justifiably so, Mullen said "I'm more optimistic than I've been in two years." **TW**

'For the first time in a very long time, I'm beginning to see signs of what I hope will be a period of sustained recovery.'
Murray Mullen, Mullen Group

asset-based trucking companies can be picked up for the value of the assets, he noted. In addition to higher oil prices - which of late have hovered at around, or slightly higher than \$50 per barrel - Mullen said natural gas storage levels have also normalized, providing stronger pricing and potentially leading to more drilling activity.

"Increased drilling in Western Canada will help the Alberta economy," Mullen said. However, he cautioned

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The Adventures of NEWLAND TRANSPORT

By Edo Van Belkom

"You seem to be damaging your truck quite a bit of late... What's going on?"

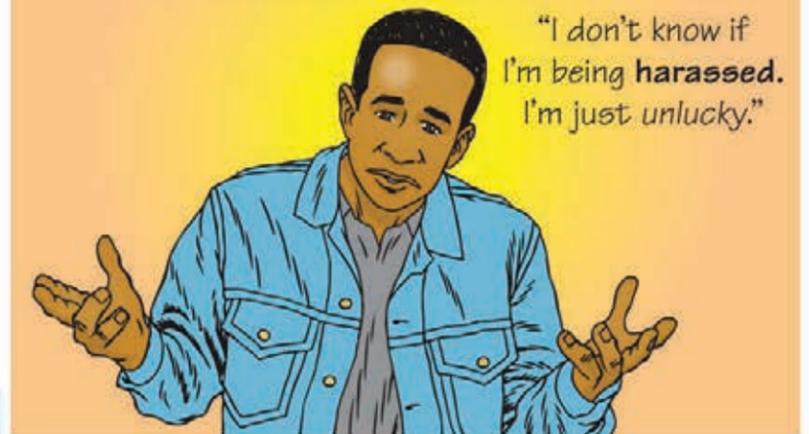
It's not me," Vic says. "I haven't had an accident in years, but every few days there's something broken on my truck. This time it was a headlight and dent in the fender. Last time, a signal light."

The boss is silent for a moment, then asks, "Does somebody not like you? Are you being harassed?"

Vic says nothing at first. He doesn't want to complain and he doesn't want to point the finger at someone because it just might make things worse.

"Because," the boss continues, "we have a lot of drivers who are racial minorities, so we've got some pretty strict guidelines about these sorts of things. If you're being harassed, we have to do something about it."

Vic is asked to see the boss of Newland Transport in his office. Vic is uncomfortable going into the office because it often ends up being bad news, but ends up going to see the man and takes a seat across from his desk.



"I don't know if I'm being harassed. I'm just unlucky."

"How many times have you been unlucky?"

"Six times."

"What?" the boss bellows. "You let this happen six times and never came to speak to me?"

"I don't want any trouble."

"Okay, this is what we're going to do. Park your truck in the corner of the yard that's closest to the office. I'll move the camera system so there's one on your truck 24 hours a day. We'll see who's making you so unlucky!"



And a few days later...



A few days later, Vic is confronted by the man in the parking lot as he's getting into his truck.

"So, you ratted me out, didn't you?"

"What are you talking about?"



"I just got fired, thanks to you. First you took all my best loads, and now you've got my job."

Vic was about to respond, when the boss spoke for him. "No one complained, Buddy. In fact, this man did everything he could not to get anyone in trouble. But I've got video proof of you messing around with his truck. You're lucky you're just getting fired. If you don't get out of here soon, I'll call the police and see what they say about what's on the video."



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

"I've got a great route for you," the boss says. "How does Florida and back twice a week sound for the next six weeks? You'll be home every weekend."

"Are you sure? There are other drivers who have been here longer than I have."

"Don't you worry about that," the boss says. "We've just had an opening and the route is all yours."



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All about lending a helping hand

By Derek Clouthier

PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE, Man. – Jake Neufeld started Paraclete Transport in 1993, and ‘praise the Lord’ for that.

As current company president Norm Thiessen told *Truck West*, Neufeld, Thiessen’s uncle, launched the transportation business to do more than move dry bulk freight between Western Canada and the mid-western US. He also wanted to help young people get their Class 1 driver’s licenses who could not afford to pay to attend a driving school on their own.

Which brings us back to the company name – Paraclete.

“The name was chosen by my uncle who wanted ‘PTL’ for ‘praise the Lord’, and the word Paraclete is a Greek word for ‘helper,’” Thiessen explained.

Paraclete Transport has evolved since its beginnings in mid-90s with a single truck and a 42’ tandem hopper trailer.

A couple years in, Neufeld landed a line haul contract with RPS Ground Service (now Fed Ex Ground) supplying a truck and team service for return trips from Winnipeg to Toronto.

Then in 1999, Neufeld asked his nephew to come on board and help in the office finding return loads, doing billing, accounts payable and payroll.

“At that time, there was a friend of my uncles who was starting a business and required transport of dry bulk product to places farther than we had gone before, as well as he needed dry van loads moved,” Thiessen said. “We rented a dry van to see if this would work for us and we added another truck and a convertible hopper/dry van so we could transport bulk product south and dry skidded product back to Western Canada.”

Company ownership moved into the hands of Thiessen and his wife, merging with his father-in-law’s business in 2002 when Neufeld decided it was time to sell; he remained with the Paraclete as an owner-operator and company director. Tragedy struck in 2005 when Thiessen’s father-in-law passed away unexpectedly, leaving Thiessen

and his wife to run the company on their own.

“Since that time, we have been on a slow, steady growth program and are presently at 35 trucks and 60 trailers,” said Thiessen, adding that 20 of the 35 trucks are owned by the company and 15 are owner-operators. “We presently are a dry, nonhazardous van carrier serving both the full-load and less-than-load market in Western Canada to mostly the US Midwest and Southeast.”

Times have changed since Thiessen’s uncle opened the company in 1993, particularly when it comes to fuel efficiency.

Thiessen said one of the biggest accomplishments Paraclete achieved in the past year has been their ability to employ new technologies to reduce fuel consumption, and they plan on continuing this effort.

“Both in anti-idling equipment, as well as air management equipment that can be added to trailers that does not require driver involvement,” Thiessen explained. “Without these improvements, it would be very difficult to remain in business.”

In 2012, the Portage Daily Graphic featured Paraclete Transport as a company that was saving fuel with the use of new technologies, specifically with the use of the Smart Truck UT-6 system installed on all its trailers to help reduce drag at the rear end of the unit and lessen side to side swing of the trailer due to wind. Thiessen said there are a number of reasons he has utilized the Smart Truck UT-6 system, including the fact that there has been no need for any maintenance on the units, unlike with the use of side skirts.

“We purchased a number of trailers with side skirts, and within six months, had damages to them to the point some had to be replaced, and



Paraclete Transport is involved in much more than moving freight.

saw the amount of road debris that was caught on the cross members of the trailer causing premature corrosion,” Thiessen said. “I was also concerned about the fact there was reduced air movement over the brakes and tires causing more heat buildup and wear.”

Thiessen also said he noticed empty trailers being pulled side to side in high winds with the use of side skirts.

Paraclete saves about .5 to .7 miles per gallon of fuel with use of the Smart Truck UT-6 technology.

But challenges in today’s highly technological truck market remain.

With Manitoba’s brisk winter temperatures, Thiessen said from an equipment perspective, there is a long way to go before diesel particulate filter (DPF) systems are up to snuff.

“The cost to these slowdowns and breakdowns in reduced service to the customer, and the down time on the road is obviously something that is not calculated when ‘saving the planet,’” said Thiessen. “With all of the sensors that are on our trucks, it takes very little to have a truck rendered useless till it is inspected and serviced before being able to continue on the trip it was dispatched out on.”

Another challenge for Paraclete has been falling rates on spot freight, something, as a small carrier, the company depends on greatly.

Thiessen said a large increase in the number of US freight brokers bidding on freight has driven the rate down for spot freight in their efforts to find the best deal.

“We, thankfully, have many customers and brokers that we have worked with for many years, and they are working at keeping the rates at a profitable

level,” said Thiessen. “With the rates dropping like they have, I expect there will be some casualties with some carriers that cannot weather this rate storm as we saw in 2008/09.”

Despite a future that he sees as being one which will force trucking companies to reduce capacity but have the same amount of equipment on the road due to increased regulation, Thiessen maintains a cautiously optimistic approach.

“My vision is to be a high quality carrier that uses high quality equipment and professional drivers that take pride in the work they do,” he said, adding that Paraclete must continue to provide its customers with service that they can rely on. “I do not have a vision of competing to be the largest carrier, but to pay attention to all the details. We will continue to grow at a manageable pace so we do not have to risk the whole company for growth.”

The sudden passing of Thiessen’s father-in-law in 2005 was the result of cancer, and Paraclete has decalated one of its trailers with the cancer awareness logo to bring attention to the disease.

The company is also supports the local Youth for Christ programs for Portage la Prairie youth, as well as the Salvation Army’s Christmas food drive and helped transport shoeboxes for Samaritan’s Purse from Vancouver to Calgary.

“The reason we are involved in these charitable works, is because we have so much in this part of the world, and there are those who do not have enough to make it through the day without help,” Thiessen said. “We do not have to go to other countries to find those who need help. My Wife and I are very involved in our church, working with youth and other related ministries. We have been given many opportunities and feel we have an opportunity to give back and to help with mentorship of some youth who are missing this at home.”

Those at Paraclete are ‘helpful’ indeed. **TW**

‘We do not have to go to other countries to find those who need help.’

Norm Thiessen



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