

TRUCK WEST

February 2011 Volume 22, Issue 2

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at www.trucknews.com



Vedder Transport's Fred Zweep

On being the cleanest agricultural fleet in the world, the triangle of success and how the company plans to be not only a consumer – but also a supplier – of LNG
See pg. 24

New hire 'rocks' AMTA

Don Wilson leaves govt. gig to guide AMTA

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – You could say the Alberta Motor Transport Association's new executive director really rocks.

In fact, when he isn't performing his work duties or volunteering around town, Don Wilson is performing on the bass guitar as part of Nitelife, which bills itself as "Calgary's Premiere Party Band."

Music has always been close to Wilson's heart, but so has the transportation industry.

"I grew up on a farm, so at age 12, you're driving a grain truck," he says. "And then my uncle had a general trucking firm so I ended up hauling for him for a while."

Wilson spent some time in Red Deer pursuing his musical career but eventually decided to put his Class 1 license to use driving pick-up and delivery in Calgary and, later, the Calgary-to-Edmonton run. Later still, he went into the office as dispatcher for Bow Valley Transport and eventually became terminal manager.

Wilson went into business for himself around 1977, buying a Peterbilt and hauling triples between Calgary and Edmonton before joining the

Continued on page 8

Antique truck collection looking for a new home

By Jim Bray

PORT COQUITLAM, B.C. – If you've built it, there's a historical society that just might want to come – especially if you make them an offer they can't refuse.

The group, the Teamsters Freight Museum & Archives Society, is hoping a white knight will ride to their rescue and provide a new home for their vintage displays of transportation memorabilia. The reason, according to curator Norm Lynch, is that the owners

of the Port Coquitlam warehouse the museum called home for several years decided they wanted the rent paid in cash only, instead of partially in cash and partially via a charitable tax receipt as had been the status quo. That change, and the additional burden of the Harmonized Sales Tax, means the society can no longer afford to keep its doors open.

"That HST kills us," says Lynch, who's been involved in the museum since before it was a museum. The

extra taxes and the additional cash "would amount to doubling the dollar output, about another \$500 a month," he says.

All of which means the organization is scrambling to find another empty warehouse – in vain, as of this writing.

The society was originally scheduled to be out of the Port Coquitlam location by the end of October, but managed to get some extra wiggle room to allow it to find a new place.

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Spec'ing dry vans

More than just a box on wheels.

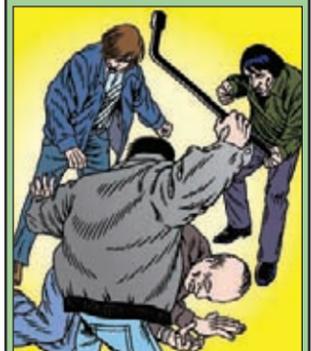


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- **Taking to the track:** The North American Big Rig Racing Series is once again revving up for another season. Page 22
- **To the Maxx:** Test driving International's ProStar+ with the 13L MaxxForce engine in EPA2010 trim. Page 26
- **Cool idea:** We check out a snow removal system for trailer tops developed by an Ontario fleet. Page 27

Mark Dalton O/O



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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

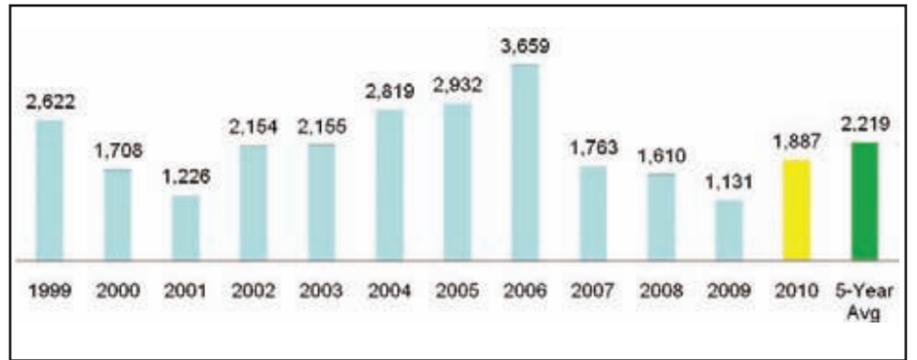
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There were 1,887 Class 8 trucks sold in November, making it one of the best months of the year when compared to the same month in previous years. It continued the pattern of considerable sales increases over dismal 2009. The figure was also higher than the October totals back in 2008, 2007, 2001 and 2000. It is perhaps indicative of truck buyers being optimistic of a real turnaround at some point in 2011. However, the sales total is still below the five-year average for Class 8 truck sales.

Monthly Class 8 Sales - Nov 10

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	488	205
International	466	276
Kenworth	278	250
Mack	148	77
Peterbilt	194	165
Sterling	0	22
Volvo	206	74
Western Star	107	62
TOTALS	1887	1131

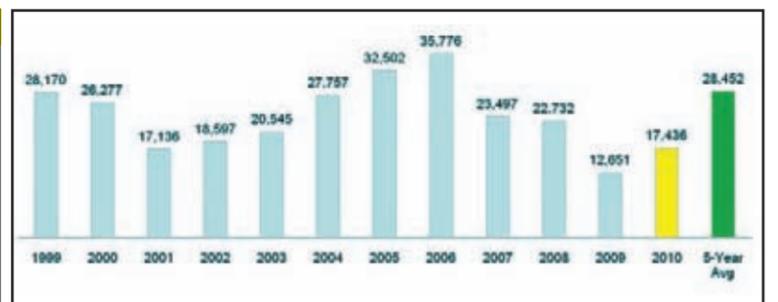
Historical Comparison - Nov 10 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Nov 10) by Province and OEM

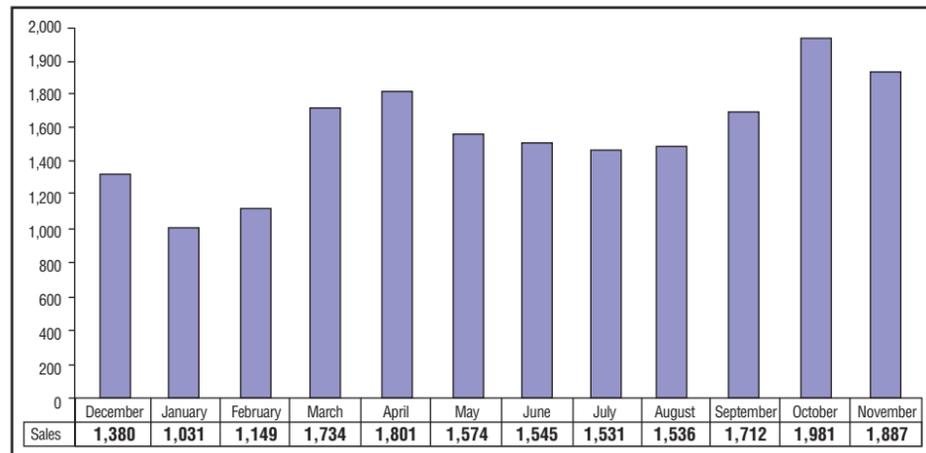
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	227	330	175	204	1,869	601	279	154	9	20	3,868
Kenworth	325	1,040	151	177	684	860	115	0	0	0	3,352
Mack	63	79	95	51	550	156	47	20	0	1	1,062
International	218	496	73	178	1,876	1,031	181	108	11	94	4,266
Peterbilt	168	524	142	191	298	476	89	38	0	0	1,926
Sterling	23	42	15	2	8	43	0	0	0	0	133
Volvo	69	100	77	114	852	406	92	41	0	11	1,762
Western Star	165	307	45	26	204	167	56	81	1	15	1,067
TOTALS	1,258	2,918	773	943	6,341	3,740	859	442	21	141	17,436

Historical Comparison - YTD Nov 10



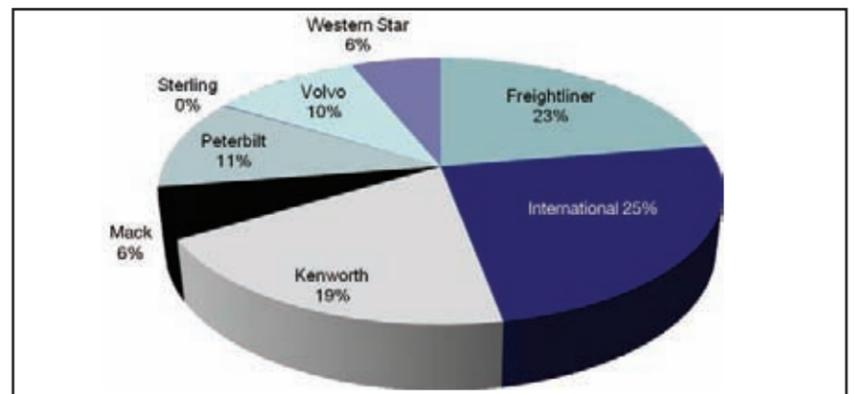
During the first 10 months of 2010, there were 17,436 trucks sold in the Canadian market. That's a considerable improvement over last year and, thanks to a strong November, slightly above the sales totals for 2001. In 2009, truck sales fell 44% from the previous year. So far, sales are up 38% from that. As Daimler North America's Martin Daum told the media during a briefing at the American Trucking Associations conference, "We would not be smiling if we didn't have 2009 to match against." Sales figures now are more than 11,000 units below the seven-year average.

12 - Month Sales Trends



After dropping for three consecutive months, Class 8 sales rebounded by ever so slight a margin in August with sales for the month coming in just a handful of units above the sales posted in July. September saw a much more robust increase and October came in with a similarly sized increase. November did drop slightly from October's totals but still came in as the second strongest month of 2010. Sixty percent of fleet owners and 27% of owner/operators responding to our annual Equipment Buying Trends Survey indicated they would be purchasing new iron this year.

Market Share Class 8 - Nov YTD



International, the only truck manufacturer not to adopt SCR engine technology, continues to drop in market share as the year draws to a close, but it remains the market share leader. Both Freightliner and Kenworth posted higher sales for August and September and Freightliner did so for October as well. International captured the market share crown in the Canadian Class 8 market in 2009, ending up with a commanding 29% share of the market. It remains the market leader this year with a 25% share. Kenworth has been the story of the year so far in 2010 and now enjoys a 19% market share, just behind second place Freightliner.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Trucking: An industry that solves its own problems

When people – outsiders, of course – ask me how it is I don't get bored covering the trucking industry, I'm never short for an answer. Of course, there's the usual rant about how the industry is constantly evolving, my fascination with the equipment that keeps the freight moving and the always-approachable people who make the industry hum. But in addition to all that, it's the resourcefulness of the people in this business that is one of the industry's most compelling and endearing traits.

You would be hard pressed to find another industry in which people work as hard for every dollar they make as they do in trucking. Margins are thin, competition is fierce and companies are constantly swimming upstream against some formidable forces, often regulatory. Yet when the people in this industry face a problem, they are remarkably adept at going out and solving it. Let me share a few examples:

Last year, Greer Hunt, owner of Hunt's Transport with terminals in Hamilton, Ont. and Mount Pearl, Nfld. grew tired of Marine Atlantic's unreliable ferry service. So he went out and leased a barge, on which he transports his trailers – 50 at a time – from Hamilton, along the St. Lawrence right through to Newfoundland. Marine Atlantic, who needs ya?

On page 60 of this issue, you can read about an ingenious solution to an age-old problem: how to safely remove snow and ice from trailer roofs. This is an issue that's getting a lot of attention these days, with New Jersey doling out hefty fines to truckers who do not clear off their vehicles. The system is basically a catwalk fabricated within the walls of a decommissioned reefer trailer. The driver pulls alongside, climbs the stairs and uses a specially designed tool (a piece of hockey board on the end of a stick) to remove snow and ice from the trailer top. I'm told Robert Transport has a very similar

Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES



system at its terminal.

Another example covered in this issue is Vedder Transport's ambitious plan to build liquefied natural gas commercial cardlocks on its property in Abbotsford, B.C. and eventually along the route between the Lower Mainland and Alberta and then in other strategic locations within Alberta. Why? So the company can transition much of its fleet from diesel to natural gas, making it possibly the 'greenest' agricultural fleet in the world and shielding itself from wild and unpredictable diesel price fluctuations.

We all know there are advantages to fueling trucks with LNG. It's more abundant than oil, it's produced right here in Canada and it has always been considerably less expensive than diesel. Furthermore, a Canadian company, Westport, has developed a robust, mature fuel system that is up to the rigors of heavy Class 8 applications (Vedder's LNG trucks will gross 140,000 lbs). All that's holding the industry back from the more widespread adoption of LNG is the cost of the vehicles (funding is available, in some instances) and the availability of the fuel.

Vedder struck up a deal with gas supplier Terasen to not only offset the higher pur-

chase price of LNG tractors but has taken it a step further and partnered to develop a fueling infrastructure that will eventually extend right across Canada's two westernmost provinces.

In my interview with Vedder Transport president Fred Zweep, he said "There are a number of great fleets throughout Canada that have phenomenal entrepreneurs and interesting engineering minds who at one time or another have taken a leap of faith from a trailer perspective or tractor perspective."

You, sir, are one of them. So I tip my hat to Fred, to Greer, to the folks at Erb and Robert and to every one of you who are not deterred by the many obstacles that are erected in your paths, but instead wake up each morning with a hunger to overcome them. You keep the wheels turning and the industry interesting to cover. □

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Is FMCSA cooking the numbers?

If you haul into the US no doubt the firestorm of debate raging right now over the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) new proposed hours-of-service rules for trucking has captured your interest. And possibly left you scratching your head too. You can read all about the proposed changes and the industry's reaction in this issue. What I'm concerned about are the motives behind what the stakeholders are saying.

The American Trucking Association has come out all guns blasting, basically accusing the FMCSA of cooking the numbers on fatigue-related truck crashes in making its case for stricter hours-of-service. Now, I have to tell you, over the years I've learned to take what the ATA says with a grain of salt. Previous warnings of the industry's demise because of some legislative change or other have proved rather exaggerated. And, let's be honest, the ATA's politics are distinctly Republican flavoured (its president Bill Graves is a former Republican Governor). If you've attended any of ATA's national get-togethers, I think you would agree with me. The ATA is naturally disposed towards not agreeing with any legislation brought in by a Democratic government.

But that in itself doesn't mean that the ATA's criticism of the proposed

crash causation study.

Second, the ATA charges that FMCSA is treating any crash in which fatigue is listed as an "associated factor" as a fatigue-related crash. Yet that contradicts the FMCSA's own report to Congress, in which it stated "No judgement is made as to whether any factor is related to a particular crash, just whether it was present."

Changing the way it looks at the data, the FMCSA has been able to nearly double the number of truck-involved crashes caused by fatigue. Back in 2008, the FMCSA believed about 7% of truck crashes involved fatigue (even though the best data on fatigue showed only a 2.2% relationship, according to the ATA.) Now, however, the FMCSA has upped that figure to 13% – hence making it look like there is a need to revisit hours-of-service regulations.

Both safety and efficiency must be taken into consideration when drafting hours-of-service legislation and, within reason, safety must trump efficiency. But when it does it must be based on solid science. Unless the FMCSA has solid answers to ATA's accusations, its numbers, and hence its motives, appear suspect. □

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The view with Lou

LOU SMYRLIS



hours-of-service rules should be dismissed as merely bipartisan bickering.

To place the need for such legislation in perspective, since the current hours-of-service rules were introduced in 2004, the trucking industry in the US has seen crash-related fatalities decline 33% from 2003 levels while both fatality and injury crash rates have reached historic lows.

Is the FMCSA attempting to fix something that isn't broken, as the ATA charges, and cooking the numbers to make the situation look worse than it really is? The ATA has certainly made some accusations that I would love to see the FMCSA respond to.

The ATA says that in the legislative proposal's cost-benefit justification, the FMCSA inflated its estimation of the percentage of fatigue-related crashes in two ways. First it overstated the percentage of single-vehicle truck crashes (which are more likely to be fatigue-related) compared to multi-vehicle crashes. In fact, the FMCSA doubled the weight given to single-vehicle truck crashes in its large truck



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IN BRIEF



Christmas came early for Manitoba Transport Minister

WINNIPEG, Man. – The Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) was in a giving mood recently, presenting provincial Transport Minister Steve Ashton with a painting that celebrates the region’s trucking industry.

The association presented Ashton with the gift at the Manitoba Legislature on Dec. 16. The painting was done by local artist Glenn Hayes, and was presented by MTA president Tom Payne Jr. and several board members.

Titled ‘Driven to Succeed,’ the painting pays homage to the roots of the Manitoba trucking industry, the association announced. It incorporates elements from the past and future and captures Manitoba’s role as a transport hub.

“The Manitoba Trucking Association is pleased to present the Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation department with this specially commissioned painting,” said MTA’s Payne. “It will serve as a reminder of the economic role trucking plays in our province and we are pleased to have the minister accept it as a keepsake in his office.”

“As Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, I’m proud of the work done by the Manitoba Trucking Association and look forward to continuing to work with them,” said Ashton. “This painting is a poignant addition to the Manitoba Legislature.” □

PM taps former trucker for help

REGINA, Sask. – Denis Prud’homme, past president of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA), has been appointed to a federal government commission looking at reducing red tape in business. Prud’homme, former owner of Prud’homme Trucking, was chosen to join a cross-section of six business and industry leaders as well as six elected officials that make up the commission.

The group will hold cross-Canada roundtables to discuss what can be done to reduce irritants from federal regulatory requirements.

“I am both humbled and excited to have been chosen by the Prime Minister to look into what can be done to encourage business growth, while reducing red tape,” Prud’homme said. “Reducing the red tape will lessen the compliance burden and some of regulatory duplication faced especially by small and medium size businesses and thus will foster growth, competition and innovation.” □

Bridge upgrades promise safer Trans-Canada

By Jim Bray
CHILLIWACK, B.C. – Work on a pair of bridges over the Vedder Canal in British Columbia’s lower mainland, upgrades called for in the wake of an accident involving a truck in 2010, has wrapped up.

The improvements pave the way for the what’s hoped will be the safer transportation of people and goods along the Trans-Canada Highway in the Chilliwack and Abbotsford areas.

The push for the Vedder Bridge upgrades came after an Aug. 17, 2010 fatality, when BCTA president and CEO Paul Landry requested that the province’s Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure find out whether or not there might be a problem at the bridge that could create hazards for commercial vehicles.

Chilliwack MLA John Les also pushed for the improvements. “Following the most recent incident,” he said, “I asked the minister if further

measures to enhance safety were possible.”

According to Jeff Knight, spokesperson for the B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Ministry did a safety review, including bringing in engineers to take a look at the area involved. “The structure was confirmed to be meeting all of our standards,” he said, “but the work that was carried out consisted of proactive measures to enhance safety and visibility.”

The upgrades to both the north and southbound structures, which began just before Labour Day, included the installation of high concrete barriers with reflectors along the length of both bridges, a move designed to reduce the potential of vehicles striking the railings. Other work included: extending the concrete roadside barriers 150 metres out on the approaches; installing extra reflectors on the barriers and guardrails to increase driver

awareness; putting in a second row of rumble strips on each approach; adding “Shoulders Ending” warning signs to each approach; and installing white pavement markings along the shoulders to increase driver awareness.

Knight said the bridge was kept open during the renovations and “the work was carried out without major disruptions to traffic.” Most of the work was accomplished last September, but the project didn’t wrap up until October.

As for the changes themselves, “they just help drivers clearly see on the approaches on each side of the crossings,” Knight said, noting that they should benefit all motorists, truckers and non-truckers alike.

As for the BCTA, the organization says it’s “extremely pleased” that the Ministry recognized that, even though the bridges already met the official standards, more had needed to be done “to mitigate the risks for vehicles in trouble and to prevent future tragedies.” □

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ALBERTA

New hire Don Wilson is no stranger to trucking industry issues

Continued from page 1

Alberta government about a year later. Juggling his private and public sector jobs was too much, though.

"I kept the truck for a while and just had drivers," he says, "but it was pretty hard to make it with just drivers when they don't have the investment in the truck. It was just too much of a headache, so I sold it."

Part of the lure of public service was its regular hours.

"In my terminal manager and safety supervisor roles it was a 24/7, on-call thing," he says, "and I just wasn't finding a quality of life at that point." He also wanted to get back into music and the Monday to Friday gig helped facilitate it.

Wilson stayed with the Alberta government for the next three decades, rising from the position of driver examiner to acting director of driver programs and licensing standards. The latter gig led to him spending his weeks in Edmonton and the weekends in Calgary, and it would also have required him to take up full-time residence in Edmonton in 2011. That, since his life, his band, his volunteering and his friends are all based in Calgary, meant it was time for a change.

Fortunately, that's when the AMTA came calling. As for where he wants to take the association, Wilson says "my philosophy is if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Mayne (Root, the outgoing executive director) has laid down some really good ground rules,



ON THE JOB: Don Wilson takes over as executive director of the AMTA.

a good foundation, so at this point I don't anticipate going out to change a direction that's already been set."

Be that as it may, Wilson says he does plan to look for ideas on where the AMTA could be going, as well as talking to members and "just kind of seeing what it is they want and what their expectations are. But basically I'm not hearing that there's a lot broken or wrong."

Not surprisingly, Wilson also wants to get to know the staff better and get the lay of that land as well.

"We're not overstaffed," he says,

noting that since he came out of the government, he knows what limited resources are. "My unit had nine people to look after the province and basically enforce the driver training examination regulations, so I'm used to not being flush with people."

Issues Wilson wants to see dealt with include the lack of an overpass at Stoney Trail and 61st Ave. SE in Calgary, an area where many trucking companies hang their corporate hats. He admits it might be a hard issue to push forward, but says (Minister) "Luke Ouellette needs to know

our industry is still very interested in some kind of connection. We also need to talk about super-single tires and the regulation regarding LCV axle dimensions."

He also stresses the importance of the ongoing issue of harmonization between provinces, noting as an example the economic agreement Alberta signed with Saskatchewan. The AMTA, he says, is "looking to make sure we're as harmonized as we can," and says he'd like to see such an economic pact repeated with British Columbia.

The other big challenge Wilson sees is the ongoing quest to increase the size of the AMTA's membership base. "We're losing some members that got eaten up in mergers," he says, "and we have to maintain the existing members and show them that there's still good value in their membership fees and that we can do so much more for the industry as a voice of solidarity."

Wilson is confident he's up to the task, however, and looks forward to putting his energies into his new stomping ground. "It's like being on the other side of the table," he says of his switch from government to industry. "It's going to be neat seeing how that works out."

He fully expects there to be a learning curve, however, and admits that Root will be a tough act to follow. "He's just a prince of a guy and he's done some really wonderful things here," he says. □

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

Teamsters museum needs new digs...fast

Continued from page 1

"We have an extension for January and probably February," Lynch says. They're looking at quite a few places, including one in Pitt Meadows and another in Delta, but so far nothing has been agreed upon.

Port Alberni has also been mentioned as a potential landing site for the museum, and there have indeed been talks between the society and its opposite number in Port Alberni, the Alberni District Museum and Historical Society. The Vancouver Island group is the driving force behind the Alberni Valley Museum, where old trucks, logging equipment and trains are repaired and put on display. And while that might seem like a good match, Port Alberni Mayor Ken McRae doesn't think anything will come of the discussions.

"The thing is, we don't have any money," McRae says. "We're like a

lot of organizations that way. Besides, there's no way we could take the whole exhibit and put it in our place; we're crammed up as it is because they actually work on the equipment there – they're always restoring something."

Lynch hopes the entire museum collection, including the 20 trucks they have currently as well as the other displays and related items, can be relocated intact.

"We're trying to keep the whole thing together and keep it as the Teamster's Museum," he says, "but I don't know for sure what's going to happen."

Teamsters Joint Council 36 president Don McGill hopes the publicity that the museum's plight has generated can help them dig up new digs.

"Otherwise," he says, "we'll be selling equipment."

The 7,200 sq.-ft. of space the Teamsters Museum is vacating not only contains classic trucks, it also has display

areas for antique tools and truck models, as well as meeting space and photographs. McGill says that, to him, the tools are just as important as the trucks.

"You don't even see these things around anymore," he says. "Most people would throw them in a scrap heap because they don't even recognize them."

Curator Lynch, who retired from driving in 1992 after a stroke, says the museum was founded after the then-president of Teamsters Local 31 asked him if he could find a 1936 model year vehicle for the Local's 60th anniversary celebration.

"I asked him how soon he needed it and he said in a couple of weeks," Lynch recalls. "I said it was going to take a little while to find such a truck, so he asked if I could find some memorabilia. We set up something really beautiful with all kinds pictures – it

was really well done."

The rest, no pun intended, was history. Lynch says the display impressed the heck out of the Teamsters boss, "So I suggested we set up a museum with lots of photos and a few trucks and they told me to see what I could come up with."

And come up with trucks he did. Lynch learned of a collection that was stored in Chilliwack and which had once belonged to an earlier museum in Cloverdale.

"The Cloverdale museum was quite a bit bigger," he says, "and when it was shut down many of the units there were sold." But not all. "We had some meetings (with the government) in Victoria," he says, "and finally they said they'd loan us the trucks for two years and see what we'd do with them – if they were happy then they'd transfer them over to us."

The trucks were rolled out of Chilliwack in the spring of 1997, Lynch says, at which time they went to a location in Vancouver.

"And after two years, the government decided we'd done a fantastic job and they signed them over to us for a dollar. We've added trucks since then, of course."

Some of the trucks on display were once owned by Bob King, a trucking magnate who Lynch says virtually controlled the industry in Vancouver until the late 1950s, at which time he locked his trucks away in a warehouse after a quarrel with the Teamsters. "It was a metal warehouse full of condensation and they were getting in bad shape," he remembers.

Other trucks came from a variety of places. Lynch recounts the story of finding one in Elko, B.C., on the Southern Trans-Canada Highway a short distance west of Fernie.

"A man had a 1935 Maple Leaf parked in his yard and we decided to go and get it," he says. "It had been parked so long that two trees had grown up behind and the only way we could get it out was to cut those trees down."

Lynch says the donor's neighbours arrived with chain saws and cut down the trees, after which the truck was towed out and brought back to the museum to be restored. "If you saw it today you wouldn't believe it," he says proudly. The oldest truck in the collection is a 1914 FWD; the newest is a 1951 three-quarter tonne, five window Chevrolet pick-up that belonged to B.C. Tel.

"It was redone for the B.C. Centennial," Lynch says, "and after that they didn't know what to do with it so they phoned us up and asked if we were interested."

Lynch is also proud of the miniature trucks in the collection. "One of them we had to put a mirror under because it was so well done underneath, with the transmission and driveline."

That particular truck, he says, is currently back with the person who donated it "Because we didn't want it to get lost or broken in the move. He said he'd bring it back if we get settled somewhere again."

They also have many metal replicas of trucks that no longer exist, including some Consolidated Freightways and Canadian Freightways units that were donated. All of these displays have been packed away, however, pending the move to new quarters. "All the showcases are empty and we're ready to move," Lynch says. "We just need a place to go." □



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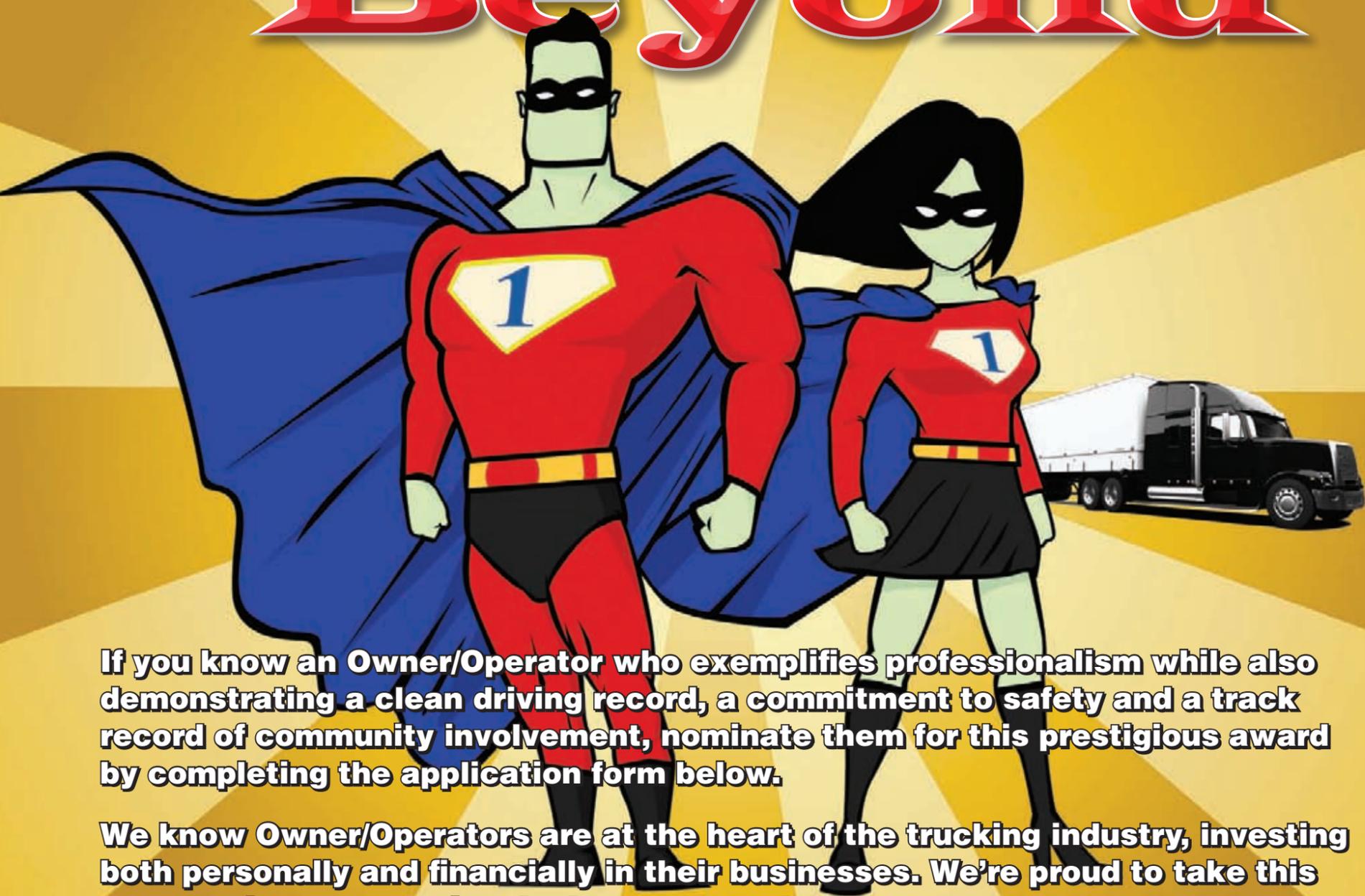


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OVER THE ROAD

Working for a good carrier makes it easier to overcome life's challenges

Carrier has important role to play in helping drivers achieve work-life balance

As the new year gets underway, we drivers are faced with a host of issues to cope with. The list gets longer with each passing year. Hours-of-service, CSA (Compliance, Safety, Accountability), electronic on-board recorders, speed limiters, driver shortages, distracted driving, the economy, engine emissions, and so on.

It is only recently that quality of life issues are being raised and recognized as having merit. Why is it that a driver's mental and physical well-being is not the number one priority in an industry where a company's success hinges on the performance of each individual driver?

I believe there are a large number of organizations in our industry that only pay lip service to the health and safety of the driver. I continue to be shocked by the lack of concern that is shown for the mental and emotional health of individual drivers.

You don't need to spend your life on the road to be aware of this.

Spend some time surfing the Internet and you can read any number of trucking blogs written by drivers detailing their experiences.

There are a number of bottom feeders out there that prey primarily on the new and the inexperienced by making grandiose promises of training, compensation, and home time.

I'd like to believe that the majority of drivers share a positive and productive relationship with their carrier, as I do with mine; a relationship that is win/win. Here is an example of the treatment I receive from my carrier:

By the time this column is published, my father's 89th birthday will be just around the corner. Sadly, his health is failing and it became very important that I pay a visit over the Christmas and New Year break.

Until recently I did open board work and was in Vancouver quite frequently, which enabled me to visit my Dad.

This past fall I started to do a weekly run between southwestern Ontario and Winnipeg, which provides me with more home time but keeps me away from the west coast and my Dad.

As soon as I told the good folks in dispatch about my situation, a trip was arranged for me to Vancouver and I was told to "take whatever time you need with your Dad."

Now many of you reading this may think that's nothing special, but in fact for me, and for the majority of drivers, this level of empathy and understanding has a huge positive impact on your morale and state of mind.

I believe the way in which we are treated and the way we treat others is the path to our long-term



happiness, peace of mind, ease of mind and success.

The carriers we work for are one of the primary gateways to that path.

The freedom and independence we experience as truck drivers does not come without costs.

Most of us have travelled down the road in isolation thinking about a loved one sick at home, a missed birthday, a family reunion you're not sure you will make it to, an event you planned and now will miss due to a breakdown, poor weather, cancelled load or dock delay.

Truck driving separates you from your support network of family and friends while at the same time providing you with countless hours to think about that separation.

Many truck drivers deal with incredibly strong feelings of angst as a result.

It's a job hazard we all must cope with but it can be eased by the actions of the carrier we choose to work for.

As I finish off this column I am sitting in Golden, B.C. I arrived at three o'clock this morning in the snow.

It's now almost one in the afternoon, it's still snowing and the ride today will be challenging, that's just fine with me. There are new hours-of-service rules pending south of the border and that's just fine with me.

There is a speed limiter on my truck and I'm still learning how to manage my electronic on-board recorder and that's fine with me too. There are a host of issues to clutter my life throwing up road-blocks at every turn and that's fine too.

I was able to spend the last five days with the man that has shaped me, inspired me, trusted me, taught me, and loved me over the course of my whole life. I know that I may not see my Dad again in this world but he will live in my heart and mind for the rest of my life. I'm happy, content and at ease.

The bottom line is I can count on my carrier, I trust them, and they feel the same way about me. That leaves the rest of those big trucking issues just fluff to deal with in the course of a normal day. □

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



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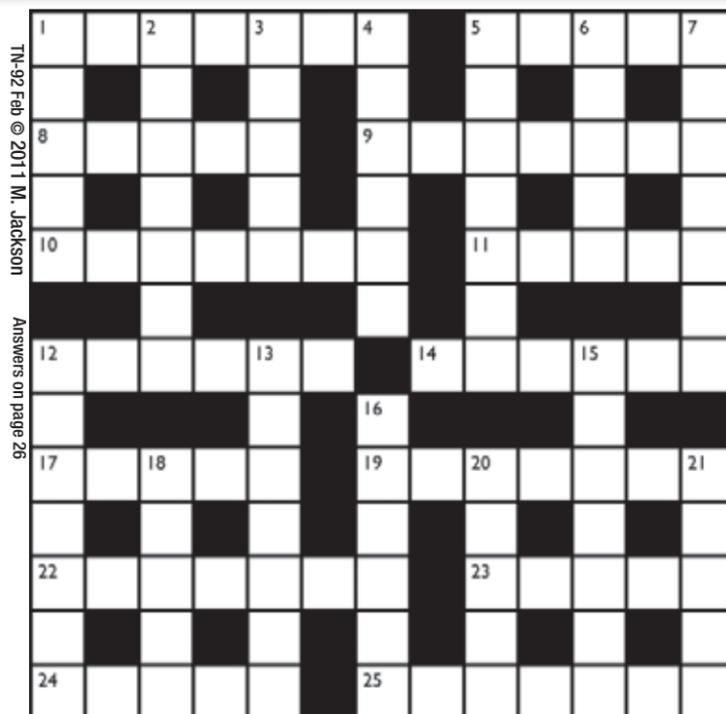
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Across

- Truckers' daily irritation
- Drive and crank trailer
- Aluminum-wheel brand
- Big-rig warning device (3,4)
- Often-welcome truck-stop facilities
- Toddler's sandbox-truck brand
- Reciprocating engine item
- Certain suspension parts, briefly
- Wooden shipping container
- Partial payment with new-truck order
- Italian exotocar with horse emblem
- Hawaiian licence-plate word
- Watercraft on four-wheeler's roof
- Chassis and fifth-wheel lubes

Down

- Driver pairs
- Boat _____, slang for tube-type CBs
- Major tractor-chassis component
- Big-rig tractor classification (5,1)
- Lengthy-limo adjective
- Wheel-nut cover design
- CB radios, slangily (3,4)
- The P in PACCAR, originally
- Goods in excess of Bill of Lading
- Border agency, informally
- Truck-stop no-no, often
- Ohio's "Rubber City"
- Hippie van bumper-sticker word
- Carhops' cargo, in days past

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TAX TALK

Will Canada Pension Plan changes affect your retirement plans?

New Canada Pension Plan (CPP) rules took effect on Jan. 1, kicking off a series of graduated changes over the next five years that may make you think twice about drawing your government pension before you turn 65.

Most people in Canada between the ages of 18 and 70 who earn more than \$3,500 a year contribute to CPP (except in Quebec, where the Quebec Pension Plan provides benefits). Like an insurance plan, CPP is designed to provide a monthly retirement or disability benefit or, if you die, a survivor benefit to your spouse and children.

In retirement, the amount you receive depends on how much you've earned, how many contributions you've made, and your age when you stop working. The normal age for receiving a CPP retirement pension is 65. If you start your CPP retirement pension then, you'll get the full pension amount you're eligible to receive. For 2011, the maximum amount is \$934.17 per month.

You can, however, start drawing a retirement pension as early as 60 (at a discount) or wait until as late as 70 (and get a premium). Among the recent changes to CPP, two of the biggest involve these discount and premium rates.

Taking CPP early

You can begin to draw your CPP retirement pension at age 60.



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

Starting in 2012, however, your pension amount will decrease by a larger percentage for every month you take it before age 65.

Currently, your CPP retirement pension is reduced by 0.5% for each month before age 65 that you begin receiving it. This means that, if you started receiving your CPP pension at 60, your pension amount is 30% less than it would have been if you had waited to take it at 65.

From 2012 to 2016, the early pension reduction will gradually change from 0.5% to 0.6% per month. So by 2016, if you start receiving your CPP pension at the age of 60, your pension amount will be 36% less than it would have been if you had taken it at 65.

Retiring later

Starting this year, after age 65 your monthly CPP retirement pension amount will increase by a larger percentage for every month you delay taking CPP, from 0.5% per month (6% per year) to 0.7% per month (8.4% per year) by 2013. At that point, if you start receiving your CPP pension at the age of 70, your pension amount will be 42% more than it would

have been if you had taken it at 65.

A cash flow hit?

If you're age 65 to 70 and work while drawing your CPP retirement pension, you can choose to make CPP contributions if you want to. If you decide to contribute, your employer will have to as well.

Starting in 2012, if you're under 65 and work while receiving your pension, you and your employer must make CPP contributions.

This will be a big cash flow hit for some. Many people choose to start their CPP at 60 even though they plan to continue working. This way they have an increased income from CPP but also less money going out as they no longer have to contribute.

Say you're in this magic bracket, 60 to 65 years old, collecting your CPP retirement pension, still working as an owner/operator, and making \$40,000 with your truck. Starting in 2012, you'll have to pay \$3,613.50 a year into CPP that you're not paying now. Ouch!

Welcome change

One new rule makes it easier for Canadians to – what's that phrase Ottawa is using? – “transition to retirement.”

Starting in 2012, you can begin receiving your CPP retirement pension before age 65 without any work interruption.

Today, if you want to take your

pension early, you have to either stop working or significantly reduce your earnings for at least two months.

CPP isn't intended to supplement your earnings from a regular job. It's a retirement pension. But these days, the rule just encourages people to skirt it.

The age when you start to take your CPP retirement pension depends on your savings, debt, job satisfaction, health, family, the lifestyle you lead, and other factors.

Ask your accountant or financial advisor about the new CPP rules and how they'll affect you personally, especially if you're counting on tapping into your government pension before you turn 65.

Visit servicecanada.gc.ca to view or print a copy of your CPP statement. It will show the total amount of your CPP contributions by year and your pensionable earnings on which they are based. It will also estimate what your pension or benefit would be if you were eligible to receive it now. □

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

OPINION

Looking at the trucking industry's top 10 issues for 2011

I recently stepped down as president of the Alberta Construction Trucking Association (ACTA).

My articles in the past year were about the construction trucking industry of Alberta.

My future articles will be geared toward the dry bulk sector of the trucking industry and the overall trucking industry in general. In this article, I will summarize what I see as the trucking industry's top 10 issues for 2011.

Low rates and the economic downturn: Low rates and the economic downturn are the number one issue affecting the trucking industry in most sectors. Why are they so low? How can we raise them to a reasonable level? How can we ensure they are sustainable and consistent? How can we raise them without conflict?

Apathy in the trucking industry: What is truckers' apathy all about? How do we prevent it? What can we do about it? How do we protect the trucking industry from it in the future?

The intrusion of governments, special interest groups and trucking associations that are creating a negative effect on the trucking industry by pursuing hidden agendas: Their agendas have created a very negative effect on the industry. Many of their policies have nothing to do with improving safety and



Constructive Dialogue

RON SINGER

good will toward the trucking industry, but rather accommodating their hidden agendas.

Pending legislation: Revised hours-of-service; speed limiters; EOBRs; CSA; fuel economy standards for heavy-duty trucks; and new equipment requirements such as collision warning systems and electronic stability control. These are just a few of the pending legislations coming our way in the future. Who will represent the trucking industry on this pending legislation? Where will trucking industry representatives get their funding to protect our industry against this legislation? We know the carrier associations, special interest groups and government representatives will be there; who will represent the owner/operators and small fleets? Where will they get the funding to ensure their interests are protected?

The lack of ethics and standards in the trucking industry: Over the past 10 years, the trucking industry's ethics and standards have eroded to an alarming level. The trucking industry needs to adapt ethics and standards to protect

its integrity. These ethics and standards need to be mandated for all members of the trucking community.

The spike of fuel prices and lack of fuel surcharges: If you can believe it, there are still some sectors of the trucking industry that do not charge a fuel surcharge (like the construction trucking industry). You know just how divided and conquered those sectors are when they haven't adopted a fuel surcharge.

They are so busy screwing each other, stealing each other's customers, cutting each other's rates and throats that they can't see the forest for the trees.

The erosion of our rights, freedoms and adverse working conditions in the trucking industry: Reduced speed limits, reduced hours-of-service and increased delays at scales and roadside inspections – all with no monetary compensation.

Lack of training, education and certification for drivers in our industry: We lack a national certification for truck drivers. A green truck driver should never be allowed to drive a truck in a snowstorm, off-road or in the mountains without a journeyman's certificate.

Restricted truck routes and truck parking: Truck routes and truck parking are being restricted

all over the country at an alarming rate.

Road construction, speed zones and traffic congestion: Reduced speeds in construction zones at night and when no-one is working. What's up with that? Why are the signs not covered up at night or when no-one is working? Who sets the speed for construction zones and roadways? Why are we not doing anything about it?

Well fellow truckers, we have a lot of work to do. Who is going to tackle these issues? How will the people that deal with these issues be paid? Will the trucking industry ante up, so these issues can be resolved? They sure haven't in the past. Maybe that's why there are so many issues to resolve.

I sure hope the trucking industry as a whole wakes up and realizes these issues will not be resolved anytime soon, without adequate support and funding to resolve them.

If we continue to turn a blind eye to them, the government, special interest groups and greedy truckers will destroy the trucking industry beyond repair. Let's hear your ideas. Tell us what you think. I am all ears! □

– Ron Singer is owner of Ron Singer Truck Lines. He can be reached at 403-244-4487 or by e-mail at ronsing@telus.net.



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OPINION

In Europe, children dream of driving the classic-styled conventional

Many years ago as a small boy, I used to push my toy trucks around the floor, dreaming of the day I would become a trucker myself. Model trucks were my only toys, I wasn't interested in anything else and there was one truck in particular that was my favourite.

It took me almost 30 years before I had the chance to drive my dream truck, but I never let the grass grow under my feet in the meantime.

Originally from England, I spent the first 20 years of my career trucking throughout Europe and Scandinavia with a couple of trips to Asia and North Africa.

Dealing with border crossings and Customs formalities was difficult as everyone spoke different languages and used different currencies – and they all drive on the wrong side of the road too.

As well as being a driver, I also ran a fleet of 200-plus trucks, had



You say tomato,
I say tomahto

MARK LEE

five of my own and spent a couple of years as a road tester/staff writer for a magazine called *TRUCK*. I continue to write for a sister publication and now write about my experiences over here in Canada, where I've been long-haul trucking for the past three years.

So, back to the 1970s and wearing the knees out on my pants as I racked up big miles pushing my favourite truck around the floor.

The truck in question was a 359 Peterbilt. It was unlike all the cabovers we have in Europe, I had plenty of those, but they were real, I could see those anytime I rode in the truck with my Dad. The long-nose Pete

was unlike anything I'd ever seen or was likely to see in real life, until I made the move to Canada.

I now drive that dream, except mine is a 379. It has all the lights and chrome and I keep it as nice as possible, but how long will I be able to carry on living the dream? Fuel costs and impending legislation are making the classic large car a dinosaur, it won't be very long until they're extinct. I'm deeply saddened by this. Thirty years of dreams have finally come true for me and soon my prize will be taken away to a junkyard.

I understand that times change, technology moves on in a never-ending quest for perfection, new truck models have a wealth of fancy gadgets, air-ride this and that, one-touch switches, much more space and visibility, they make the driver's life far more comfortable – but is that really progress?

After all, we're truck drivers –

we're supposed to be tough. We moan that the newer drivers are a bunch of wimps, that they couldn't have done the job back in the days when we had twin sticks or no power steering, no A/C or APUs.

At the rate things are going, driving truck will be as difficult as playing a computer game. In five or 10 years there will be drivers who have never shifted a stick, never had a map open on the jump seat looking for that short cut through the bush – they will just push a few buttons and follow the instructions given to them by a computer. Is that really trucking?

We call ourselves truckers, that is short for truck drivers, because that's what we do, we drive trucks. If the classic truck dies out, we die with it, to be replaced by machine operators who push buttons in computers with 18 wheels. My grandson will be able to take the wings off a model plane and push that around the carpet, apart from the windows in the side it will look exactly the same as the trucks of the future.

Speaking of youngsters, give a five-year-old a piece of paper and some crayons and ask them to draw a truck. You can guarantee that the end result will look like a 379 or a W9, with a big long hood and a set of fat pipes. It's the way trucks have always looked and it's the way they *should* always look.

Remember, I've driven in Europe for most of my career. Over there, everything is a square box and half of the time the only way you can tell one truck from another is by reading the name on the badge.

A bit extreme, you may think, but look at the shadow of a ProStar or a Volvo VNL, or a Cascadia, or a T700 – they're all the same.

Now imagine the shadow of a 379, or a W9, or a Western Star – each has its own distinct shape. They're not called a classic for nothing, the shape of that shadow says 'proper truck,' unlike the new trucks that just block out the sunlight in a shape that signifies that they're a method of moving freight from A to B.

Like I said, I understand why things have to change, but we cannot allow the classic to disappear. If we do, what will the truckers of tomorrow have to dream about?

I've driven one of the newer aerodynamic trucks over here before I got my Pete. It never got a second glance, even though it was a pretty striking colour and was always clean and shiny.

Yet in my Pete, I'm always getting waved at by young kids in four-wheelers, I've had a group of architects from overseas take pictures of my truck as they said it was an example of classic North American design, I've even had a young lady remove her shirt alongside of me.

None of that ever happened in my modern truck. That's the appeal of the classic and long may it continue. □

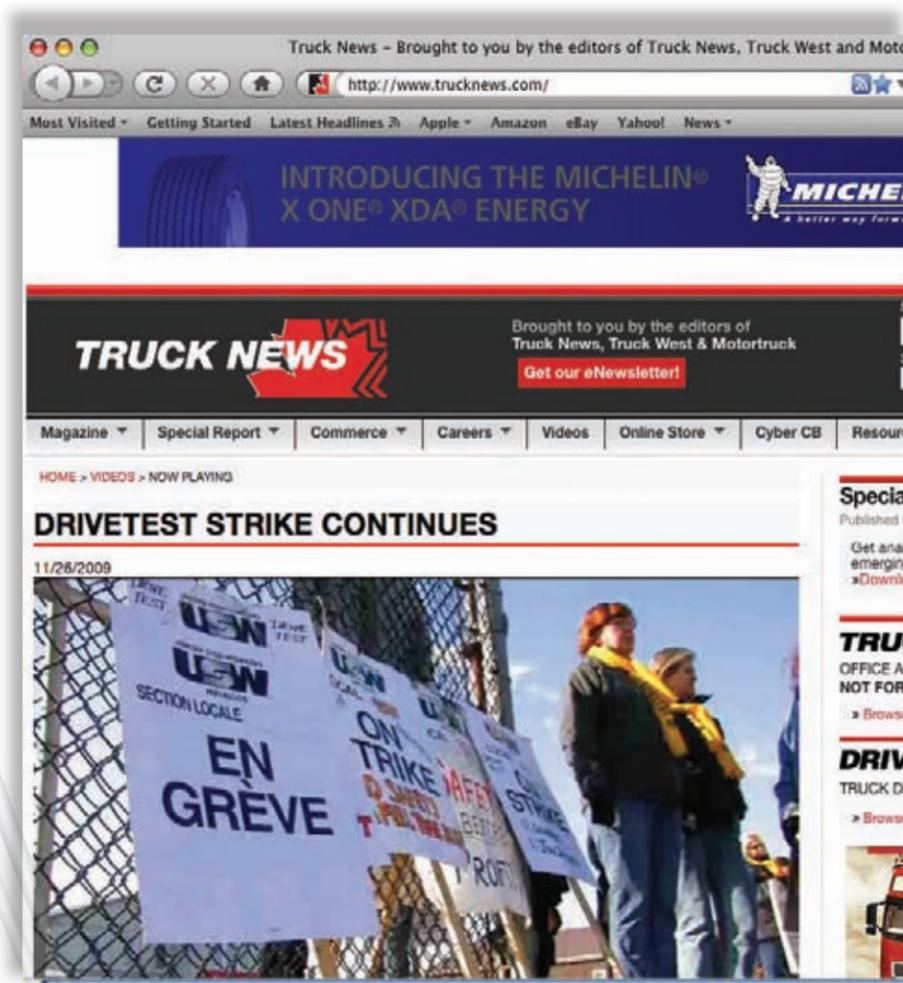
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AWARDS

B.C. driver named tops in Canada

SURREY, B.C. – Canadian Freightways trucker Heinz Alvin (John) Beeler has been named the 2010 Canadian Trucking Alliance/Volvo Trucks Canada Driver of the Year. The announcement was made at the British Columbia Trucking Association's (BCTA) annual Christmas party Dec. 2.



JOHN BEELER

Event organizers say Beeler was chosen for his demonstrated dedication to safety and impressive collision-free driving career, spanning more than 36 years and almost five million kilometres.

"John Beeler is an outstanding truck driver and a true professional, both on and off the road," said David Bradley, CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance. "Canada's highways are made safer by the efforts of John and other drivers like him. He is very deserving of this prestigious award."

Beeler was presented the award by Terry Warkentin, fleet sales manager of Volvo Trucks Canada, during festiv-

ities at the Sheraton Vancouver Guildford Hotel in Surrey. As part of this honour, Beeler received a trophy, cash prize and weekend getaway for two.

"I am delighted that John has received national recognition for his outstanding safety record," said Paul Landry, president and CEO of BCTA.

"He's not only logged 36 accident-free years as a professional driver, he has also done it in a province with the most challenging terrain in Canada. He is the first B.C. driver to win the

national award since 2003."

Each year, a panel of judges made up of representatives from Transport Canada, the Traffic Industry Research Foundation, Canada Safety Council, the RCMP and the Canadian Trucking Alliance selects a national winner from among recipients of the Driver of the Year award in each province.

The national winner is selected for excellence among peers who have maintained a collision-free driving record and otherwise demonstrated exemplary professionalism both on and off the road.

Beeler was awarded the B.C. Driver of the Year award at BCTA's annual Management Conference in June.

Officials say his driving record has earned him many accolades from organizations including the National Safety Council, the RCMP and Canadian Freightway.

In addition to training company drivers, Beeler also offers his expertise to outside carriers by consulting on safety issues and has assisted authorities in collision investigations. □

Bison 0/0 reaches 2M accident-free miles

WINNIPEG, Man. – Laird Copeland, an owner/operator with Bison Transport has reached a major driving milestone in his career with Bison, having achieved two million consecutive accident-free driving miles. Laird has been with Bison since 1996 and says the key to his success is simple: "Take precautions, observe all possibilities of danger and avoid them."

"Safety is a top priority at Bison Transport and it is with professional drivers like Laird that Bison has been named by the Truckload Carriers Association for the fifth consecutive year as having the lowest DoT (Department of Transportation) reportable accident rate in over the 100 million mile carrier category. We are proud to recognize Laird for his commitment to safety," said Garth Pitzel, Bison's director of safety and driver development.

Laird was formally recognized at Bison's annual awards banquet in Calgary Jan. 14. □

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PEOPLE

Linda Gauthier has announced she is resigning from the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) in June. Gauthier has been with the CTHRC since 1995 and has served as its executive director since 2002. The organization has solicited the help of Pragmatic HR Solutions in Dartmouth, N.S. to help it find a replacement.

Gauthier won the National Transportation Week Award of Achievement in 2003 and has been a vital part of many of the CTHRC's major projects, including establishing essential skills profiles for a variety of occupations in the trucking industry and developing the Closing the Gap initiative that brought together stakeholders from government and industry.

The Canadian arm of Yokohama Tire has reorganized to create distinct business units to manage sales and marketing operations of its consumer and commercial lines, the company has announced. **John Overing** has been named business unit director for commercial tires.

The new marketing and sales organizational structure will be supported by the company's existing administration, distribution and technical departments, Yokohama officials said.

Trailer Wizards, formerly Lions Gate Trailers/Provincial Trailer Rentals, has appointed **Chuck Waterhouse** as manager of emergency road services. Waterhouse will report directly to Steve Nash, vice-president of Trailer Wizards' Central Region, and will be coordinating the efforts of the company's maintenance personnel and service partners throughout Canada and the US. The service can be accessed toll free at 855-EASY-ERS (327-9377). □



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TRAILERS



Box on wheels, no more

A trailer industry revival is underway as savvy fleet managers rediscover the lost art of spec'ing dry vans

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – The trailer business, says Conny Weyers, president of Trailers Canada, hasn't been a whole lot of fun over the past few years.

"What we've seen since the early 2000s is that it became 'How big is it and how cheap is it?' and that was the extent of the conversation. There was no spec'ing. A trailer was a trailer and nobody cared. It became a very unglamorous place to be," laments the industry veteran. However, he says there's reason to be optimistic as the industry emerges from recession and fleet owners and asset managers begin to take a fresh look at the lowly van trailer with an eye on lowering oper-

ating costs through proper spec'ing.

"We've seen a lot of owners getting back into the spec'ing of trailers," Weyers says. "They're taking out asset teams and accountants and we're actually spec'ing trailers again. The customer sees there are benefits to spec'ing a unit rather than just buying a unit. It has actually been a little bit of fun over the last year or so."

So, what has changed to suddenly earn the van trailer some newfound respect in the eyes of fleet managers? For one, savvy fleet operators have turned their attention to the trailer after squeezing every ounce of productivity possible out of the power unit. The advent of new technologies like

side fairings and wide-base singles has proven to fleet managers that not all trailers are created equal and purchase price and load capacity are not the only considerations when looking to maximize their return on investment.

"They're looking at it as a centre where they can possibly save dollars," Weyers says. "In the past, (trailers) were a load-carrying agent. Now they're possibly a cost saving centre, which is great."

George Cobham Jr., vice-president of sales and marketing with Glasvan Great Dane and his co-hort Mike Hignett, who oversees new and used equipment sales for the same company, have noticed the trend as well.

"We're finding that fleet managers are highly-researched these days. They're spending more time looking at the spec' and considering all the options," Cobham says. "In the last six to eight months, I've found that people have given us their ear a little more when talking about our products and they're willing to talk about some of the problems that they've had."

There's nothing more disheartening, adds Hignett, than providing a customer with a five-page quote only to see them turn to the final page and retort that the price is too high.

"There's a reason why Brand A is higher than Brand B – and it's not just because we're trying to make more money than somebody else," Hignett says. "Thicker aluminum costs more than thinner aluminum, better grade stainless steel costs more than muffler grade stainless steel."

Another reason fleets may be taking a closer look at trailer spec'ing is that the industry lost a major Canadian manufacturer during the recession and there are a lot of fleets sitting on massive trailer pools for which they may now have trouble finding proprietary parts – not to mention support.

"I think some fleet managers are

taking a harder look at where they're buying their equipment from," says Cobham.

So now that fleets are spending more time spec'ing trailers, what are some of the things they're looking at?

Aluminum roofs

The industry's love affair with translucent roofs, as torrid as it once was, seems to have lost its sizzle. Between the mid-90s and about 2006, Weyers says about 95% of the trailers his company sold had translucent roofs. Today, it's come full circle with only about 3-5% of customers requesting translucent roofs.

"Heat is a problem with translucent roofs," he explains. "The trailers run hotter and there can be some discoloration of the product because of the sun's UV rays coming through."

Sky lights along the top edge of the trailer wall have become a popular option, allowing some daylight into the trailer without any of the side-effects inherent with translucent roofs. But Glasvan's Cobham contends there's still a place for translucent roofs, which have improved in recent years.

"There are still people who want it," he says. "More on the small fleet and owner/operator side, where they can control how their trailers are loaded."

Damage is another issue with translucent roofs. Repairing them is tricky and the result is unsightly, while aluminum roofs can be easily patched, good as new.

Bye-bye, plywood

Like the poor translucent roof, plywood is also on the outs with truckers and trailer manufacturers.

"Five years ago, 75% of our inventory was plywood-lined trailers with logistics posts," Hignett says. "Now, it's probably reversed."

Plywood is heavy, retains water and is difficult to repair, causing it to be gradually displaced by more plastic composite materials.

"Plywood is almost a thing of the past," Weyers agrees. "We're seeing plastic become a major part of the trailer with wood becoming almost non-existent."

Brakes and tires

Disc brakes were gaining a lot of momentum with trailer customers. Then the economy crashed, abruptly halting any progress. Disc brakes are a costly spec', but the investment can often be justified since the brakes require less maintenance than drums and can improve safety by providing greater stopping power. And as disc brakes increased in popularity, the costs have come down.

Weyers predicts disc brakes will become a common spec' within the next six years.

"I think the economic slowdown of the last two years has stopped that from happening but now we have more people coming back into that," he says. Glasvan's Cobham agrees, noting disc brakes come up in more conversations with customers. "People are still stand-off-ish," he says.

Wide-base tires are another option that's getting a lot of attention, but so far reviews are mixed.

"We had a lot of customers try them between 2006 and 2008 and a good number of them switched back to duals," Cobham says. "They didn't necessarily have a great experience."

But that's not to say they don't work. Wide-base tires have been proven to

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“A lot of fleets are getting several hundred thousand kilometres out of their super-single tires and they have very careful tire maintenance systems in place,” Cobham says, noting some major fleets have installed nitrogen inflation systems in their facilities to help keep tire pressures constant. “You definitely can’t just put the tires on and check the pressures once every three months, it requires more attention than that.”

Weyers also has seen issues such as irregular wear, especially on the inner and outer edges of the tire.

“We’ve been told it’s tire pressures (causing the problems) but we don’t have enough facts on that yet,” he says. Still, about half of the trailers he sells are now being spec’d with wide-base single tires.

To LCV or not to LCV?

Fleets participating in Ontario’s long combination vehicle (LCV) pilot project may currently be limited to just two permits. But that’s not stopping them from making every new trailer they order LCV-compatible.

“Companies that have two permits will put these systems on over 50 trailers,” Cobham notes. “Some companies this year that I know of have purchased more than 100 trailers, all set up for LCVs.”

It seems like a big leap of faith for a program that has yet to receive any public acknowledgment from the Ministry of Transportation that it will be expanded beyond its current ‘pilot’ status. But Weyers says for fleets looking to run LCVs, it’s a gamble worth taking since it costs twice as much to make a trailer LCV-compatible in the aftermarket.

Flooring

Even trailer flooring has evolved in recent years. Weyers says most floors now feature composite materials laid underneath the hardwood, to prevent moisture from seeping up and rotting the wood surface.

Great Dane offers Prolam flooring, which is fitted together in a unique way that the company says makes it stronger and longer-lasting. The rear section of the trailer floor then receives a special coating, giving it added protection where forklifts will do most of their damage.

Other add-ons

Trailer side fairings are now being installed by many large, long-haul fleets and even smaller fleets and owner/operators are now inquiring about the fuel-saving devices.

“We’re getting more and more people every day ordering them,” Hignett says. “Nearly half of the trailers in our yard have some kind of side skirt on them.”

Glasvan Great Dane is doing about five to 10 side skirt installations a week, Cobham estimates, compared to about one a month just two-and-a-half years ago.

Side skirts are another item Weyers is taking a wait-and-see approach to.

“For the long-distance guys, yes, they work,” he says. “Customers that are running them seem to see savings but fleets are not coming back with any specifics yet.”

For a piece of equipment that’s often unfairly labeled as a simple box on wheels, there’s a lot going on in

‘We’ve seen a lot of owners get back into the spec’ing of trailers.’

Conny Weyers

the dry van marketplace. Glasvan’s Cobham says as customers finally begin replenishing their trailer fleets after two years of keeping their wallets locked tight, flexibility is the ultimate objective.

“Customers want their trailers to be more flexible now,” he contends. “Customers are sacrificing weight so their trailer can deck freight and at the same time be LCV-ready. Your LCV-ready trailer weights 500-700 lbs more than a standard trailer and now maybe you’re spec’ing a reefer with vertical logistics in it, adding another 1,000 lbs to the trailer. They want that trailer to be able to do everything so they can go after different freight and be more flexible.”

So as the dry van industry experi-

ences a revival, it may be prudent for fleets to begin locking in their orders before capacity is eaten up and the inevitable pricing pressure takes hold. After all, Weyers points out a dry van cost about 20-30% more in the late 90s than it does today.

“We haven’t been able to get pricing back up at all,” he says. “Back in 1998 or 1999, it would be nothing to pay \$28,000-\$29,000 for a new trailer. Today, we’re down in that \$24,000-\$25,000 range.”

With some manufacturers wiped from the landscape by the recession and others shuttering factories, there’s some question on whether the industry will be able to keep up with demand. The current lead-time for a new dry

van is about 90 days, Cobham says.

But according to industry analyst ACT Research’s latest *State of the Industry: US Trailers* report, net orders for dry vans were up 215% year-over-year in November. Senior analyst Kenny Vieth said the trailer industry is entering an upcycle that should last two to three years.

With that in mind, you can’t accuse Weyers of being entirely self-serving when he urges truck fleets to get their orders in soon.

“Sooner or later, there will be big demand and no supply,” he warns. “I think that may happen next year or in 2012, where a demand bubble will be created and the manufacturing sector right now has backed itself off so much that it won’t be able to catch up with the demand. Once the large fleets start buying, it’ll gobble up all the production for quite a while and we could be back to where we were in 1998 with a 12- to 14-month lead-time.” □

FINANCIAL NEWS

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RACING

Big rig racing on track for growth

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – It may have suffered a near death experience, but it appears the North American Big Rig Racing series is looking ahead to some big things in 2011 and beyond.

It wasn't always so positive, however. Within the past couple of years, the actual future of the series was in question, but it went through a restructuring and reorganization recently that prompts Calgary-based spokesman Ron Singer to announce that it's full speed ahead for the 2011 season, with new teams on-board and new venues being worked out.

One of the major changes that happened was that some long-time team owners left the series, a move that not only opened the door for new teams to come on board but offered them the opportunity to have input into the series, the likes of which they'd never had before.

"All teams are involved in the series' management now," Singer says, "and it's one truck, one vote, three trucks, three votes and the like. It's a lot more democratic and the executive has to be approved on an annual basis, so you have to be able to produce or you're going to be out the next year."

The series also has a new head, in Bobby Fowler. The Airdrie area-based welder and fabricator, who also owns and drives the #66 truck in the series, was chosen unanimously by team owners to take the spiritual pole in 2011.

"Bobby's been racing with us for more than five years now," Singer says. "And, like many of us, he's seen the way the series kind of floundered a little bit because of some clashing attitudes. He's wanted to take an active role in the leadership and we've really welcomed it. We don't want to stand in the way of people wanting to move the series forward."

Some of the clashing visions to which Singer refers led to one US-based team leaving the series and starting its own in the States, competing with the NABRR and stealing away some of its venues, Singer claims. But, he says, the production ended up falling short, and some promoters are looking to welcome back the Canadian series.

"We've got some promoters that are pushing our series very actively because we've taken on some pretty heavy responsibility with some of them," he says, noting that the series raced for the gate money instead of for a certain fixed cash amount, a move that obviously entails some risk. "But because we took that risk and were very successful at it," Singer says, "these promoters have really appreciated us and in return they're promoting us."

Singer also points out there are two or three tracks interested in becoming the series' future home, a move made necessary by the pending closure of current base Race City Motorsports Park in Calgary.

"We're hoping to put together at least one more event (at Race City)," he says, "but we don't know



START YOUR ENGINES: After a few minor pit stops that threatened its very existence, the North American Big Rig Racing series seems poised for growth well into the future – which is great news for fans of the high-speed hobby.

yet." Singer says he hopes new Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi will get involved in seeing action return to Race City. "We've always been one of the most successful events there, the top event," he says.

Thanks to the new promotional strength it's getting, the NABRR is also seeing interest expressed from the eastern US, and Singer says he expects they'll do some events there in 2012. And that appears to be just the tip of the iceberg.

"It's going to take us probably two or three years just to get around to all the promoters who are interested in us now," Singer says, "because there's just too many and there's no way we can do them all in one year. It's pretty encouraging when you've never raced anywhere near there but they've heard about you anyway."

With success comes new challenges, of course, including logistical ones. "The tough part is the travel," Singer admits, "because it's so far between venues." He says the NABRR's biggest season, 2004, had 11 events scheduled as far away as southern California.

"It was a really gruelling schedule," he remembers. "You work all week and then you have to drive a thousand, two thousand miles to the event, then you prepare for and do the event and then you have to drive back again to get back to work. And then you do it all over again for the next event. It's not like we just race."

Singer can see the series growing to the point where it will require full-time teams to get from event to event which, if nothing else, would help solve some of the logistical nightmares.

"We hope that will happen," he says. "We've become the longest-lasting big rig racing series there is, and there's been some big ones including the GATR (Great American Truck Racing) series that was big money – their events paid up to \$100,000 each, back in the '80s when we were just starting."

The NABRR, Singer says, is even open to branching out from its traditional oval track base and trying some road courses, though such a move wouldn't be without challenges.

"The biggest concern we have to deal with is that the trucks are big and heavy," Singer says. "And they

can do a lot of damage so we have to be real careful because that has hurt us in the past – you get two or three trucks crashing into the walls and they can do heavy damage, so we don't want any of that and we especially don't want to hurt anybody."

The way to prevent it, he says, is to race smart. "Racing is racing, but we've had crashes that could have been prevented," Singer says. "Guys just rolled the dice. It's one thing to have a risk, but it's got to be calculated, you just don't do things at all costs." Singer says it's all well and good to stick your truck's nose into the fray, but, "You have to make sure you aren't going to put other guys off the track or upside down or send them to the hospital in the process. And it can easily happen."

Then again, it all comes down to the overall control over the series, the most important facet of which is discipline on the track. "That's one of the most important things we've changed," Singer points out. "Teams are disciplined now and a new team coming on board has to fall under the wings of a veteran team and do what they're told or they'll have to sit out for one, two, three, however many races they decide." New teams are usually mentored for their first season, Singer says, "If or until they're ready to be on their own."

Safety and discipline are also topics of discussion during regular meetings at the track, from the orientation meeting before each event through the post-race reviews.

Also adding to the series' new focus are technical checks the

teams perform on each other to ensure all the trucks are safe. "It's not only better for us all," Singer says, "but guys get to know different things about the trucks. They'll notice something that should be changed and they'll get discussing it and if it's deemed unsafe it'll have to be changed."

The big thing, Singer says, is that the teams are all pulling in the same direction now, with a positive attitude and no feuding. "We identify issues and deal with them in a timely fashion," he says, "so they don't go on and on. If there's something that happens at an event it's dealt with at that event and nobody leaves the track until it's settled. It resolves all the potential conflict."

This new focus also means that if one truck gets wrecked, everybody works together to get it fixed, and if one team's driver can't show up to an event, then somebody else will drive for him. "It's a real team effort," Singer says. "And in racing that's what it's all about. Everyone plays a role."

The series is also putting new emphasis on efficiency in its scheduling.

"We're now doing more events in a specific time frame than we used to," Singer says. Where they'd once head to a single race in Washington State and then go home again, for example, they're now talking to neighbouring tracks to schedule multiple events in one week. Singer says the positive changes and new momentum are very encouraging, so much so that the veterans of the series have been able to take a step back and let the younger guys have more input. "They're the future of the series anyway," he says, "and we want to promote them and their teams."

With the old issues finally solved and the series moving forward, teams can now concentrate more on racing and less on politics. "It's very exciting," Singer says, "because most of the guys just want to race. It's what they love to do. They don't want to fight with each other, they just want to go and have a good time and it's a real release for all of them."

The NABRR now boasts of 11 teams duking it out at speeds up to 90 mph – which can make for some exciting wheel-to-wheel action on a tight oval, especially when the Laws of Motion – let alone Murphy's Law – enters the mix. "They all start out going the same way," Singer says, "But they don't always end up that way." □

Tight finish marks end of racing season

The always-exciting NABRR series didn't see its 2010 series champion decided until the last lap of the last race, when Cam Sully drove to victory at Western Speedway Super Oval on Vancouver Island – before a sold out, standing room only crowd. It was so tight, says Ron Singer, that the top six teams finished the championship separated by only five points.

Among the 11 teams competing in the series full-time are NABRR veterans such as: Darwin Berdahl (Truck #26), Peter Van Dyck (#63), Darren Berdahl (#4), Cam Sully, Glen Creed and Norm Johal (#59) and Ron Singer (who, with his son Ron Jr., runs trucks #70 and 71). Newer teams include those of Bobby Fowler, (#66), Tyrell and Herb Schmidt (#13 and 91), with driver Cory McMeckan, and truck #12 driven by Lonny Grzech.

The 2011 season is shaping up already, with events confirmed through July and August in venues ranging from Spokane, Tenino and Wenatchee, Wash., to Post Falls, Idaho and Victoria, B.C., with more races expected to be added later. □

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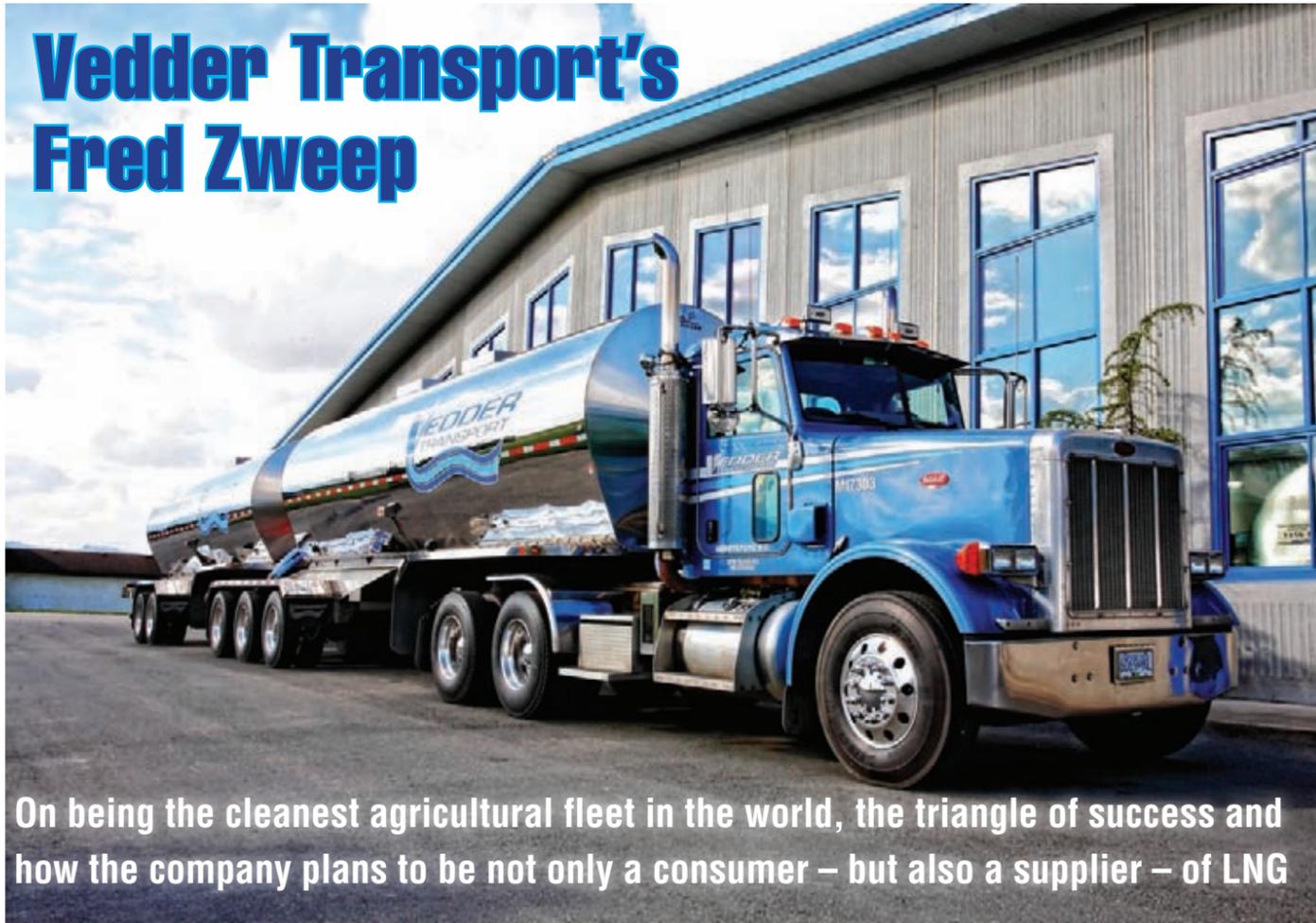
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EXECUTIVE VIEW

Vedder Transport's Fred Zweep



On being the cleanest agricultural fleet in the world, the triangle of success and how the company plans to be not only a consumer – but also a supplier – of LNG

By James Menzies

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – As Vedder Transport president Fred Zweep sees it, the company's recent order for 50 liquefied natural gas (LNG)-powered Peterbilt Model 386s is only the tip of the iceberg. Already, the fleet is bidding on a job that would require the purchase of an additional 25 LNG-powered trucks and through a partnership with natural gas supplier Terasen Gas, Vedder will not only consume gas – but supply it as well.

In subsequent phases of Vedder's foray into the world of natural gas-powered transportation, the fleet will build and operate commercial cardlocks, retailing gas to other carriers, making natural gas-powered trucks more viable for fleets operating in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and eventually into Alberta. Zweep is quick to credit Claude Robert, chair and CEO of Robert Transport for "instilling the vision" of a Canadian transportation network that's fueled by natural gas. Robert ordered 180 LNG-powered trucks last fall.

Truck West executive editor James Menzies caught up with Zweep to learn what was behind Vedder's move to natural gas and what the future may hold for this promising alternative fuel.

TW: As a mid-sized trucking company, Vedder may seem an unlikely pioneer when it comes to natural gas. What prompted the company to be an early adopter?

Zweep: I think there were a number of reasons. One of them is that on the food grade side of our business, we serve the agricultural industry and they're forever asking what we are doing to become greener as an organization.

When we did our research on LNG technology, it certainly told us we'd be a pioneer – which makes us nervous, by the way – but at the same time it would also put us at the forefront with our customers.

One of our largest clients is the B.C. Milk Marketing Board and we are probably the largest milk hauler in all of Canada.

We pick up 1.4 million litres of milk every 24 hours, going on and off the

farms locally here in B.C., so it certainly provides us with the opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint in excess of about 27% and it puts us at the forefront of being a leader. I believe we will be cleanest agricultural transporter in the world.

TW: Are your customers willing to pay a premium for that?

Zweep: When we looked at it from a financial perspective, one of the reasons why you want to invest in the technology is the opportunity to be able to balance your fuel management program.

Having lived through when Wall Street ran up the barrel of oil to \$120-\$140, and paying \$1.35-\$1.45 per litre (for diesel), we were looking at ways how can we manage that more prudently.

We have an abundance of natural gas, not only in Canada, but particularly here in B.C.

In the northeastern part of our province, we have a 100-year find of shale gas that once goes it through the fracking process will be available to us.

Looking at countries around the world, although we may view them as oil barons, you look at Dubai; Dubai operates the majority of their transport infrastructure on natural gas and exports their oil.

So when we took a look at that, it gave us an opportunity to say: 'You know what, we may be able to manage our exposure to the significant fluctuations and what happened with the barrel of oil (in 2008).'

TW: What kinds of savings do you expect to see over the life of the vehicles?

Zweep: Over a 20-year history, there has always been a spread between natural gas and diesel. When you break it out to a distillate litre cost, there has never been a conver-

gence. When oil was \$120-\$140 per barrel and we were paying \$1.35-\$1.45 per litre at the pump, natural gas was at its peak as well and there was still a significant spread between diesel and the equivalent in natural gas.

TW: Can you describe the duty cycles these natural gas trucks will be performing under?

Zweep: The equipment is going to be broken into three business units. Twenty-five are going to be bulk milk hauling in B.C. in super-train applications with a 140,000-lb GVW.

Ten of the vehicles will be utilized in a flatdeck, short-haul super-train operation in B.C. and the Pacific Northwest and that will also be in a 140,000-lb GVW.

Then, we'll be operating the remaining 15 units in the Lower Mainland in an 80,000- to 105,000-lb GVW.

The 50 units are all return-to-base pieces of equipment. They go out and return to base every 12-14 hours. Some of the equipment we'll be double-shifting. In conjunction with the purchase, we have developed a relationship with Terasen Gas to build a commercial cardlock for natural gas on our property here in Abbotsford.

TW: Who will fuel the trucks? Will the drivers be trained on fueling the equipment?

Zweep: With our vision of having a retail commercial cardlock operation, we'll have that manned 24 hours a day.

TW: The weights you described are quite heavy. Has natural gas been tested at those GVWs?

Zweep: Yes, they have. Back in 2006 the equipment was operated by Challenger on a garbage haul. They would take 140,000 lbs and go to Michigan every day. They were quite impressed with it. The technology is

not the issue; it's the distribution and the fueling network that's the challenge with LNG.

TW: First Robert, and now Vedder. You both made significant investments in LNG-powered trucks and it seems Peterbilt is winning the majority of the business here in Canada. Why is that? Have you always been a Pete guy or is there something about Peterbilt that makes them appealing from a natural gas perspective?

Zweep: When we did our due diligence, I spent five months with our CEO Larry Wiebe travelling through North America learning as much as we could about the technology, who has adopted the technology and the pros and cons of the technology.

We visited over 17 different transportation organizations and probably half a dozen retail commercial cardlocks in the US and we found ourselves in some interesting places.

What we found was there are three ingredients to success in transitioning from a traditional diesel fleet to an LNG fleet. It's a triangle of success. You need to have two suppliers and a willing participant to implement the technology.

As the transporter, we're the willing participant. Then, you require a very good dealer network because the dealer has to take on the responsibility of maintaining the technology and they have to educate themselves on the technology so they understand it when it comes into their shop.

And then the third participant has to be the supplier of the technology, in this case it's Westport. What we found in all the locations we went to was (if there were problems), one of the three didn't work. What we found in our research was, where LNG was slow to get out of the gate it was because an organization didn't put the resources forth in terms of training and education of the fleet or the dealer didn't put forth the effort in training and bringing their technicians up to speed. The constant we always found was Westport's desire to make the technology work and to educate people.

The technology is durable, it's bearable and it functions well. Will there be hiccups? Yeah, we're pretty sure there will be. But if you have a relationship – it's no different than you do with your diesel equipment suppliers – you will find common ground and work through those things. But you have to have a triangle of relationships. When something didn't work in the US, one of those three or two of those three didn't work.

To answer your question, why Peterbilt? We've been a very large user of Peterbilt, but in our fleet what we found was Peterbilt and its sister company Kenworth, although both owned by Paccar, have different philosophies.

Peterbilt is a one-truck/one-build mentality. When building a truck for you, it's very much like an owner/operator, so a fleet like ours or like Robert, we're an oddity to them. We're going to buy more than one vehicle from them but their culture is around that owner/operator model so it's a one-truck/one-sale mentality, so every truck they sell is extremely important to them right down to the detail.

It's nothing against Kenworth, but they're more of a mass producer, so we found with the culture within Peterbilt they would pay particular attention to what our needs and de-

'You look at Dubai; Dubai operates the majority of their transport infrastructure on natural gas and exports their oil.'

Fred Zweep, Vedder Transport

sires were going to be when we bring this equipment into the fleet, and it has proven to be true.

Peterbilt Pacific in B.C. took it upon themselves – without us asking – they contacted Westport and they went down and spent time with Peterbilt’s engineering team in Denton, Texas to educate themselves on what LNG was going to be and whether it was something they wanted to invest their dealership in.

Why are we taking this leap of faith? We do believe in the technology. We are so traditional in our thinking in this industry. We have to be open-minded or we will never progress. There are a number of great fleets throughout Canada that have phenomenal entrepreneurs and interesting engineering minds who at one time or another have taken a leap of faith from a trailer perspective or tractor perspective. Although we’re nervous, we’re nervous because we’re pioneers and it’s out of our typical realm.

Sometimes the stars do line up for you and they’ve lined up for us. It’s a Richmond-based technology so if we have an issue, we only have to drive 40 miles and we are face-to-face (with Westport), our dealer is two blocks from our property and we sit on 36 acres of prime property here in the Fraser Valley in the Lower Mainland of B.C. and we have a terrific parcel of land we can develop into a commercial retail cardlock operation.

TW: Your vision then, is to be not only a consumer of natural gas but also a retailer?

Zweep: Yes, as other fleets come on-board, they have the opportunity to come use that facility because it’s a joint venture between us and Terasen Gas.

TW: Is Terasen also assisting you with the purchase of the equipment in any way?

Zweep: Yes, they have an energy efficiency program that allows for them to provide funding to entice people to transition to LNG technology.

TW: Are your drivers and mechanics nervous about the switch or are they excited about it?

Zweep: They’re excited about it for a couple of reasons, and this is where one of the stars lined up. Where this equipment is being deployed, traditionally it’s going to locations that are longstanding establishments that aren’t necessarily conducive for the type of equipment we take on and off



MEET PETE: Vedder Transport’s order is for Peterbilt Model 386s, like this one. The company went with Peterbilt because of its one truck/one build philosophy, according to Vedder president Fred Zweep.

their properties.

With the Peterbilt 386 set-back axle (SBA), we’ve been able to purchase a tool for our driving fleet that will enable them to have more versatility getting on and off our clients’ properties that we visit every day. In the demonstrations we had on our property, (drivers loved) the quietness of the engine. The tractor is so quiet. We

spoke to people in the US who told us they felt half as tired at the end of their shift because they didn’t have that noise level bothering them.

TW: How’s the torque?

Zweep: The truck will still run on diesel, that’s what creates the ignition. The natural gas creates the energy to keep the piston moving but it

still does have that diesel.

The only performance difference we found was at lift-off from a dead stop, you’re going to have a slight hesitation for a split second.

In North America, we love having horsepower and we want to get from zero to 60 very quickly and a diesel engine is built that way, as soon as you press the accelerator you have response immediately whereas with natural gas you’ll have a slight hesitation.

Drivers also found, because the engines were so quiet, they realized they actually learned how to operate a diesel tractor initially by observing the tach and over time it was by ear. What we found in our test cycles was that our drivers were overrevving the equipment substantially because it was so quiet. They’d look down and realize they need to shift at 1,450 rpm and they’re sitting at 1,800-1,900, so that’s going to be one of the challenges we have. We’ve laid out the groundwork, we have a training module in place and we have the resources in place to train the folks who will be driving them.

We are going to implement the equipment over a period of time where all 50 of those vehicles will be up and running before Dec. 31, 2011.

TW: You’re obviously a big believer in natural gas. Do you foresee a day when it will be practical for linehaul applications in North America or will it always be a regional solution?

Zweep: We’re bidding on an opportunity here for quite a significant haul, the tender was released yesterday and the requirement is that you will have approximately 25 vehicles in a 140,000-lb GVW configuration and the requirement is that you’ll be LNG.

It’s going to take time, there’s no question about it.

We’re excited about it, we’ve done our due diligence and put a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources into looking at the technology and understanding the infrastructure and the restraints of the infrastructure.

We look at it in three phases. Phase 1 is what we’re doing today with the acquisition of these 50 vehicles. For Phase 2, we operate a significant fleet of equipment that operates between B.C. and Alberta and we’re committed to, within the next three years, to build our own cardlock operations to fuel LNG vehicles to go up and over the mountains.

The third phase will be to build our own infrastructure for the operations we serve in Alberta. □

Vedder LNG order ‘significant’: Westport

ABBOTSFORD, B.C. – Vedder Transport is the latest to get on the natural gas bandwagon, placing an order for 50 Peterbilt trucks powered by Westport’s liquefied natural gas (LNG) system.

The order has been placed in concert with a planned refueling station that Terasen Gas has committed to building in Abbotsford in 2011.

The trucks will be Peterbilt Model 386s with the Westport HD system under the hood. Vedder Transport specializes in the delivery of food grade products in bulk liquid or dry state, offering truckload and LTL services throughout Canada and between Canada and the US. The LNG-powered trucks will be used on routes within Southern B.C., primarily serving the bulk food grade industry, the company announced.

“This is a significant order for LNG trucks in Western Canada,” said Clark Quintin, president of Westport’s HD division. “It further demonstrates that natural gas is rapidly becoming a mainstream fuel solution for the trucking industry in Canada. With the Province’s 33% carbon reduction target by 2020, substantial commitment from Vedder Transport and Terasen Gas to operate LNG trucks is helping the province achieve this target.”

“At Vedder, we are committed to protecting the environment for future generations. Adding natural gas trucks to our fleet will help us reduce transportation-related emissions, ultimately improving air quality while reducing fuel management expenses,” added Fred Zweep, president of the Vedder Transportation Group.

The Westport HD system consists of the GX 15-litre engine with Westport’s fuel injectors, LNG fuel tanks and integrated cryogenic fuel pumps as well as the associated electronic components. □

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ROAD TEST

Taking it to the Maxx

TORONTO, Ont. – By chance, I landed a week-long city run with a leased International ProStar+ paired with a production model EPA2010-compliant MaxxForce 13 engine.

I've been anxious to try this engine because there's quite a bit of buzz about it but as far as I know, no-one has reviewed the production version that's dialled down to 0.5 g NOx.

This is Navistar's answer to the 2010 EPA regulations, and if you don't want to be slinging around buckets of diesel exhaust fluid (DEF), the MaxxForce might be the only alternative to going SCR like the rest of the herd.

Navistar calls this a big bore engine, and with 430 horses it was overqualified to make half a dozen pick-ups per day, and zip up and down the 427 and the 410 a bunch of times. The motor provides up to 1,700 lb.-ft. torque and was impressively mated with an Eaton Fuller 13-speed transmission. I was able to give it a decent workout as I had it for almost 45 hours and five duty cycles.

The truck was just broken in with 4,000 kms on the odometer – very quick off the line with lots of surplus power. I swung through the lower gears as fast as I could depress the accelerator, skipping a few.

The high end split shifting was just for fun as I didn't need the extra gears for these loads, and the engine never sputtered even under moderate stress. Response was very quick in high range, too. The ProStar sat on 3.55 rear ends. At 100 km/h, the MaxxForce 13 was churning at 1,350 rpm (1,300@60 mph). I paid close attention to the regeneration cycle after the first day. The yellow engine warning light came on a couple of times but the performance was never compromised.

Apparently the motor needed a regeneration but took care of the problem by itself those two times.

From then on I noticed that the motor liked to regen when first started every day.

It would idle for a couple of minutes at 700 rpm and then jump up to around 1,300 and burn off the ac-



cumulated soot for 10-15 minutes, gradually reducing the revs as it purged itself.

Since I work for a fast-paced courier company, I'm always nervous some other driver will take my empty.

So I'd kick down the throttle and start working if I couldn't wait. The motor would finish the process the next time I left it idling.

Compared to the Cummins ISX engine with EGR, the MaxxForce enhanced EGR system regenerated more frequently. Both the engine and tractor are amazingly quiet so it was difficult to notice when the MaxxForce was in regen mode on the highway. The fan would usually come on and it sounded a little like a tap running.

The truck was at its best running along the highway, but getting stuck in traffic snarls would sometimes cause the yellow engine light to come on and the motor welcomed a regeneration at the next stop. The idle shut-off was set at two minutes, so if it idled longer than that I knew it was doing a burn-off.

The MaxxForce attempts to provide an "in-cylinder" solution to tightening EPA2010 standards which mandate engine emissions of no more than 0.2 g/bhp-hr of nitrogen oxide and almost zero particulate discharge.

At present, the engine emits 0.5 grams of NOx but Navistar is allowed to sell the engines using banked emissions credits from its medium- and light-duty vehicles. The manufacturer is in the process of certifying a more advanced EGR model which it expects to meet the 0.2 benchmark before its credits are used up.

Navistar developed this engine in partnership with MAN in Germany.

The first MaxxForces were made overseas but the North American models are being produced at Navistar's engine plant in Huntsville, Alabama.

The CGI block itself is a technological breakthrough comprised of compacted graphite and iron molecules cast together by a special process. The block is said to be lighter, stronger and more durable.

Since Navistar dropped the SCR option, they no longer use Cummins power and currently don't have a 15-litre engine in their repertoire. However, a new 15-litre model is being developed in partnership with Caterpillar that should be in production in early 2011, and available in early to mid-2011.

Meanwhile, Navistar would like 15-litre customers to consider the 13-litre as an alternative (it's actually 12.4 litres).

In my opinion, the manufacturer has achieved terrific performance out of this smaller displacement engine.

Key to its good performance are two turbochargers mounted in series Bosche injectors that supply five rather than three squirts per combustion cycle.

The ProStar+ itself is worth a mention, as it comes with many operator-friendly options and appears to be roomier than previous year models.

My ride was a 6x4 day cab with a full aero package.

Besides the great sight lines and tight turning radius, the drafty doors are now gone and the entire unit is much quieter and better insulated.

My truck came with the National 2000 series seat which offers air cushion support every which way. It includes a BackCycler function that allows you to try a range of different settings while you're driving. When you find the right setting, you can lock it in.

There's no reason to climb around under the engine cowl because all fluids and dipsticks are accessible at ground level.

The tilt-away bumper is a nice feature that lets you get right close to the engine compartment for maintenance issues, and also makes changing the front tire easier.

The day cab model has the batteries mounted on the right side directly above the air tanks.

This leaves the driver's side free for a set of stairs and a cutaway section that provides easy access to air line hook-ups.

The ProStar/MaxxForce combination came with a subtle and quiet



A-PLUS: The International ProStar+ is noticeably better than its predecessor. The drafty doors are history and the BackCycler seat helps contribute to a comfortable ride.

three-speed engine brake that was a little too subtle for my liking.

It was most effective at grabbing around 1,500 rpm but was really not great at holding the truck back. I used it a few times but never felt confident with it.

This truck was well set up for a regional driver staying hooked to the same trailer all day.

But for city driving, with half a dozen drop and pulls, a little thing like the air line sleeves mounted too high on the back of the cab cause a lot of needless climbing and repetitive exertion.

The MaxxForce 13 would be right at home in a regional truck pulling some weight up and down the road.

It was probably over-powered for the light loads I was carrying, and most likely the Maxx 11 would be enough motor for this kind of city P&D work.

That said, the unit seemed to be very good on fuel consumption.

I never took any mileage measurements but my visits to the fuel pump were infrequent and light.

The EGR system never let me down, but it would be nice to have something on the dash telling the driver when it's regenerating.

Possibly, the frequent appearance of the engine light on the leased vehicle was a minor glitch that just needed a reset.

But leasers should be aware that most customers are reluctant to take a vehicle out of service for a day and take it up to the dealer for a minor adjustment, especially during peak periods.

Overall, the MaxxForce 13 was more than enough engine to handle the job.

With all the bugs worked out, perhaps Navistar has got its enhanced EGR system right after all. □

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FEATURE

Snow removal:

Easy as 1-2-3



1 Before leaving the yard, drivers pull up alongside the snow removal trailer, leaving enough space between the trailers to allow snow to escape. Previously, they had to pull into the wash bay for snow and ice removal, which was time-consuming, required the help of a second person and cluttered the wash bay with snow and ice.



3 Drivers can now safely remove snow and ice from atop their trailer. It takes about 15 minutes to remove snow and up to a half-hour if ice is present. Drivers use a highly specialized piece of equipment for this task: A piece of hockey board attached to the end of a stick. What could be more Canadian than that?

By James Menzies

BADEN, Ont. – What to do with snow and ice that’s accumulated on trailer tops has been a quandary since, well, since folks began hauling freight in van trailers.

The issue has received more attention lately, however, thanks to new legislation in New Jersey that requires drivers to make a “reasonable effort” to remove snow and ice from the roofs of their trailers or face hefty fines.

There are several snow removal systems on the market, some more effective – not to mention cost-effective – than others. However, the Erb Group of Companies has come up with a system of its own that provides drivers with a safe and easy way to clear off their equipment while also finding a secondary use for decommissioned reefer trailers.

Tom Boehler, director of safety and compliance with Erb Group, said the idea stemmed from a prototype system that was built at the company’s Ottawa terminal, but with the catwalk affixed to the outside of the trailer. To avoid a litany of fall protection requirements, the company’s health and safety committee teamed with a local machine shop to fine-tune the system to make it safer and to save drivers the hassle of wearing harnesses. The result is a system that works pretty well. So well, in fact, all nine of Erb’s Canadian terminals now have a system of their own.

The system begins with a good reefer trailer, Boehler explained during a recent tour.

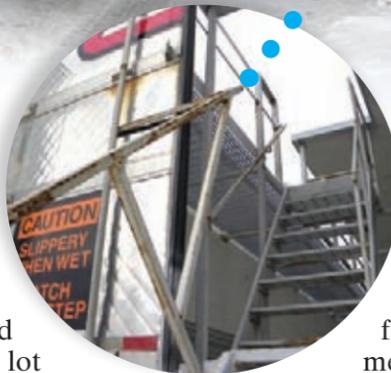
“This trailer was about seven years old,” he said. “It still has

valid inspection stickers. Over the years, these trailers gain weight in the walls from moisture and start costing a lot of money to maintain, so we were going to decommission these trailers. But they are still roadworthy and can still be annually inspected and certified if you wanted to move it to a customer’s to clean trailers there.”

Reefers are ideal because they have strong floor, roof and wall structures. Cress-Ridge Machine out of nearby New Hamburg provided the fabrication of the steps and crossbeams, at a cost of a little under \$9,000. Add the value of the trailer, and each system costs about \$12,000, Boehler said. Cleaning a trailer can take anywhere from 15 minutes for light snow to up to half an hour if ice is present. Drivers are paid for their time and seem to appreciate having the system available.

“I think most of them are glad there’s something there and they don’t have to rely on the wash bay being open and someone coming in to do it (for them),” Boehler said. “It’s something that’s easily accessible to them and there’s no tie-down required.”

As shippers have learned about the system, some have asked the company for a price on getting a similar snow removal system for their own facilities. With more trailers nearing the end of their



2 Drivers climb the stairs, fabricated by Cress-Ridge Machine, up to the catwalk that’s strategically located within the trailer’s walls to avoid the need for fall protection equipment.

freight hauling days, it could mean that Erb has stumbled upon a lucrative side business.

“We’ve had some of our shippers enquire about purchasing trailers through us and setting

up the fabrication. I haven’t heard whether they’re going ahead with it or not but we do have some trailers that are going to be decommissioned so the opportunity is there,” he said. □

MISSING



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Missing since:
November 15, 1998

Missing from: Naples, Florida

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Weight: 130 lbs.

Eyes: Hazel

Hair Colour: Light Brown



Characteristics: Wears braces on her top and bottom teeth; left ear has double piercing. Wendy was last seen leaving a party with an adult male on November 15, 1998. The male states that he dropped Wendy off at her home. She has not been seen or heard from since.

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

An eye for an eye

By Edo van Belkom

Mark was driving westward through Saskatchewan when his cell phone rang. He checked the number on his phone, saw that it was Bud calling and put the call onto his hands-free device.

"Hello?" he said.

"Hi Mark," said the caller, then a pause.

"Who's this?" Mark said. He knew it was Bud, but he couldn't resist giving his dispatcher a hard time. Bud had the same caller ID technology as Mark did, but that didn't stop him from playing the "Mark who?" game every time he called. Now it was time for a little payback.

"C'mon Dalton, you know it's me."

"Me who?"

"Me Bud."

"I don't know any Mebud," Mark said. "I have ear buds, and an iPod, but no Mebuds."

"Smarten up Dalton, this is important."

The smile immediately disappeared from Mark's face. It was all funny stuff, but maybe not the right time for it. "What's up?"

"I need you to head up to Prince George to pick up a load that's stranded there."

"One of your drivers bailed on you?"

"No, I wish it was just that."

"What could be worse than a driver quitting on Bud in the middle of a load?" Mark wondered. Whatever was left of Mark's playfulness was suddenly gone. "What's going on?"

"You remember a guy by the name of Earl Purcell?"

"The name rings a bell."

"He's an older guy, over 65 but still drives a couple of times a month for me, you know, for a bit of extra money and something to do."

"Is that the guy who drove the flowers for your daughter's wedding all the way from South Carolina?"

"Yeah, that's him. Did it in one shot. He already had a load and went two hours out of his way to pick up the flowers. I offered him money, but all he wanted was a piece of the wedding cake."

"I know who he is now... gave me a litre of oil once at a truck stop when everything was closed. I still haven't given it back to him."

"Well here's your chance to pay him back."

"Why? What happened?"

Bud took a deep breath and let

out a sigh. "He was on the highway heading north toward Prince George when some guy on the side of the road flagged him down looking for help."

"A trucker?"

"No, some guy in a car," Bud said. "Earl can't pass someone in trouble so he pulls over and gets out of his truck to see what he can do." A pause. "And that's when they jumped him."

"Who?"

"Three guys. In addition to the guy out on the highway, there were two more in the car. As Earl's looking under the hood, one of them hits him with a tire iron and once he's on the ground all three men wail on him... punches, kicks, the iron."

"I heard about that attack on television. It was everywhere... on TV, the radio, newspapers. I had no idea the guy was one of your drivers."

"One of my best and most experienced drivers. These thugs left him on the side of the road for dead, but he's a scrapper. When he was found a while later, he was taken to the hospital in Prince George, but he was in such bad shape they couldn't do everything he needed done. He had to be airlifted to Vancouver where they reconstructed his face."

"Is he going to live?"

"Yeah, he'll live, but who knows what the damage will be to his brain, his eyes? He might have to learn everything all over again."

"Will he drive again?"

"I doubt it," Bud said. "Who would want to after something like that?"

"I hear you," Mark said, understanding completely. He'd once stopped on the side of the road to help a girl who looked as if she were being harassed by a bunch of goons. He stopped to help and wound up in the hospital for his trouble.

And to make matters worse, Mother Load had been trashed to the point where he almost had to buy a new truck. Luckily for him, the girl's father was rich and paid to get Mother Load repaired.

But even though everything worked out all right for him in the end, Mark never passed a motorist on the side of the road without first wondering whether something bad might happen to him if he stopped.

He hated to admit it, but there had been plenty of times in which he'd

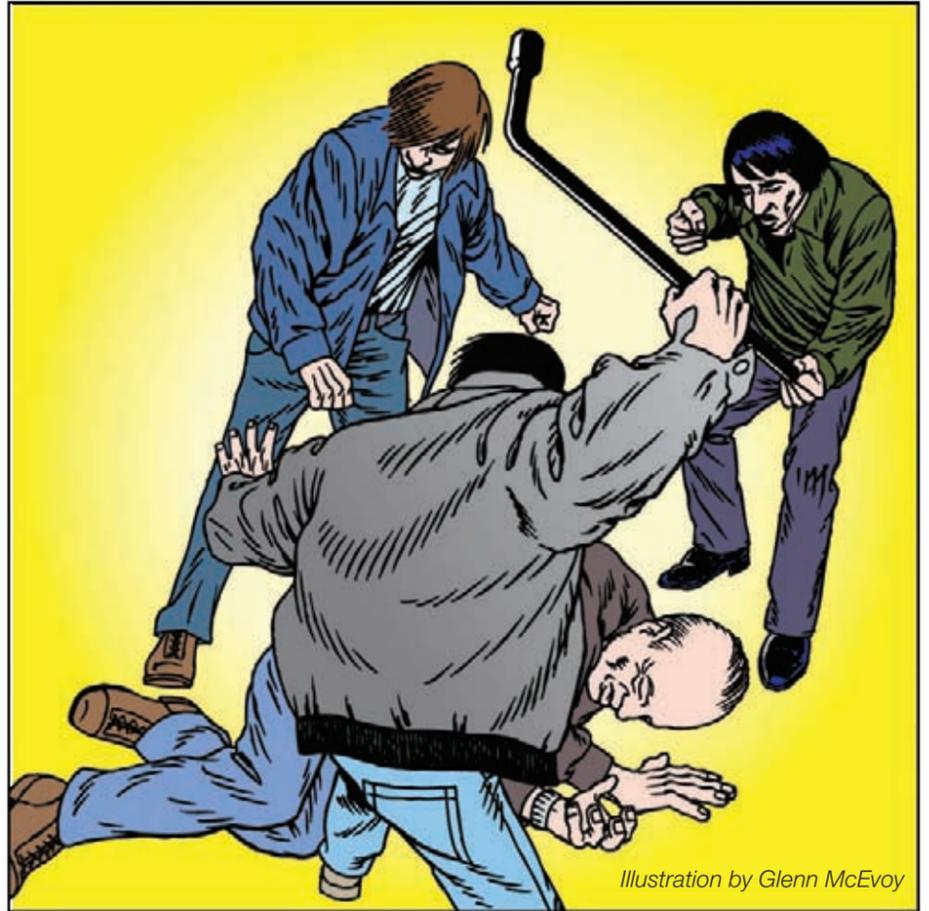


Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

just driven on by thinking that he probably couldn't help the person in trouble or that they'd likely already called somebody and help was on the way.

It wasn't a good feeling, looking the other way and driving on by, but it was safe.

"Now, I'm not naive enough to think that if I give you Earl's load, you'll just pick it up and deliver it without a lot of fuss and bother."

"Who, me?"

"Yeah, you'll probably end up in the thick of it, looking for the guys that did this to Earl or doing something nice so his family won't have to suffer."

"That does sound a little bit like me."

"Well, just so you know, the Canadian Trucking Alliance and the British Columbia Trucking Association have each put up a \$10,000 reward for anyone who helps catch and convict the men responsible for this."

"Twenty grand, eh? You know I'd do it for nothing."

"I know that, but with that much money as an incentive, there are going to be dozens, if not hundreds of truck drivers playing detective out there."

"Might not be a bad thing," said Mark. The money will put the capture of these criminals at the forefront of everyone's mind and with thousands of drivers on the lookout for clues, it might only be a matter of time before the thugs were caught and brought to justice.

"Yeah, well, just be careful whatever you do."

"Awe, Bud. I didn't know you cared."

"I've already got one driver in the hospital, I don't need another one."

Mark understood.

Bud gave Mark the information he needed to get Earl's load out of the yard in Prince George. "The load is already a day late, but I called the receiver and explained what happened, and he's giving us a couple of day's grace. But only a couple."

"Where's it going?"

"A warehouse in Oregon."

"I'll get it there."

"I know that," Bud said. "I just don't want you doing anything stupid before you get it there."

"Bye, Bud," Mark said, hanging up the phone.

Mark continued heading west. Even though the load he was supposed to pick up was already late, he'd head up to Prince George tomorrow.

Today he had to reach Vancouver to drop off his load and visit a hero. □

- Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of *An Eye for an Eye*.

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

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OPINION

Entering the smart phone era

I've never been one to rush into anything. Traditionally, I won't make any major buying decision without researching the ying-yang out of it.

This hasn't always been the case. I'm the proud owner of an original Betamax hi-fi machine that hasn't seen the light of day in decades. At the time, I was convinced Betamax was the way of the future.

If Sony hung its name on it, so should I. We all know the rest of the story. VHS became the technology of choice and I got burned. For years, I left it under the TV. It was a great conversation piece that usually involved laughter followed by 'I can't believe you bought that.'

It sits to this day below a staircase in the back room. Rest its soul.

That misinformed buying decision has played on my mind throughout the years.

This leads me to my most recent purchase. For some time now, the sales and editorial staff of *Truck West* have been using smart phones. These handheld devices do so much that it's a little bit scary.

They connect to our server at work, which allows them access to work files and e-mails, they access the Internet, take pictures, tell you the weather, organize appointments...the applications (the cool people refer to them as "apps") are endless.

I can't tell you how many times I have been asked why I don't own a Blackberry or iPhone. A few of my

Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



clients have asked me how I manage to do business without one? The fact is, it can be done. Mind you, it's getting harder since e-mail has taken over as the preferred method of communication.

My problems started when I was on the road. Without e-mail access I knew I could be missing something of significance. Even when I had my cell phone, it wouldn't be much help since it can't access my e-mails. It was time I considered my options.

After much consideration, and flashbacks of an old useless BetaMax player, I jumped into the 2000s. I'm now an iPhone man.

I've had it now for two months and have found it's an amazing piece of technology. I'm not going to embarrass myself by telling you what this baby is capable of. Most of you already know that, but for all the hold-outs out there, it's time to embrace the technology. You'll be shocked.

My only challenge now is when to turn the iPhone off for the day. It's not as easy as you may think. □

— Rob Wilkins is the publisher of *Truck West* and can be reached at 416-510-5123.

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 Van Other _____

Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply)
 Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van
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 Van Other _____

Current Drivers License: Do you have a Commercial License? Yes No

License # _____ Exp. Date _____ Prov/State Issued _____ Type _____

Has your license ever been suspended? Yes No Total Truck Driving Experience _____ /yrs

Last Employer _____

Name _____ Company City _____ Prov/State _____

Tel _____ Start/End Date _____

Job Description _____ Reason for Leaving _____

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

Name of School _____ Name of Course Completed _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ Start/End Date _____

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TSQ

BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – The US-based Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration has proposed a new string of changes to its Hours-of-Service rules, including the possibility of dropping the maximum daily driving time from 11 hours to 10.

Both times are currently under consideration, though FMCSA officials have said they currently favour a 10-hour limit.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has said the group is working towards an HoS rule that “will help create an environment where commercial truck drivers are rested, alert and focused on safety while on the job.”

But would drivers endorse the proposed changes? We went to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to see if drivers would support a similar change to Canada’s rules.

•
Tim Broad, a driver with Cooney



Truck Stop Question *Do you think Canada should reduce its maximum daily driving limit?*

ADAM LEDLOW



Tim Broad

Transport out of Toronto, says the current daily driving limit of 13 hours in Canada is tough enough to deal with already without lowering it.

“You have to do 13 hours in a

16-hour day. You have traffic, dispatch issues and load issues. To drop it like they did before, guys were complaining about not getting enough hours and drive time in. You have to shut down in the middle of wherever if you run out of time,” Broad said.

“Canada should stay the same because if you drive more hours then it’s more money. They bumped up the sleeping hours to 10 hours instead of the eight, so you are gaining two on both ends.”

•
Alan James, a driver with Air Heat Supplies in Mississauga,

Ont. says the current 13-hour rule “is not overextending it or anything,” so he’s fine to keep things as they are.

“For me it doesn’t matter because I only work eight to nine hours a day anyway. I don’t drive for 13 hours straight, but I break it down into two stops. I still feel fine; it’s not a problem. You are in that zone and you just go.”



Keith Taylor

Keith Taylor, a driver with Flanagan Food Service out of Kitchener, Ont., says Canada is too sparse a country to be lowering driving time for truckers.

“We’re too sparse. We’re wide open. Right now, all the service centres are closed along the 401 and there are no rest stops. If you cut the guys’ hours back, they are going to get halfway between here and nowhere with no place to stop,” Taylor says.

“What are you going to accomplish? They are going to have to break the law to get someplace where it is safe. Just leave it alone.”

As an ex-truck enforcement officer, Taylor acknowledges the FMCSA’s argument about reducing driver fatigue, but notes that truckers are not the only problem in this area.

“You pick on the trucker, but what about the guy commuting into the city to work an eight-hour day in the city and he’s got a three-hour commute both ways? They don’t say anything about him. He is the one that is falling asleep and causing the accidents.”



Cody King

Cody King, another Flanagan Food Service driver, but based out of Brockville, Ont., says the weather in Canada is harsher than the US and truckers need that extra time to get from stop to stop.

“Down in the US, they don’t have as much snow as we have up here, and as it is we’re getting 13 hours and we’re hardly having enough time to do what we need to do,” he told *Truck West*. “That doesn’t accommodate accidents or construction, and they don’t leave any time for anything else. If they (lower daily driving limits), there are going to be a lot more loads not being delivered on time and a lot more trucks using parking lots.” □

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