

# TRUCK WEST

April 2010 Volume 21, Issue 4

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at [www.trucknews.com](http://www.trucknews.com)



**NO PUSHOVER:** Irene Friesen has learned a thing or two about holding her own with the guys in a male-dominated world. The driver and driver-trainer has earned the respect of her peers during a rewarding career in the trucking industry.

## Just like one of the guys

### Alberta driver-trainer proves trucking can be 'women's work'

By Jim Bray

**KATHRYN, Alta.** – Growing up in Golden, B.C., Irene Friesen didn't want to be a truck driver, ever. Yet the Kathryn, Alta., resident is not only a veteran driver now, she helps others become better driv-

ers as well.

"When I was about 15 I worked in a truck stop," she says seriously, "and there was no way I was going to have anything to do with those guys." Yet within a few years she had not only married a truck driver,

she had followed him into the cab.

Irene met Wayne Friesen at an interdenominational Bible school on an island off Chemainus, B.C., during what she describes as the toughest year of her life.

Continued on page 8

## Vision 2030

### Future of Trucking Symposium offers a glance ahead

By Lou Smyrlis

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – Predicting the shape of the future is a considerably less than perfect science, littered with predictions so off the mark they are laughable. Consider the famous assertion back in 1899 by Charles Duell from the US patent office that "everything that can be invented has been invented." Or the statement made in 1895 by Lord Kelvin, president of the Royal Society, that "heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible."

Nevertheless, transportation companies do require a vision of the future and the various factors that could shape their business in order to strategize for future growth and protect against possible threats. And that is exactly what a panel of experts at the Future of Trucking Symposium in Winnipeg attempted to provide. The panelists – Antonio Benecchi of Roland Berger Strategic Consultants, Bill Van Amburg, senior vice-president with CALSTART and Rick Whittaker, vice-president investments with Sustainable

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## A new Class 4/5 player emerges

See page 25



### Inside This Issue...

- **Life after trucking:** A professional driver struggles to come to terms with a new lifestyle after his trucking career was cut short by a tragic loading accident. Page 10
- **Report card time:** The real-world performance of EPA07 engines was candidly discussed at the recent Technology and Maintenance Council meetings. Page 17
- **Funding fight:** Does B.C.'s new EI funding formula favour low-end driving schools? Page 22
- **Pilot takes flight:** B.C. is attempting to raise entry-level driver training standards with a new pilot project. Page 23

### Mark Dalton O/O



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# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

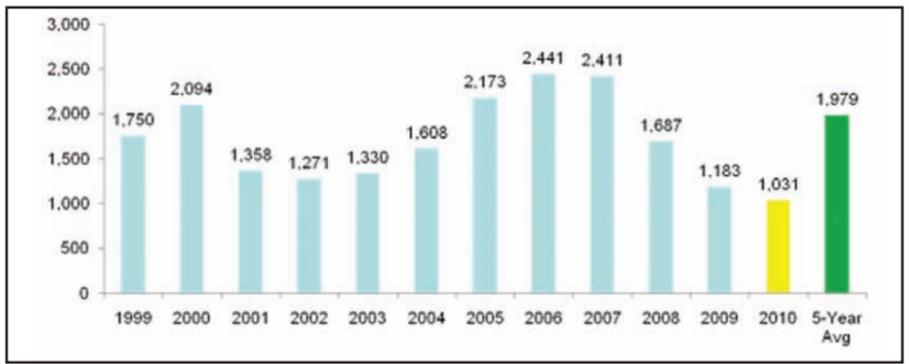
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The best thing that could be said about 2009 is that it's over. Last year's sales were way off the five-year average and even further behind the record year of 2006. It is hoped that with the Canadian economy growing again that freight volumes will grow and with it will come the demand to replace old iron. Yet the first month of 2010 is a huge disappointment, posting even lower sales than last year's disastrous opening. The 1,031 Class 8 trucks sold in January made for the worst January sales over the past decade and are more than 100 units off last year's sales and more than 900 units off the five-year average.

### Monthly Class 8 Sales - Jan 10

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	269	234
International	259	425
Kenworth	202	111
Mack	44	80
Peterbilt	120	46
Sterling	10	87
Volvo	56	98
Western Star	71	102
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>1,183</b>

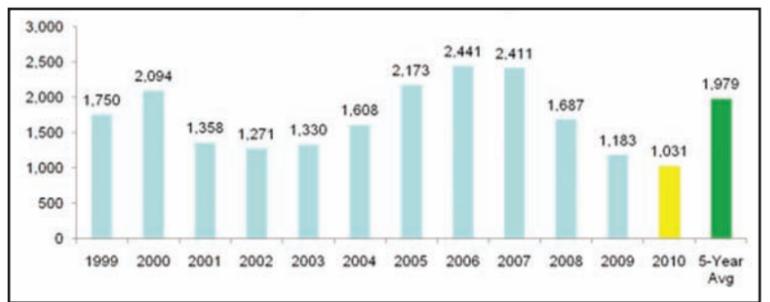
### Historical Comparison - Jan 10 Sales



### Class 8 Sales (YTD Jan 10) by Province and OEM

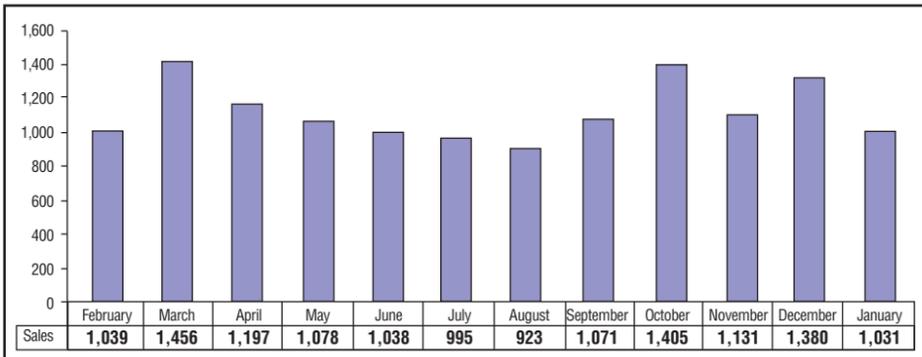
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	29	24	48	11	98	45	6	6	0	2	269
Kenworth	30	55	13	5	37	55	7	0	0	0	202
Mack	4	3	3	3	12	14	3	2	0	0	44
International	9	17	5	11	146	53	10	6	0	2	259
Peterbilt	4	12	10	11	35	35	11	2	0	0	120
Sterling	1	4	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	10
Volvo	0	8	5	5	20	14	3	1	0	0	56
Western Star	10	16	3	3	10	5	3	20	0	1	71
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1,031</b>

### Historical Comparison - YTD Jan

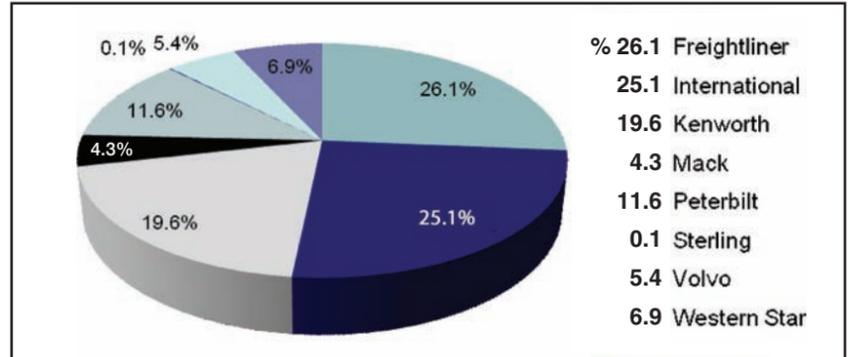


The previous year was the worst year for Canadian Class 8 truck sales of the past decade and one of the worst since the economic slowdowns of the early 90s. The first quarter of 2009 was so weak that, three months into the year, sales were about 3,000 off the five-year YTD average and about 5,000 off the banner year of 2006. Will the first quarter of 2010 prove to be similarly lacklustre? There are signs that freight volumes are starting to grow yet trucking remains in over capacity and financing institutions are being tight fisted when it comes to lending money to small- and medium-sized companies looking to get into new equipment.

### 12 - Month Sales Trends



### Market Share Class 8 - Jan YTD



There are many reasons motor carriers remain reticent to purchase new trucks. Despite bankruptcies and fleet size reductions, there are still too many trucks chasing too little freight. Although indications are that freight volumes are growing, growth remains tentative. Pricing for trade-ins remains less than appealing and access to capital for new truck purchases remains limited. The new trucks also come with 2010 emissions standards compliant engines, which add about \$10,000 to the price of a new rig.

International once again captured the market share crown in the Canadian Class 8 market in 2009, ending up with a commanding 29% share of the market. But the fight for market share this year will be particularly interesting as International stands alone with its advanced EGR solution to the 2010 emissions standards compared to the SCR option all other truck manufacturers have chosen. Although it's too early in the game to determine how the market share battle will unfold, former front runner Freightliner has jumped out to a narrow early lead while Kenworth is coming in at a strong third.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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# The \$25 million load

I knew spring was in the air when I came upon two long combination vehicles (LCVs) on my way to a lunch meeting March 2. Yes, the Ontario LCV pilot project has resumed after a mandatory winter time-out, and I welcomed the sight of them.

For one, it meant spring was truly in the air. Seeing those LCVs on the 401, however, and speaking to some fleets that are participating in the pilot got me to wondering about the future of Ontario's LCV pilot project, which seems very much up in the air. Any way you slice it, the pilot appears to have been a bona-fide success to date.

Last summer and fall, there were 4,114 LCV trips in Ontario covering 1.28 million kilometres and not a single violation or accident to speak of, according to data from the Ministry of Transportation.

Still, the MTO seems non-committal about the pilot's future. When pressed for a hint of what's to come, MTO spokesman Bob Nichols would only say "The MTO will undertake a review of LCV operations to evaluate their effectiveness and safety leading to (a) recommendation on how the program will move forward."

Further complicating matters is that the Transport Minister who approved the program, Jim Bradley, was replaced in a Cabinet shuffle by MPP Kathleen Wynne.

As highly-touted as she may be, she likely didn't (until recently, anyway) know the difference between a king pin and a converter dolly.

It remains to be seen whether she has the appetite to expand a program that has its share of critics, despite the obvious economic benefits.

Given the uncertainty of the program's future, I'm astounded at the investment the trucking industry has collectively made in LCV equip-

## Editorial Comment

James Menzies



ment, training and the related engineering. No exact figure exists, but it's in the millions.

One major fleet told me it has \$500,000 invested in the program and at a minimum a participating fleet would have to have invested \$90,000 for two units, assuming a lead trailer cost of \$28,000 and converter dolly cost of \$17,000 – approximate figures supplied by Glasvan Great Dane. That's assuming most fleets are using existing equipment as the trailing trailer, which clearly is not the case.

Whether it's out of necessity or in an effort to put their best foot forward, most fleets seem to be running new equipment all-around on their LCVs. And my highly-unscientific figure does not include engineering costs, which remain the responsibility of the carrier or the untold sums being spent on administering the program and ensuring compliance with the litany of rules.

Assuming each participating carrier has between \$100,000 and \$500,000 invested in the program, the industry at large has invested between \$5 and \$25 million –

again excluding training and administrative costs. All that in a down market and with no assurance the program will continue. That speaks volumes to how important this program is to our province's carriers.

And how about the men and women (one of the very first Ontario drivers certified to pull LCVs was, in fact, a female professional driver) who pilot these behemoths? It goes without saying this program would be dead in the water should even one of these LCVs end up on its side anywhere between Windsor and Cornwall.

So it can be said that in addition to hooking up to a heckuva lot of freight, LCV drivers are also carrying with them the industry's collective \$5-\$25 million investment. That's a heavy load to carry but our drivers are proving they're up to the task. □

– James Menzies can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6896 or by e-mail at [jmenzies@trucknews.com](mailto:jmenzies@trucknews.com). You can also follow him on Twitter at [Twitter.com/JamesMenzies](https://twitter.com/JamesMenzies).



# So long, long nose

Navistar executive Jim Hebe is no stranger to making headlines or being controversial. The two tend to go hand-in-hand and Hebe has seemed comfortable with both his entire career.

His latest headline-grabbing remark that long and tall is "dead and gone" has no doubt raised more than a few eyebrows among owner/operators who still love their long-nose conventionals.

According to the senior vice-president of North American sales operations for the continent's Class 8 market share leader, we're in a whole new world. The classic long-nose conventionals that were the envy of many owner/operators, not to mention fleet owners looking to attract drivers, accounted for 25% of Class 8 sales back in 2000.

Their market share has since dropped to less than 6%. And, according to Hebe, the long-nose conventional is about to be placed on the endangered species list. To be honest, the only thing I find shocking about Hebe's comments is that it has taken this long to come to this conclusion.

Think about it: Trends such as the growing use of intermodal options

## Viewpoint

Lou Smyrlis  
 Editorial Director



for longer hauls, the smaller but more frequent shipments necessitated by online retailers and municipal governments getting pretty ornery about not allowing large trucks near their city cores are serious obstacles to the long-term need for long-nose conventionals. But beyond that, trucking is an industry that operates on thin margins compared to many other industries and even other transport modes such as rail.

One of the most volatile and damaging costs for trucking is fuel. Yet long-nose conventionals are the biggest fuel guzzlers around. The only way for a carrier to be able to justify having such vehicles in its fleet is if it could truly pass on all fuel costs to its clients. And we all know shippers are getting too smart for that to happen.

Many carriers, of course, used to justify adding long-nose conventionals to their fleet because of the

impact that had on attracting drivers. I say perhaps it's time to re-evaluate what kind of drivers we want to attract. Are people who care more about chrome than fuel efficiency really the best people to grow your company with?

You may be able to tolerate them during the boom times but I sure as heck would not want them on my bus when times get bad.

So that leaves the owner/operator as the hardcore buyer for long-nose conventionals into the future. But a new rig depreciates at about \$30,000 a year. As Hebe pointed out, how many finance companies are going to be willing to assume that type of risk with a single individual in this kind of economic environment? Traditional buyers of such equipment I'm certain will have trouble getting financing.

The long-nose conventional has been an icon in our industry for decades. But its time has come and gone. It may have taken the outspoken Hebe to say it; but I think most people in this industry can agree with it. □

– Lou Smyrlis can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6881 or by e-mail at [lou@TransportationMedia.ca](mailto:lou@TransportationMedia.ca). You can also follow him on Twitter at [Twitter.com/LouSmyrlis](https://twitter.com/LouSmyrlis).

## In Brief

## Carrier reps to speak at Driving For Profit event

**CALEDONIA, Ont.** – Representatives from three major carriers will take part in a candid discussion about the trucking industry at the Driving for Profit Seminar series' first event of the New Year April 6.

Rob Penner of Bison Transport, Trevor Kurtz of Kurtz Trucking, and Mark Bylsma of Spring Creek Carriers will join *Truck West's* Lou Smyrlis, who will act as moderator during the event at the Capitol Banquet Centre in Mississauga.

Participants will hear about the companies' best practices, the do's and don'ts of running a successful trucking company, hurdles that many companies are currently dealing with, as well as a look towards the future.

Kim Richardson, president of KRTS Transportation Specialists and partner of the Driving for Profit seminar series, said: "The companies and the individuals representing their companies have a proven track record of success in the trucking industry. We are very pleased that they are taking the time to come and share their knowledge and advice with the participants who will attend this event."

Also presenting will be Alf Brown, head carrier enforcement liaison with the Ministry of Transportation. Brown will speak on issues concerning the largest targeted enforcement program on commercial vehicles in the world for 2010. Marketing tables are available to industry suppliers at a cost of \$500 per table, which includes two passes for the seminar.

For information on the marketing tables, contact Aaron Lindsay at 800-265-1657 ext. 3004. To register, visit [www.drivingforprofit.com](http://www.drivingforprofit.com). □

## The Driver's Seat videos now available individually

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Videos from The Driver's Seat online information video series are now available for individual sale on [Trucknews.com](http://Trucknews.com).

The videos: CSA2010; Coupling/Uncoupling; Pre-Trip Underhood; Pre-Trip Exterior; and Pre-Trip In-Cab are now each available for \$14.95. Just visit [Trucknews.com](http://Trucknews.com), select Online Store from the menu bar on the top and then choose Webinars from the drop-down menu. Or you can simply

visit: [www.trucknews.com/webinars](http://www.trucknews.com/webinars). You can then purchase the video of your choice using your credit card.

The informational videos feature *Truck West* personality Adam Ledlow learning how to safely perform truck-related tasks in an entertaining manner.

They serve as a good refresher course for experienced drivers as well as a tutorial for entry-level drivers, and feature the expertise of trainers from KRTS Transportation Specialists. □

## Regina to establish itself as global transport hub

**REGINA, Sask.** – A meeting of transportation and logistics professionals was held here recently to flush out a vision of establishing the region as a global transportation hub. The Global Transportation Hub Authority (GTHA) Board of Directors held its first meeting last month.

"We have assembled a diverse group of men and women with impeccable credentials in transportation logistics and international trade," GTHA Chair Wayne Elhard said. "With people whose names are instantly recognized in the international business community, the Global Transportation Hub (GTH) vision will quickly become a reality."

Elhard said the board will plan, develop, construct, operate and manage the Global Transportation Hub. Other board members include: Captain Gordon Houston (vice chair), former president and CEO of Port Metro Vancouver; Mayo Schmidt, president and CEO of Viterro; Louis Ranger, former deputy minister, Transport Canada; Marcella Szel, Q.C., former v.p., marketing and sales, Canadian Pacific Rail; Lionel LaBelle, president and CEO, Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership; and Ron Dedman, Deputy Minister, Government Services, Government of Saskatchewan.

The board plans to establish Regina as a major Western Canadian transportation and logistics centre. Among the initiatives already underway is the construction of a new one million square foot Loblaw's distribution centre. Other plans include ramping up rail capacity and improving supply chain access and efficiency. CPR is building a new state-of-the-art intermodal facility as part of the project, which will replace its current downtown Regina facility. The new facility will increase container capacity to about 250,000 TEU lifts per year. New interchanges, highway connectors and access roads are being constructed at a cost of \$167 million. For more info, visit [www.gtha.ca](http://www.gtha.ca). □

## Alberta green lights new log hauling configurations

**EDMONTON, Alta.** – A pilot project by the Alberta forest industry has resulted in an increase to the allowable axle weights and the use of new log hauling configurations, FPIInnovations, Feric Division has announced.

The pilot was first covered by western editor Jim Bray in the January issue of *Truck West*. It allowed the use of two new nine- and 10-axle log configurations with winter payloads of 53 and 59 tonnes respectively.

Among the changes, Alberta has announced it will increase axle weight allowances for six different existing log hauling configurations while also allowing the use of two new nine- and 10-axle B-train configurations. Productivity improvements will range from three to 11 tonnes, depending on configuration, FPIInnovations reports. □



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## EI Benefits: Six questions self-employed people should ask

Being your own boss has many benefits, but access to Canada's federal Employment Insurance plan isn't among them. If you're self-employed and want to take time off to care for an ailing parent or new baby, or your own health prevents you from working, you're on your own. That's changing. Under the EI Measure for Self-Employed People, you can now pay into EI and be eligible to claim certain benefits previously available only to salaried workers and wage-earners: maternity, parental, sickness, and compassionate-care.

You've probably seen TV commercials about this and all the other great new programs and tax cuts the government has made available to Canadians (I think this ad campaign is a government program to help the TV stations get through the recession).

Like anything else coming out of Ottawa, 30 seconds isn't nearly enough time to cover the details. If you're self-employed and thinking about opting into EI, here are some points to consider:

### Are you "self-employed"?

The EI Measure for Self-Employed People defines the "self-employed" as someone who operates his own business or is an employee of a corporation but not eligible to participate in EI because he controls more than 40% of the voting shares.

### What EI benefits can I receive?

There are four types of "special" EI benefits for the self-employed: maternity and parental benefits, for people who are pregnant, have recently given birth, are adopting a child, or are caring for a newborn; sickness benefits, for people who are sick, injured, or quarantined; and compassionate care benefits, for individuals who have to be away from work temporarily to care for a family member who is gravely ill with a significant risk of death. You must wait 12 months from your enrollment date before you can claim EI benefits.

### How much are the premiums?

The premiums are payable on the amount of your earnings up to an annual maximum (\$43,200 in self-employment earnings 2010), based on your income tax return for the year you register. The 2010 EI premium rate for self-employed people is \$1.73 per \$100 of earnings, which is the same rate that employees pay. This means the maximum EI premium you can pay for the 2010 calendar year is \$747.36.

EI premiums are payable on your self-employment income for the entire year, regardless of the date you register. Whether you register in April or December, you'll pay EI premiums on your self-employment income for the entire year.

If you're a shareholder of a corporation and have registered for the program, your EI premiums will be based on the amount of your T4 slip.

### How do I sign up?

Register with the Canada Employment Insurance Commission

### Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



(the Commission) through Service Canada's online 'My Service' account. You must have earned \$6,000 in self-employment income during 2010 to be eligible to file claims in 2011.

After you enroll, you have 60 days to reconsider and opt out without having to pay any premiums. Once the 60-day grace period has elapsed, your participation lasts indefinitely, unless you terminate it.

### How do I opt out?

EI is voluntary for the self-employed, and you can terminate your

participation at any time provided you have never received EI benefits as a self-employed person. Your participation will end on Dec. 31 of the year in which you file the notice of termination with Service Canada.

That means regardless of the date you file the notice of termination, you must pay EI premiums on your self-employment income for the entire calendar year. If you end your agreement on Apr. 20, 2011, you must continue to pay EI premiums until Dec. 31, 2011. Your access to EI special benefits will continue until the end of the year in which you terminate your agreement.

Again, you can only terminate your agreement if you have never claimed EI special benefits during your period of self-employment. If you have received benefits, you cannot terminate your agreement. In other words, after you receive EI

special benefits, you have to continue to pay EI premiums on your self-employment income for the duration of your self-employment career, regardless of any change in the nature of your employment.

### What if I'm out of work?

Remember, this program extends maternity, parental, sickness, and compassionate-care benefits to the self-employed. There's no compensation if you lose your job. Take time to learn the details at [www.servicecanada.gc.ca](http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca). □

— 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](http://www.tfsgroup.com) or call 800-461-5970.

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Profile

# Rewarding trucking career began driving team with husband

Continued from page 1

“You work there,” she remembers. “You keep garden and they have animals, you’re thinning out thorny blackberry bushes – and you’re kind of out of the mayhem of civilization, so to speak. I’m glad I did it but I never want to do it again.”

Meeting Wayne changed her life. “He wanted to go back on the road,” she explains. “And so I literally went from being very active – into sports, horses, that kind of thing – to getting my licence, being a wife and learning to sit still in the cab of a truck for hours on end. That was tough,” she says, her words punctuated by a sparkling laugh.

Friesen says she’ll never forget that first trip, taken in a 32-inch bunk glider kit. “I was straight out of driving school, while Wayne had been driving six or seven years,” she says. “And he’s going from being a bachelor to where he’s got to put up with me in this tiny little cab, which means he’s got to break his old bachelor ways.”

She describes her husband as a focused individual who concentrates on the destination, not the trip. This caused some issues. “I wanted to stop and treat it like a picnic,” she says, “but Wayne said, ‘No way, we have to keep going until we hit our destination.’ You can imagine what that was like!”

They left from Calgary on that



**STILL ROLLING:** Despite many ups and downs, Friesen is still enjoying her career in the trucking industry.

initial adventure, hauling hanging beef to Sydney, N.S., then heading back to Trenton, Ont. to pick up orange juice bound for Vancouver. But somewhere in Ontario, after having a tough time sitting in the cab for about a week straight, Irene decided to go AWOL.

“He didn’t even get that tractor dynamited and I was out of the cab

and running,” she remembers. Her new husband was left wondering if she were planning to return at all. She did, of course, after an hour or so “when I’d kind of gotten my legs again,” she says. “We had a lot of that.”

It was the beginning of a two-year odyssey during which they eventually worked out a system: Wayne

would drop Irene off a mile or two short of their destination and she’d walk to their prearranged meeting place. Their very different personalities ensured, however, that it wouldn’t become a long-term arrangement, and she left the road in the late 1980s, enrolling in nursing school.

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must have wormed their way into her blood, because it wasn't long before she snagged a part-time job hauling milk – heading out to different farms to pick up raw milk and bring it back to what, at the time, was Palm Dairies. "I came home smelling like an old barn," she says, "but I enjoyed the job."

Daughter Brittany was born during that time and Friesen continued her milk runs part-time, even taking the new addition to the family along with her. "She was about a year old and she had a great time, hiding out in the bunk and going to see the cows," Friesen says.

Then her husband, who was driving trucks again after having taken time off to pursue a career as a travel agent, made a surprise announcement.

"I came home from school one day," Irene says, "and Wayne tells me he got me this part-time job working with him. I didn't know what to think because I hadn't even applied and I wasn't really interested. But he likes the togetherness of a husband and wife team."

So it was back into the cab, which required a new balancing act – work and a young family. That balancing act ended up minimizing the "together time" Wayne and Irene had on the road, but it was successful nonetheless. "We were working off of one truck," Friesen says. "He would be home with Brittany when I would work and vice-versa, so there was always a parent at home."

They kept up that arrangement for several years, during which time their son, Brandon, was born.

As the kids got older, the Friesens started going out in separate trucks, with her starting at nine in the morning so she could take the kids to school and Wayne starting at 3 a.m. so he could pick them up afterward.

Irene eventually earned another opportunity to stay closer to home when Trimac offered her a gig as a driver-trainer. It involves taking new drivers for a road test and, she says, "If I'm happy with it they go up for more training and then they come back to me."

She teaches them their paperwork, the pneumatics, loading and unloading and the like, "basically from the point where they know nothing to where they're comfortable and ready to go."

She still spends time behind the wheel, too, though she tries to limit herself to day trips. "What I didn't like (about driving) was the long distance," she says. "I'm too much of a social butterfly and being on the road and always in an environment where you don't belong, I didn't enjoy that."

Her day trips currently are mostly around the city of Calgary, but she also runs to points between Edmonton and Lethbridge. Until last fall, she also hauled coal from the Line Creek mine in the Elk Valley of British Columbia, about a three-and-a-half hour drive from Calgary, delivering the product to Exshaw, about an hour west of the city. Friesen remembers that it could be a difficult trip sometimes, though she says she never got tired of the beauty of the spectacular Elk Valley.

Hauling the coal was especially challenging during winter snowfalls.

"The first year, we ended up pulling Super-B combination trailers," she says, "and they were not nice." The trailers, she explains, open by clam doors and quite often the rams would get frozen, "so we're sitting up in Exshaw for three, four hours trying to open up the doors. We had to use come-alongs and I tell you it was tough, not fun at all."

She persisted, though she was one of the few who did. "They had a full crew of guys, mostly out of the Crowsnest Pass," she says. "And they only retained about two. The rest couldn't handle it."

Things have improved since then, she says. "They've treated the coal with calcium chloride so it comes out easier now, and they also installed a heat shed so you have these huge heat elements that make things easier."

Despite the improvements, she still finds herself wanting to stay closer to home. "It's funny, but as I get older even that day trip is getting to be too long," she says.

Fortunately for her, it looks as if her wish is coming true. Not only is she tapped regularly to fill in at the office when the local manager is off, but her training duties are about to increase.

"They have moved the training centre down to Calgary," she says. "And the driver-trainer called and said he needs some help and he'd like me to give classroom training as well."

So she'll be doing a little driving, a little fill-in as a desk jockey, and a little training – and that suits her just fine. "I love the variety," she says. "I'm just going to be assisting everybody and the nice thing is that I still get to keep my truck," a 2006 Western Star "with only 147,000 clicks on it."

As if she doesn't have enough irons in the fire, Friesen is also vice-president of Trimac's drivers' association. "If drivers have any problems or issues," she says, "if they've been unfairly treated or terminated by the company or whatever, they come to us and we try to iron it out. We are also involved in their fact finding."

And she'll continue sharing job and parenting responsibilities with husband, Wayne, hauling cement, mostly.

"Coal isn't a steady run for us Calgary guys," she notes. "So we just help out as required." She says the company has two trucks dedicated to two drivers, "one of whom happens to be my husband," she notes, "and he and I will slip-seat off it." She says that, if everything goes well, it's about an 11-hour day for them, but, "We figure out our own shift, so it works out quite well."

Friesen has high praise for Trimac, which allows the couple the flexibility to schedule the job around their lives. "They've been super," she says, "With a good staff and a good team."

Being a woman in a man's world has made Friesen a bit of an oddity, she acknowledges, but says it was never a problem.

"I knew that all eyes were on me when I was initially hired," she says. "And I knew I had to be twice as good as the guys to be considered one of them." One of her policies was to always leave a truck cleaner than she found it and "For the most part it all worked out fine. I never ran into any issues at all. I got that respect early and it paid off."

She's also very careful to manage possible male/female issues right off the bat. "I have a boundary and (the men) know I won't take any guff," she says. That includes swearing. "I tell the guys as soon as they step into the truck that (swearing) is just so unprofessional. I have very high standards, and so I instill that respect right from the beginning."

Friesen says acting professionally is something she learned early on. "They knew I was married and I worked within those parameters." It hasn't all been sweetness and light, though, and she has mentored men who scared her.

Friesen remembers one such man in particular. "They sent me on a trip down to the Crowsnest with him," she says. "They wanted me to assess his driving because he'd locked horns really badly with another driver. So they put him with me and I had to be quite firm with

him – and at the end of a couple of days he wasn't hired. He was an interesting case; I wouldn't want him on our team."

Friesen says the respect she has earned from the guys is one of the reasons the company wanted her to be a trainer.

"I'm very friendly and I can relate to the students because I remember what it's like to drive, and to learn. They know they're being evaluated and they're nervous. I take that into account."

Friesen's advice to young women who may want to pursue a career in trucking is simple: Don't lower your standards.

"Ask for help when you need it," she says, "but, especially for a woman, don't cross that boundary (between being a friend and being a colleague)." She advises young women to be friendly to the guys, "but don't lead them on – you're one of them and don't take advantage of being a female." It boils down, she says, to "do the work and act like one of the guys. Act professionally."

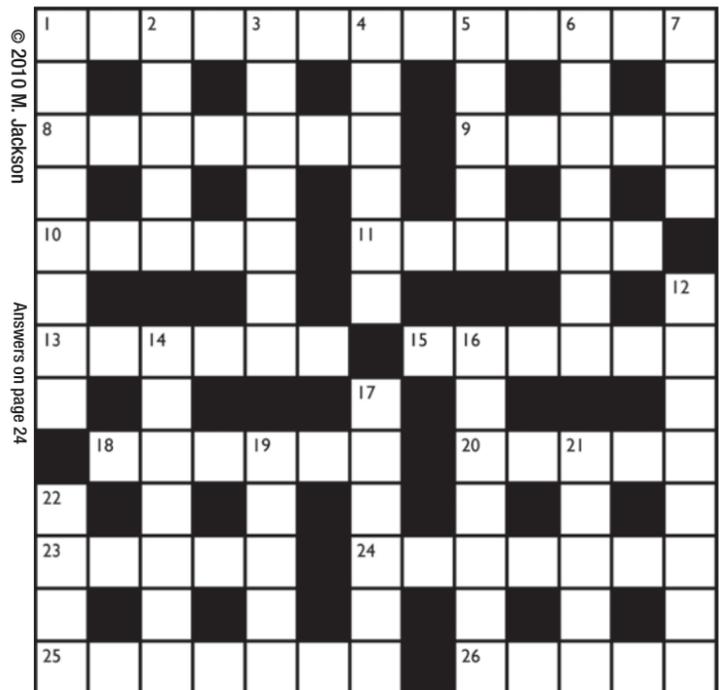
As it turns out, Friesen received much of her own training from a perfectionist: her husband. "If I even scratched a gear," she says, "he would let me know about it. But it's paid off in the long run because they've obviously noted that I'm a good driver and they want me teaching."

Quite a change from the teenager whose only goal involving the trucking industry was to avoid becoming part of it! □

'I knew I had to be twice as good as the guys to be considered one of them.'

Irene Friesen

## THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



**Across**

- 1. Certain cargo restraints (7,6)
- 8. Driver's assistant, slangily
- 9. Press term for International LoneStar
- 10. Tractor-tire type
- 11. Driveshaft's flexible coupling (1,5)
- 13. Truck-leasing alternative
- 15. Fifth-wheel lube
- 18. Delectable truck-stop-menu items
- 20. Border state between WA and MT
- 23. The \_\_\_\_\_, Montreal's moniker
- 24. Item in income-tax file, perhaps
- 25. Sixty-acre truck stop in Bangor, ME
- 26. Suffers corrosion

**Down**

- 1. Trip pause (4,4)
- 2. Factor in new-truck deal, perhaps
- 3. A Castrol diesel-engine oil
- 4. Diesel-engine output
- 5. Power-boosting engine add-on
- 6. Mirror-mounted CB adjunct
- 7. Octagonal-sign instruction
- 12. Alters the normal traffic path
- 14. Auto-transporters' cargo, often (3,4)
- 16. Cargo-container transport, sometimes
- 17. Former GMC cabovers
- 19. A bunk-heater brand
- 21. Trucker's CB handle, you might say
- 22. Truck dealer's "pre-owned"

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Opinion

# Transitioning to a life after trucking can be a challenge

One day as I was driving through New Mexico, the scenery slid by my windows in pastel colours of red and ochre. I was on my way to Los Angeles, opting to take the southern route to avoid a winter storm up north.

As I drove, I started thinking about friends with the typical nine-to-five day job. What did they see out their office windows? Certainly nothing as visually stunning as the New Mexico desert.

They got up at the same time every weekday, left the house at about the same time each morning and drove the same way to work. They took their lunch at the same time each day and every night they drove the same route home again.

To me, it seemed an inconceivable lifestyle. A lifestyle I would have to adapt to sooner than I could ever have imagined.

## Guest Column

Alistair Lowe



When I was a boy of seven or eight, my neighbour's father owned a moving company. On weekends he would take us to the office and we would play in the warehouse, chase each other on pallet jacks or have a blast raising and lowering the forks on the forklift.

Occasionally one of the *really* big trucks would come in from the US. One of the drivers always let us climb into his cab, wide-eyed and marveling at all the chrome, the switches and the chairs that raised up and down on air.

For two small boys, it didn't get any better than this.

Fast-forward 25 years. I was picking up a load in a small town outside Albany, N.Y. The forklift driver was new and having trouble loading the 750-lb crates. Fate came crashing down and changed my life when a crate was knocked over onto me. At first, typical guy, I shook off my sore arm, shoulder and back.

I took a couple days off, thinking I had pulled a muscle or two, then grabbed a load to Kansas City, Kansas. For the first time in my life I almost turned the truck around halfway there. The pain in my back was atrocious. But I kept it together and got the load delivered and returned home.

After a battery of tests including cat scans and MRIs, I was told I had a couple herniated discs, one with a tear in it. That crate did far

more damage than I realized.

I would never be a trucker again.

Luckily we have the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) for times like this when we need their help the most. I needed a new plan. What was I going to do? What could I do? I finished high school with my Grade 12, but the only jobs I was qualified for required physical work I could no longer handle.

I had to go back to school and learn a new profession. At 35 years old, it was a terrifying prospect to start again.

I was leaving everything I knew and loved behind and was venturing into a world I knew nothing about.

The WSIB gave me some tests to see what professions I could potentially excel at and one of them was journalism. So I was going to college.

For me, being out of work brought a certain amount of shame. I was embarrassed that I didn't have a job. At parties and the like the inevitable question arose, "What do you do?"

And although most people thought returning to school was admirable, to me it meant being unemployed. Questions and worries raced through my mind constantly. Would I fit in? Could I do it? What would the other students think of this broken down old trucker? My classmates would be almost 20 years my junior. I was going to stick out like a sore thumb.

The first day of classes wasn't easy. I walked fast and kept my head down, hoping not to get lost on my way to the lecture hall. But somehow I got through it, despite missing trucking the entire time.

I would have given anything to take a load to Vancouver.

To this day, whenever I see a large car on the highway I always imagine driving it, wondering where it's off to, and the things the driver will see along the way.

Now, at the end of my courses I can look back and see the learning curve I've travelled over the past four years.

The kids in my classes were alright to work with after all and it wasn't nearly as bad as I thought. Finances have been a struggle but I'll soon be gainfully employed once more.

However, a new challenge is on the horizon. Returning to the working world. I will have to wear a shirt and tie.

The view out of my office window will never change and I'll be one of those people driving the same way to work every morning. Another scary change. But believe me, if I can do it, anyone can.

So I've gone from trucker to writer. And although I may not be in a truck, I've been changing gears all the while. □

*- Alistair Lowe is embarking on a new career in the field of corporate communications. He wrote this column exclusively for Truck West to share his experience of adapting to life after trucking.*

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 g)  Construction / Mining / Sand & Gravel  
 h)  Petroleum / Dry Bulk / Chemicals / Tank  
 i)  Manufacturing / Processing  
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## Health

## Minding your pees and queues

On the road, frequent pit stops can really affect your bottom line. Yet, if you've ever come down with a urinary tract infection (UTI), you know that the need for frequent urination is one of the first annoying symptoms. Considering that the kidneys really just filter our blood, it's a wonder we don't have more UTIs. About a quarter of our body's blood travels through the kidneys, which then separate waste products and excess amounts of minerals, sugar, and other chemicals for elimination.

These waste products become part of the urine, which flows through "ureters" (one per kidney) into the bladder, where it is stored until you are ready to get rid of it. To urinate, the muscles in the bladder wall help push urine out of the bladder, through the urethra, and out of the body.

Usually, urine is sterile, which is good, since the mineral content of urine makes it ideal for bacteria to grow in. So ideally, there should be no bacteria in the urine.

In fact, most UTIs are caused by bacteria entering from the outside. Fortunately, the body has lots of safeguards to prevent bacteria from reaching the kidneys. To begin, the

### Preventive Maintenance

Karen Bowen



urethral sphincter keeps bacteria from beginning a climb up the urethra. Then, if bacteria get in, they must travel quite far to reach the kidneys since the connecting ureters are quite long.

As well, the simple act of urination flushes bacteria away, since most people empty their bladders almost completely when they urinate. Additionally, valves where the ureters enter the bladder prevent urine from "refluxing" from the bladder to the kidneys. Therefore, even when the bladder or urine is infected, the bacteria shouldn't be able to travel up to the kidneys.

Sometimes though, kidney stones or an enlarged prostate gland may contribute to a UTI by not allowing the bladder to empty completely. In these cases, germs aren't eliminated efficiently.

What are the symptoms of a UTI? Although not everyone develops

obvious symptoms, the common ones are: a strong, persistent urge to urinate; a burning sensation when urinating; an ability to only excrete small amounts of urine; blood or bacteria in the urine; and/or cloudy, strong-smelling urine.

A UTI in a specific area of the urinary tract has these specific symptoms: If it's in the urethra, there's burning when you urinate. If it's in the bladder, there's pelvic pressure and discomfort in the lower abdomen. As well, you'll have a low-grade fever and have frequent, painful urination. If it's in the kidneys, you'll have a high fever with shaking and chills. You'll also have pain in your upper back and side, and nausea and vomiting.

See a doctor immediately if you have painful urination and any of the following: nausea and vomiting; fever and chills; shaking and night sweats; pain in the back just below the rib cage; pain on one side of your body; pain in the groin; or, severe abdominal pain.

These are signs that the infection has spread to your kidneys, which is particularly dangerous because it could lead to internal, permanent scarring of the kidneys. This scarring could hinder your body's ability to filter and remove liquid wastes for the rest of your life.

Consider calling a doctor if: you have had a UTI previously that required medical attention and you're feeling the same symptoms again; you have blood or pus in your urine; you have diabetes; you've been prescribed and taken antibiotics but your symptoms didn't improve or they came right back as soon as you stopped taking the drugs; or, you have taken self-help actions, but your symptoms have not gone away.

For preventive and self-help actions, I suggest that you: drink lots of water; urinate frequently to flush the bacteria from your urinary tract; urinate when you feel the urge; avoid constipation; maintain excellent hygiene; wear cotton underwear; avoid tight-fitting pants. Then, if you still get an infection, soak in a hot tub or use a heating pad to ease the discomfort.

If you are prone to getting UTIs, drink cranberry juice or take cranberry pills daily. But, don't use cranberry products if you have a history of kidney stones. Urinary tract infections are usually avoidable. Use common sense to handle this common condition. □

— Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant and she can be reached by e-mail at karen\_bowen@yahoo.com.

## Trucking's health crisis can be addressed by employers

Most knowledgeable and informed members of the trucking industry will candidly admit there is a serious health crisis amongst truckers. Sure, it's easy to identify the most obvious contributing factors to our condition: a sedentary lifestyle, smoking, poor eating habits, irregular sleep patterns, obesity, stress...the list can go on. The apparent remedy seems simple enough, exercise, quit smoking, eat and sleep better. But it's not so simple. Beyond blaming the trucking industry for our condition, what is the real basis or cause for drivers to disregard their health, their hygiene, their appearance?

What I've come to realize is the problem is psychological, rooted in environmental circumstances. I've been trucking for over 30 years, I'm physically fit, I have a positive attitude, and I'm very conscientious of my appearance, both on- and off-duty.

On the other hand one fellow driver confided to me while waiting for inspection clearance that he no longer had 'the will to live!' On further discussion, he told me he no longer had friends, merely acquaintances, was having marital problems, and no real desire to get into shape.

Yet he seemed to be reasonably, outwardly happy and successful in his chosen profession.

I once met a man who had been a member of the special forces in the military who, as he put it 'was a lean, mean, killing machine.' Yet after leaving the forces and becoming a trucker, he had gained over 100 lbs in just over a year and a half.

And what of the drivers I've stood behind in a line at some

### Guest Column

Alfy R.E. Meyer



truck stops who have clearly not showered or washed their clothes for several days or longer?

The fact that we are engaged in a service industry should impress upon these men and women that their appearance and presentation is important to the customers they serve.

Yet even the companies they work for seem disinterested in their drivers' appearance or their overall well-being.

This pervasive attitude within the industry speaks volumes as to why there is such a malaise amongst its drivers.

Many drivers I've spoken to express the feeling that they are merely indentured servants, feeling little or no pride or dignity in their jobs.

Their families and friendships are suffering from their long absences as they try to meet the industry's demands and expectations.

So what can be done aside from an overhauling of the whole industry? Perhaps by considering the physical needs of the drivers and working with both them and the customer, a viable solution can be developed.

Management should genuinely express concern and interest in their drivers' families and social well-being and even encourage drivers to take the occasional mental health time off. Perhaps

bring in speakers or organize periodic health/exercise/therapy events. Provide incentives like rewards for weight loss, simple fitness equipment (resistance bands, workout CDs, portable steppers, etc.) and even provide subsidized gym memberships.

Dispatchers need to be educated on the proper handling of company drivers. Instruct them that home/family time is sacrosanct and they shouldn't harass a driver to come in early because there's a load that just has to go. Dispatchers need to book loads so the driver has sufficient time to deliver it without having to sacrifice his/her sleep or off-duty time.

It might be nice if they showed some interest in the drivers' progress if they're trying to quit smoking, lose weight or get involved in certain activities. Remember, it's lonely out there and a friendly familiar voice of encouragement can motivate a driver to put in a little extra effort for his/her dispatcher.

When I joined the company I currently work for as an O/O eight years ago, I was barely treading water financially and emotionally. It wasn't too long afterwards that working here put the 'joy of trucking' back into vogue for me.

The original owners of this company live and work by the 'Golden Rule' – treat other people as you would like them to treat you. They don't exploit or take unfair advantage of their drivers.

I've found all reasonable requests for time off is approved without debate. A number of our dispatchers have family who are drivers, so they tend to treat us as they'd like their family to be treat-

ed, with respect and consideration.

The drivers are generally supported by management who are willing to consider their suggestions, concerns and even protests. They even support us financially should we O/Os be encumbered with a large repair bill on the road. We are paid for all the work we do – no freebies! This includes sweeping out a trailer, our pre-trips, all pick-ups and deliveries, border crossings, etc.

Our company maintains its equipment to excellent standards. This takes much of the anxiety away from a driver when it comes to travelling safely down the road or crossing a scale.

They encourage and maintain an exceptional safety record. This too diminishes our anxiety when dealing with various enforcement agencies. Drivers are even given the responsibility of determining if road and weather conditions are conducive to safe driving. This company actively participates in a wellness/fitness program put on by a community hospital.

I could go on, but suffice it to say, these are some factors that will contribute to a more positive driving environment and improved productivity. Most importantly, our drivers are less stressed and are generally in better condition, psychologically if not physically than many of their truck stop peers and acquaintances. I know this for a fact because many of our customers tell us so! So how are your drivers doing? □

— Alfy Meyer is a health-conscious owner/operator who's concerned about the health of the trucking industry's drivers.

# Keeping an open mind about potential of electronic on-board recorders

I've always had difficulty with the hours-of-service (HoS) rules. I have a good understanding of the rules and can log as creatively as the next person.

That's the problem – logging creatively. Ask a thousand drivers to complete their “driver's daily log” under a given set of circumstances and you will get a thousand variations on the same theme. Each driver will struggle to match their unique individual needs and the unique needs of the industry niche they work in to the rules.

The stated purpose of the HoS rules is to try to ensure that a driver is not fatigued to an extent that he or she cannot operate a commercial vehicle safely.

It is not the intent of the HoS legislation, or the sleep science that supports it, that I take issue with. The problem lies in how the rules are applied.

The lack of flexibility within the rules is what has led to the accepted practice by drivers of gaming the system through the driver's daily log.

The whole industry, including enforcement, has been complicit in this charade since HoS rules first came into play.

I suffer from fatigue on a regular and ongoing basis. Whether you are ready to admit it or not, many of you reading this do also. The rules are not fulfilling their

## Over the Road

Al Goodhall



stated intent of ensuring a driver is not fatigued.

So what should the rules look like? I think Joanne Ritchie summed it up best in her December 2009 column that appeared in *Truck West* entitled *Fifteen years and counting*: “I believe it's high time that a true fatigue management plan was brought to the table, one that allows drivers to manage their own internal and very individual need for rest within the confines of a workable set of limits on drive time and prescribed minimums for daily rest.”

I couldn't agree more.

Enter the Electronic On-Board Recorder (EOBR). Under the supervision of the EOBR, the rules are no longer interpreted. Driving time is what it is and happens when it happens. Period. I've had the opportunity to work with an EOBR in my truck for the last nine months or so and I like it.

The EOBR may prove to be a driver's best friend and the agent of change our industry needs to put the debate on hours-of-service to bed once and for all. Huh? I

know, you're thinking there is no way big brother's black box could ever be a friend of yours, right?

The EOBR provides enforcement officials with compliance data that cannot be questioned. The driving time is what it is.

The driving time data on the electronic daily log is gathered directly from the truck's electronic control module and a sensor on the drive axle. Gaming of the system on the part of the driver no longer exists.

The 70-hour work week remains in place for a driver providing plenty of time to get the freight to the receiver on time. Drivers will no longer be reporting a 70-hour week and working an 80- to 90-hour week.

So you think an EOBR will have a negative impact on your income because it limits the amount of time you can drive? Don't be overly concerned.

The industry can't afford to have you driving fewer miles. Inefficiencies in the system will quickly be eliminated. This bodes well for drivers. We will benefit from a reduction in dock delays and less time waiting between loads. The EOBR will force *all* players in the industry to be more accountable for their actions.

I think it's high time our lifestyle issues, our work/life balance issues, are brought to the forefront.

There is no better way to do this than through the HoS rules that lie at the core of our daily routine. The question of whether or not a driver is complying with the rules needs to be taken out of the equation for our own benefit. The EOBR does this very effectively.

EOBRs are part of the rapid technological growth we are experiencing across our whole culture. They are first and foremost an information tool, gathering huge amounts of data and providing us with valuable knowledge.

Do we possess the wisdom to apply this newfound knowledge in effective and productive ways? Will we be able to work smarter and not harder? Will the industry come to recognize that focusing on improving the driver's lifestyle is the key to improving productivity and profitability? Can we move away from seeing the EOBR as a “black box” with the sole purpose of enforcing compliance?

I think the EOBR has opened the door to improving our lifestyle. It is a discussion we all need to take part in. □

– Al Goodhall has been a professional long-haul driver since 1998. He shares his experiences via his 'Over the Road' blog at <http://truckingacrosscanada.blogspot.com> and you can follow him on Twitter at [Twitter.com/Al\\_Goodhall](http://Twitter.com/Al_Goodhall).

## Opinion

### EOBRs? Let's fix what's really broken

After close to a decade of dithering about black boxes, regulators are finally looking seriously at developing a national standard to mandate the use of EOBRs in commercial vehicles. In the spring of 2009, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) got its marching orders from the Council of Deputy Ministers of Transportation to explore issues related to an EOBR mandate, and report back with recommendations in the fall of 2010. A project group was struck, with representatives from several provincial ministries as well as Transport Canada, and that group is now seeking the input from stakeholders.

While the Canadian Trucking Alliance – chief proponent of the mandate – has been working with CCMTA on this for several years, the EOBR project group released its first public discussion paper on Feb. 18, inviting feedback by March 11. Allowing a mere three weeks, by the way, to assemble and submit comments leaves me wondering – again – just how anxious they are to get input from the steering wheel crowd, but that's another story.

The discussion paper does a very good job of outlining the pros and cons of an EOBR mandate, and examines the issues from several perspectives, including technology standardization, security and privacy concerns, the accuracy and ultimate admissibility of EOBR data as evidence, cost burdens, and more.

For example, the discussion paper

## Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie



mentions – more than a few times – the efficiency gains and cost reduction potential associated with maintaining drivers' HoS records electronically, and ultimately the cost of auditing those records. The advantages of EOBRs, in this context, would be best realized by larger fleets and the enforcement community. Small fleets could benefit here as well, but on a much different scale. Absent from the paper, however (it's completely ignored, actually) are the operational challenges that will result from hardwired adherence to a rule that is very difficult to comply with 100% of the time in the real world.

So, if an elite group of large fleets and the cops are to be the principle beneficiaries of an EOBR mandate, what costs and other burdens will be imposed on the rest of the industry in order to satisfy those needs?

Don't forget, most of Canada's trucking industry consists of very small to small fleets (25 or fewer trucks), which means we could be throwing close to 75% of the industry population under the bus to garner cost savings and efficiencies for the rest. OBAC's brief to the EOBR project group will outline our position on all aspects of a possible man-

date, and you can rest assured we'll be putting a number of driver-side-of-the-steering-wheel issues on the table that no-one else is raising. But I have one nagging concern I'd like to raise here.

Proponents of government-mandated EOBRs always play the “safety card” up front (shades of speed-limiters), and this, unfortunately, has become the jumping-off point for much of the ensuing debate. Let's be clear about one thing from the get-go: EOBRs will *not* make our roads safer. To its credit, CCMTA admits as much in the discussion paper. “...there is limited data to support the assertion that EOBRs would significantly improve the rate of fatigue-related accidents involving commercial vehicles,” the paper states, adding, “companies using EOBRs report improved compliance with hours-of-service; however, there are no empirical data to show that EOBRs directly reduce driver fatigue.” Further, author of a paper called *Safety for the Long Haul: Large Truck Crash Risk, Causation, & Prevention*, Dr. Ron Knipling, says the claim that EOBRs will reduce crashes through improved compliance with HoS is “at best, weakly true.”

He explains that the link between HoS compliance and safety (read, crash reduction) is weak as well. “Hours of driving is not a primary factor affecting driver fatigue and crash risk,” he says in a recently-published editorial. “The main factors affecting fatigue are inadequate sleep, excessive time awake, daily ‘circadian’ low periods (such as 3-6 a.m.), and individual differences in

fatigue susceptibility. None of these fatigue factors is directly addressed by hours-of-service rules...”

Nor, one would have to conclude, would these factors be addressed by EOBRs. It would follow then, that EOBR-imposed compliance with HoS would have little measurable impact on highway safety. So, if we're looking at an EOBR mandate, let's at least be up-front about the motives.

If HoS compliance is the real goal, we need to have an honest debate about why paper logbooks are, as many carriers and drivers agree, a joke. We need to question a system that requires – often encourages – drivers to hide a great deal of their wasted time on the top line of the log. EOBRs might make it harder to disguise the number of hours drivers waste, but they won't make those hours go away – and they won't help drivers make up for income lost to inefficient shippers and poor trip planning. Rather than looking for government to mandate EOBRs, perhaps the industry needs to take a hard look at itself and replace the incentive to cheat with a system that encourages compliance. If drivers were compensated for all their time spent on-duty doing something other than driving, we'd be taking a step in the right direction.

At the end of the day, tighter monitoring of a broken system by any means – whether paper or electronic – is ludicrous. The real debate should be how to fix the system. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call 888-794-9990.



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## Safety

# Due diligence begins with the driver application form

Economic conditions seem to influence hiring practices in more ways than one. Business volumes will always dictate whether a driver's seat needs to be filled, and due diligence should not take a back seat when the freight needs to move right away.

But the earliest steps in the hiring process can identify the differ-

ence between high-risk drivers and those who will become valuable additions to a team.

A fleet's commitment to due diligence emerges with something as fundamental as its application form, which in the case of cross-border drivers will need to collect at least 10 years of employment

history. Typically, the documents also include space for a signature that offers permission to complete valuable reference checks.

Many past employers will still cite privacy issues and limit their comments to details such as the length of employment, but there will always be opportunities to ask revealing questions such as whether someone would ever re-hire an individual.

A number of related documents can be used to confirm the information provided in the form itself. Every inspection recorded on a Commercial Vehicle Operator's Registration (CVOR), for example, will include a date and the name of the company. That can be matched to the work history. In contrast, a candidate who provides a driver's abstract that is more than 30 days old may be trying to hide details about recent collisions or other issues that can be the hallmark of a high-risk driver.

It is important information to collect. Every moving violation tells a story and the drivers who record multiple violations in the span of 12 months face a higher chance of becoming involved in a collision in the year to come. The file that begins to emerge will also need to include the details of pre-employment drug testing results before a driver is allowed to cross the border.

Auditors with the US Department of Transportation often check for this information and can issue a fine for each case where the results are not on file. That offers yet another reason to focus on required documentation.

Of course, due diligence is not limited to paperwork. The interview process itself presents a great opportunity to determine if an individual is a perfect fit for a specific job and clear up any misconceptions that may exist. A driver with a young family who has never been exposed to a long-haul route may not even realize that a particular job will take them away from home

## Ask the Expert

Evelyn Cartmill



two weeks at a time.

Each question in the related discussion will offer a little more information about the person sitting at the other side of the table, and a well-phrased query can lead to a particularly revealing answer. An open-ended question such as, "Tell me about a situation when you disagreed with a manager and how the situation was resolved?" can offer insight into everything from a commitment to teamwork to this individual's favourite aspects of a job.

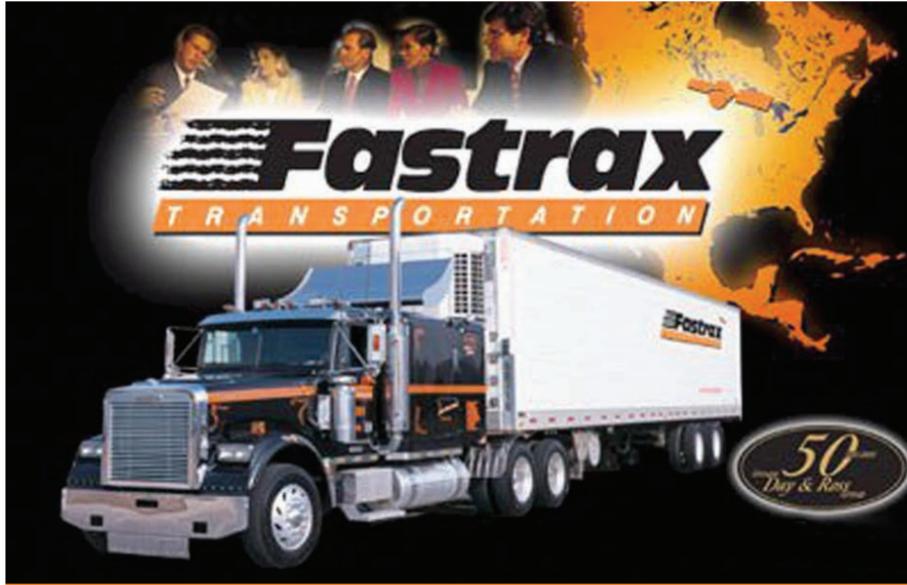
Beyond the interview, a thorough road test can answer many of the questions about skills at the wheel as long as the process is not rushed. Given a two-hour test, drivers will begin to let down their guard and offer insight into everyday habits. Candidates who are simply nervous about the thought of a test will begin to ease into their usual routines, while their high-risk counterparts will begin to show signs of trouble.

The report card that emerges can guide an informed hiring decision and identify habits that can be corrected with some additional training.

The early days of the hiring process even present a great opportunity to introduce a successful candidate to policies, procedures and related paperwork with the help of a strong orientation program. A tour through various departments will give them the opportunity to put a face to the names they will hear in the days to come, and once they see repairs in action they will understand the importance of reporting any defects in equipment.

Of course, the efforts do not end here. Carriers who would never think of hiring a driver with more than three points on an abstract would want to continue to monitor employees throughout their careers, identifying any of the bad habits that emerge and correcting issues as they come along. And even the most experienced drivers will require a proper assessment and training when hired by a new fleet. A true commitment to due diligence never ends. □

- This month's expert is Evelyn Cartmill, STS senior advisor, CHRP, CRM. Evelyn has served the trucking industry for over 15 years in the areas of human resources, safety and compliance. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Markel is the country's largest trucking insurer. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to [info@markel.ca](mailto:info@markel.ca). To read about more industry hot topics, visit Markel's website at [www.markel.ca](http://www.markel.ca) and click on the Articles & Essays section.



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# Grading the 07 engines

**TAMPA, Fla.** – The transition to engines meeting 2007 emissions standards was expected to be relatively trouble-free when compared to the early days of Exhaust Gas Recirculation. Yes, the 2007 standards introduced the industry to Diesel Particulate Filters (DPFs), but earlier generations of emissions-controlling equipment were rushed to market. This time, there was more testing. Even fuel supplies were upgraded to give the components some added protection.

Curtis Cummings, project manager for power vehicles at FedEx Freight, certainly offered a “good” grade when reporting on his experience during the annual meeting of the Technology and Maintenance Council (TMC). There was no change in Preventive Maintenance intervals. The fleet even continued to use existing CI-4 Plus oils without experiencing any filter plugging. Durability improved and fuel economy was up 1.8%.

Steve Duley, vice-president of purchasing at Schneider National, admittedly had a few more challenges. The base engines are reliable, but there have been defects linked to the DPF sensors and fuel dosing components, he said of the 1,876 power units now in service with Schneider. The new engines also represented a 3% increase in work orders and more DPF regenerations than expected. Still, service was good and reliability has been improving.

The transition to the new technology has obviously presented some fleets with more challenges than others. In a poll of 120 fleet representatives attending the TMC meeting, about 60% said they faced more challenges with 2007 emissions hardware when compared to previous models.

Sixty-nine per cent cited more maintenance issues, even though 67% noted that maintenance intervals were relatively unchanged. Fifty-eight per cent experienced more road breakdowns compared to the 35% who thought the experience was about the same.

Frank Nicholson faced his share of nightmares at TransAm Trucking, a long-haul refrigerated carrier that has recorded 120 million miles on 971 of the engines. “The list of problems is varied and lengthy,” the fleet’s vice-president of maintenance said. “Our overall scorecard for ’07 iron is unacceptable. There have been constant parts availability issues and we have been working

## Technical Correspondent

John G. Smith



our way through various campaigns and issues.”

Extended warranty packages skew true costs, but downtime has increased by 125%, with the length of time in the shop averaging four days and reaching as long as two weeks in extreme cases. “We incur out-of-route and deadhead miles just to cover a load and to maintain our on-time delivery percentages,” he added.

What went wrong specifically? Nicholson pointed to a litany of problems. Additional Preventive Maintenance steps were required for the thermostat, clean gas induction components such as the piping assembly, the crankcase filter, check valve and DPF. Parts costs jumped 37% and labour costs jumped 50% when the new equipment was compared to engines built prior to the 2007 emission guidelines.

The added maintenance requirements might even be a surprise to some users, he suggested: “Many fleets and even dealerships are not aware of the crankcase ventilation filter and the crankcase filter check valve.” It took three years before a supplier informed him about the check valve in the engine block, consisting of a small screen with a brass fitting. It is now cleaned every 30,000 miles.

“Driveability has been acceptable – when you can drive it,” he said. “The EPA 2007 engine has been plagued with various campaigns and updates right from the start, and still continues to this day.”

Meanwhile, oil analysis programs showed unacceptable levels of iron, chromium, copper and aluminum. Some increases were as much as 30% over allowable limits. “We operated without SOS criteria for two or three years,” he notes, referring to how the allowable limits were unknown.

Thermostats are also requiring preventive maintenance every 200,000 miles to address overcooling. “Oil is emulsifying and plugging the filter,” he added. “When it fails, it’s in a stuck-open position.”

One of the few positive notes was that there was no measurable difference in fuel economy, but he largely attributes that to a more fuel-effi-

cient chassis. The regeneration of the DPF is still thought to consume more fuel. Of course, most fleets seem to have challenges of one sort or another.

YRC Worldwide, an LTL carrier with 1,688 of the 2007 engines, required some additional engine programming to allow the Diesel Particulate Filter to regenerate when the vehicles were parked, said procurement manager Dan Miller.

“We weren’t getting enough regeneration going down the road based on climate condition, being cold, or light loads and short hauls,” he explained. Drivers also had to be trained to notify the fleet when related warning lights were lit.

“Distribute literature to drivers. Post things on bulletin boards so they know what to expect. Let them see what the icon is going to look like in the dash so they kind of know what to expect,” he suggested. “And one of the things we’ve had to say on top of in our shop environment is to make sure mechanics have their

software updates.”

Meanwhile, every driver at Schneider National receives one hour of training on the new engine technology, while general mechanics get a five-hour session and lead mechanics receive 35 to 40 hours of training. Granted, the 2007 generation of engines still offer some of the worst fuel economy in the fleet at Schneider National.

When compared to older engines, 2004 models were accompanied by a 4% increase in fuel consumption, and 2005 engines improved somewhat with a 3% increase. The 2007 engines experienced a 5% sacrifice in fuel economy.

“Fuel economy has not been where it needs to be,” Miller agrees, referring to his fleet’s experience. But his fleet has tried to offset the impact using everything from fuel-efficient tires to training.

As for the durability of the engines that are now in service? “I think that’s still being determined,” Miller says. “The jury’s still out.” □

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### POST 2007 VS PRE 2007 TMC FLEET SURVEY (120 responses)

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durability	8%	44%	48%
fuel economy	24%	33%	43%
maintenance intervals	11%	67%	22%
maintenance issues	7%	24%	69%
emissions hardware	7%	33%	60%
driver satisfaction	10%	48%	42%
out of service	7%	27%	66%
replacement parts	6%	46%	48%
road breakdowns	7%	35%	58%

## Wakefield takes over BP Lubricants plant

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Wakefield Canada has inked a deal to purchase a Toronto-based Castrol blending and packaging plant from BP Lubricants.

As per the agreement, Wakefield will assume ownership and manufacturing responsibilities for the plant, where it will blend and package most Castrol products for the Canadian market. Wakefield will maintain its exclusive sales, marketing and distribution rights for Castrol commercial lubricants in Canada, the company announced.

“BP believes that this alliance will provide the opportunity to combine the global technology and marketing leadership of BP with the local entrepreneurial capabilities of Wakefield,” Wakefield Canada said in a release. “This alliance will ensure the continuing success of the Castrol brand, which is already a market leader in the in-

tensely competitive Canadian automotive lubricant market.”

Bob MacDonald, president and CEO of Wakefield, added “We intend to deliver on our aspiration to be the clear leaders in the Canadian marketplace. This is a strategic move for Wakefield and provides us with greater flexibility to deliver intuitive customer service within the Canadian marketplace.”

The plant is now in a transitional period and BP Lubricants will retain ownership and operations responsibilities until the transition is completed in mid-2010, the companies report.

Wakefield first signed a strategic partnership with BP Lubricants in 2005 and has since marketed Castrol lubricants and services to the Canadian market. For more info, visit [www.wakefieldcanada.ca](http://www.wakefieldcanada.ca) or call 888-CASTROL. □

## Western Star forms own engineering team

**PORTLAND, Ore.** – Western Star Trucks now has its own engineering division. Parent company Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) has afforded its flagship brand its own engineering division encompassing nearly 50 dedicated engineers and engineering systems, focusing exclusively on Western Star trucks, the company announced.

Randy DeBortoli will head the new division as director of engineering. “Many of our engineers in the new team have significant experience in Western Star product and in providing solutions for heavy-duty applications like those that are experienced throughout the world,” said DeBortoli. “It is important that the Western Star product evolves with its customer base and that base is about heavy-duty trucks with custom engineering solutions.”

“This is a clear indication of the faith that Daimler has in the growth and demand for Western Star Trucks going forward,” added Jim Looyen, Western Star Trucks sales manager. “The success of the Western Star product in Canada has significantly influenced Daimler Truck’s decision to invest in this additional engineering resource and a substantially large amount of this new resource will be dedicated to Western Star product and options for the toughest applications on- and off-highway.” □

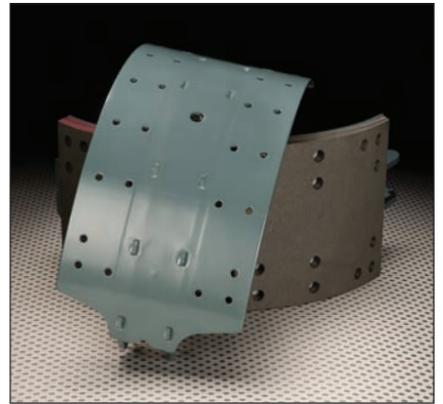
## Meritor gets editors’ nod for top tech achievement

**TAMPA, Fla.** – ArvinMeritor has won the 2009 Truck Writers of North America (TWNA) Technical Achievement Award for its PlatinumShield aftermarket brake shoes. The presentation was made to Mac Whittemore, ArvinMeritor’s midwest regional manager and Paul Greenlaw, ArvinMeritor’s national fleet manager – aftermarket, at the recent Technology and Maintenance Council meetings in Tampa.

ArvinMeritor’s PlatinumShield coating resists micro-abrasion caused by the movement of the brake lining against the shoe table during normal use and prohibits rust-jacking, where rust forms on bare shoe metal under the lining, causing the lining to lift and crack.

“The Technical Achievement Award committee was impressed that ArvinMeritor’s PlatinumShield coating offers a practical solution to rust-jacking, a problem that has frustrated countless maintenance managers and owner/operators in the US and Canada,” said James Menzies, chair of the TWNA Technical Achievement Award committee. “As trucking companies search for ways to lower their operating costs, ArvinMeritor has come to market with an effective solution to a costly, long-running problem.”

TWNA is an organization comprised of trucking journalists and communicators. The Technical Achievement Award has been presented annually since 1991. To be eligible, a product or service has to



clearly exhibit technical innovation, have a wide applicability in the trucking industry, offer significant benefits and be widely available. While complete vehicles are not eligible, components and systems are.

TWNA press members nominate candidates and then following an in-depth review, the award committee selects a winner using a points-based scoring system.

This year’s Technical Achievement Award Committee included: Menzies (*Truck News/Truck West*); Paul Abelson (*Road King and Land Line*); John Baxter (*Randall-Reilly Publishing*); Tom Berg (*Heavy Duty Trucking and Construction Equipment*); Peter Carter (*Today’s Trucking*); Paul Hartley (*AddMedia*); and Jim Park (*Heavy Duty Trucking*).

Runners-up included: Eaton’s UltraShift PLUS Transmission; Rand McNally’s IntelliRoute TND 500 GPS; and TruckLite’s LED Headlamps. □



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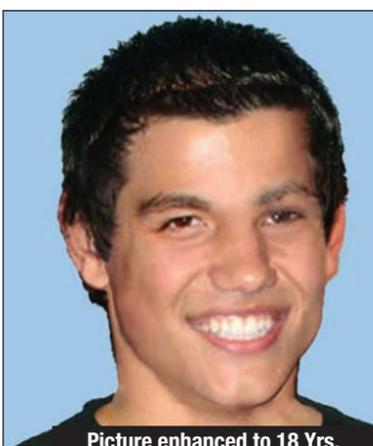
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# MISSING



Picture enhanced to 18 Yrs.

**JOSEPH ANDREWS**  
**2656-U**

**Date Of Birth:** February 22, 1991  
**Missing since:** August 4, 2002  
**Missing from:** Salmon Valley, B.C.  
**Height:** 4' 9" (at time of disappearance)  
**Weight:** 65 lbs. (at time of disappearance)  
**Eyes:** Brown  
**Hair:** Black  
**Ethnicity:** Metis

**Characteristics:** Joseph was camping at the Salmon Valley Campsite, just north of the City of Prince George with his foster family. He was last seen on the banks of the river at approximately 2:30 pm August 4, 2002.

[www.childfindbc.com](http://www.childfindbc.com)
[www.ontario.childfind.ca](http://www.ontario.childfind.ca)

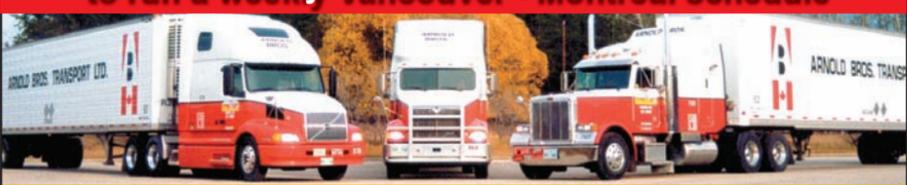
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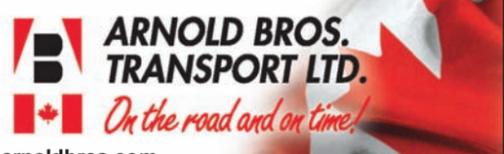


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# An addiction to oil, increased urbanization and ITS to shape the industry

Continued from page 1

Development Technology Canada – looked 20 years into the future of transportation, focusing specifically on the challenges that will drive change and the energy solutions that will drive mobility. David Hughes, formerly a geologist with the Geological Survey of Canada, addressed the symposium just before the panel and also contributed to the discussion on how oil depletion and climate change will define the future.

Benecchi outlined a number of factors certain to impact the future direction of transportation in Canada, including population growth, urbanization, energy consumption, energy policy and technological innovation.

By around 2030, Canada's population will have grown by five million and the country will be home to about 39 million people, according to Statistics Canada estimates cited by Benecchi. But that demographic will be considerably different from today's and is certain to impact the available pool of labour, transportation mobility and government policy. Within 20 years we can expect to see the setting of a dramatic benchmark in the country's demographics.

For the first time in the history of our country, the percentage share of our oldest citizens will be greater than our youngest. As of the 2006 census, Canadians over age 65 made up 13% of our population while Canadians 14 years or younger made up 17%.

After 2015, senior citizens will outnumber our youth to the point that by 2031 senior citizens will comprise 23% of our population while youth 14 years or younger (our future workforce) will make up just 15% of the population, according to Statistics Canada estimates. The 15-64 age bracket, which currently makes up 69% of Canada's population, will also decline down to 62% by 2031.

By 2030 the country's natural growth will turn negative. We just won't be having enough babies to keep up with the annual death rate. The growth of our population would then become dependent on immigration.

One in five Canadians by 2030 will be a visible minority and visible minorities will become the largest selection of people entering the workforce. This will impact the face of the labour pool available to the transportation industry but also future mobility in our transportation network. Benecchi said most of the new immigrants will settle in urban areas and he foresaw even more densely populated cities than we have now. Ontario and British Columbia can expect to see the greatest amounts of immigration.

In fact, Ontario's urban areas will be home to 15 million people by 2030 or about 40% of the Canadian population.

"This will define where business will be and where transportation corridors and services will need to concentrate," Benecchi said.

**"We expect to see more and stricter regulations. To limit global warming, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have to be reduced on a global basis and transportation, of course, is a key contributor."**

– Antonio Benecchi, Roland Berger Strategic Consultants

"With urbanization comes congestion. For goods delivery it means continued constraints and costs going up and a further push towards reducing emissions."

Speaking of emissions, Benecchi's vision of the future includes a continually growing need for oil. He forecasted a greater than 30% increase in energy demand by 2030 compared to 2010.

A bit more than a quarter of that total energy demand would be from the transportation sector. And he also saw petroleum-based fuel playing an even larger role in the energy consumption of 2030. He expects up to 50% of our energy consumption to come from petroleum-based fuel compared to the 42% reliance we had back in 2004.

"The addiction to oil will continue to grow, despite increased efforts on renewable energy. And so fuel costs will go up," Benecchi warned.

Hughes, who has studied Canada's energy resources for 32 years, doesn't soft peddle the future likelihood of oil shortages and steep pricing. The existing paradigm of cheap energy fuelling constant economic growth is over, according to Hughes.

Global new oil discoveries peaked back in 1965 and since then our depletion rate of existing reserves has been accelerating, Hughes pointed out. About 64% of oil production in 2008 was from countries which had already surpassed their peak.

## Peak production

"The US is most optimistic about when we will reach world oil peak production. It believes it won't be until 2044. Most other countries believe it will be much sooner, perhaps within the next few years," Hughes said, adding some experts believe we already reached that peak back in 2008.

The cold reality is that there are 5.3 times as many people consuming 8.6 times as much energy today compared to 1850. And yet China and India with their massive populations are industrializing and aspiring to consume energy at the current levels of western industrialized nations. By 2008, China was importing 53% of its oil demand.

"The world would need six Saudi Arabias to keep up with the expected increase in demand by 2030... And even if we quadruple unconventional oil production (e.g., Venezuelan heavy crude and the Alberta tar sands) it would add just 12.6% to world oil production," Hughes said.

With such dire energy chal-

lenges, Benecchi foresees environmental policy and regulation continuing to be a factor in shaping the transportation industry's future.

## Targeting CO<sub>2</sub>

"We expect to see more and stricter regulations. To limit global warming, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have to be reduced on a global basis and transportation, of course, is a key contributor. There is not a lot left to do in the area of smog. Significant progress has been made on emissions standards for smog and the emission standards are becoming quite comparable among the developed countries. No further regulation is expected," Benecchi says.

"But the next focus will be on carbon reduction, through improved fuel efficiency. In the US, we expect a standard by 2013 and enforcement by 2016. By 2030, most countries will have enforced strict CO<sub>2</sub> standards."

If we carry on at our current pace, we can expect a 45% increase in global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions until 2030, which would likely lead to a disastrous 5 degrees C global warming.

Major reductions to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are required to keep global warming below the 2 degrees C rise most climate scientists believe is safe.

Currently, transportation activity contributes approximately 37% to Canada's total energy-related GHG emissions inventory, according to government data cited by SDTC's Whittaker.

Roughly half of transportation emissions are attributed to freight transportation, and over half of those are attributed to trucking, so the industry carries a large bull's eye.

The SDTC's 2030 vision for Canada's trucking industry includes the following goals: reduce energy intensity by 40% in Class 8 and 80% in Classes 6 and 7; reduce absolute energy consumption by 50% from projected levels by the year 2030; and reduce GHG emissions by a corresponding 50%.

"The vision can be achieved through the development of new technologies, the adoption of advanced policies and regulations, and the emergence of more sophisticated risk management techniques for investors," Whittaker said.

SDTC estimates that about \$1.5 billion is needed to fully commercialize the new technologies in its portfolio of high assay projects.

Benecchi foresees a distinct future for alternative power in commercial transportation. For

example, the share of hybrid vehicles in sales of Class 4 and 5 vehicles is forecasted to grow from the current 1-2% to 15% by 2015 and 20-25% by 2020.

Van Amburg from CALSTART also forecasted a "blossoming" of natural gas options along with the ability to blend renewable natural gas. But he cautioned that hybrid truck production is still too low to realize prices that would make it feasible for industry to seriously invest in such trucks.

However, he believes only modest volumes – 3,000-5,000 unit sales/year – are necessary to move prices to within business cases needs.

He called for government incentives to provide a big kickstart to this number by helping drive volume up in a targeted effort.

Hughes meanwhile was not as optimistic about the ability of alternative fuels to meet our growing energy needs.

"You really have to look at the scale of what we do with renewables versus what we do with hydrocarbons," Hughes reasoned. "Renewables will only add about 6%. Renewables are no panacea."

Van Amburg said there is no simple, all-encompassing solution to the transportation industry's energy requirements.

## No silver bullet

"There is no silver bullet. What you need is a silver buckshot. We need to have a lot of different solutions in play. What's needed to make the transition? We need multi-year coordinated plans with aligned investments, requirements, incentives and policies, even if we are looking at multiple technologies," Van Amburg explained.

CALSTART is a non-profit clean transportation organization. Its stated goal is to create a clean technologies industry. Based in California, with projects across North America, its focus is on commercializing technology as well as helping fleets implement new technologies.

More efficient movement is also needed to reduce GHG emissions and Benecchi foresees the confluence of two events contributing to this. First are federal and provincial government investments in trade corridor infrastructures design to speed up commerce.

By 2030, he also expects to see further advancements in technology – such as electronic collision notification and warning, driver assistance and auto-piloted vehicles – to create a fully intelligent transportation system.

The most important thing is to figure out how to radically reduce consumption, according to Hughes.

"Not burning fossil fuel is the biggest source of future energy. The climate change dialogue for the most part excludes the likelihood for diminished energy use," he said. "The energy sustainability dilemma will be the defining issue of our time as it limits growth." □

# Funding fracas

*B.C. funding formula favours low-cost driving schools, training school owner claims*

By Jim Bray

**CASTLEGAR, B.C.** – A British Columbia truck driving school operator is calling on governments to create a new, higher end EI training funding program so potential truck drivers can learn the skills they need without going bankrupt in the process.

Andy Roberts of Castlegar, B.C.-based Mountain Transport Institute, claims that tuition funding caps introduced by the provincial government are shortchanging people who want to pursue careers such as trucking, whose training costs can go far above and beyond what's currently available from the province.

The funding caps, he explains, came about after a changeover from federal to provincial control over the funds.

"Traditionally," Roberts says, "the money for retraining people on EI came from the federal government and was administered federally."

That changed last year, however, when Victoria signed an agreement with Ottawa to take over responsibility for those funds.

Now, explains Roberts, that money is transferred to the provincial government once a year, and the province can do what it pleases with it.

The difference is that, when Ottawa was in charge, the province could go back to the federal well if it ran out of money before the fiscal year was over – citing such issues as higher demand for training. The new arrangement sees Ottawa transfer a fixed amount per year and, while "they don't have to give it back," Roberts says, "you don't get any more, either."

Roberts says a \$4,000 tuition cap was introduced in response to a number of regions in the province spending their entire training budgets long before the end of the fiscal year, leaving them with more year than they had money.

And while a \$4,000 cap might not be a big deal for many training courses, it effectively throws a monkey wrench into Roberts' business and others like it.

"If you're taking college-based or classroom-based courses," Roberts says, "you can put 20 people into a classroom with a projector or a bunch of computers, so that \$4,000 will actually buy you quite a bit of training."

He says the challenge in training for careers such as a professional driver, however, "is that the classroom costs more like \$125,000 to purchase, plus the trailer that goes with it, so you're looking at a capital cost of \$150,000 for a classroom that'll

house one student and one instructor for however many hours as the case may be."

Mountain Transport Institute charges just shy of \$14,000 for the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council's Earning Your Wheels program, including tuition, textbooks and the other related fees.

Four grand in this case amounts to little more than a nice down payment.

Roberts acknowledges that there are institutes offering programs for less than \$4,000, but accuses most of them of being targeted at teaching people how to pass the road test, not how to be employable, safe, professional drivers.

Some of these schools, Roberts claims, literally teach students the road test route "and they won't necessarily teach you how to turn a corner, but how to turn a particular corner that's on the road test," he says.

"So if you can get a job driving the road test route you're good to go. But we want to ensure the highways are safer tomorrow than they are today by turning out people who are employable. It's better for the student and for the carrier – and ultimately for the travelling public."

Not only that, Roberts says, but

'As things pick up and get busy again, the driver shortage is going to return and it's going to be bigger than it was before.'

Andy Roberts, MTI

potential students who don't know much about the trucking industry going in can also be sold a bill of goods about their job potential afterward.

"What they don't tell them is that simply getting your licence isn't going to get you a job; it's one of many qualifications you need to be employable. There's mountain driving, sliding a fifth wheel, chaining up, driving in the dark, dealing with the paperwork, dealing with customers, that type of thing."

Roberts acknowledges that some of Mountain Transport Institute's students are self-funded and some use student lines of credit and other mechanisms but, he says, thanks to the tuition cap, some people who may want to pursue a career in trucking are being shut out.

One solution, he says, is a new mechanism by which people are accountable for investing in their own retraining.

"I don't necessarily think it's a



**FUNDING FIGHT:** Driving in B.C. is challenging, and MTI's Roberts worries courses that cost less than \$4,000 may not include important training on things such as properly inspecting the braking system before tackling B.C.'s mountains.

good idea to write somebody a \$14,000 cheque, because that almost becomes a bit like a paid vacation," he says. Instead, he'd like to see a new type of student loan that allows students to borrow a larger sum and requires them to pay it back afterward "so that money is there for the next person to use the next year."

Such a system, he says, not only includes accountability – in that the money must be paid back – but the larger amount also encourages people to take a long, hard look to see if truck driving is really the career they want.

"They're much more engaged when they come to do the training," he says, "because they need to be prepared to pay back that extra \$10,000 or whatever. But right now there's no mechanism for that."

"Recruitment ads are starting slowly to reappear," he says, "and if the estimates are correct we're going to see some growth this year, which means we're going to see carriers getting busier and needing drivers."

The need will be even more pressing going forward, since experienced drivers have been retiring from the industry but haven't necessarily been replaced.

"As things pick up and get busy again," Roberts says, "the driver shortage is going to return and it's going to be bigger than it was before."

That means, he says, the lack of proper funding choices for students is going to handicap carriers from getting good quality entry-level people, er, down the road.

One possible ray of sunshine is the B.C. Professional (Truck) Driver Training Program Pilot Project (see next page) on which the BCTA and the government are working. Roberts thinks it may eventually offer a similar program to what he envisions, and he's planning to get involved if he can.

"We don't have a lot of information on it right now," he says, "but it appears it's going to turn out a very competent entry-level driver, so I'm excited about that."

What isn't known right now is whether, if the project gets through the pilot phase and is adopted as a permanent program eventually, there will be adequate training money attached to it.

"Once we see that, we'll know what opportunities that opens up," Roberts says.

In the meantime, Roberts says it's short-sighted on the part of the government to remove access to such training without providing a viable option for people to improve their skill sets and employability.

"The hidden impact of this decision (to cap tuition) will become apparent as the economy begins to improve," he says.

"And the shortage of professional drivers restricts opportunities for B.C. trucking companies to provide their clients with superior service as well as to seize new opportunities for growth." □

# B.C. pilot project aims to churn out better drivers

By Jim Bray

**LANGLEY, B.C.** – If a pilot project getting under way in British Columbia works out as hoped, it could help lead to a steady stream of qualified new drivers taking to the province's roads in the future.

The B.C. Professional (Truck) Driver Training pilot project is being organized by the BCTA and the Transportation Career Development Association (TransCDA) and, according to the BCTA's vice-president of policy, communications and partnerships, Louise Yako, it's "a fairly comprehensive training program."

The program will kick off with eight weeks of classroom and practical training followed by four weeks unpaid, one-on-one work experience with a trained coach at an employer's business. Participants will then perform 1,000 hours of paid, work-based learning where, Yako says, "the trainee would be performing all of the tasks that you would expect an entry-level driver to perform."

The pilot program started taking shape some four years ago. "We started a human resources planning committee," says Yako, "and noted that a strong training base for professional drivers was lacking in the province." That led to the development of a strategic plan for the BCTA membership in particular and the industry in general to help address the issue.

One of the requirements for admission to the pilot project is a Class 1 learner's licence, so potential trainees need to be committed to the concept.

"We've set a fairly high bar in terms of the prerequisites," Yako says. "So we expect that person to go and at least be seen by a physician and give us assurance that they would be able to pass the medical."

Yako says students will also be expected to obtain their actual Class 1 licence at about the halfway point of the in-school portion, though the actual timing of the test is one of the things being evaluated in the pilot project.

Undergoing the physical first is a new wrinkle. Currently, the medical component isn't required until after a person has earned the Class 1, but "that seemed a bit backwards to us," Yako says. "We want to know if a person can meet the medical standards up-front and I think that helps the trainee as well."

Yako says trainees must also have completed the air brake course and will be required to take a TOWES (Test of Workplace Essential Skills) test, which gauges literacy, numeracy and arithmetic skills to ensure a candidate can take in the classroom-based portion of the learning.

The organizers are trying to focus not only on the knowledge required to be a successful truck driver, but on the 'Big Picture' above and beyond that.

"One of the things learned from our research and other, similar programs," Yako says, "is that, while our industry gets its fair share of new entrants, a number of them only stay for a few months because



**PILOT TAKING OFF:** A pilot project in B.C. is attempting to open the road to a successful career for well-trained drivers.

they don't have a good experience."

Part of the reason, she says, is that they didn't understand what the lifestyle would be like or what their choices would be in terms of the types of jobs available and the lifestyle such jobs would support.

To help in that regard, Yako says, potential trainees and their "spouses or significant others" will undergo an interview process and will also meet with the prospective employers participating in the project before the in-school training starts, "to make sure we're matching the right student with the right employer."

And it won't end there. According to Yako, a training coordinator will check in with the student every two weeks and the employer will be encouraged to check in with the trainee as well, to see how things are going and find out whether or not the experience is what the trainee expected.

It's all meant to help ensure entry-level drivers go into the business not only well-qualified, but with their eyes wide open.

"We don't want to frustrate anybody with this process," Yako says. "But if for whatever reason this is not the right career path for that individual we want to tell them quickly."

Yako says that if the pilot project is successful and ends up becoming an ongoing program, its positive effects should also be felt by province's driving schools.

"We hope (the program) will get formal approval from the Industry Training Authority," she says, "and if that happens it will become a voluntary training standard in the province so any driver training school that meets the minimum criteria acceptable to the ITA could teach it."

Such a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval-type of accreditation won't simply fall from the sky and land on driving schools, of course. "There'll be a process for schools to apply," Yako says, "including an audit." If a school is successful, she says, it will get listed on the ITA Web site "for people who want to

make sure they are in an approved program."

The ITA would also act as a kind of central clearinghouse, with all trainees going through an ITA-managed intake process. Trainees would get an ITA training number, Yako says, and report back at specified dates or achievement points during the training process, "so everybody knows they're in the ITA stream."

Driver training schools might also be attracted to the fact that, since the Industry Training Authority is a Crown corporation recognized by the provincial government, it has a certain amount of funding dollars available that could be used to subsidize training. That means an ITA-certified school could expect to receive a certain amount of dollars per student for the program.

Another advantage of the ITA approval process, Yako says, would be that "students are eligible for the normal student loans available, as well as tax credits. Trainees get tax credits and employers get tax credits for participating in the training process, so there's a benefit for everyone all-around."

Be that as it may, all of that is in the future – and only if the pilot project is successful and gains a permanent place in the halls of British Columbia industrial training. In the meantime, it's still a test, and one that will cost money to mount. So who's paying for it now?

"The ITA has a budget for pilot projects and so we expect to get money from there," Yako says. "We also received funding in the development of this training program from Service Canada, so they want to see this through."

Basically, she says, they're cobbling together the funding necessary to make the pilot project a go. And, "so there's skin in the game for everybody," Yako says, students can expect to shell out around \$500 each due to costs such as getting their beginner's licence and paying for the medical, since some doctors charge for the assessment.

The pilot project is hoped to be up and running by mid-April, but

as of this writing nothing is written in stone. Yako says they have a request for proposals out for the training schools and were scheduled to choose the pilot project's training school by the middle of March. "We are also taking in applications for both trainees and employers now," she says, "and our target start date is April 19, though we have a little bit of flexibility."

As for choosing the school that will participate, Yako says "we expect it to meet minimum standards and we've set some requirements in terms of classroom space, yard space, equipment, that sort of thing. But a lot of it will depend on where we get the trainee applications from."

Yako says that, based on population, she assumes they'll get most of their applications for training from the Lower Mainland but that doesn't mean it'll end up happening that way. "We'll be looking at matching the applications geographically to be the most convenient for everyone."

The pilot project will be assessed on an ongoing basis and, assuming everything goes well and any adjustments deemed to be required are made, it should become a regular program adopted by the ITA. That won't happen overnight, though. Yako thinks it'll probably take about a year, considering that the pilot project calls for two months in classes, a month for the supervised work experience and, probably, 25 weeks or so for the trainee to acquire the 1,000 hours of experience – if all goes smoothly. "Then we'll have to make whatever adjustments are needed," Yako says, "and I expect we'll have to make some adjustments."

Yako says the timing of the project has been both lucky and unlucky, considering the state of the industry and the economy.

"We're at a point where many companies have their pick of good professional drivers and so may not be thinking ahead to when the economy rebounds and they're having to look for qualified drivers again. But we want to be prepared for when the retirements of professional drivers occur at the rate that everyone is projecting them to be." The industry, she says will be under a lot of pressure then to come up with good people to fill those spots, and "we're hoping to be in a position where we'll be able to deliver those people."

Applications are coming in already, and Yako says they're pleased with the caliber of the applicants, who come from a variety of demographic backgrounds.

"The thing I find the most positive is that many applicants are people who already have jobs and are clearly making a deliberate career change," she says. "We expected a lot of young people, and we have some of those, but we also have people who have done other things and have decided that the transportation industry is something they want to pursue."

More information, including application forms, is available at [www.bctrucking.com](http://www.bctrucking.com). □

Opinion

# A day in the life of a professional construction truck owner/driver

## Part 1 of 2

Ever wonder what a typical day is like for a professional construction trucker? The professional driver gets up early (usually between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m.), makes a nutritious lunch (lots of fruits, vegetables and protein), boils some H2O and fills his thermos for the day.

Breakfast is usually a cup of coffee and a bowl of cereal (ideally with a minimum of 12 grams of fiber and a few blueberries per serving). He checks the wife, kids, dog, cat, etc. making sure they are all safe, then off he goes to work. (Not much traffic at 4 a.m. – sweet!)

The driver does a thorough pre-trip inspection of his unit, knowing there won't be any issues with it because of the thorough post-trip inspection he did when he parked the truck the day before.

After completing his pre-trip, he documents all the relevant paperwork like the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Report and logbook and enters contractor information and dispatcher instructions on his company time record report. He notes the load site and dump site addresses, the haul route and all other applicable information. Now he is ready to leave the yard and proceed to the load site.

After arriving at the load site, he puts on his personal protective equipment (hard hat, fluorescent vest, steel-toed boots, safety glasses, gloves and coveralls).

Now he can exit the truck and proceed to the contractor job site safety meeting.

The contractor's personnel address the hazards and instructions for the load site, dump site and haul route. Special attention is given to the locations of overhead power lines, water valves, man holes, high-voltage cables and any other on-site hazards.

He then signs off to acknowledge that he understands and agrees to follow the instructions.

The driver is now able to line up to load, leaving enough space so the driver ahead can see him and also back up without backing into

### Constructive Dialogue

Ron Singer



his truck. While waiting in line, the professional driver will clean his mirrors, windows, headlights, tail lights, brake lights, dash, etc. He will complete all relevant paperwork and will soon be ready to load.

The professional driver always pays attention to the loading process, moving up as the trucks get loaded, paying attention to the operator and where he'd like him to stop for loading. Usually, the operator will give a toot of the horn when he wants you to stop and when you are loaded, so the professional driver keeps the stereo turned down, stays off the cell phone and keeps his window open so he can hear the horn.

When the truck is loaded, the professional driver gives the operator a smile, a nod of his head or a friendly wave – or if he has a CB radio in his truck, a pleasant 'Good morning.'

The driver proceeds to the tarping and clean-off area and cleans off the load wherever the material hangs loose. He tarps his load and makes sure his gates are locked.

As he exits the job site, he approaches the flag man who tries to stop the rush hour traffic.

When the traffic finally stops, the professional driver attempts to exit the site, but may have to come to an emergency stop because traffic has decided to ignore the flag man's directions.

Soon after, the flag man manages to get traffic stopped and the professional driver can now safely leave the load site. The professional driver gives the flag man a wave for risking his life to stop the traffic!

When he gets off-site, he is now in the midst of rush hour traffic. He is cut off a couple times before he gets to the first traffic light.

The professional driver moves over to the right lane and avoids convoying or travelling in the fast

lane. He uses the fast lane to pass slow-moving traffic then moves back over to the right lane so not to cause traffic congestion. He studies the traffic lights and traffic flow and paces himself so he doesn't have to stop and start at every light.

As he approaches the dump site, he is cut off by a couple more cars. (Just another day in the life of a professional truck driver).

When he enters the dump site, he has to stop for an empty truck who failed to yield to the loaded truck. Rather than get upset, the professional driver makes adjustments for the lack of professionalism of the other truck driver (as he will always do).

He proceeds into the dump site, observing the direction of the dump man and keeping far enough behind the truck ahead to allow to him to get dumped first. While waiting for the truck ahead of him to unload, he untarps his load.

He proceeds to the dumping area, dumps his truck and then jackknives his trailer as quickly as possible to prevent congestion in the dump site.

He proceeds to clean off the area, his hitch, his gates and proceeds off-site.

The professional driver is always courteous and has a friendly attitude.

He usually gives a nod or wave to all personnel on the site during the first and last loads of the day – even though the mood of the competition can be aggressive, unfriendly and stressed.

When the professional driver leaves the job site, he yields the right-of-way to the loaded competitor's truck, even if the loaded competitor truck's driver does not acknowledge the courtesy – he just gives a look that would kill, a common practice these days.

The professional driver gives him a nod, a wave and a smile anyways. The professional driver is working by the hour today, so he shows up to the job on time, stays in line, spaces out so he doesn't bunch up the job site and keeps his trip times consistent.

As the professional driver leaves the dump site, he has to stop at a green light because another truck has run a red light and there would have been a collision if the professional did not stop. He doesn't get excited or upset (just another day as a professional driver!)

As he scans a 360-degree radius every 10 seconds, he notices an ambulance trying to get through traffic a couple blocks behind him.

The professional driver moves over to the right side of the road and stops, to clear a path for the ambulance to follow. The traffic behind him fails to stop or move over for the ambulance – they don't even realize it's there.

Once the ambulance passes, the professional driver tries to move forward but has to wait for the impatient drivers to pass him before he can safely return to the traffic lane (just another day as a profes-

sional driver!)

While proceeding to the load site, the professional driver observes a vehicle pulled off to the right side of the road. He looks in his left mirror, puts on his left signal light then moves over to the left lane and passes the stopped vehicle safely. Then he signals and goes back into the right lane when safe to do so.

The professional driver will always take steps to diffuse an unsafe situation, even if the other drivers fail to do so. After loading his second load, he proceeds off-site towards the dump site. He waves to the flag man for stopping the traffic.

As he leaves the job site, he moves over to the right lane and observes a little old lady trying to cross the road in a crosswalk.

The professional driver stops and signals for traffic to stop with his left hand so the lady can safely cross the road.

As the lady passes the truck, she turns her head to smile and wave to the professional driver, who stopped the traffic.

As the professional driver approaches the dump site, he notices a police car has pulled over a car 100 feet from a major intersection, creating a major traffic jam. The professional driver doesn't get excited or impatient – he just waits patiently until he can safely pass the police car.

At the job site, he notices the truck in front of him has a huge rock stuck in the duals of his trailer. He gets the driver on the CB radio and advises him of the rock in his duals.

After the professional driver dumps his load and moves to the clean-off area, he sees the driver ahead of him with a dumbfounded look on his face, unable to figure out how to remove the boulder from his duals.

The professional driver jumps out of his truck, cleans off his gates and hitch and ensures his dump controls are deactivated. He then grabs his trusty 24-inch hardwood 4x4 slab.

He then advises the driver to get into his truck and move forward half a wheel turn.

He motions the driver to stop, the professional driver places the slab between the duals under the rock and motions the driver to back up, pushing the huge rock out of his duals.

The other driver is amazed and how simple and fast the rock was removed from his duals. An instant respect has been earned by the professional driver. There's no time to chat with the other driver, the clean-off area must be cleared to avoid congestion. □

– The professional driver's day has just begun. Check back next month for the conclusion.

– Ron Singer is owner of Ron Singer Truck Lines and president of the Alberta Construction Trucking Association. He can be reached at 403-244-4487 or by e-mail at ronsing@telus.net. ACTA's Web site is www.myacta.ca.

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**New Products**

**Navistar introduces Class 4/5 International TerraStar**

**ST. LOUIS, Mo.** – There’s a new player in the Class 4/5 market. Navistar unveiled its new International TerraStar Class 4/5 work truck March 10 at the Work Truck Show. The new commercial offering boasts what Navistar claims to be the roomiest cab in its class as well as MaxxForce 7 V-8 power that doesn’t require selective catalytic reduction (SCR) exhaust aftertreatment.



**NEW PLAYER:** Navistar rounded out its commercial truck line with the Class 4/5 International TerraStar.

“The International TerraStar comes from the same blood lines as the rest of our commercial truck line-up,” said Jack Allen, president, Navistar’s North American Truck Group. “Its commercial-duty design will change the game in the work truck market by offering one of the most capable, most versatile and most drivable trucks in its class.”

boasts 28% greater visibility than its chief competitor, a 107-inch BBC and a 44-ft. curb-to-curb turning radius for operating in tight spaces.

The truck is powered by a 300 hp, 6.4-litre MaxxForce 7 V-8 engine capable of 660 lb.-ft. of torque. It’s comprised of a compacted graphite iron (CGI) block that offers high strength but low weight, the company says. It’ll also be available with a commercial-duty Allison 1000 transmission to optimize power output.

The roomy cab can comfortably seat three adults, the company claims, and an extended cab or crew cab will also be available.

The TerraStar will come with Navistar’s in-cylinder EPA2010 emissions solution which doesn’t require diesel exhaust fluid, which the company feels will be a strong selling point, particularly since the absence of an SCR system frees up chassis space for body builders.

The truck’s tilt-away hood offers easy access to the engine compartment. The TerraStar will be available with a 4x2 drivetrain with a 4x4 version to come in 2011, Navistar announced.

“With the introduction of the International TerraStar powered by the MaxxForce 7, there is no other truck manufacturer in the industry today with as complete a line-up of integrated trucks and engines,” Allen added. “The addition of TerraStar gives us a product line-up that can serve virtually any truck need, spanning from Class 4 to Class 8.” □

**Has a solution to wheel-offs been found?**

**By John G. Smith**

**TAMPA, Fla.** – A series of four companies have joined together under the banner of Wheel Torque Solutions to unveil a wheel system that promises to maintain higher clamp loads and eliminate most of the traditional causes of wheel losses. And they have already found a fan in Rolf VanderZwaag, who oversees technical issues for the Ontario Trucking Association.

60,000 pounds of clamping force. The extra deflection is designed to compensate for the flexing, temperature changes, expansion and contraction that can take place during normal operation. There are wide variations in the quality of nuts and bolts in the marketplace, and some of the poorest offerings even deliver less than the 30,000 pounds of clamping force needed to hold a wheel in place, VanderZwaag added. “It’s the clamp force that holds the wheel on. Not the torque.”

Chicago Pneumatic, Alcoa, ITW CIP, and B&D Cold Heading unveiled the system – a combination of components and tools – during recent meetings of the Technology and Maintenance Council. Pac-Sleeve laminated lock nuts are combined with strengthened B&D bolts and Alcoa aluminum wheels that are thicker than usual where the fasteners are applied. Related tools come in the form of sanders and polishers to properly clean mounting faces, metal sleeves to guide the wheels into position, specially designed nut-runners and impact wrenches. In designing a system for severe applications, the suppliers have addressed all the root causes of wheel losses, said VanderZwaag, who was instrumental in creating the program used to train Ontario wheel installers.

After the mounting surfaces are properly cleaned, a half-inch driver is used to seat two or three long metal sleeves onto the wheel bolts. The wheels are slipped over the sleeves that ensure everything is seated in the proper position, nuts are lubricated and spun onto the bolts, and then everything is tightened with a Blue Tork electric nut runner using about 600 ft.-lb. of torque. The electronic tools scan and confirm the exacting torque values of each installation. While mounting surfaces are supposed to be clean, it can be difficult to get into the small areas on the face of a brake drum, VanderZwaag adds, referring to the importance of the cleaning tools.

The Pac-Sleeve nuts incorporate a stack of five internal washers that will deflect 30 thousandths of an inch as they are pulled together, compared to a solid fastener that will deflect a maximum of 19 thousandths of an inch when the wheel components are tightened with

The suppliers suggest that their solution even eliminates the traditionally recommended practice of rechecking torques after newly installed wheels travel about 160 km.

“If you assemble this thing properly, you don’t have to check it,” VanderZwaag says. “You’re absolutely covering every step.” □

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**Preferred Trailer Type (check all that apply):**  Flatbed  Heavy Hauling/Specialized  Moving Van  
 Tanker  Straight Truck  Super B  Reefer  
 Van  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply)**  Flatbed  Heavy Hauling/Specialized  Moving Van  
 Tanker  Straight Truck  Super B  Reefer  
 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Opinion

## Facebook, Twitter...find them all on our new Web site

The next time you're online you owe it to yourself to check out our new features on Trucknews.com. It seems that almost weekly we are introducing something new and the last few months have been no exception.

I don't know about you, but I find myself spending much of my time just trying to keep up with all the new technology. In the media business, there are more and more "social platforms" that enable you to communicate with us and each other in real-time.

From my point of view, I'm really happy our editorial staff has some very talented young (key word being young) staff on-board who are on top of these developments. I'd like to think I'm not a dinosaur but I am amazed at how quickly things are changing.

I get a kick out of listening to the staff in the morning. They talk

## Publisher's Comment

Rob Wilkins



about their latest "tweets" and how the number of Facebook fans has doubled yet again.

If Rip Van Winkle awoke to these conversations he would have thought the world has been taken over by a rebel force of chickens.

I've been involved in IT department meetings where the language just flies over my head. Usually I'll sit there and just nod or shake my head depending on the tone of the conversation.

If someone asks me what I think, my standard "Let me digest the problem and get back to you,"

is the answer. It's amazing how well that works.

In the early 90s, the company was considering providing laptop computers to the sales force.

They wanted to take advantage of a leading-edge sales program that was supposed to be the best thing since sliced bread.

Before making this kind of investment, it was decided they needed a Guinea Pig and of course, as fate would have it, that would be me.

Apparently, the general consensus was that if I could grasp the concept, anyone could.

A few months later, they took the machine away from me. Apparently using the screen for post-it notes wasn't what they had in mind.

Don't get me wrong, I do know how to get around in Cyberspace. I urge you to check out our Web

site if you haven't already done so. It's not that difficult to navigate and it's full of great features all designed to help you and your business.

It's been recognized as one of the top business Web sites in the country and we're proud of it! □

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

## People

Bison Transport driver **Ben Dyck** has reached two million consecutive accident-free miles with the company. Bison will be formally recognizing Dyck's achievement at its annual awards banquet.

"We congratulate Ben on his achievement. As a professional driver, Ben is a role model setting a benchmark in safety that very few achieve," said Garth Pitzel, director of safety and driver development for Bison.

A professional driver for 41 years, Winnipeg-based Dyck has been a long-haul owner/operator with Bison since 1995.

The Manitoba Trucking Association has elected its officers and executive committee members for the 2010/2011 term. The elections were held during the MTA's 78th annual general meeting.

Elected were: president — **Susan Snyder** (Searcy Trucking); first vice-president — **Tom Payne Jr.** (Payne Transportation); second vice-president — **Norm Blagden** (Bison Transport); past president — **Earl Coleman** (Big Freight Systems).

Executive committee members at large include: **Gary Arnold** (Arnold Bros. Transport); **Greg Arndt** (Jade Transport); and **Keith McLeod** (Glen McLeod & Son).

Kinedyne Canada president **Larry Harrison** has been promoted to the position of vice-president of sales and marketing for Kinedyne's global operations, the company announced. The move was part of a shake-up intended to strengthen the company's global sales and operational structure.

Harrison has been with Kinedyne Canada since 2001, first as general manager and later as president. The company says Harrison was instrumental in the Canadian operation's success. Harrison will now oversee global sales initiatives, developing new markets, and implementing a unified strategic approach to the company's marketing activities.

**Romolo DiVito** has been named the new general manager of Kinedyne Canada.

Hankook Tire Canada has promoted two of its executives. **William Hume** has been promoted to vice-president of Hankook Tire Canada. He has been with Hankook since 2007.

And **Jeff Bullock** has been promoted to national sales operations director. Bullock is the longest-serving employee at Hankook Tire Canada and will now focus on further developing the company's sales and distribution network. □

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# Erb wins TCA grand prize

**LAS VEGAS, Nev.** – Erb International was named the grand prize winner of the Truckload Carriers Association’s (TCA’s) National Fleet Safety Awards for the category of less than 25 million miles. The Canadian fleet earned top honours in its category while competing against Canadian and American trucking firms.

Wendell Erb, general manager of Erb International, accepted the award at the TCA’s annual banquet and awards dinner March 2. Also receiving recognition were MacKinnon Transport, which won top honours in the 25-49.99 million miles category and Bison Transport which topped the more than 100 million miles category.

But it was Erb’s night, taking grand prize honours for its safety record and driver programs and being singled out among 18 division winners. TCA said its judges were impressed by how Erb invests in its people, providing employees with the proper tools, training and recognition they need to achieve safety success. TCA lauded the fleet’s open and frequent communication and the company’s “walk-about” management style.

Erb encourages interaction between management and front-line employees, and welcomes input on safety concerns and other issues, according to the TCA.

Erb also has a Safety Management Program in place that defines the corporate safety culture

and covers all aspects of the company’s operations. It includes standards manuals, an emergency response plan and provides immediate feedback on potential safety risks. Another key to Erb’s success has been its Pro-Drive driver performance and incentive program.

It is based on electronic on-board recorder data that measures speed, hard-braking, idle-time, routing and mileage. Drivers are benchmarked against their peers and best practices are shared company-wide, TCA notes. Drivers who do not meet minimum company benchmarks receive further training and recognition is given to top performers. Incentives are also given to drivers who remain incident- and injury-free, the TCA reports.

Erb enjoyed a turnover rate of just 10% in 2009, thanks to its open-door communications policy and driver perks.

The company also attributes this low turnover to its selection process during hiring. Erb ensures potential drivers are a good match for the company right from the start through personal interviews that go beyond simple ‘yes’ and ‘no’ responses, the company claims.

Entry-level drivers are also required to bring along a spouse or partner to a second job interview.

It’s been a good year for Erb. The company also ranked one of the Best Fleets to Drive For, a program administered by the TCA and CarriersEdge. □

# RTL-Westcan acquires ECL Transport

**EDMONTON, Alta.** – RTL-Westcan Group of Companies has acquired the business and transportation assets of Calgary-based ECL Transportation Ltd. ECL has more than 60 years experience delivering bulk commodities and freight throughout North America.

“This acquisition significantly strengthens RTL-Westcan’s leading market position in bulk commodity transportation in Western and Northern Canada and enhances the platform for RTL-Westcan to grow and better serve the needs of its customers,” said Tom Kenny, CEO of RTL-Westcan.

Jim Davis, president and CEO of ECL Transportation, will serve as president, while Kenny will continue as CEO. Davis has been president and CEO of ECL since January 2004.

“RTL-Westcan and ECL are two premier companies in our industry. Our joining of forces brings together two very complementary organizations as ECL’s service and geographic offering augments RTL-Westcan’s current line of products,” Kenny said in a memo to staff announcing the deal. □

# Koch downsizes, drops Ontario LTL service

**CAMBRIDGE, Ont.** – In an interview with local media, a Koch Transport executive lamented the state of the economy and explained how Ontario’s manufacturing struggles are impacting his company. John Schneider, director of corporate development with Koch, told local newspaper *The Record* that the company has laid off two-thirds of its workforce in the past year-and-a-half and will shutter its Ontario LTL service March 26.

“We’ve been losing money. You can only lose for so long,” Schneider told the paper.

Koch’s LTL service accounted for about 40% of its revenue, Schneider said. Schneider wasn’t ready to declare the recession over, saying there

were “no real positive signs on the horizon as far as improvement is concerned.”

Koch has downsized from more than 100 employees in October 2008 to about 35 today, according to the article in *The Record*. Unionized workers have reportedly helped out by restructuring their contracts.

Koch will continue offering LTL service outside Ontario, including in Quebec and the US, according to the article and full truckload services to all regions in its coverage area. Schneider added the company will be ready to take advantage when the economy does rebound.

“The trucking industry is cyclical. There will be a boom time again,” he told *The Record*. □

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

## Licence renewed

By Edo van Belkom

Mark had returned from Texas hauling three loads that got him first to Winnipeg, then to Ottawa, and finally back into the Greater Toronto Area. After dropping off his load at the CN yard in Vaughan it was time to give Bud a call and get his next load.

He dialed the number and waited for an answer.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Bud. Mark here."

"Mark who?"

Mark racked his brain for a witty comeback that he hadn't used before and all he could come up with was, "Mark of the beast."

"What? Who?"

"Mark of the beast. You know, the sign of the werewolf?"

"Oh."

"Yeah, there's a full moon and I'm itching to get on the road headed someplace warm."

"Warm, eh?" Bud said. Mark could hear the sound of shuffling papers over the phone. Then, "I've got a load to California with a three-day layover before a load's ready coming back to Toronto."

"That's perfect, I'll take it."

"I knew you would. Trouble is, the load to California won't be ready for a couple of days."

"I can wait."

"You just gonna wait?" Bud asked.

"You got nothing going?"

"Not really."

"Great, because I've got something for you to do in the meantime."

"Like what? The last time you had something like this for me I wound up dispatching and nearly got killed by a jealous man whose wife was having an affair...with you!"

Bud laughed a little under his breath at the memory. "It's nothing like that this time."

"Then, what is it?"

"One of my drivers needs to get his licence renewed and he's going to need some help passing the tests."

"Is he that bad a driver?"

"No, not at all. Matter of fact, he hasn't had an accident or infraction in 45 years."

"So what's the problem?"

Bud sighed. "He's a mossback, but I don't think he'll have any problems getting his licence renewed. It's just that he's turned 65 and he's worried about all the stuff he's got to do to keep his licence."

Mark nodded. "I understand about the need for a physical and an eye test. Even the written test makes sense, but why do you have to take a road test if you haven't had an accident or shown

any signs of being a bad driver?"

"Because it's the law," was all Bud said.

"It doesn't seem fair."

"I know."

"And what if he fails one of these tests? A man's been driving for 45 years and all of a sudden he can't make a living anymore?"

"If he fails, his licence gets downgraded to a Class D or G."

"That's some consolation... Sounds to me like just because he's turned 65, the government's already decided he's a bad driver and it's up to him to prove he isn't."

"No, it's not like that. He's a good driver, no question. In fact he's one of my best drivers next to..."

Bud's voice cut out in mid-sentence, as if he'd stopped himself before he said something he might regret.

"Go on. Say it!" Mark prodded.

"Say what?"

"What you were about to say."

"What was I about to say?"

"You said, 'In fact he's one of my best drivers next to,' and then you stopped. I want to hear what you were going to say."

"I wasn't going to say anything."

"If you don't say it, I'm not going to help you."

Bud sighed heavily. "Alright. You win. He's one of my best drivers next to you."

"Hal! Now was that so hard?"

Bud hesitated. "Yes it was, actually. Extremely difficult."

Mark's smile was ear-to-ear. 'At least Bud's honest,' he thought. "Okay I'll help."

There was an audible sigh over the phone line as Bud said, "Thanks Mark. I appreciate it, and I know he will too."

"What's his name, by the way?"

"Charlie Knowles."

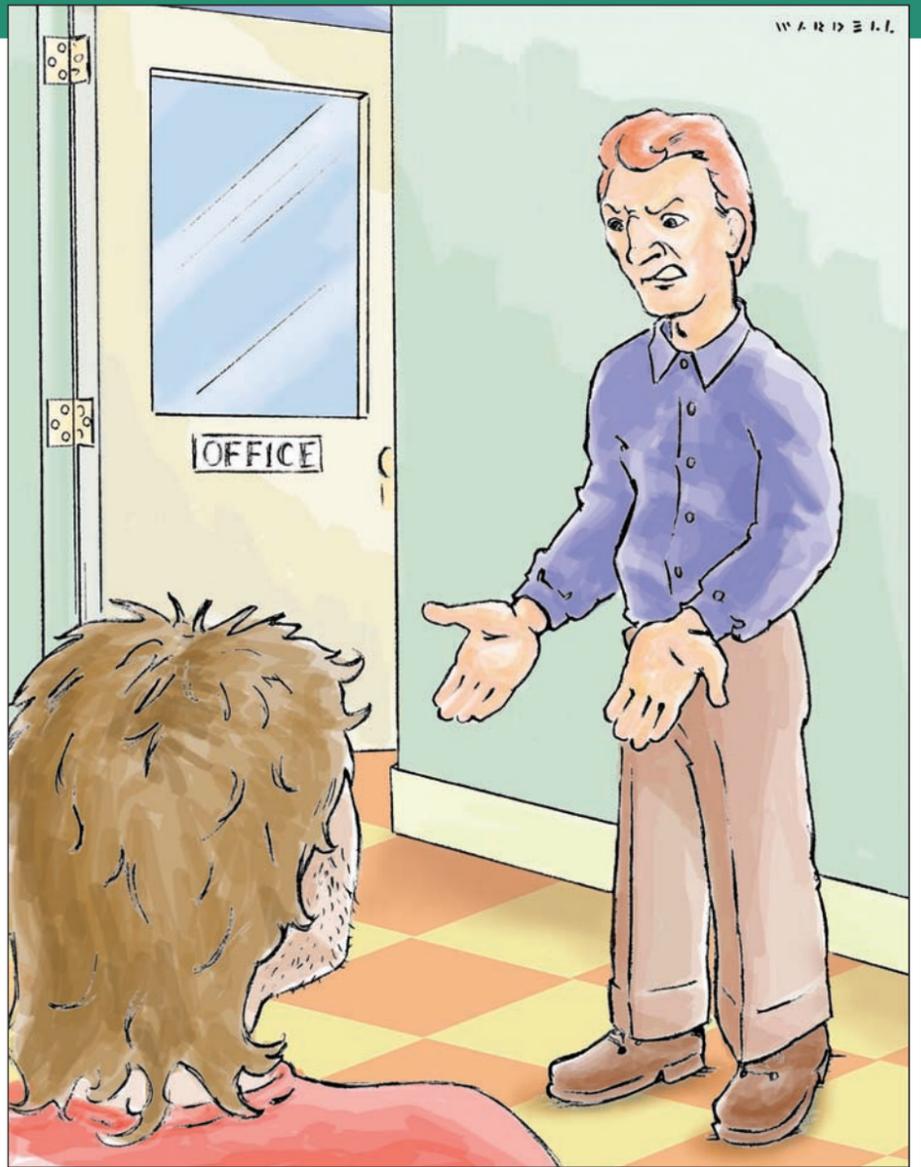
A smile broke over Mark's face and he laughed a little under his breath.

"What's wrong?"

Mark had met Charlie Knowles before. The man was a firebrand of a Scotsman who stood five-foot-two and weighed no more than 150 pounds. He was lean and fit and had a way of looking at the world that made anyone else's thoughts or viewpoint wrong. Period.

Mark remembered crossing paths with Charlie Knowles years ago when he had just started driving for Bud right after his divorce. At the time Mark had let his hair grow long and didn't bother much about washing his clothes, or even changing them for that matter. Mark had been leaving the office and Charlie was entering when they passed each other in the doorway.

"Ew!" Charlie said.



"What?"

"Yew smell like a pig! Did you know that?" he said in his heavy Scottish accent.

"What's it to ya?" Mark said, angry at anyone and everyone at the time and not caring who knew it.

"To me, nothin'. But it might mean something to the people paying you to work for them. You look like a slob... and I bet your truck's a mess too."

Mark's truck had looked like a dog's breakfast with coffee cups and sandwich wrappers lying all over the place. One time he'd even stepped on the brake and had trouble stopping his truck because a coffee cup had rolled underneath it. "That's none of your business."

"But it is," Charlie said, staring at Mark like he was something that he'd pulled off the bottom of his shoe. "You drive for the same company I do, so when you show up lookin' like a bum you make me look bad too."

Mark looked the man over when he'd said that and noticed that his clothes were all clean and pressed and there was a fresh shine on his shoes. He was clean-shaven with a fresh haircut too. Mark tried to think of something smart to say, but he couldn't think of a damn thing that would put this man in his place.

"What a loser!" Charlie said, and continued on his way.

Mark stood there in the doorway, shaken by the exchange and a bit embarrassed. The man was right, he had

let himself go and it reflected on him and the perception people had of the job he could do for them.

Shaken from his doldrums, Mark got a haircut, washed his clothes, and cleaned out his truck that very afternoon... and things had been good every since.

"I know him," Mark said at last.

"You won't let that stop you from helping him, will you?"

"No," Mark said. "I guess not."

"Great."

"But I don't understand why he's so worried about renewing his licence. He's a great driver."

"He's scared to death of tests, written or otherwise."

Mark understood. Charlie wasn't the kind of person who liked to be judged by anybody. "When am I supposed to do this?"

"His test is booked for this Friday. You want his number or do you want me to call him?"

"You call him... and don't tell him too much about me. I want to introduce myself when we meet." □

— Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of *Licence renewed*.

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](http://fleetsmart.gc.ca)

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**BOWMANVILLE, Ont.** – As the trucking world becomes increasingly computerized and digitized, the notion of paper logbooks seems, to many, increasingly antiquated. Their would-be successor, the electronic on-board recorder, seems poised to become not only a more popular alternative to paper logs, but – if the Canadian Trucking Alliance has its way – mandatory.

While proponents of EOBRs say the technology eliminates the possibility of drivers cheating the system, many truckers say preventing the occasional bending of the rules – however insignificantly – can prevent drivers from getting the job done and cost them money. Which brings back the old debate: which payment method is preferable – by the mile or by the hour? We stopped by the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to find out how truckers would rather be paid.

•  
**Gene Martel**, a driver with Ryder



**Truck Stop Question**

**Adam Ledlow**  
Managing Editor

*Would you rather be paid by the mile or by the hour?*

Transport in Pickering, Ont., says he would stick with an hourly wage – his current method of payment – since it accurately reflects his time on the job. “Mileage is piece work and no other industry does that. Why they would do it in an industry that puts 80,000 lbs out on the highway going at 100 km/h is beyond me, but that’s the way they do it,” he says.

He says a better method for payment industry-wide would be to have a pay scale and treat trucking like a skilled trade.

“As truckers we’ve never united

in the way like skilled trades have before, even though we’re probably running a lot more responsibility with these rigs than someone putting in plumbing or something. Not to demote them, but we’ve never organized ourselves into that type of system.”

•  
**Ken Dodds**, an owner/operator with FMTK Holdings in Lansdowne, N.B., says a trip rate is fine for when you’re doing highway driving, but for city driving – especially in Toronto or Montreal – hourly is the way to go.



**Ken Dodds**

“You could waste a whole day in there just trying to get in and get out, unload and reload,” Dodds says of the two major urban centres. And what would be a fair hourly rate to deal with that? “For the amount of time that we’re out here, I would have to say between \$20-\$25 per hour. I think that would be fair for what we have to put up with in the city in terms of congestion and shippers and receivers.”

•  
**Gavin Spig**, a driver with Kriska Transport out of Mississauga, Ont., says being paid by the mile usually makes sense for long distance trips, however, “Sometimes it would be better being paid by the hour, because a lot of times you sit around and you don’t really get paid as much. It depends – 50/50 I would have to say.” Spig says that an hourly rate between \$22 and \$27 per hour would be fair.



**Frances Brunelle**

**Frances Brunelle**, a driver with Acam Transport in Saint-Hyacinthe, Que., says pay should be dependent on the load. “For a tanker, better by the hour, but if you have good distance, by the mile. Both are good, but in different cases,” he said, adding that he believes Ontario drivers are usually paid better than Quebec truckers. Brunelle says a more conservative \$18-\$20 per hour would suffice for the responsibility of being a professional truck driver.



**Shane Ellis**

**Shane Ellis**, a driver with Kriska Transport out of Prescott, Ont., says hourly is the way to go. “With all your waiting time and delay time traffic and everything else, I think it would be a lot more profitable for a driver,” he said, adding that \$20-\$22 per hour would be a reasonable rate for truckers. □

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