

TRUCK WEST

July 2010 Volume 21, Issue 7

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



IT'S NO JOKE: Jim Riddle of William Day Construction (right) was named this year's Canadian Fleet Maintenance Manager of the Year. He was presented with the award by Volvo's Don Coldwell. *Photo by Rachel Ongaro*

AMTA's annual conference sees changes ahead

By Jim Bray

BANFF, Alta. – Take a gorgeous mountain setting, add nearly 180 participants, sprinkle liberally with information sessions, awards, networking and fine food, and you have the 2010 Alberta Motor Transport Association's Management Conference at Banff's Rimrock Resort Hotel.

And while the typical southern Alberta springtime may have thinned the crowd a little, it didn't stop the event from going forward successfully.

"We were hoping for more (people)," admits Mayne Root, executive director of the Calgary-based organization, "and we actually had more registered, but the weather scared some people off."

Root was referring to a major blast of Old Person Winter the day before the conference kicked off that wreaked havoc on southern Alberta highways, causing major angst for anyone trying to move around the region – though it also provided fodder for good-natured griping from those who braved the elements.

"It was too bad," Root says, "because when you actually got to Banff it wasn't bad at all."

The annual affair has been held at the Rimrock since 2004 and Root reports that "Everybody had a good time, everybody was relatively well-behaved, and the events worked out well."

The conference featured an address by Alberta's Deputy Minister

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The Riddle behind a great shop

By Adam Ledlow

MARKHAM, Ont. – It is a fitting outcome of Jim Riddle's 30-plus year career in maintenance that he should be named Canada's Fleet Maintenance Manager of the Year at the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Seminars.

Not just because Riddle, the current director of maintenance for Sudbury, Ont.-based William Day Construc-

tion, was one of those responsible for creating the award in the first place more than 20 years ago. Nor simply that he embodies the many characteristics attributed to him by Don Coldwell of Volvo Trucks Canada, the award's sponsor, including pride, professionalism, dedication and a commitment to safety and education.

No, the award seems most fitting

for Riddle because of his wholehearted appreciation and support of CFMS, the arena that has been home to the award for the past 22 years and to which Riddle credits much of his career's success.

"The relationships that I built with suppliers, manufacturers, other fleet men, other people in the repair

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A five-minute oil change?

Shell says it's possible with LubeExpress

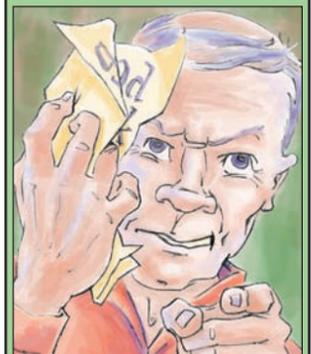
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- **Pardon me?:** Proposed changes to Canada's pardons system has some truckers scrambling. But is there good reason to rush out to get a pardon? **Page 14**
- **A new standard:** Fuel economy standards are coming for heavy trucks. How will they affect you? **Page 19**
- **Beer run:** We profile a private fleet that may offer one of the best gigs going for professional drivers. **Page 20**

Mark Dalton O/O



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Classic-styled trucks aren't dead yet

When pondering the future of the classic-styled, long-nose tractor, the famous Mark Twain line "Rumours of my death have been greatly exaggerated," springs to mind.

Not since the mandatory use of speed limiters has an issue inspired so much debate within the pages of *Truck West* as whether there's a future for the long-nose, classic-styled tractor.

I, unlike boss Lou Smyrlis below, am reluctant to write the classic-styled tractor off for good. I think it will always have a place in Canada, although its place in the market is undeniably shrinking. As Lou points out, forthcoming government-mandated fuel economy standards for heavy trucks will deal the long-nose conventional tractor another blow. But the passion owner/operators have for this style of tractor runs deep, and as long as the appetite is there, truck makers will continue to build trucks to satisfy this demand.

Let's not forget, while fuel is an owner/operator's biggest expense, it's not always the be-all and end-all. In certain operations, most notably vocational applications, the fuel economy advantages of a so-called 'slippery' truck are negligible. How much fuel are you really going to save running an aerodynamic tractor in the northern Ontario bush or hauling rock in a B.C. quarry? There's a reason those trucks don't have side skirts and super-singles on them.

Also, let's consider the private fleets that serve a dual purpose of promoting a brand while delivering product. I write about one such fleet, Sleeman Breweries, on pages 20-21 of this issue. Company founder and beer baron John Sleeman likes the traditional-styled tractors the fleet runs, and equipment spec'ing pro Dave Joyce

Editorial Comment

JAMES MENZIES



says with its heavy weights and inner-city routes, the fleet wouldn't save much fuel by converting to an aerodynamic-styled tractor. The Sleeman fleet of Western Stars and Freightliner Classics is averaging over 6 mpg under heavy load and mostly in the city, how much better would a Cascadia be under those same driving conditions?

Finally, Lou scoffs at the notion of using classic-styled trucks as bait to attract drivers when the driver shortage again rears its head, noting fleets that choose this tactic will be attracting the wrong types of drivers, those who value chrome over fuel efficiency.

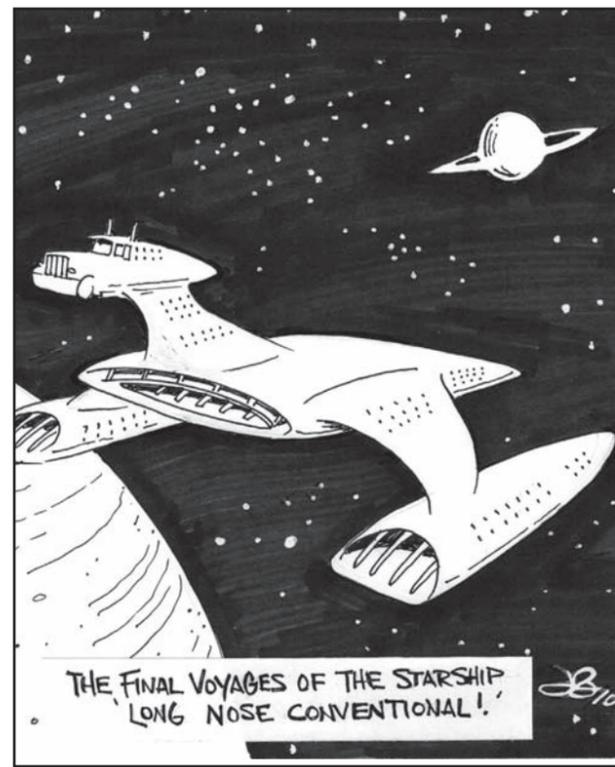
I would counter that veteran drivers with an appreciation for classic-styled trucks and a genuine passion for trucks and for driving, as opposed to those who are simply driving as a means to an end, are just the types of drivers you want in your company. Classic-styled trucks don't only appeal to cowboys, they also appeal to the experienced, long-time professional drivers who are the very soul of this industry.

I'm not for a second suggesting that fuel economy isn't important and in many instances, you owe it to yourself to seriously consider spec'ing

a fuel-efficient truck. Truck and engine manufacturers will all agree that fuel efficiency is the next battleground. However, there's an image-conscious segment of the market that will still see value in the pride that's associated with running a long-nose, classic-styled big rig and is prepared to pay a small premium for that luxury.

For the foreseeable future, anyway, I think classic-styled Western Stars, Pete 379s and Kenworth W900s will continue to dominate the summer show'n'shines - and they won't be relegated to competing in the antique categories. □

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It's time to face reality

A couple of months ago I took on the difficult issue of the future of the long-nose conventional in our industry. Picking up on the remarks of Navistar executive Jim Hebe that long and tall is "dead and gone," I commented that, although I appreciated the remark would raise more than a few eyebrows among drivers and owner/operators who still love their long-nose conventionals, the only thing I found shocking about it was that it has taken the industry this long to come to such a conclusion.

I argued that trucking is an industry that operates on thin margins with fuel being one of the most volatile and damaging costs.

Yet the long-nose conventional is the biggest fuel guzzler around. (Yes, an experienced driver can squeeze some arguably decent mileage out of a long-nose but how much better would he do driving an aerodynamic design?)

Well, sure enough my remarks resulted in a wave of protest from truckers who like life with their long-nose conventionals just fine, thank you. Seasoned veterans equated the classic-style truck with pride for their job and threatened to toss away their keys if the long-nose conventional was no longer available.

Others argued that the longer wheelbase made for a safer design. A teenager with trucking in his blood,

Viewpoint

LOU SMYRLIS
 Editorial Director



wrote to tell me he's looking forward to getting his Class 1 licence and stepping foot into a big old long-nose Peterbilt.

"There's something about those trucks that makes me and all kinds of people stare when one drives by," he wrote. Some were so ticked off with my remarks they were just plain nasty in their comments, like this one: "So now you're onto hating long-nose conventionals? Why don't you just admit you hate trucking, period?"

Writing about this industry has provided me with a very good living for two decades now and actually it's because I love what I do, and because I have a great deal of respect for this industry and the many people who make it what it is, that I'm not just telling you what you want to hear. The reality is that trucking is a business; and driving truck is a profession. A business needs to be profitable and cost-efficient or it won't survive. A professional engaged in business needs to make sound business decisions or be replaced by others who do.

On our cover this month we include a story about US President Barack Obama announcing that heavy truck manufacturers will have to meet minimum fuel economy standards, beginning with the 2014 model year.

It's expected fuel economy will be required to improve by up to 25% by 2018 under the impending rules. The Canadian government will follow suit, hopefully with regulations tailored to the unique characteristics of our industry.

Likely the rules will be imposed on the OEMs, who already believe such fuel economy goals will require not only the current aerodynamic designs but likely making some of the currently optional equipment standard spec'.

Will such legislation spell the end of the classic-styled, long and tall tractor? I'll let Mack and Volvo CEO Denny Slagle speak to the issue this time: "That could be a casualty of what we're talking about," Slagle acknowledged shortly after the White House announcement.

Folks, I get it that the long-nose has been a long-loved industry icon. But it's an icon from an era whose time has come and gone. If you can't see that, time may pass you by. □

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

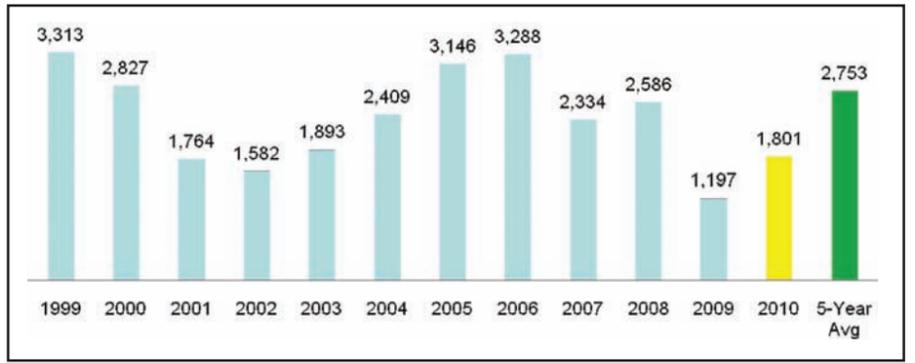
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Monthly Class 8 Sales - Apr 10

There was an upsurge in momentum for truck sales during the final month of the first quarter and that continued into April. There were 1,891 Class 8 trucks sold during the month, considerably better than last year's disastrous mark and also better than the monthly sales back in 2001 and 2002. Navistar International, in particular, had a solid month compared to the previous year as did Kenworth and Peterbilt.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	299	222
International	535	343
Kenworth	359	135
Mack	93	101
Peterbilt	209	65
Sterling	16	94
Volvo	169	136
Western Star	121	101
TOTALS	1801	1197

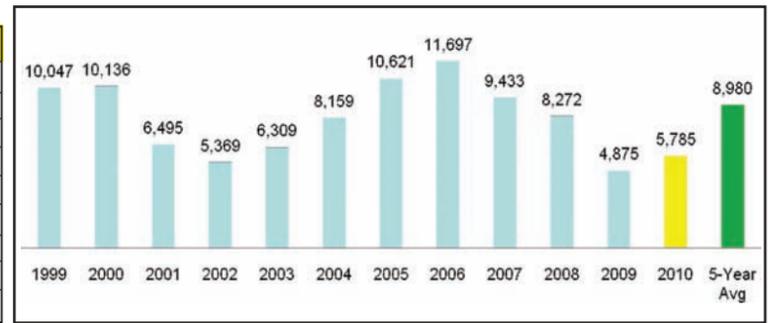
Historical Comparison - Apr 10 Sales



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

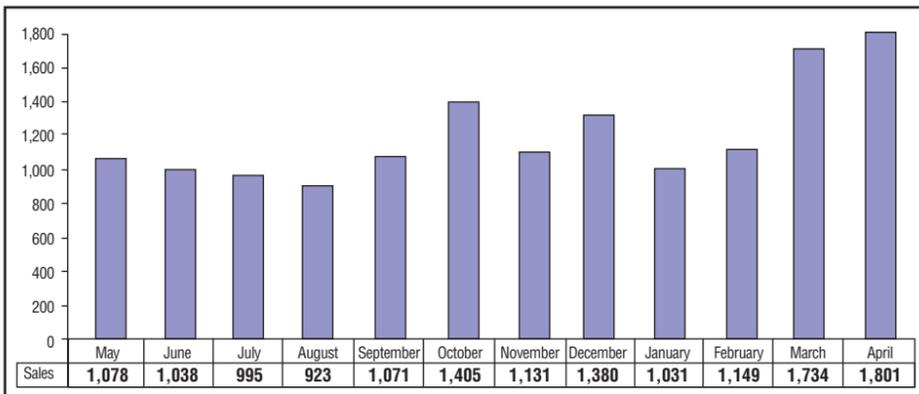
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	98	129	86	65	519	191	81	68	0	3	1,240
Kenworth	95	275	80	90	208	340	21	0	0	0	1,109
Mack	15	24	24	32	120	61	13	12	0	0	301
International	84	173	22	80	680	387	53	45	2	19	1,545
Peterbilt	51	121	48	51	98	227	33	21	0	0	650
Sterling	11	13	3	2	5	21	0	0	0	0	55
Volvo	20	36	20	29	246	102	38	25	0	1	517
Western Star	57	78	21	12	78	46	25	50	0	1	368
TOTALS	431	949	304	361	1,954	1,375	264	221	2	24	5,785

Historical Comparison - YTD Apr 10

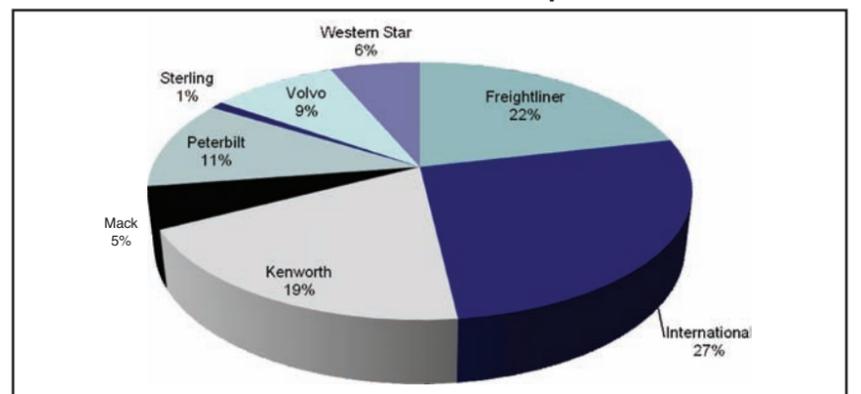


The first quarter of 2010, following an upsurge in sales in March, closed with sales of 3,984 Class 8 trucks which, although considerably behind the five-year average, is better than both last year's first quarter mark as well as the mark posted back in 2002. With April continuing the sales trend towards incremental improvement, so far 2010 is shaping up to deliver the moderate bounce back industry experts expected. Sales are almost 1,000 units better than last year's pace but still more than 4,000 units away from the industry average.

12 - Month Sales Trends



Market Share Class 8 - Apr 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.

The fight for market share this year is proving much tighter with International standing alone with its advanced EGR solution to the 2010 emissions standards compared to the SCR option all other truck manufacturers have chosen. After the first four months, International has opened its lead to 5% over rival Freightliner for the market share crown with Kenworth nearing 20% market share.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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IN BRIEF

Alberta offers rebates for fuel-saving equipment

CALGARY, Alta. – Alberta is the latest province to provide rebates for truckers who invest in fuel-saving technologies. The province has made \$2 million available in an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector by 97,000 tonnes per year. The rebate program, announced May 31, went into effect June 1.

“With 80% of greenhouse gas emissions coming from the tailpipe, we all have a crucial role to play in improving Alberta’s fuel efficiency,” said Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner.

The program will be administered by Climate Change Central. Eligible technologies include: trailer skirts and fairings (\$500); end fairings (\$500); cab heaters (\$400); auxiliary power units (\$1,500); gap fairings (\$300); and hybrid commercial vehicles (\$7,000).

“Financial incentives are only part of this initiative,” said Simon Knight, president and CEO of Climate Change Central. “Twenty-five companies will also receive a tailored fleet analysis showing them how to make their fuel go further, and several workshops will be held to educate operators on reducing fuel costs by maximizing fleet performance.”

The announcement was welcomed by the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA), which has been lobbying for incentives since 2005. To apply for a rebate or for more information, visit www.TrucksOfTomorrow.com or call 888-537-7202. □

B.C. fleet joins fight against tuition cap

VANCOUVER, B.C. – A B.C. fleet has spoken out in support of driver training school Mountain Transport Institute’s attempts to have the provincial government remove a \$4,000 funding cap for entry-level drivers.

The tuition cap, MTI argues, pushes entry-level drivers into training schools with low standards, resulting in poorly-trained drivers. B.C. fleet Coastal Pacific Xpress agrees the tuition cap should be revisited, according to manager Jim Mickey, who vows the company “will not hire \$4,000 drivers.”

“The withdrawal of substantial financial training support from government all but guarantees further erosion in the quality and quantity of professionals employed in the critical field of over-the-road transport, since no one trucking organization has the motivation to undertake this initiative on its own just to serve the needs of the industry and society as a whole,” Mickey contends.

“If we do not have a sufficient supply of drivers, we will have a crippled supply chain that fails to support our normal life needs; or if we expect to continue to employ similar numbers of drivers we will witness a gradual deterioration in the safety of our highways due to a willful acceptance of lower qualifications and lessened levels of career skill development among the industry participants.”

Mickey continued: “We cannot ‘half train’ a driver by investing half the money. We can train half the number of drivers, but we cannot realistically cut the training in half to keep up the numbers but reduce the investment in each one of them. Imagine if we transfer this thought to an airline pilot...would we really propose to reduce the training by half or more, just to meet a budget constraint? How about doctors? A truck driver has a serious need for competency in the safe operation of the motor vehicle he drives on the public roads. The only reason the driver is subject to a different set of rules is the occupation wages are so much less, therefore no one in the equation has the wherewithal to fund the training; not the applicant, not the employer, no one on the consumer side.”

MTI owner Andy Roberts is frustrated with the lack of response from the industry and has thus far had little success in swaying provincial politicians to revisit the tuition cap.

“The Ministry of Employment and Labour Market Services is still reviewing the impact of the \$4,000 tuition cap in British Columbia and it’s clear that they will maintain it if they don’t feel any push back from industry,” Roberts said. “If the BCTA as well as carriers in this province feel they can operate efficiently and safely with \$4,000 entry-level professional drivers, then you don’t need to do anything as this is quickly becoming your new reality.” □

Saskatchewan boosts B-train weights

REGINA, Sask. – Saskatchewan has harmonized its B-train weight allowances with Alberta and B.C. to improve the flow of goods across western Canada. An amendment to the Vehicle Weight and Dimension Regulations, 1999 allows B-trains to operate at 63,500 kg, up from a previous limit of 62,500 kg on the province’s most heavily-travelled highways. Alberta and B.C. already allowed 63,500 kg GVWs for B-trains.

“This weight increase is an example of the New West Partnership at work,” Saskatchewan’s Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter said. “It’s a change specifically requested by the commercial carrier industry that will have tangible and immediate benefits, and it supports the goal of the New West Partnership in creating a barrier-free trade zone and investment climate in the three western-most provinces.”

“We’re very pleased to see the provincial government moving forward on harmonization of regulations for our industry,” Saskatchewan Trucking Association director Steve Balzer added. “The largest impact on commercial carriers is the ability to operate B-train combinations through the Saskatchewan-Alberta-B.C. corridor without having to reduce shipping weight.”

The increase is expected to provide carriers with 2.5% greater productivity. For a list of affected highways, visit www.gov.sk.ca. □

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ALBERTA

Alberta trucking industry gathers to recognize its best

Continued from page 1

of Transportation, Gary Boddez, who outlined the province's highway construction plans for 2010 and touched briefly on some industry issues – such as the Transportation Routing and Vehicle Information System (TRAVIS) project and on-board recorders – the province is either looking at or working on currently (see pg. 11).

Other events included a panel discussion on the 2010 engine standards populated by representatives from Volvo, Cummins, Detroit Diesel, International, Mack and Paccar.

The panel answered questions about what companies can expect in the way of cost, durability, warranties, and the training required to bring drivers up to speed with new technologies and methodologies. The upshot: more money, but not a lot more hassle.

A Saturday morning session from Markel Insurance outlined how companies can help minimize the impact of high-risk drivers on their operations (see pg. 8) and a casino night allowed the assembled multitude to lose their shirts virtually, thanks to copious amounts of funny money created for the occasion.

Speaking at Saturday's luncheon, former Banff park warden and current motivational speaker Michael Kerr outlined the importance of humour in the workplace and, to howls of laughter from the audience, outlined many ways in which it can be accomplished both with and without funny hats and props.

Industry awards

Several awards were handed out over the course of the April 30-May 1 event, including the Service to the Industry Award which, as is the AMTA's tradition, went to Richard Warnock as the outgoing president. The honour was sponsored by BFL Canada Insurance Services Inc.

Warnock, who in "civilian life" is president of Westfreight Systems of Calgary, has been in the trucking industry for 45 years and still keeps his Class 1 licence current. Once in a while, he even climbs up behind the wheel. He turns over the reins of the AMTA to Lethbridge Truck Terminals' Dean Paisley.

Other honours bestowed over the weekend included the 2010 Associate Trades Award, sponsored by the AMTA, which went to Sherry Orr of BFL Canada, a national insurance brokerage and risk management firm. Orr was cited for, among other things, her devotion to and tireless support of the AMTA.

The 2010 Driver of the Year award, sponsored by Volvo Trucks Canada, went to Cornelius 'Corny' Wiebe, of Bison Transport who, it was said, may be winding down his wide-ranging career but who has been able to live his dream through that career.

Wiebe got the driving bug at 16, while still a schoolboy, as he



DRIVER OF THE YEAR: Bison Transport driver Cornelius 'Corny' Wiebe was named Driver of the Year. He's pictured here with wife Lynda. Wiebe has been living his dream since the age of 16.

ogled the magical gravel trucks passing by on the highway. His career took him to a variety of companies and even included a stint selling trucks.

The 2010 AMTA Historical Award, sponsored by the Alberta chapter of the ATHS, went to Canada Safeway's long-time driver and safety manager George McLaine.

Though retired now, McLaine grew up in the industry in Prince Edward Island but, by 1974, was running between Edmonton and Calgary for Safeway. He retired in 2007, but still does some consulting (for Britain's Clean Power Technologies) and volunteers for his church and the annual AMTA Truck Rodeo.

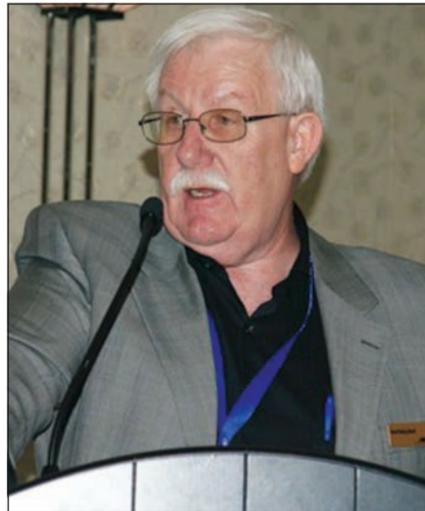
Don Chapman of Canadian Freightways was named 2010 Safety Person of the Year (sponsored by Bow Valley Insurance). He was credited with being intimately involved with such safety-related issues and initiatives as the Fatigue Management Study, the adoption of Canadian Freightway's Certification of Recognition, its own PDIC presentation, the PIC standards committee, the Alberta and British Columbia LCV Task Force and the AMTA's Collision Review committee.

An important part of the weekend was the AMTA's Annual General Meeting at which a new Board of Directors was elected, mostly by acclamation.

A new board

Outgoing president Warnock kicked things off with a look back at an eventful year that saw the organization take up residence in a new building on Calgary's southeast corner, and he reminded members they're welcome to take advantage of the training facilities offered there. Warnock also thanked outgoing board members Jean Kipp and Trevor Fridfinnson for their hard work during their terms.

Past president Greg Sokil, as chair of the Nominating Committee, then presented the new



THE PREZ: Incoming AMTA president Dean Paisley will have to lead a search for a new executive director.

board:

Dean Paisley, Lethbridge Truck Terminals – president

Richard Warnock, Westfreight Systems – past president

Carl Rosenau, Rosenau Transport – president-elect (acclaimed)

Darren Smith, Rosenau Transport – southern regional director (second year of two-year term)

Don Jackman, EnviroSort Inc. – central regional director (acclaimed)

Ed Pierce, Capstan Hauling – northwest regional director (second year of two-year term)

Jo-Ann Gunn, Robyn's Transportation – Calgary regional director (acclaimed)

Dan Duckering, Duckering's Transport – Edmonton regional director (second year of two-year term)

Rod Shopland, Night Hawk Truck Lines – Northeast regional director (acclaimed)

Bob Hill, Hill Bros. Expressways – director at large (second year of two-year term)

Gene Orlick, Orlick's Transport – director at large (second year of two-year term)

Greg Sokil, Sokil Express Lines – director at large (acclaimed)

Jeffrey Readhead, Canadian Freightways – director at large (acclaimed)

Upon taking the gavel from Warnock, incoming AMTA president Paisley kicked off the new year by outlining some of the organization's upcoming challenges, including the need to find a new executive director to replace the retiring Mayne Root.

Search is on

"They're going to be huge shoes to fill" he said as he recognized Root's contributions and thanked him for "an excellent job."

The announcement came as an apparent bombshell to many attendees, which Root found surprising when interviewed later.

"I thought I told people way back before Christmas," he says, "but I guess it didn't get out there as fast as bad news does."

Root began with the AMTA as manager of compliance and regulatory affairs upon his retirement from the Calgary Police Service in 2002.

"I retired Jan. 4 and started this job on Jan. 7," he says.

The biggest challenge Root says he faced over his eight years with the association was "To help re-establish the credibility and relevance of the association with government and our members," something he says he and his staff have managed to accomplish, helping put the association in "a really good position."

If he has any regrets about his time with the AMTA, Root says it's "The lack of expertise I have in getting the message of (the AMTA's) value across to the industry. I feel like I was inadequate in that area and still am to a degree."

Luckily, he says, everything has worked out and the organization has come along well. "We've come a long way, but it would have been a lot quicker if I'd had more expertise in those areas," he says.

There've been many changes to the industry during Root's tenure as executive director. He cites the effect of amalgamations as one example.

"We have organizations made up of many companies now that were independent before and so there's different challenges in dealing with that side of the business," he says.

"And of course the economy, going from the boom to the bust certainly has changed the face of the industry in many ways, in the need for manpower, being able to maintain rates and those kinds of things."

Once he hangs up his AMTA hat, Root says, he intends to keep busy with other things, perhaps including some contract work with the Calgary Police Service. He and his wife, Rosie, also want to do "some travelling, service for our church and other things."

There's no official final date set for Root's last day behind the wheel of the AMTA.

"I gather it will be at the end of the year or early in the new year," he says, "whenever we can make the transition so it works best for the organization." □

CANADA

Maintenance Mgr. of the Year manages from the shop floor

Continued from page 1

business, and all different walks of our industry, absolutely made a huge difference in all of the occupations that I have had that have lead up to what I do today," Riddle said in an interview with *Truck West*.

"I see a great value to the CFMS. It is a gathering and a collection – there are no colours here, and it is meant specifically for the advancement of maintenance. That is my core; I really believe that doing it once, doing it right and being proud of what you do is parcel and part."

The centrepiece of that system of core beliefs is for Riddle to perform his duties on a human level; to be neither dictatorial or overbearing, but to be approachable and have a sense of humour. And part of that approachability comes from his position in the shop – his literal position.

"I really have directed the maintenance shops from the shop. When I was given the job, the first thing I did was move the maintenance office into the shop, not in the general office, not because I was there to spy, but my employees recognize that I am there if they need me. I interact on the floor all day, every day," Riddle says.

"I help them solve problems and I let them teach me. I did not learn everything I learned on my own; my men have taught me. Together, we develop our best practices and we take pride that our fleet works hard; it works 24/7. We take pride in that we have relatively few driver complaints, we have relatively few operational dispatch complaints and we have relatively few customer complaints, all of which relate to the maintenance of the equipment used."

While Riddle's "human" approach to managing was enough to secure him



GRATEFUL WINNER: Jim Riddle accepts the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Manager of the Year award alongside his wife, Rita.

a place in the CFMS history books, he offered audiences at the awards ceremony a glimpse of his own humanity, becoming emotional when speaking of his employer in his acceptance speech.

"I have to give credit to my employer. Since I went there, I have been given absolute unbridled authority to run the maintenance department... the ability to just take care of business

and not be under the thumb, not be judged, but have the total confidence. I would like (my employer) to be recognized because he told me that the last years of my career would be the best years, and I believe that," Riddle said during his acceptance speech.

But while his impassioned speech may have compelled more than a few eyes in attendance to become teary, he has also proved he has the ability to produce a few smiles as well. When asked what a maintenance manager does when he's reached the pinnacle of his career, Riddle's response?

"I obviously can't consider retirement for at least a year because I have to bring the trophy back."

And if he has his way, Riddle will be back, continuing his relationship with CFMS for many years to come, inspiring future generations of maintenance managers to rise to the top of their game – and perhaps one day, the top of their industry as Riddle has. □

No need to idle

WINNIPEG, Man. – A study by FPInnovations-Feric in partnership with Bison Transport has confirmed that it's not necessary to idle a diesel engine to warm it up.

A series of tests were conducted as part of Project Innovation Transport (PIT), which proved it was more efficient to idle the engine for a short period after a cold start and then to drive the vehicle at moderate load while it warms up to normal operating temperatures. The findings debunk the myth that a diesel engine must first be idled for a lengthy period to bring it up to temperature.

The study also tested a coolant energy recovery system and found that it was effective in maintaining cab warmth with the engine turned off. The cabin remained a comfortable 17 degrees C two hours after engine shut-down, with the system turned on.

The system was found to keep cabin temperature 5-12 degrees C warmer for at least 1.5 hours after the engine was shut down, even though the ambient temperature was 4-9 degrees C colder for the system-on portion of the test. The study found the system is ideal for day cab applications where idle periods rarely exceed one or two hours. The outside temperature ranged from -7 degrees C to 2 degrees C during the test. FPInnovations says it plans to further test the device at colder temperatures. □

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Engineering Your Road to Success

ALBERTA

BEWARE the high-risk driver, Markel warns

By Jim Bray

BANFF, Alta. – Trucking companies have at least a one in three chance of interviewing a high-risk driver every time they look for new talent.

That's according to Rick Geller, director of safety and signature services for Markel Insurance. The good news, the insurance rep says, is that companies already have most of the tools they need to improve their odds of getting responsible, professional drivers.

Speaking before delegates to the 2010 Alberta Motor Transport Association Management Conference in Banff, Geller described high-risk drivers as those who engage consistently in unsafe driving behaviour such as speeding,

tailgating, running red lights and hopping from lane to lane, practices he says increase significantly the probability of being involved in a crash.

Geller breaks these high-risk drivers into two categories he says are easy to identify: those who refuse to take responsibility – always finding someone else to blame, and those who either delay reporting violations and collisions or who don't report them at all. The second type is worse for carriers ultimately, he says, because their actions could lead to personal injury lawsuits well after the fact, seemingly out of left field, perhaps even after the driver is no longer with the company.

Making the situation worse,

he says, is the fact that carriers are generally reactive in their response to high-risk driver issues, responding only after crashes and other incidents have happened – and he points to two typical responses to such incidents: “Yell at the driver and put him back behind the wheel, or fire him.”

Geller says the decision over which course of action to take is driven typically by the severity of the crash, a factor he says shouldn't even be a consideration in managing driver performance. Why not? Because, he says, similar actions by different drivers can have wildly different outcomes depending on other circumstances.

To illustrate the point, he outlines a scenario in which two trucks slide on ice in succession, cross the centre line and end up in the ditch, with the first truck only suffering damage to itself but the second also taking out an oncoming vehicle that happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

“Both drivers did exactly the same thing,” Geller says, “but one was lucky and one wasn't. Why are we handling the drivers differently? Why does the severity of the crash factor in how we're going to manage the driver's performance going forward?”

Geller also points to what he says is a distinct lack of understanding between preventability and liability. “In its simplest form,” he says, “if I'm going through a green light and get hit by someone running the red light, it's their fault.”

But preventability means that, even though the traffic light may be green, the driver should be thinking about possible actions he or she could take that could prevent a crash from happening in the first place.

“At the end of the day,” Geller says, “if the six o'clock news is showing a broken school bus, a bunch of hurt kiddies and ambulances, people don't care whose fault it was. They want to know how it can be prevented.”

Being a professional driver, he says, means you're expected to take into account and make allowances for the mistakes of others.

“They need to be watching when they're out there,” he says.

The best way to fight the scourge of high-risk drivers, Geller says, is for owners to adopt a more proactive approach that concentrates on monitoring violations continuously combined with remedial training. But not just any remedial training.

“Remedial training is usually used as discipline,” he says. “You've messed up so you're going to PDIC (the Professional Driver Improvement Course).” The problem, he says, is that – since the driver who ends up in such a situation is typically the type who won't take responsibility – a sudden epiphany on his or her part is “simply not going to

happen.”

By focusing instead on an ongoing process of measurement and intervention, Geller says, a carrier can avoid most of the risks connected to high-risk drivers. It doesn't have to be a big hassle or a huge expense, either, since much of what's needed is already at hand.

“You have an opportunity to really utilize a lot of information that's already within the four walls of your building,” Geller says. “All it requires is looking at existing information through a different lens.”

Collecting the information that can help identify a potential bad apple, he says, can be done by paying close attention to such things as driver's abstracts, on-board recording devices, violation notices, inspection reports, loss registers and even customer complaints. Carrier profiles and engine downloads – which can record info such as hard braking incidents, RPM and top speed – can also be useful.

Armed with this information, a carrier can help take care of what Geller says is the cause of 93% of major crashes: the human factor or, as the old joke goes, “the nut behind the wheel.”

According to Geller, such human issues include recognition errors (driver inattention or distraction), wrong decisions (speeding, underestimating the gap in front of the vehicle, driving when tired), performance errors (caused, perhaps, by a driver not being familiar with the equipment), and critical non-performance issues he describes as “medical issues like black-outs, where at a critical moment the driver did nothing.”

While it may seem that figuring out which driver is going to succumb to a “human factor” requires psychic abilities on the carrier's part, Geller says the best way to make such predictions is to keep track of moving violations.

“What we found was that, while crashes could be indicative of bad behaviour,” he says, “they could also be indicative of just being in the wrong spot at the wrong time.” On the other hand, Geller says that, over time, the data collected from moving violations is without question the best predictor of future crash involvement.

According to Markel's data, about 28% of all drivers fall into the various high-risk categories, with approximately 5% at the highest risk level. Statistics show, for example, that a driver who picks up a careless driving violation (what Markel calls High-Risk Driver Category 1) is 325% more likely to have a crash in the next 12 months. Category 2 offenses such as improper turn or improper/erratic lane change violations up the potential accident ante by 100% or more.

The good news, Geller says, is that a company already has this info on-hand, if it only chooses to use it. “You've got this violation,”

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AVOIDABLE?: Fleets can reduce insurance premiums by identifying high-risk drivers before an accident occurs.

Geller says, “so let’s use it as a wake-up call to help make your drivers the best they can possibly be. Let’s categorize those high-risk drivers in your fleet.”

And don’t forget to count personal vehicle violations.

“There seems to be a notion out there that drivers can drive one way in their personal car,” Geller says, “and then when they get behind the wheel of a commercial vehicle this magical transformation takes place and they now become safe drivers. I don’t care if it’s their car, your truck or grandma’s moped, a violation is a violation – they all count.”

Once its high-risk drivers have been identified, Geller says, a carrier then has some choices to make: it can simply maintain the status quo and hope for the best, it can fire the high-risk drivers, deal with specific issues and drivers, or look at its own practices as a carrier.

Geller recommends a strategy by which a carrier deals with the highest risk drivers first, and not necessarily by turfing them all out. But by concentrating initially on the drivers with the worst potential for incidents, Geller says, the carrier not only puts the spotlight where it’s needed the most, it also makes the process easier to handle.

“Five is a more manageable number than 100,” he says. “You want to get at the rest fairly quickly, but the pressing urgency isn’t there.”

And while firing some high-risk drivers may be the best course of action, Geller notes that drivers are also a precious commodity, so “If you have a chance to salvage that (high-risk) driver then why not?” He points out that most high-risk drivers “don’t have horns, they don’t breathe fire, they’re just ordinary people trying to make a living but they’ve let bad habits creep in. It happens to all of us.”

As far as intervention is concerned, Geller says taking advantage of remedial training

programs offers ways for a carrier to not only identify and weed out the safety-averse drivers in an organization, but also to work with the ones deemed salvageable. Most importantly, Geller says, “it provides the opportunity for management involvement before the crash happens.”

Remedial training should be more than a few hours in a classroom, though.

“Most of these drivers require a defensive driving course that has a hands-on, in-cab component,” Geller says. “You normally have to have someone get into the cab with them and do a really good over-the-road evaluation – two-and-a-half to three hours’ worth – and then have someone who has the skills coach and mentor these drivers.”

Another strategy Geller says should be in a carrier’s defensive arsenal against high-risk drivers is written criteria for drivers. “And let’s not just shoot for the lowest common denominator, let’s pretend we’re writing a letter to Santa Claus – what does our ideal driver look like?” When a carrier figures out what it’s looking for in a driver, Geller says, it has a much better chance of finding it.

Geller also stresses the importance of requalifying drivers annually, to ensure they still meet the company’s standards.

“If he qualifies, that’s perfect,” he says, and if the driver has slipped “you have to provide the training regardless of the amount of experience they bring. If you don’t provide the training they get it from 65,000 ‘truck stop lawyers’ out there and they usually learn exactly the wrong thing.”

And if the driver doesn’t meet your standards, Geller says, it’s on his or her shoulders.

“You’ve got your criteria; it’s his responsibility to make sure he meets it.” He says carriers should make sure drivers understand they’re expected to get back into the position where they qualify. “Provide the training and guidance,” he says, “but don’t take

ownership.”

On the other hand, Geller acknowledges that there can be legitimate times when a carrier wants to deviate from its criteria, for whatever reason, but at least then it’s “a business decision as to how far you want to deviate and, if you are going to deviate, then what’s your plan? Are you just going to hire the guy and then throw

him out there or are you going to do something to bring that driver up to the level he needs to be at?”

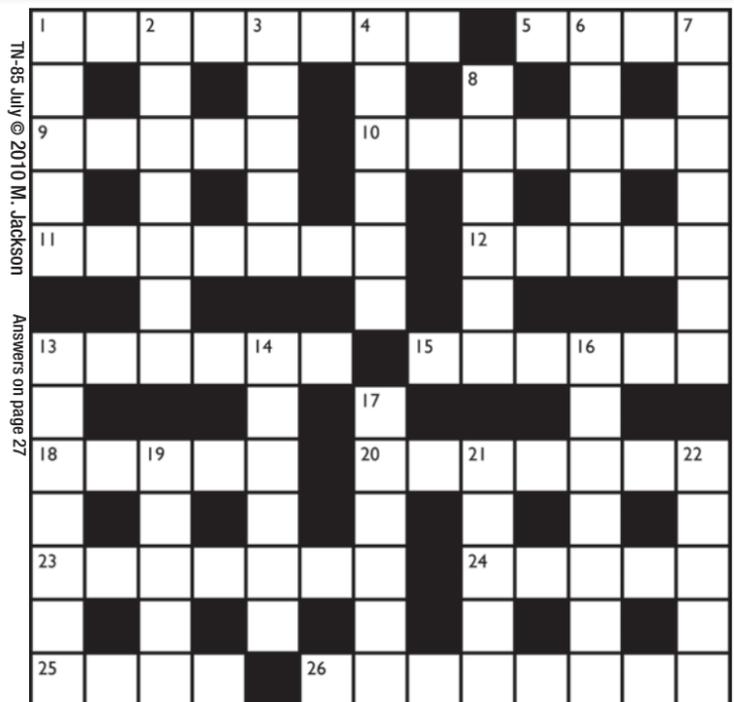
The bottom line, of course, is the bottom line – and while paying strict attention to minimizing the threat posed by high-risk drivers may seem like a lot of time and effort spent concentrating on things that may not have happened and which may not happen at all – Geller says it can also pay off financially through lower insurance costs and reduced administration and human resources costs.

“It’s very important that you make sure people understand the impact,” he says. “You can stop the bleeding, and it’s a lot easier to not spend a dollar than it is to earn one.”

There’s no magic formula for all of this, Geller admits, but he stresses that a high-risk driver strategy has benefits beyond the balance sheet, by letting the carrier maximize its driver and safety resources and, by becoming known throughout the industry for high standards, becoming an employer of choice for good, professional drivers.

“Drivers are funny creatures,” Geller says, “and when the perception gets out there that the drivers at a particular company are sub-standard, your better drivers don’t want to be associated with it.” Geller says it doesn’t matter if that perception is true or not, but that the perception becomes reality. □

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. Rubber-related operating expense (4,4)
5. Vehicle-related urban-air issue
9. E on fuel gauge
10. Tachometer’s warning mark (3,4)
11. Certain transport-company employees
12. Recently-licensed car drivers, usually
13. Engine item with skirt and rings
15. Reduced speed
18. Machinery-shipping container, commonly
20. CB-radio requirement
23. Song lyric, “Ten _____ gears and a Georgia overdrive”
24. One of two windshield adjuncts
25. Truck-battery compartment
26. One-way-out streets (4,4)

Down

1. Patterned tire surface
2. Truck-stop tasks
3. Bonnie’s buddy in bullet-ridden ’34 Ford
4. Driver-health issue, sometimes
6. State with “Vacationland” plates
7. Applied fifth-wheel lube
8. Truck News decision maker
13. PACCAR’s pre-’72 name, _____ Car and Foundry Co.
14. City-street sign, sometimes (3,3)
16. Vital semitrailer component
17. Trucker’s CB-radio name
19. Deadline month for income-tax returns
21. Pulled a trailer
22. Song lyric, “I need 40 _____ to turn this rig around”

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OVER THE ROAD

A driver's health scare can be a wake-up call for all of us

Sometimes you will have an experience or hear of one that wakes you up to what's really important in your daily life.

This was the case for me a couple of weeks ago.

I came face to face with an example of how shaky life can be on the road for all of us. It is an anecdote involving a 911 call and a driver in distress.

Here's how the story unfolded as related to me by the guys in dispatch as I prepared to leave on my last trip.

A cell phone call came in to the dispatch office that day from one of our drivers experiencing severe chest pain and shortness of breath.

This was a single driver doing open board highway work and at the time of the call was on Hwy. 1 in the boondocks of Saskatch-



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

ewan.

He had pulled off the road near the town of Tompkins which is about halfway between Maple Creek and Swift Current.

Our dispatcher called 911 from southern Ontario and related the situation to the operator.

Within a minute of making that call our office received a call from the 911 operator in Swift Current telling them that an ambulance had been dispatched from Gull Lake and would be to our driver within 15 minutes.

About a half-hour later, our dispatcher reached the driver on

his cell. He was still very much in physical pain and distressed but was in the ambulance and on his way to the hospital in Swift Current.

We all usually experience similar feelings when we hear a story like this.

Our first reaction is one of concern for the person we know.

Our second is often surprise that it could happen to that person, since we were just talking to them the other day and they were just fine, giving us no indication of poor health or cause for concern.

We are then often struck by how lucky we are to live in a part of the world that provides us with emergency medical care, even when we are alone and in the middle of nowhere.

The 911 emergency system is

pretty incredible. Finally, we start to look at our own state of health and how we would cope in a similar situation.

There has much been written in recent years about the shorter life expectancy for truck drivers in comparison to the rest of the population.

The average life expectancy for a North American male is 76 years.

Truck drivers can expect to live 10 to 15 years less than that.

That's a sobering thought. Coping with personal health issues as a truck driver is no easy task. Finding the time to exercise and maintain a routine that provides you with the rest you need to fight off fatigue is a challenge.

It's also very much a personal choice as to how you choose to live your life.

I make no secret of the fact that I have made significant lifestyle changes over the past eight to 10 years to improve my own health. Those changes included quitting tobacco, getting some daily exercise, and eating healthier.

There has been no quick fix solution for me and it has taken a long time to break old habits and develop new ones.

As I look back, it has been well worth the effort but the temptations to indulge in "comfort" foods and to not bother to go for that daily walk or run are always there.

As I write this, I am finishing up a week of vacation time. I have been enjoying the week with my father who has made the trip from Vancouver Island to visit his kids here in Ontario.

He is 88 years young and lives every day to the fullest. As we enjoy each other's company this week, I am reminded of why I take the time to look after my health.

I think we have the obligation to live each day to the best of our ability. We may not always succeed but we can always keep trying.

There has been a tremendous focus in our industry of late on health and lifestyle issues. As a driver myself, I believe that these lifestyle changes are the wave of the future for the industry.

I intend to buck the trend and retire as a healthy husband, father and hopefully grandfather, by the time my retirement rolls around. I'm running in my first 10-kilometre run of the summer season shortly.

Committing to an organized activity is a great motivator and it puts you in touch with others that are committed to the same healthy changes in their lives.

I'm happy to report our driver that experienced the heart attack is now in Calgary recovering from the ordeal. □

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

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 — No. of Truck-Tractors _____ No. of Buses _____
 — No. of Off-Road Vehicles _____

2) Does this location operate, control or administer one or more vehicles in any of the following Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) categories? Please check YES or NO:

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11,794-14,968 kg. (26,001-33,000 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
8,846-11,793 kg. (19,501-26,000 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
4,536-8,845 kg. (10,000-19,500 lbs.)...	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Under 4,536 kg. (10,000 lbs.).....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

3) This location operates, controls or administers:

Diesel powered vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Refrigerated vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Pickups or Utility Vans.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Propane powered vehicles.....	<input type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

4) Do you operate maintenance facilities at this location? YES NO
 IF YES, do you employ mechanics?..... YES NO

5) Indicate your PRIMARY type of business by checking ONLY ONE of the following:

a) <input type="checkbox"/> For Hire/Contract Trucking (hauling for others)
b) <input type="checkbox"/> Lease/Rental
c) <input type="checkbox"/> Food Production / Distribution / Beverages
d) <input type="checkbox"/> Farming
e) <input type="checkbox"/> Government (Fed., Prov., Local)
f) <input type="checkbox"/> Public Utility (electric, gas, telephone)
g) <input type="checkbox"/> Construction / Mining / Sand & Gravel
h) <input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum / Dry Bulk / Chemicals / Tank
i) <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing / Processing
j) <input type="checkbox"/> Retail
ji) <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale
k) <input type="checkbox"/> Logging / Lumber
l) <input type="checkbox"/> Bus Transportation
m) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify) _____

6) Are you involved in the purchase of equipment or replacement parts? YES NO

7) Are you responsible either directly or indirectly for equipment maintenance? YES NO

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ALBERTA

Deputy minister promises money for roads, new tech inspections

By Jim Bray

BANFF, Alta. – The challenging economy may have put a damper on many businesses' expansion plans, but for the Alberta government it's full steam ahead for Transportation's 2010 schedule.

Such is the word from Gary Boddez, the province's Deputy Minister of Transportation. Speaking at the Alberta Motor Transport Association's 2010 Management Conference in Banff on April 30, he said the government's much ballyhooed budget busting hasn't affected his department very much.

"Alberta Transportation is investing about \$1.5 billion into the provincial highway network this year," Boddez said, noting it's about the same amount the department spent in 2009 and is "quite a feat if you look at the rather sudden decline in provincial revenues this province has experienced over the last 12 to 18 months."

The decline of which he speaks was a projected \$8 billion surplus that did a quick 180 and became a projected deficit of \$7 billion.

"If that happened to any of your companies or households," Boddez noted, "you would make some very drastic changes in your spending habits."

Governments apparently don't have to live by the same rules as the rest of us, however, and Boddez credited the unchecked cash flow at the transport department to the fact current Premier Ed Stelmach used to be Transportation Minister.

"Back then, he said if (such a cash crunch) ever happened again and he was in a position to do something about it he would," Boddez said. "He's been good to his word."

The upshot, Boddez said, is that the department will fund about 1,300 kilometres of paving this year. "Roads are the backbone of the economy," he said, "and that's why we're continuing to invest in our roads and bridges."

Highlights of the province's paving programs include:

Edmonton: work continues on the 21-km northwest leg of the Anthony Henday ring road. Boddez said that section of the highway, as well as the major interchanges at Stoney Plain, Collingwood and Lessard Roads, are scheduled for completion by the fall of 2011 and that the recently announced project at the Cameron Heights intersection, which he said is the last signaled intersection on the west Henday, should go to tender shortly.

Calgary: Boddez expects the contractor for the southeast leg of the Stoney Trail ring road will be mobilizing on the site soon and once that leg is open to traffic (Autumn 2013), about 70% of the ring road will be completed, allowing a free flow of traffic "From Claresholm to Edmonton" with no traffic lights.

Northern Alberta: Boddez said the twinning of Highway 63 to Fort McMurray continues, including the construction of a five-lane bridge over the Athabasca River and two interchanges in the city itself.

A number of older highways are also being brought up to modern standards, Boddez said, including



TECHNO-SPECTIONS: Alberta will make more use of technology, such as thermal imaging vans, to make truck inspections more effective and efficient.

Highway 9 between Calgary and Drumheller and Highway 58 between High Level and Rainbow Lake, which includes adding full shoulders as well as some tweaks to reduce the severity of curves and grades.

Alberta Transport is also upping the rest area ante.

"Safety is very important," Boddez said, "and that's why Alberta Transport will be building a significant number of new safety rest areas that will benefit truckers and other motorists and help ensure the safe long distance movement of people and goods."

Boddez said the plan is to spend an estimated \$100 million on another 100 rest areas. This construction season should see new rest areas built on Highway 16 west of Entwistle, Highway 33 north of Swan hills, Highway 58 west of High Level, with a pair going in on Highway 63 – one south of Boyle and one north of Wandering River.

The province will also be building a new vehicle inspection station on Highway 63, east of Grassland. Boddez said it will include a shed that allows enforcement officers to conduct inspections 24 hours a day in all kinds of weather and will be able to monitor both north and southbound traffic. The project is still in the design phase, but "should be completed over the next three years in conjunction with the twinning of Highway 63."

Boddez also touched on issues such as fatigue management and new ways of doing business on Alberta highways.

"It might seem like a long drawn out process," he said of the slow-moving North American Fatigue Management Program, but a request for proposal will be issued "soon" for a contractor to develop the learning tools for an online fatigue management program. "This would enable all interested carriers to participate," he said.

The Deputy Minister also expressed hope that carriers would look into installing electronic on-board recorders (EOBRs) in their vehicles and reported that, while some industry representatives would apparently like to see them made mandatory, "the minister does not support mandatory use by all carriers."

On the other hand, Boddez said the Ministry "will be prepared to

deploy this technology with persistent hours-of-service violators as a condition attached to a safety fitness certificate."

As for the province's Transportation Routing and Vehicle Information System (TRAVIS) permitting system, Boddez said the next step in the project is to include the municipal permissions required to complement the provincial ones.

"One document will be generated with all the approvals to reflect the different permit conditions," he said, calling it "a one window approach." Boddez promised that TRAVIS will be a fast, 24-hour permitting service integrating all routes and conditions into a single transaction and document.

But not just yet. Alberta Transportation is running a TRAVIS pilot project in the Grande Prairie area currently and, Boddez said, "we anticipate making it province-wide hopefully by the end of this calendar year," though he also admitted it may also take a year or so to bring all the interested municipalities and counties on board.

Alberta, Boddez reported, amended its Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Act recently to ensure the provincial legislation is in step with the feds. The change, he said, will allow his department to introduce an administrative penalty option for offences.

"The Department will also implement a progressive disciplinary model consistent with the approach used by other jurisdictions," he said. "This will allow us to effectively deal with carriers who continue to operate in non-compliance with dangerous goods regulations."

And there are some new tech wrinkles coming to Alberta's inspection regimens. Boddez said that, since defective brakes are the leading cause of commercial vehicle fatalities and injuries, the department has introduced Performance Brake Testers in conjunction with CVSA on-road inspections, which he said makes brake testing "more accurate, more direct and less subjective than current practices."

Boddez also informed the audience that the department's enforcement staff is now using thermal imaging units to pre-screen commercial vehicles during inspections. Thermal imaging reveals the presence or absence of heat, allowing an inspector to read a vehicle's

heat signature. Boddez claimed this helps inspectors locate mechanical problems – such as faulty brakes, underinflated tires, overheated wheel bearings, overweight loads, and poorly secured cargo – more efficiently.

"When a mechanical problem is identified, the truck is pulled over for closer inspection," Boddez said. "And serious safety defects must be repaired before it is allowed back on the road." The deputy noted that, since the new equipment is mobile, testing can be conducted in many locations. "It's an extremely valuable and cost-effective piece of equipment," he said.

Alberta Transportation is also planning to go digital, with a process of "e-inspections". Boddez said these electronic CVSA inspections will replace the current paper document. "This will facilitate accuracy, availability, and timeliness of inspections," he said.

These e-inspections won't lengthen the intervals between inspections or affect current safety procedures, Boddez said, but they will let inspectors document results on a laptop computer and forward the data for approval electronically. Once it's approved, the data can be deposited in the carrier's profile database.

"The inspections will be viewable and printable at any time by accessing it over the Internet," Boddez said, stressing that carriers will benefit from "all levels of inspection being recorded through this expedited inspection system."

E-inspections should be up and running later this year, he said.

The Deputy Minister then turned his focus to the Partners in Compliance program, calling it an excellent example of industry and government working together to develop safety programs.

"It was the first program in North America to recognize excellence in safety practices by motor carriers," Boddez noted, adding that the revised program introduced in 2007 includes full bypass privileges for PIC partners through transponder reader systems at a number of vehicle inspection stations. "Alberta Transportation has now implemented incentives such as the designation of 'Excellent' as a National Safety Code rating and non-fee driver abstracts," he said. "And eventually, when the new driver abstract system is complete, we'll develop it as non-fee right from the start for those involved in the PIC program."

Boddez wrapped up his remarks by praising the AMTA and its members.

"Alberta transportation values the close working relationship we have," he said. "Carriers play an important role in the lives of Albertans in transporting the goods we use daily and our Minister really does value your input."

He also recognized the AMTA's role in helping shape policy and improve Alberta's transportation system. "We want to make sure that our processes are more efficient for everyone who drives for a living, and as a key stakeholder and partner you play an important role in helping to develop a safe and productive industry." □

SASKATCHEWAN

By Jim Bray

REGINA, Sask. – Things are heating up on the prairies when it comes to intermodal transportation hubs, and that could mean many jobs and opportunities over the next few years.

Winnipeg's Centreport, which we reported on briefly last summer, is being joined – and perhaps led somewhat – by Saskatchewan's Global Transportation Hub. Each of the inland ports has a different focus and both are working to become important focal points for Canada's transportation infrastructure, connecting the country with markets here, in the US and around the world.

But is there room for two major intermodal hubs in the west?

As it turns out, backers of both projects think there is, and neither thinks they're in true competition with each other.

"If you think about this in terms of the gateway concept," says John Law, president and CEO of Saskatchewan's Global Transportation Hub Authority, "there's probably room to provide these kinds of services in more than one jurisdiction in western Canada, depending on where people are wanting to go and where they're coming from."

Diane Gray, president and CEO of Centreport, agrees. "I wouldn't even call it a competition," she says. "I think (Saskatchewan) has a focus that involves using CP Rail and building a logistics hub around that, and Centreport includes a very busy cargo airport with the most dedicated cargo freighter flights a day."

This "there's room for everyone" mindset may be good news for Alberta, where "Port Alberta" in the Edmonton area has been under development. Port Alberta, however, doesn't appear to be as advanced as the other two projects.

Ken Mamczasz, executive director of Port Alberta, says they're busy working on the initiative and have done quite a bit of work over the past year, but it appears the project is still mostly on the drawing board.

"We have commissioned some significant market research and are moving forward with our industry involvement strategy," he said in an e-mail.

Port Alberta's Steering Committee had been led by government representatives and economic development agencies, Mamczasz says, but "now that we have some research and a serious value proposition for Port Alberta, we are asking industry members to get involved and help set up a new Board and create a new legal not-for-profit corporation called Port Alberta."

Meanwhile, Centreport and the Global Transportation Hub are well underway.

According to Law, Saskatchewan's project came as a logical outgrowth of a new provincial transportation strategy.

"We wanted to understand better not just how to manage our road network and the connections we make by air or by rail," he says, "but to focus more on overall economic development and how the transportation system serves the economy."

Law says that Saskatchewan is arguably the most trade-dependent provincial jurisdiction in the country, with about 70% of its gross domestic product based on exports and that, despite having had a "nice run here economically for the last while," their research

REGINA

The western Canadian transport hub of the future?

led them to change how they viewed the province's transportation system and the type of investments it needed going forward.

"It became apparent that there were some really interesting things happening that we hadn't really perhaps paid as close attention to as we might have," Law says. One was that Saskatchewan's road network, built primarily during the 1950s and 60s, had sections that couldn't handle the increase in commercial truck traffic over the past decade, nor were parts of the existing infrastructure taking new realities into account.

"Our economy changed quite dramatically and there were significant shifts in some trade movements," says Law.

These included major oil and gas

to modernize the transportation system from the west coast ports through the prairies and into the markets in the midwestern and northeastern United States and southwestern Ontario. Not only that, but "We learned that CP Rail was looking at their own system and concluded that if they couldn't contribute to a more efficient operation at their intermodal facility in Regina, then they'd probably have to do something different someplace else."

Such mutual needs and confluences of events are where marriages – or at least partnerships – are born, and that's what happened.

"We determined that if we partnered up (with CP) and made an approach to the federal government," Law says, "we might qualify for some of the infrastructure funding that was

'A lot of people are thinking differently about our province's economy and this hub is one of the tangible initiatives that has people thinking of investing here.'

John Law, Saskatchewan's Global Transportation Hub Authority

developments, new intensive livestock operations, a burgeoning mining industry in the north (Law says it grew by a factor of 10 over a two-year period), and expanded forestry. All of this was putting strains on a road system that, Law says, includes some highways built from gravel and dirt roads that had been merely paved over, without being engineered to carry heavy truck weights.

"Some of our roads were getting beat up really badly," Law says, "because there was all sorts of new commercial truck activity taking place. We had some gaps to fill in."

Law says Saskatchewan's research also discovered that it was mostly north-south traffic that was showing huge increases, while east-west truck traffic was virtually static.

Eventually, Law says, it became clear that if the province was going to support its economy, it had to not only get its products moved more efficiently inside the province, but to connect up better to the national and international supply chains as well. Canada has "a sailing advantage over the US ports," he says, "but if you have problems getting through the Rockies in the winter or there are congestion points at the port or labour disruptions or whatever, all that gets factored into (shippers') determination about the best way to move product."

As it turns out, Law says, at the same time Saskatchewan was mulling its future over, Ottawa was developing an Asia-Pacific Gateway concept

being made available to help enhance the transportation system."

CP has since become an anchor tenant at the Global Transportation Hub, a 2,000-acre parcel of land annexed by the city of Regina about three miles west of the Highway 1 and Lewvan Drive interchange. The railroad is taking up residence on some 300 of those acres which, when compared to their current 40-acre site, should give them plenty of elbow room for the foreseeable future.

"I think they've got the capacity to about quadruple the number of lifts in terms of the container movements in and out of their facility there," Law says.

Another anchor tenant is Loblaw's, which is building a massive facility on about 100 acres, with room for, according to Law, "about 765 truck bays."

That still leaves room for plenty more tenants, and the Hub folk aren't only looking for clients who want to set up large-scale facilities like the two anchors are.

"We think we'll see a lot more small- to medium-sized operations," Law says, estimating that most sites will probably fall in the 30- to 70-acre size. "It depends on who you're talking about and the nature of their business."

Having the two anchor tenants onboard helped generate interest from other parties, Law says. "We're in active negotiations with three or four other very serious parties about locating at the site," he notes, though

none had signed on the dotted line as of publication date.

Infrastructure to support the Hub includes a \$170-million west bypass connecting Highways 1 and 11. "This was always on the books," Law admits. "But when Loblaw's said they'd probably be running 1,400 Super-Bs and maybe triple tandems in and out of here a week, we realized we also had to think about how to manage the flow of traffic in and around the city from an efficiency and a public safety perspective."

And while the bypass has been the biggest piece of infrastructure work so far, Law says the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure has a 10-year build-out plan which is intended to serve almost like a collection and distribution system, not just for the Hub, Law says, "but to effectively connect up all of the important economic corridors in the province."

There's also thought being given to looking at a more direct connection to the US.

"That will be driven almost exclusively by the traffic volumes," says Law. "And if the Hub generates a lot more activity of the sort we saw when we got the Loblaw's commitment, it might happen sooner than we think."

Centreport, meanwhile, is focused currently on "building its assets," according to Gray, and they're looking not only to the west coast ports for business but to the north as well, through the port of Churchill.

Churchill isn't open all year, but Manitoba Trucking Association general manager Bob Dolyniuk says it's open more now than it used to be – so much so that "when Steve Ashton was Highways and Transportation Minister, he went over to London to talk to Lloyds and see if they would extend the insurable shipping season through Churchill because of this climate change issue."

Ashton's pleas apparently fell on deaf ears, so the Churchill shipping season still, Dolyniuk says, boils down to "the ship owners being able to get insurance to come in there."

The availability of Churchill notwithstanding, there are still plenty of transportation fish for Winnipeg to fry. The city is also the gateway to the east, including the port of Thunder Bay, and Gray points out it's also the northern hub of the midcontinent transportation corridor.

Gray says the Centreport concept began in earnest with the release of a Mayor's Trade Council report in March 2008, which had seen business leaders asked how Winnipeg could participate more in global trade movement and what investments would be required to help facilitate that expanded role.

"The report made a number of recommendations including the need to invest more significantly in infrastructure that connects into trade corridors and gateways," Gray says.

Gary Doer, Manitoba's Premier at the time, then led a community-wide effort to "turn the concept into something tangible," Gray says. Diverse parties such as the City of Winnipeg, Chambers of Commerce, the trucking association, and the Airports Authority were brought aboard the project, leading to the creation of a private sector corporation whose board of directors included the heads of Bison Transport and Paine Transportation.

Right now, Gray says, they're

finalizing their first business plan and working with governments on servicing the land, the land-use plan and a master plan for zoning. As for a completion date, Gray says that's in the eye of the beholder.

"Completion to some people could mean we have an office established," she says. "We're operational. We're working with developers and the first investments will be announced this summer."

Work is also continuing on Centreport Canada Way, a \$212.5-million, four-lane divided expressway the federal and provincial governments are funding and which Gray says is opening up Winnipeg's northwest quadrant. The route also provides trucks with access to the Perimeter Highway connecting to the Trans-Canada and Highway 75 to the Emerson border crossing.

There's also a new terminal, expected to be open this fall, being built at Winnipeg's airport. Though the \$600-million facility is meant primarily for passengers, Gray stresses that the airport itself is "the busiest in Canada when it comes to being a cargo jet hub." Not only that, she says, but Canada Post has built its western Canadian facility there as well, "so that has connections into what we're building."

Manitoba's famous flooding could be thought of as a potential fly in the ointment, but Gray doesn't see that as a major issue. "Everyone has their eye on that particular ball," she says, noting that there are other routes to the south, just east of Winnipeg, and that the "border crossings are open and the commercial traffic continues to flow, so it's not a case of there being no alternative."

And it isn't as if nothing's being done to help ensure the major four-lane highway to the border doesn't float away in the future.

"They're looking at either a bypass or a diversion of water to take the flooding away from the highway," Gray says. "They've got a number of options that they're studying." Back on the outskirts of Regina, meanwhile, things are moving along. "We're in the very early days out there," says Law, "But you can't miss it."

Phase One of the Loblaws operation, which Law expects to be operational by this summer, was started about 14 months ago. It's a 400,000 sq.-ft. facility that's "big enough to see from quite a distance away on our flat prairie."

Loblaws' initial phase is a distribution centre for its fresh and frozen food operations. The remainder of its million square feet facilities, Law says, is "primarily dry goods, clothing, elec-

tronics – the stuff that they're competing with the Wal-Marts of the world." Law estimates it'll take another 18 months to get that phase finished.

As for the rest of the Global Transportation Hub, Law says they've started working on the roads, and the water and sewer pipes are going in. CP still operates from its downtown location, Law says, waiting for the required approvals to be vetted through the Canadian Transportation Agency and he estimates that, if things go well, construction will be underway on its new digs "towards the end of the current construction season."

Law figures both CP and Loblaws will be fully operational sometime in 2012.

Law says one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Saskatchewan initiative is that it was born out of the requirements of its private sector partners.

"We thought it would be appropriate to look for the right site and that sort of thing but it was really the private sector that drove the initiative," he says. "A lot of people are thinking differently about our province's economy and this Hub is one of the tangible initiatives that has people interested in investing here."

They're also working with potential tenants on everything from permitting and zoning to service provision and the solving of construction issues. "That facilitation role has been one that we have received a lot of very positive feedback for," Law says. "It's really a one-stop shopping thing."

Law says they've also had interest "expressed" by a few trucking and transportation companies "because of the nature of the hub's focus" and he expects there'll be some announcements in that area in the near future.

Intermodal hubs such as the Global Transportation Hub, Centreport and, eventually, Port Alberta, should not only offer convenience and efficiency for the movers of goods across Canada and to the world, they also stand to be good job creators. Law says that potential was one of the things that motivated them to get the project going in the first place.

"Loblaws," he cites as an example, "should require up to 1,500 new incremental jobs just to service and operate their new facility. That's a lot of new jobs for the region."

The choice for companies interested in locating at any of these new facilities may end up being made more interesting because they'll be faced with a cornucopia of riches. "I think a lot will depend to a large extent on individual business requirements," Law says. "That certainly has been our experience so far." □

Saskatchewan developing high clearance truck lanes

REGINA, Sask. – Saskatchewan continues to increase its trucker-friendliness, most recently committing \$1.6 million to create high clearance trucking corridors for over-dimensional loads. The corridors will allow oversize loads to be trucked without the need to raise or temporarily cut power lines and other structures, the province announced. The corridors will run from Saskatoon to the Alberta border on Hwy. 7 and from Melville to Rosetown via Hwy. 15 and 4.

"Providing reliable, low-cost and efficient routes to export markets is a primary focus of our government's management of the transportation system," Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter said. "We are listening to the people who create jobs and investment in Saskatchewan and responding to their needs."

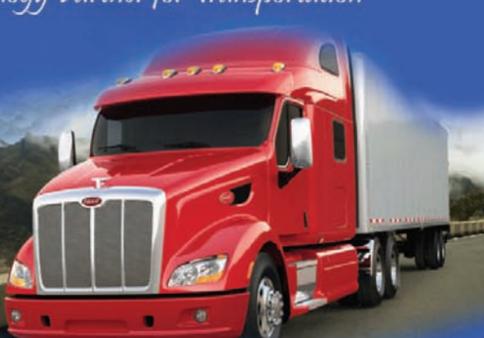
Saskatchewan also vowed to reduce the red tape involved in hauling over-dimensional loads. Previously, shippers had to work with regulatory authorities to plan a route and arrange for utilities to be raised with each move. Now, shippers can just pay a permit fee to use the corridor, which will cost substantially less than paying for the raising of electrical wires, the province notes. □



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CANADA

By Ingrid Phaneuf

OTTAWA, Ont. – New pardons rules recently introduced by the federal government have truckers with criminal records worried, but some experts say the rules won't amount to much more than a teapot for most drivers.

Bill C23 was tabled in Parliament this spring in the wake of the news that former hockey coach Graham James, convicted in 1997 of sexual assaults against two teens, including future NHLer Sheldon Kennedy, received a pardon in 2007.

The new law, if passed in its current form, would change the term "pardon" to "record suspension," increase the wait times for summary convictions from three to five years and for indictable offenses from five to 10 years and rule out "record suspensions" for persons convicted of three or more indictable offenses or of sexual assault against minors.

The news they may have to wait longer to apply to have their criminal records sealed and therefore invisible on the RCMP's Canadian Police Information Centre database, which is regularly checked at the US border by Homeland Security officials, has truckers and other individuals scrambling to apply for pardons under the old rules, say pardons experts.

"We've doubled our staff to handle applications, and asked them to work Saturdays as well until the new rules come into law," says Peter Dimakos, business development manager for Canadian Pardon Services.

But some pardons experts feel truckers are overreacting.

"All of this scary crap comes from the Karla Homolka, Paul Bernardo fiasco," says Paulette Gauthier-Roy, owner of Pardons Inc. based in northern Ontario. "The attorney general got burnt when he made a deal with Karla Homolka and she got off scott free and now she's coming up for a pardon. Then people found out about the hockey coach."

Gauthier-Roy, who works with truckers, believes the new rules, if passed in their current form, will have little to no impact on her clients.

"I'm not going to go and start drumming up drama about why truckers should be running to our offices to get pardons before the wait times are increased," she says. "The bulk of my clients have records that are more than 10 years old, so they wouldn't be affected anyway. As for those who have summary convictions for DUIs and such, they may have to wait five years to apply for a pardon instead of three, but we don't even know that yet. What you have to remember is that these new rules are being created to deal with people who've committed sexual crimes against children. The other rules may not even change."

'Hysteria' is the word Gauthier-Roy uses to describe the reaction of the trucking community to the Stephen Harper government's proposed changes.

But increased wait times for indictable offenses could have a severe impact on some truckers, other

Are proposed new pardons rules reason for concern, or simply...

Pardons Paranoia?

experts argue.

"There are people who get into trucking to turn their lives around," points out Michael Ashby, communications director for the National Pardon Centre, headquartered in Montreal. "Some of these people do have a few indictable offenses on their records, so not being able to get a pardon could hold those people back. And having to wait 10 years instead of five for one indictable offense could be drastic."

But does that mean truckers should be rushing to get their pardons applications in before the proposed changes become law (which could be as long as a year from now, if the minority government stands for that long, some point out)?

"For the small stuff, the changes won't be huge," says Ashby. "But for anyone with a few indictable offenses on their record, it's a good idea."

Will changes impact border crossing?

The answer to the above question is both 'No' and 'Yes,' according to pardons experts; 'No' because the US does not recognize Canadian pardons.

"The Americans don't recognize our pardon system," points out Ashby. "So if you're at the border and you tell them you've got a pardon they'll say it doesn't count." Of course, lying to US border officials about whether you've had a pardon is against the law in the US and could get you permanently banned, points out Ashby.

Getting a waiver is the only guarantee of US entry for Canadians who've been convicted of a crime, pardons experts agree.

But what if you've been pardoned and haven't previously crossed into the US? Can you get away with crossing the border if your record has already been sealed and you lie to border officials about it, breaking US law? Pardons experts are divided on whether this is possible. Some believe that US border officials have access to Canadian criminal records even after they've been pardoned.

Others believe US border officials are just experts at spotting and sweating out liars.

According to the RCMP, US border officials do have access to criminal records on CPIC, but not once individuals have received pardons.

"There is no indication on CPIC that your record has been sealed," confirmed RCMP communications officer Julie Gagnon.

RCMP officials could not confirm, however, whether US Homeland Security downloads CPIC information on a daily basis and then keeps it, thereby keeping track of Canadian criminal records long after they have been removed from the database by the RCMP. Neither could officials from the National Parole Board, which regulates pardons.

"We know US border officials have access to CPIC but we don't know what they do with the information once they get it," says Nadine Archambault, communications officer.

According to her, the sealing of criminal records after a pardon is required under Canadian law, but whether local police services and courts are actually doing it is debatable.

"We know records are not vis-

ible in CPIC and we do request that courts and local police services seal the criminal records of individuals who have received pardons but we are not able to follow up with every court and police service to ensure that they do," said Archambault, adding that revealing whether someone has been pardoned is illegal and can result in a summary conviction under Canadian law.

Better safe than sorry

Still, some pardons experts believe it's better to be safe than sorry and recommend getting your pardon as soon as you possibly can, especially prior to applying for a waiver. Scott Mindel, an information counselor with Pardons Canada, is one such expert.

"Waivers are a cash cow for the US government, so why should you apply for one unless you need it?" says Mindel. According to him, getting a pardon first allows you to determine if you'll need a waiver or not.

"Most people we deal with don't even know what they actually ended up being convicted of, because their lawyers pled them down. After they start the pardon process with us, they find out. Then they can make a determination, based on what they've been convicted of, as to whether they need to apply for a waiver," Mindel says.

Waivers are issued according to US law, not Canadian law, he adds, and therefore a charge considered minor in Canada could require a waiver for entry to the US and vice-versa.

"Finding out what you've actually been convicted of will tell you if you need a waiver or not," he asserts, adding that entry into the US is determined by "the book of moral turpitude. You can look it up on the Internet."

Indeed, the issue of whether a Canadian with a pardon can or can't get into the US has little to do with the new pardons rules, if implemented, sums up Gauthier-Roy.

"The rules, as far as getting into the US, aren't going to change, unless the US changes them," she says.

Can you still get a job?

So will the new rules have a significant impact on those who want to drive in Canada only? Ontario Trucking Association v.p. of public affairs Doug Switzer says probably not.

"You can still get hired as a driver if you have a criminal record," says Switzer. "But it depends on what you've been convicted of. It's certainly not something that recommends you, especially if you have three convictions for cargo theft or several DUIs. Then again, if you were in a bar room brawl 15 years ago when you were 18 years old, no one will give a damn."

Switzer warns against lying about your record, even after you've obtained a pardon.

"Especially in this industry, it's practically impossible to keep a secret," says Switzer. "Chances are someone already knows and they'll tell, and you'll be in trouble for lying to your employer. You're better off telling the truth up front." □



BE HONEST: While a waiver is supposed to make your record invisible to US Customs officers, there's no guarantee the information isn't saved.

INDUSTRY

Three relatively simple things US CBP could do to help fix the border

Recently, the trade community in the US and Canada were asked by the new chief at the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency to come up with a list of “low-hanging fruit” that could be implemented to help enhance the balance between security and trade facilitation.

Everyone from the business community is united in the view that things have not gone as promised at the border; that the benefits of participating in the “trusted trader” programs like FAST and C-TPAT have not materialized.

While there are a host of issues and priorities – in terms of what might be classified as low-hanging fruit – measures that do not denigrate security; that would help make the border more efficient or less frustrating; that would not require gobs of money; or legislation – CTA and ATA got together and agreed on the following list:

Suspension of C-TPAT benefits

Single Incident vs. Systemic Problems: The right to due process and natural justice are underpinnings of our society and some of the things our troops are fighting for overseas.

Yet, motor carriers participating in C-TPAT face the possibility of a single security incident resulting in the immediate revocation of a carriers’ C-TPAT status.

Such a drastic measure occurs before an investigation is performed to uncover what led to the security incident.

Our proposed solution is that in the event of a security incident, CBP should: a) Not immediately suspend the motor carrier, and thus it should not ‘turn off’ its Status Verification Interface (SVI) number, until an investigation determines the nature of the illicit cargo and at what point it was introduced into the conveyance; and b) Consider a ‘probation’ period if the investigation



Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY

demonstrates that the carrier was not at fault.

The probation can end once CBP is satisfied that the motor carrier has properly implemented the Minimum Security Criteria and considered establishing applicable best practices to reduce the risks of future security breaches.

If an investigation demonstrates a willful disregard on the part of the motor carrier of the C-TPAT Minimum Security Criteria, CBP could suspend the motor carrier and turn off its SVI number; or require the motor carrier to re-apply and undergo again a full validation of the C-TPAT requirements prior to being re-admitted to C-TPAT.

A single security incident should not result in a motor carrier being automatically suspended unless an investigation demonstrates a “systemic security” problem and a lack of proper security measures by the trucking company.

Individual incidents, even if perpetrated by a company employee, should not be treated as systemic problems.

Empty trailer repositioning

The trucking industry is seeking a minor change in the interpretation of immigration rules to allow foreign drivers to reposition a foreign-based trailer in the US that did not enter and/or will not leave with the same driver.

Such flexibility would greatly improve not only driver and equipment efficiency, but also improve fuel consumption and reduce emissions due to unnecessary extra tractor movements.

Today, foreign drivers are allowed to reposition an empty piece of equipment that either enters or exits with them.

Again, the additional flexibility would only impact foreign-based trailers that are in the US and need to be repositioned between two domestic points before being loaded and bound for the border.

We are urging that CBP provide this added flexibility to low-risk motor carriers that are members of the C-TPAT program as an added benefit to those carriers that have invested to participate in C-TPAT and/or PIP.

Such treatment would be reciprocal in the US and in Canada.

The Canadian government supports the industry with this solution and is prepared to proceed on a reciprocal basis when the US agrees.

In-transit movements

With the introduction of CBP’s ACE Truck e-Manifest, carriers moving goods in-transit are required to submit complete shipment information electronically to Customs in advance of arrival at the border.

To do this, carriers require full commercial invoice information for the shipment.

This is a particularly daunting, if not impossible task for less-than-truckload (LTL) carriers, where they may have the goods from literally hundreds of customers on-board.

As shippers and consignees are already reluctant to produce this information for what is essentially a domestic shipment, the move towards electronic processes, a measure that should streamline border clearance, has instead created inefficiencies in the supply chain.

Carriers are forced to abandon the efficiency of an in-transit move, and seek an alternate

route adding extra miles which is also not timely or cost-effective or environmentally-conscious.

As Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) moves towards the introduction of the Advanced Commercial Information (ACI) Highway – comparable to ACE – the in-transit process will become automated but the full commercial information required by the US, will remain a non-requirement for Canada.

The demands for information make it difficult to comply, again particularly in the LTL segment where detailed shipment information is required from multiple shippers, and the matter is further complicated by differing demands from the two countries.

CTA and ATA strongly recommend that CBP remove the requirement for a carrier that is a member of the C-TPAT or PIP programs to submit full commercial information for domestic shipments that are part of an in-transit movement and require only a limited data set for goods moving in-transit.

This not only improves and creates dramatic time and cost savings for carriers, consignees and shippers in both the US and Canada, it also reduces emissions by eliminating unnecessary miles and brings added benefits to the low risk programs.

While on the surface these might seem like modest concessions, in combination they could have a meaningful impact on supply chain efficiency and provide additional value-added to companies that have invested in the myriad of border security programs that have been introduced over the past several years. □

– David Bradley is president of the Ontario Trucking Association and chief executive officer of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

MISSING

PEARL ROSE GAVAGHAN DA MASSA

Aka Belle Flaherty
5625-P

Date Of Birth: April 6, 2004
Missing since: December 9, 2008
Missing from: Manchester, England
Eyes: Green/Brown
Hair: Brown, curly, past shoulders
Small scar beneath lower lip

Characteristics: Pearl was last seen at her nursery school on December 1, 2008 when she was picked up by her mother Helen Gavaghan (aka Meta International; Dana Flaherty). It has been confirmed that mother and child flew from the UK to Mexico on December 9, 2008. It has also been confirmed that they subsequently entered the US via land crossing at Laredo, Texas on December 30, 2008. There has been a recent sighting of them in Toronto, Ontario, under the names Dana and Belle Flaherty. The Manchester Police Service have issued a warrant for their return to the UK.

Toronto Police Fugitive Squad: 416-808-5930 www.ontario.childfind.ca

Anyone with information please contact: All Calls Confidential – No Name Required

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FEATURE

Creative craftsman carves an interesting niche

Woodworker's wooden truck replicas gaining attention far and wide

By Jim Bray

RED DEER, Alta. – You might call Darryl Thompson a “model” citizen. That’s because the North Carolina-based trucker and craftsman is carving out a unique niche for himself by making replicas of tractor-trailers for clients across North America. Thompson, who markets his models via his Web site at www.woodtrux.com, has been crafting his replica vehicles since 1990, hand-building them all from wood. It’s been an uphill battle, but his reputation is spreading, catching the attention of customers as far away as Red Deer, Alta.

“It’s kind of a simple story,” Thompson says from the North Carolina home and workshop where

he lives with his photographer wife, Brenda. And, indeed, his trucking involvement began in a straightforward way: he got his trucking licence back in 1988 and since then has been all over the US and Canada, turning in over a million miles. He’s been a company driver, an owner/operator and, as he says, has driven “all kinds of equipment.”

Then, he says, he came home one day around 1993 and decided to see if he could build a truck for himself – a model, not the real deal.

“I built one and it didn’t turn out too bad,” he remembers. “The wheels didn’t roll as nice as I’d like them to, but I worked at it.” He continued working on it – and others – until a



CROSS-BORDER CARVING: Guys Freightways is one of Thompson’s Canadian customers.

buddy who was into trucking stopped by, saw his growing gaggle of rolling replicas and asked where he had got-

ten them. “I told him I made them,” Thompson says, “and he said, ‘Man, you could sell those things.’”

And thus a career – or at least a sideline – was born.

Thompson says he’d never considered selling his models at the time; he was just enjoying himself and making them for his own collection.

“Then I decided I’d take one to work and let my boss see it,” he says, reporting that The Man “was so tickled he bought 25 of them!”

Things took off from there. Word of mouth started spreading, assisted by some legwork from Thompson himself.

“I live in trucking country anyways, North Carolina,” he says, “and there’s a lot of trucking companies around. I just went around to different places and showed them my stuff.”

Despite that first order, sales were hard to come by. Thompson says he’d call up a trucking company and tell them about his wooden trucks only to find the people distinctly underwhelmed. They didn’t get the concept, he says, so rather than telling people about them, he started showing them.

“I’d take (the model) out of the crate – and I make the crate to ship them in, too – and I put it on their desk and their jaws would just hit the floor.”

Thompson says they couldn’t believe the model was made of wood until he’d tip it upside down and show them, “because I leave one spot of plain wood on every truck’s cab, where I sign and date it. They just couldn’t believe it.”

From that sprang his self-designed Web site, which garnered interest from the online community, trucking Web sites and the like.

“It’s pretty much evolved from that,” he says, his model-making going from being just a hobby to, well, a HOBBY! And as his business has grown so has the quality of the models, each of which he says takes him at least a month to build.

One might think that a craftsman of fine, wooden replicas would have a background in woodworking or the like, but Thompson says it wasn’t so.

“I was more into doing what other kids did, like motorcycle riding and stuff like that,” he says. “I took a few shop classes and found it’s always neat to take something and turn it into something else.”

His interest was piqued further by his master craftsman father-in-law, who showed him what could be done

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with wood. From there, "I just kind of taught myself the different things," he says.

As it turns out, he created a niche. "There's a lot of people out there that would love to have a wooden truck," he says. "They can't go to these big (model) companies and order one; they want you to order 100 or something."

He says his boss had ordered many models from one of these companies but "when he got them, he was very disappointed because they weren't his exact model truck, the stickers were on crooked and a lot of the wheels didn't even turn on the darn things."

Thompson knew he could do better. "It's the details that make your truck," he says, "the graphics on it and stuff like that." He makes sure his clients give him all the information he needs, right down to what they want on the vanity licence plates for the trailer and truck.

Such customization makes his models more relevant to the customer. "It's to get the little differences between trucks right," he says, "because your graphics might look different from someone else's, you might have more lights on the back, little variations like that." Thompson says people often take their trucks' look for granted, but they remember subconsciously the nuances that separate them from similar vehicles and, if they're missing, they know.

"The great deal about it is that anybody can send me pictures," Thompson says. "I don't work from patterns or anything - I just build from the pictures."

Besides his woodworking tools, Thompson uses CorelDraw, a Canadian-developed computer software application, to help him reproduce the graphics. On the other hand, clients sometimes have copies of their own graphics that they can send, as was the case when Red Deer, Alta.'s, Guys Freightways commissioned replicas of its equipment.

"Their graphics man is really good," Thompson remembers. "He sent me an actual graphic image that I could just go in and reproduce." He says, however, that sometimes all he has from which to work is a blurry picture.

"If it's good enough, I might be able to scan it and pull out what I need," he says, but sometimes he ends up reproducing the graphic from scratch.

Denise Pederson of Guys Freightways, learned about Woodtrux through mutual friends and some other projects she's involved with, information that eventually took her to the Woodtrux Web site.

"I was looking for a unique Christmas present for our bosses," she says, "so I e-mailed Darryl and then I phoned him and had a really lengthy talk, about an hour long. Then I sent him pictures and got the ball rolling."

Pederson says Thompson turned the order for two 2010 Pete 389s in Guys' red and white livery around in about a month, "and he delivered it to us on the day he said he would. I was amazed. He did just a phenomenal job." She was also impressed by the "very wonderful little wooden crates he made for them."

The Guys Freightways models are identical except for the Alberta licence plates on the front, which are customized with "Bernie" and "Todd," the first names of the company owners.



LIKE THE REAL THING: This propane hauler is one of many wooden truck replicas that woodworker Darryl Thompson has created. He claims this tanker was his greatest challenge yet.

Pederson says the detail on Thompson's models is authentic right from the mascot on the door (a big-footed kangaroo named Boomer) to the reflectors on the trucks and trailers that "if you're walking by them and the light hits them," she says, "look like they're on."

They aren't on, however. Thompson says the reflective tape he uses on the models is just that: reflective tape, the same as you'd find on the real vehicle.

"I just cut it down to a size that looks comparable to the size of the truck," he admits. Everything else is wood, though, including the wheels, and it's all made by Thompson, in his workshop.

Many of Woodtrux customers are, like Pederson, people looking for unique gifts.

"A lot of the time, it's for a company executive or the owners," Thompson says. "But some people buy them for their best drivers, too. It's better than a belt buckle."

He says the models are also ideal gifts for honouring years of service, safest drivers and the like. To illustrate his point, Thompson points out a model he built for a company to give a driver who was retiring after nearly 40 years of service. "They wanted something super special to give this guy," he says, "and he was tickled pink."

Thompson says that turning out tiny trucks is more than a sideline business; it's a labour of love. "I don't send anything out of my house that I'm not happy with," he says. "And if I'm not happy with it, I make the person wait until I am."

A laudable strategy, perhaps, but one that's undoubtedly frustrating for the customer waiting for the model. "Most of them are very understanding," Thompson says. "I mean, they're not going to get this anywhere. There's very few people out there that make wooden trucks in the same detail and on this scale."

Thompson's most challenging commission to date was a 1988 Kenworth propane tanker.

"I had never done a tanker before," he says. "The vans and stuff like that are pretty much just a box, but you can't just go and buy a chunk of wood that's round like a cylinder."

He has also adapted the concept to take into account ideas from clients, including the creation of lamps where the light fixture extends up from the fifth wheel. "Whatever people have an idea for," he says. "I'm pretty good at just looking at a picture and building something."

Fortunately (or unfortunately, de-

pending on how you look at it), he has plenty of time to fill orders right now.

"The trucking industry kinda took a hit back when fuel really spiked," Thompson says, and the downturn forced him to shut down his trucking

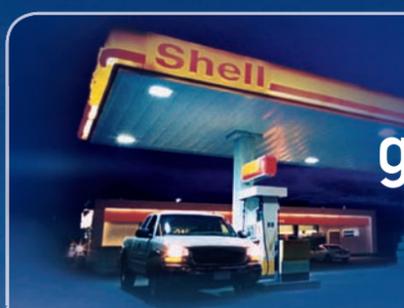
company. "Needless to say, it's been kind of tough since then."

But he perseveres. Right now, Thompson has several projects on the go, some of which he's making on spec, hoping to open up some new markets. One is an extended sleeper Pete 379, he says. "I am basically building that one for myself, but if somebody decides they want it, fine."

As if that isn't enough to keep him busy, Thompson has also made room in his two-stall garage/workshop for the custom-made wooden furniture and accessories he has started marketing. Guys' Pederson is so impressed with Thompson's models that she hopes his reputation spreads far and wide.

"I just think Darryl does phenomenal work," she says. "He's a super person and a really top-notch guy who has a wonderful talent that we need to know more about up here."

And, with the type of detail and craftsmanship Thompson puts into his replicas, it's hard to see why anyone "wooden" want to own one. □



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OPINION

Clause for concern

Tell me one more time, folks, that owner/operators don't need contracts. Over the past few weeks I've had dozens of calls – and I mean dozens – from members and friends of OBAC outlining troubles they're having with carriers.

The problems range from undisclosed hikes in insurance rates to fuel surcharges to rate reductions. I've heard from a few, too, claiming that fleets they work for have arbitrarily changed the mileage paid to given destinations. I'm not sure how that works, except that some routing program must have calculated a shorter distance between two points – regardless of how impractical the new route might be.

These calls are nothing new, of course. I'm often on the receiving end of diatribes about unexpected deductions from monthly statements, or holdbacks that never seem to materialize after an owner/op leaves a carrier.

I've said many times here in this space that the only mechanism an owner/op has to "regulate" the business relationship with his or her carrier is the contract, but I still get calls asking if carriers "are allowed" do this or that, or if they are violating some regulation or another in making a change to the working conditions.

Here's the bottom line on the carrier-owner/operator relationship: carriers and owner/ops are



Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

two commercial entities that agree to do business together. No rules or regulations exist anywhere to govern that relationship – except your contract or owner/operator agreement.

And since owner/operators are not employees of the carrier, the terms and conditions imposed on employers by Part III of the Canada Labour Code don't apply to owner/ops. Actually, this subject is fodder for a thesis or two because certain terms in the CLC Part III that bind federally-regulated employee drivers to specific statutes, such as working hours, overtime, vacation pay, etc. are sometimes applied to owner/operators too, even though they do not have the force of law.

Other statutes, such as those prohibiting unauthorized deductions and withholding of earnings, do not apply to owner/ops. Therefore, when questions arise concerning monies missing from statements, for example, the CLC Part III is of no use to an owner/operator.

So, what's wrong with current custom and practice that has so many owner/operators unhappy with their business partners?

I'm not about to label all carriers as the bad guys here, but some – maybe more than a few – use rather one-sided, self-serving contracts. But why shouldn't they? They are, after all, simply protecting their interests. And to be utterly fair, some owner/ops must shoulder their share of the blame for signing such contracts, or for agreeing to work under terms and conditions of contracts they either do not understand or have never read.

Some contracts I've seen give the carrier sole discretion in rate adjustments, fuel surcharge terms, and some even allow the carrier to make changes to the contract without the consent of the owner/operator. Sounds underhanded, doesn't it? But, it's a contract, and one of the signatures on the dotted line is yours.

No matter how one-sided a contract might be, if you sign it, you're bound by it. It's up to owner/operators to look after their interests too.

First, read and understand the contract. If you have to, get your lawyer to go over it with you. If the carrier will not allow you to review the contract, walk away. Period.

There isn't an excuse on the planet that I would accept for not being allowed to review a contract that will govern my business and my livelihood.

Go through the contract clause by clause and determine where you might stand in any given situation, because the contract alone determines the outcome of a dispute. When some aspect of the relationship goes off the rails, you will prob-

ably have to resort to the courts for a resolution, and the first thing a judge will look at is the contract. If the contract grants the carrier some right – even one that just doesn't seem fair – the judge will side with the carrier because of the terms of the contract.

The carrier-owner/op relationship is a strange one, and probably unprecedented in its structure. Even though we're looking at two companies doing business together, the carrier is clearly the dominant player – very much in the fashion of a boss and a worker.

For obvious reasons, carriers like it that way, but there's really no reason that an owner/operator should be subservient to the carrier from a contractual point of view. It has stayed that way because owner/ops haven't bothered to question the boundaries of the relationship, and haven't pushed hard enough for fairer, more transparent contracts.

The best tool you have at your disposal is simply to refuse to sign a contract that doesn't protect your interests.

And – I can't stress this enough – fundamental to the whole process is arming yourself with the business savvy to know what your interests are. When's the last time you tried bargaining with a carrier for changes to certain clauses of a contract? I rest my case. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Are you getting less than you bargained for? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

TAX TALK

You never pay tax? I'm sorry to hear about it

Quick: how much tax have you paid this year? If you're an employee, you probably won't know until you get your T4 slip next January or February.

That's because your employer deducts your Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions, Employment Insurance (EI) premiums, and income tax from each paycheque.

You probably pay more attention to the amount you're getting paid, not what's being withheld for Canada Revenue Agency.

If you're self-employed, you have a different take. You have to record all your income and expenses and pay tax in installments.

When you have to write a cheque to the government each month or quarter, you're keenly aware of how much tax you pay.

Occasionally you'll hear a blowhard owner/operator yammering on about how he pays very little or no tax at all.

Personally, I'd feel bad for the guy. The only legal way to not have a tax obligation is to have a reportable income of \$3,500 or less.

It's tough to get financing on a new truck or mortgage on that, let alone feed a family.

The point of all this is perspective. Your tax bill is a business expense – another bill that has to be



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

paid. So take steps to understand why you owe what you do. Keep these points in mind:

1. Just because your tax bill is low doesn't mean it's correct. Maybe it should be even lower. Conversely, just because your tax bill is high doesn't make it wrong, either.

Whether you do your books and tax returns yourself or have someone do them for you, review your financial statements and make sure all the numbers make sense. Review the income statement on your tax return.

Do you see how your lease payments are handled? Is all your loan and credit card interest claimed?

Where is your health insurance? What percentage was

used for your office in the home expenses?

2. As an accountant, I can help you find ways to reduce your tax liability and take advantage of every available deduction, but there's no escaping your legal obligation to report all your income to CRA and pay the tax you owe. Don't fudge the numbers.

3. When you compare an employed person and a self-employed person earning a similar income, the self-employed person will owe approximately \$800 more in total to CRA.

For instance, on \$30,000 net income, a self-employed person in Ontario will pay \$3,980 in tax and \$2,630 in CPP.

An employee earning the same \$30,000 a year will have deductions from their paycheques totaling to the same amount of tax, half the CPP (about \$1,315), but will also pay EI of \$525.

I ran these numbers through a 2005 tax return to see how they compare to today. The CPP on

\$30,000 is exactly the same, the EI in 2009 is \$60 less, and the taxes in 2009 are also \$400 less. Do you feel richer?

4. This is an expensive country to live in. Let's go back to that example of \$30,000 in income. The tax rate on \$30,000 is 22% or \$6,600 – a big chunk of change. That leaves \$23,400 or \$1,950 a month to live on.

By the time you've paid for a place to sleep, eat, drink and be merry, there probably isn't much left over.

You need to run hard and smart in order to make as much money as possible.

Because the more you earn, the more tax you'll pay, it makes managing your taxes that much more important to your success in business. Next time you hear someone say they pay no tax, remember there are only two logical explanations: he is independently wealthy and doesn't have to work very hard or he doesn't have the cash to pay his bills. Maybe you should buy him a coffee. □

'Your tax bill is a business expense – another bill that has to be paid. So take steps to understand why you owe what you do.'

Scott Taylor, TFS Group

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

BORDER

By James Menzies

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a much-anticipated move, US President Barack Obama announced May 21 that heavy truck manufacturers will have to meet minimum fuel economy standards, beginning with the 2014 model year.

Specific details on the targets, and just how truck manufacturers will meet them, remain unclear, but the US president said the benefits of more fuel-efficient trucks will be far-reaching.

“This will bring down costs for transporting goods, serving businesses and consumers alike,” said President Obama. “It will reduce pollution. And, just like the rule concerning cars, this standard will spur growth in the clean energy sector. We know how important that is. We know that our dependence on foreign oil endangers our security and our economy. We know that climate change poses a threat to our way of life – in fact we are already beginning to see its profound and costly impact. And we know that our economic future depends on our leadership in the industries of the future.”

The announcement comes on the heels of the roll-out of the latest generation of smog-free, EPA2010-compliant engines, which have added about \$10,000 to the cost of a new Class 8 truck. Yet, truck and engine manufacturers seem ready to face the new challenge head-on – and several were present at the White House when the new standards were announced, Mack and Volvo CEO Denny Slagle among them.

“We would have liked to have had a breather on this,” he admitted during a roundtable discussion with trucking trade press editors in Virginia just days after the announcement. “We are now putting out almost zero emissions after 10 years of very hard work and a lot of resources directed towards that emissions challenge, and I would’ve loved to have a breather, particularly on the R&D level to do some other things to the truck. But the times demand that we focus now on CO₂ and we would rather be part of the whole process and the whole dialogue with the (Obama) Administration. We’re comfortable with what was signed last week. It was a good document but it’s very conceptual at this stage.”

Other manufacturers as well seem unfazed by the impending targets.

“Regulations that recognize the needs of business, offer clear direction and provide incentives to companies that create innovative technologies have the power to significantly benefit the environment while creating jobs in this country,” added Cummins CEO Tim Solso, who was also at the announcement.

It’s expected fuel economy will be required to improve by up to 25% by 2018 under the impending rules, but it’s not yet clear what will be used as a baseline. Manufacturers are hopeful the targets will be attainable using existing technologies, such as low-rolling resistance tires and aerodynamic fairings.

“One of the agreed-upon terms was that we would at least start with focusing on existing technologies,” Slagle said. “Existing technologies help us (meet the targets) and we think we can get there based on what’s on the drawing board (already) and taking existing technologies a little further.”

It may mean, however, that custom-

A new standard

Government-mandated fuel economy standards for heavy trucks are coming

ers will have no choice but to specify proven fuel-saving equipment that is optional today.

“I don’t know if it can all be achieved through more aerodynamics or better, more efficient engines,” Slagle admitted. “I think some of it is going to involve acquiring different types of optional equipment that may have to become standard.”

It’s also not yet clear how the Administration will enforce the new standards. For instance, will the compliance responsibility rest with the manufacturer or operator? Will every truck an OEM builds have to meet the standard or will the targets be averaged across manufacturer’s product line?

Or, if it’s up to the end user to meet the targets, will a fleet be required to maintain a certain percentage of aerodynamic, fuel-efficient trucks in its fleet? If so, how will that affect the single truck owner/operator? All those details are being worked out, but Tony Greszler, vice-president of government and industry relations with Volvo, said it’s expected the rules will be imposed on the OEMs. Does that spell the end of the classic-styled, long and tall tractor?

“That could be a casualty of what we’re talking about,” Slagle admitted.

Here in Canada, it was feared the Harper government would simply adopt the US standards, without consideration of our unique operating

requirements, including more liberal weight allowances. Just hours after Obama announced the US mandate, Canada’s Environment Minister Jim Prentice lent credence to those fears.

“Just like passenger vehicles, manufacturers of heavy-duty trucks operate in an integrated North American market – so a closely-harmonized approach makes sense for them,” Prentice told reporters in B.C. Prentice also told reporters he would work with the Canadian trucking industry to develop standards that would be implemented in line with the US mandate.

The Canadian Trucking Alliance’s (CTA) assessment of the US announcement and Prentice’s remarks was that “the devil is in the details.”

“Today’s announcement will hopefully lead to technology, regulatory and taxation reforms that will help eliminate the fuel efficiencies lost by heavy trucks over the last few years because of federal smog control regulations,” said Stephen Laskowski, senior vice-president of the CTA. “Fuel is either the first or second leading cost for a trucking company, so intuitively a regulation designed to reduce this cost should be welcomed by our sector, but the devil will be in the details.”

The CTA is quick to point out the trucking industry is not “homogenous” and that fuel standards can’t be slapped uniformly across all segments of the industry. Sizes and

weights vary by province and state, Laskowski pointed out, and a one-size-fits-all approach is not feasible. Instead, the CTA would like to see the federal government provide incentives to encourage the adoption of fuel-saving technologies.

The CTA says it has been assured by Environment Canada that it will be involved in developing the Canadian requirements.

“CTA looks forward to working with Environment Canada to develop a fuel efficiency regulation that is realistic, practical and provides incentives for quicker adoption,” Laskowski said.

The irony of government-imposed fuel economy standards for heavy trucks coming on the heels of emissions requirements that in some cases actually reduced fuel economy, was not lost on Slagle, who wondered whether the impending targets would have already been met if not for the stringent EPA emissions standards.

“What would our truck look like today if we had no emissions standards over the last 10 years?” he pondered. “I think on its own inertia, a lot of the fuel efficiency and emissions (targets) would have been accomplished. (Emissions regulations) did suck a lot of oxygen out of the R&D budget. It’s possible we would have been further along with (natural) gas, for example.”

Nonetheless, Slagle said Volvo Group will not shy away from the latest challenge, noting environmental care is one of the company’s core values.

“We are already working hard on improving fuel efficiency and at the end of the day, the best way to reduce greenhouse gases is to not burn as much fuel,” Slagle said. “It’s not terribly invasive to us, we already have plenty of great ideas on the drawing board.” □

US freight tonnage poised for growth post-recession: ATA study

ARLINGTON, Va. – Freight transportation is poised for a sustained recovery post-recession, according to the newly-released American Trucking Associations’ study, titled *ATA US Freight Transportation Forecast to 2021*.

IHS Global Insight and Martin Labbe Associates, which contracted with ATA to conduct the study, project that by 2021 total freight tonnage will grow 25% and total freight transportation revenue will grow 69%. However, that positive outlook is set against the backdrop of the recession; the US freight pool contracted by almost 12.5% in 2009.

The study also predicts that the

trucking industry will see its share of total tonnage increase gradually from 68% in 2009 to 70.7% by 2021. Trucks hauled 81.9% of freight tonnage by revenue last year.

“All modes of freight transportation were impacted by the ‘Great Recession,’ but I’m growing more optimistic about the long-term outlook,” said ATA chief economist Bob Costello. “There are certainly some risks, but I think better days do lie ahead for the freight hauling business.”

The forecast also includes information about other transportation modes, including rail (carload and intermodal), domestic water, pipe-

line and domestic air.

Railroads’ overall share of total tonnage will slip slightly from 14.7% to 14.1% by 2021, according to the report, while air cargo tonnage is estimated to grow from 11.7 million tonnes in 2009 to 18.4 million tonnes in 2021. Water and pipeline freight are also predicted to grow slightly over the forecast period.

In addition to its projections about volume and revenue for all modes of freight transportation, the study examines other key indicators for the US economic outlook. Consumer spending is predicted to expand only 2.5% per year during the next decade, and the unemployment rate will decline, but likely remain at 6.7% by late-2015, two percentage points above pre-recession levels. The forecast also examines industrial output, business investment, trade, housing starts, vehicle sales and other key drivers of freight.

The forecast report uses a 2009 baseline and projects freight tonnage and revenue by mode to 2021, as well as the number of trucks that will be needed to move the freight. This year’s edition also includes historical data for all modes of freight dating back to 1990, useful for gauging growth, and revised revenue and tonnage figures back to 2003.

The report can be purchased at www.atabusinesssolutions.com or by calling 866-821-3468. □

US truck tonnage continues upward trend

ARLINGTON, Va. – US truck tonnage rose 0.9% in April, marking the sixth increase in the last seven months, the American Trucking Associations reported.

The ATA’s Truck Tonnage Index now sits at its highest point since September, 2008. Overall, US truck tonnage is up 6.5% over the past seven months.

April’s tonnage was up 9.4% compared to last April, the fifth straight month of year-over-year gains and the largest y-o-y increase since January 2005. Tonnage is up 6% year to date compared to the same period of 2009.

“Truck tonnage volumes continue to improve at a solid, yet sustainable, rate. Tonnage is being boosted by robust manufacturing output and stronger retail sales,” reported ATA chief economist Bob Costello. “For most fleets, freight volumes feel better than reported tonnage because the supply situation, particularly in the truckload sector, is turning quickly.” □

FLEET PROFILE

By James Menzies

GUELPH, Ont. – In the world of private trucking, where truck fleets serve the dual purpose of delivering product while promoting a brand, it could be argued nobody balances both duties better than Sleeman Breweries.

The company's eye-catching tractor-trailer units each have their own distinct paint scheme to represent an individual brand from the brewery's stable.

While this branding strategy presents logistical challenges for fleet management (trailers can't be swapped between tractors), they wouldn't have it any other way.

"It's not that big a deal to match them," says Dave Joyce, a long-time driver with the company, who also counts dispatching, training and spec'ing equipment among his responsibilities. "It's a little extra work on my part, but we can do it."

Joyce, and Sleeman distribution manager David Parsons, have strong feelings about how the equipment should look and that passion is shared by each of the company's drivers. Parsons recounts a story from a year ago when a driver got fed up with pulling a plain white trailer on his downtown Toronto deliveries because the funds for decaling weren't immediately available. The driver positioned his tractor-trailer so that it blocked brewery founder and chairman John Sleeman from leaving the parking lot.

"He (told Sleeman) 'I love working for the company, I have a beautiful tractor and the trailer is great, but there are no graphics on it,'" recalled Parsons. It served as an eye-opener for Sleeman, who gained a new appre-

BEER RUN

Sleeman fleet quenches drivers' thirst for rewarding trucking career



NICE AS NEW: David Joyce stands in front of his pride and joy, an 02 Freightliner Classic that looks like it just rolled off the showroom floor.

Photo by James Menzies

ciation for how passionate the company's drivers are about the equipment they drive.

The Sleeman trucks, each with their unique paint scheme, are hard to miss running down the highway. A roof fairing displays the Sleeman logo, and in the process hides an un-

sightly reefer. The trucks are a mix of Western Stars and Freightliner Classics, the newer trucks from Western Star after Freightliner discontinued dual stacks on its Classic model a few years back.

"They were only offering single exhaust on the Classic so we went with

the Western Stars," Joyce explains, adding he's considering making the switch to the recently redesigned Freightliner Coronado for future purchases.

Joyce's favourite truck on the lot, however, is actually the oldest. It's the 2002 Freightliner Classic he calls his own, with a 430-hp Detroit Diesel Series 60 engine under the hood and 13-speed Eaton Fuller transmission. It has been Joyce's dedicated tractor for eight years, and has about 500,000 kms on it.

Inside and out, it looks like it just came off the showroom floor. The lease has been renewed several times, and Joyce is trying to make a business case to purchase the tractor when the current lease expires. And for good reason; the interior of the truck has been customized with dozens of chrome accessories that Joyce has added over the years.

"It takes years in the making," he says, as he shows off some of the upgrades. "A little piece here, a little piece there."

Some might find the chrome floor-mats to be a bit much. Or the fact he politely (jokingly, I think) asks passengers to step into the truck sideways, to avoid scuffing the polished fuel tank with the toes of their footwear.

But Joyce wants every driver in the fleet to exhibit the same level of respect for the equipment they run.

And just because he's the dispatcher and in charge of equipment spec'ing doesn't mean he's the only one who enjoys his own dedicated ride. Each of Sleeman's 13 full-time drivers enjoys the luxury of running

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a dedicated tractor and trailer.

“You tend to get better care of the whole unit if you assign a driver a truck and trailer to match,” Joyce says.

Driving for Sleeman Breweries is described by Parsons as “the Cadillac of driving jobs.” Drivers are paid by the hour and home most evenings and weekends. An internal association handles collective bargaining, so drivers earn above average wages, not to mention important benefits such as free beer on weekends. The 13 full-time drivers cycle through a two-week schedule, serving over 490 The Beer Store locations in Ontario. One of those drivers handles the so-called “40-foot stores”, where getting a 53-ft. trailer in is impossible and even a 40-footer is a challenge. The most notorious of these locations is on Rideau St. in Ottawa.

“The driver has to blindside it in on a one-way street downtown,” Joyce explains. “Molson and Labatt don’t even deliver to this one, but we go in there with a 40-footer.”

“It’s dedication like that from all our guys,” Parsons adds with pride. “He knows what the cost of outsourcing it is, so he does what he can do to get it in there and he gets it there every time.”

The brewery hires third-party carriers for deliveries out of province and into the US. The furthest beer store it delivers to is in Kenora, Ont., however one neophyte driver went further after missing instructions to leave the isolated Red Lake store’s delivery in Dryden. Red Lake is the most remote The Beer Store location in all of Ontario, Joyce says with a chuckle.

“Only one of our drivers ever went there because nobody ever told him you drop that beer in Dryden,” he says. “He took it way up there. He’s the only one who’s ever been to Red Lake.”

Drivers typically work 55 hours a week, but there’s a price that goes along with running beautiful iron – they’re expected to keep it looking that way.

“We usually tell them to clean it once a week,” says Joyce. “You do your housekeeping once a week at home, so you should clean your truck once a week inside and out.”

That attention to detail has been ingrained into the culture of the Sleeman fleet’s drivers. Joyce recalls going on a training run with a new hire. When they encountered a short delay at a beer store, Joyce handed the driver a rag and said “Here’s a rag, let’s go, we’re polishing while we’re waiting.”

Despite the fact it’s their busy season, many of the Sleeman trucks are taken off the road for an extra day in July to take part in the Fergus Truck Show show’n’shine, where even the fleet’s shunt truck has received an award. Company founder John Sleeman has set aside money for a polishing budget and supports the drivers’ participation in the show. For his part, Joyce spends about 60 hours prepping his own truck for the show’n’shine.

“You could eat off the fifth wheel (of his truck) at the truck show,” Parsons says.

Keeping the trucks looking new has other benefits, besides promoting the company’s image. Joyce jokes the best way to get through the scales hassle-free is to blind inspectors with the truck’s reflection.

“If they see a rusty, old piece of equipment coming through, they’ll



CROWD-PLEASER: When displayed at the truck show, the Sleeman fleet attracts a crowd.

want to have a closer look,” Joyce reasons.

“We need to keep those trucks moving – there’s a lot of thirsty people out there!” Parsons adds.

With their well-kept equipment and polished appearance (complete with company uniform), Sleeman drivers are often the envy of their peers and

realizes many of the company’s best drivers will come due for retirement around the same time.

Sleeman is not the most technologically-advanced fleet there is. Delivery schedules are displayed on a white board and any sophisticated load planning and scheduling software resides in Joyce’s head. Give him

‘As a private fleet with our shiny trucks and well-paid drivers, we can undercut most of our outside carriers on the price they give us to do a job.’

David Joyce, Sleeman Breweries

many other drivers have gone to great lengths to submit a job application.

“When they take a look at the fleet and how well kept it is, that starts their interest and then they get talking to the guys (about working conditions),” Parsons says. Unfortunately for aspiring Sleeman drivers, however, turnover is virtually non-existent at the company (blame the free beer). Only one driver has left for greener pastures, and he returned soon thereafter. With an average age of 40-something, however, Parsons

the four-digit code for any beer store in Ontario, and he can recite its exact location. The company is no laggard, however. It’s C-TPAT-certified and employs technologies like gladhand locks to deter theft. All the trucks are equipped with satellite radio.

While some may argue it’s easy to run a polished fleet without any of the cost pressures faced by for-hire carriers, Parsons is quick to dispel that myth.

“We still have the same pressures,” he insists. “The organization is put-

ting up millions of dollars in operating costs, so we have to hit those numbers and it’s going to get tougher as years go on.”

Some of the ways Sleeman has controlled its operating costs in recent years include dialing down truck speeds to comply with Ontario’s 105 km/h speed limiter requirement and consolidating fuel purchases.

“At one point, everybody had the opportunity to take their credit card and get fuel where they wanted,” recalls Parsons. “It was a free-for-all on the road. Now we fuel up at (neighbour) MacKinnon Transport and we have Petro-Passes for when we can’t fuel around here. We’ve seen a significant savings there.”

With for-hire trucking rates taking a beating in recent years, Parsons and Joyce say the company still has no trouble justifying the expense of running its own private fleet, marketing opportunities aside.

“As a private fleet with our shiny trucks and well-paid drivers, we can undercut most of our outside carriers on the price they give us to do a load,” Joyce insists. Parsons points out the company trimmed its outside contracting costs by \$400,000 last year. The key, he says, is that Sleeman’s tractor-trailers are never empty. They leave the brewery in the early morning with beer, drop it at multiple retail locations throughout the day and pick up their empties (Sleeman owns its own, unique clear bottles) for the trip back to the brewery.

“We run our fleet like an LTL fleet,” Parsons explains.

It’s a highly-efficient operation, and seasoned drivers are constantly shuffling the load to keep axle weights compliant while preventing the good stuff from getting blocked in with empties. Even the traditional-styled tractors are getting decent fuel mileage, about 6 mpg on average which is respectable, considering most kilometres are run in the city, under heavy load.

But as much as they strive to be efficient, Joyce and Parsons are also mindful the fleet serves an equally important secondary purpose – and that’s to leave an impression on consumers so they consider buying Sleeman beer the next time they’re at the LCBO or beer store.

It’s the ultimate balancing act between image and efficiency, and despite the challenges, they wouldn’t have it any other way. □



BRANDING: Each truck in the fleet is paired with a matching trailer to reflect one of the brewery’s brands – Sapporo (above) and Sleeman Clear (below).

HEALTH

What a pain! Body aches and pains are inevitable as we age

As each year passes, we feel the effects of our bodies aging. Aches and pains appear where they've never been before. Although we can't turn the clock back, we can fight back!

To help keep pain at the lowest level, I suggest the following:

First, check your diet to make sure you're getting enough Vitamin D. Since Vitamin D helps your body use calcium, it's necessary to maintain strong bones and teeth, avoiding painful small fractures or osteoporosis. Vitamin D is found in fortified dairy products, as well as egg yolk, liver, fish and butter. Fortunately, your body can even make its own Vitamin D when skin is exposed to the sun. So, why not take advantage of the warm weather and pack a folding chair in your rig so you can catch a few rays between loads? What a great way to stock up on Vitamin D.

You can also avoid pain by watching your weight. Carrying an oversized load puts extra strain on your entire body. Every system has to work harder to keep functioning well. Your joints, especially, feel the pressure and may let you know through pain. Extra belly weight is a major cause of lower back pain. So, just taking off a few pounds could really help.

Getting enough sleep can help, too. Certainly, it gives your body time to relax and recover from the regular stresses of the day, both physical and mental. As well, during sleep, your



Preventive Maintenance

KAREN BOWEN

brain releases a chemical that increases your sense of contentment, which can relieve depression which often leads to increased pain levels.

Interestingly, different age groups tend to experience different types of pain.

If you're in your thirties, headaches are the main complaint. Tension headaches, which are described as constant pain and pressure instead of the throbbing pain of a migraine, may actually become more severe with age. However, migraines tend to peak in severity between the ages of 35 and 45.

Finding the cause of headaches can be challenging. Some common triggers of migraines are flashing lights, wine, cheese, food, food dyes, irregular eating times or even skipping your usual coffee times. When you get a headache, try to identify the cause; then, avoid that trigger in the future.

For headaches, you might try over-the-counter pain relievers, or acupuncture, yoga, and focused stress-reduction techniques.

In your thirties, when you physically push yourself like you did in your early twenties, your body just can't

respond as well. The result is muscle pain, tendonitis, lower back pain, shoulder pain and/or tennis elbow. Repetitive motions begin to take their toll on your body beginning at this age, especially if your joint alignment is a little off.

However, by consciously using good form, you can avoid injury. Lift with your legs to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on your back. Avoid working with your arms above your head because it creates extra pressure on your shoulders and neck.

Think about your posture all the time: when you're driving, walking, hooking up your trailer and climbing in and out of your rig.

In your forties and beyond, the effects of any past injuries will become more noticeable. Osteoarthritis and degenerative disc disease appear. With degenerative disc disease, the discs (shock absorbers for the spine, allowing it to flex, bend, and twist) dry out, becoming brittle. This condition causes pain, limits range of motion, and irritates muscles or tendons. In addition, chronic back, neck, hand, knee and hip pain now appear.

These two groups experience arthritis pain in their forties or fifties: The ones who are very fit and have injured themselves mid-life by overdoing exercise; and those who have made no effort, whatsoever, to keep fit.

To relieve short-term joint and low-

er back pain, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, or prescription medications may help. However, it may take two weeks of regular dosages to work. Some people opt for surgery.

Even so, surgery should be a last resort because of possible serious complications. As well, if the root cause of the pain is not resolved, the pain often will return later.

You may also consider acupuncture, physical therapy, athletic therapy, muscle injections to reduce inflammation, or a combination of these therapies. Just be persistent until you find something that works for you.

Certainly, strengthening your core muscles is a great option to avoid strain and pain.

Strengthening your abs will reduce lower back pain because your abdominal muscles actually support the lower back. Strengthening the quadriceps muscles which run between your hip and knee cap on the front of your upper leg will reduce knee pain, and help you maintain balance to avoid falls. So, no matter how old, there is still time to take action.

Maintain your health now, so "pain in the neck" can remain just a figure of speech. □

— Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant, and she can be reached at karen_bowen@yahoo.com.

OPINION

A wake-up call for the trucking industry

The health of the trucking industry is the worst it has ever been. How bad is it and what can we do to fix it? If we want to improve the health of the trucking industry, we need to identify what the important issues are and evaluate their impact on the past a present.

Here are some of the most important issues facing the industry: We have a divide and conquer trucking industry; the majority of the trucking industry does not get involved in trucking associations; there is a large number of veteran truckers who have left the industry and they are being replaced with untrained and inexperienced people; the majority of trucking companies and drivers do not follow a code of ethics and standards; there is a lack of people leading the industry by example; too many companies try to steal their competitors' customers at any cost; and many members of the industry bitch and complain and point fingers at everyone but themselves. Finally, the trucking industry is out of control without a plan on how to regain control.

The Alberta Construction Trucking Association (ACTA) has recently completed its annual three-month tour of public meetings with members in six regions across Alberta. We have come up with several solutions to some of the industry's problems:

Take back control: The trucking industry needs to take back control of our business. We should not allow the end-users of our services



Constructive Dialogue

RON SINGER

to dictate the rates we are paid. We need to ensure we are as efficient as possible but our rates must include a reasonable return on our investment. We then need to justify the rates we charge our customers and educate them accordingly.

Support our associations: The trucking associations have a loyal following of members and they are the movers and shakers of the trucking industry. We have to respect and appreciate their ongoing support. We need to use our power of influence and persuasion to educate non-members on the benefits of joining an industry association. If you don't agree with your associations' viewpoints or concerns, we need to make a better case than theirs without disrespecting them.

Replacing industry veterans: We need to do a better job of replacing our industry veterans and educating and training their replacements to be safe, professional, efficient and competitive so they understand the need to make a reasonable return on their investments and reflect that in the rates they charge. We also need to do a better job of showcasing the remaining veterans of our industry. We must capture their knowledge, experience

and achievements and reward them before they leave the trucking industry.

We must adhere to a code of ethics: The ACTA and its members have developed a code of ethics and standards for its members to follow. In 2010, ACTA executives decided to raise the bar for membership – we no longer accept just any member. All applicants must meet specific criteria to be a member. If members don't meet our new standards, their memberships will be suspended.

Working together: Trucking associations and their members must all work together with other associations and industry representatives to groom the leading trucking companies and drivers in our industry to lead by example. Education and training will play a major role in raising the bar and developing more leaders in the industry.

Keeping our balance: There are only so many customers and employees to go around. We must work together to ensure we do not oversupply the industry. We must educate the industry so they realize the negative effects of stealing each others' customers and how that affects rates.

Improving compliance: The trucking industry has not met the expectations of compliance from industry regulators and truck enforcement personnel on a consistent basis. That's not to say there aren't responsible, compliant members of our industry – there are

many. Unfortunately, the non-compliant members of our industry are dragging down the entire industry. CSA2010 is an initiative that has been in the works for the past five years. The program has been operating in the US and Canadian legislatures and enforcement personnel are eager to evaluate this program and possibly adopt the successful components of it. This will focus on non-compliant trucking companies and drivers, which should weed them out of our industry for good.

Changing mindset: The trucking industry must also work harder to change the overall mindset of its people. The industry as a whole needs to raise the bar and be much more effective at improving our image and making us all more credible so we can regain control of our industry. The health of our industry depends on it.

I have one final recommendation for everyone in the trucking industry: find out who your local aldermen and councillors are as well as your provincial MLAs and federal MPs. Let them all know what your concerns are regarding the trucking industry and put them on the spot by asking them what they intend to do to help resolve your concerns. Follow up on what they say or do. And don't forget to vote! □

— 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.

SAFETY

Better awareness leads to a relaxing driving experience

A commitment to defensive driving can be revealed by something as simple as a conversation in the truck cab. Ask any driver what they are watching, and they can easily offer a running commentary about hazards such as changing terrain, parked cars, an approaching construction zone or a ramp that will require slower speeds.

The question is where these hazards can be found.

It is an important distinction. While the eyes of a defensive driver are always on the move, those who are aware of issues on the horizon will be in the best position to act in a proactive way.

And the movement of the truck can be just as revealing as the driver's words. Those who focus their attention a short distance in front of the hood will tend to steer from one side of the lane to the next rather than maintaining a consistent path between the painted lines. The truck will also tend to be lurching again and again as the brakes are applied to avoid hazards that appear to come "out of nowhere."

Even a fleet's safest drivers can become complacent over time. But by taking steps to improve their awareness of space around a truck, drivers will enjoy a safer, more relaxing experience on the road.

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation, for example, stresses the importance of checking West Coast mirrors every three to five seconds.



It is a technique that will increase awareness of the space around the truck, and it will make the biggest difference of all when a driver takes the time to absorb the information rather than falling into a mechanical motion.

Mirrors just need to be properly adjusted to offer a view of these important details. Drivers have a chance to read the writing on the side of their trailer when conducting a circle check, so they don't need to stare at it all day. The mirrors do not need to be tilted upward to offer an open view of the sky, either. The biggest hazards will always be on the road.

When a seat is properly adjusted so a driver's back is straight and knees are at 90 degrees, the best possible view in a mirror will simply show a sliver of the truck and trailer, offering a reference point for any hazards that are emerging around the vehicle.

The safest driving techniques will then take advantage of the information the mirror can provide.

For example, the smoothest lane changes will tend to follow a 'Three to Five Second Rule' – taking the time to activate a turn signal, observe surroundings, and then move

steadily into the lane.

Of course, the view through the windshield is just as important, and it can be improved by offering a few extra seconds of space.

Given the required stopping distances of a tractor-trailer, a following distance of eight to 10 seconds can create an effective cushion of safety. It is even better if the leading vehicle always seems to be pulling away from the truck, adding to the overall room and offering more opportunities to take appropriate action.

Consider the difference that the added distance can make when approaching a traffic signal.

If a driver notices that a light has been green for a long period of time, there is a chance to begin thinking about the number of gears that need to be downshifted as the signal begins to turn yellow. Nothing will come as a surprise.

Drivers just need to be aware that the stopping distances will vary from one vehicle to the next. At highway speeds, a car that will stop in 300 feet will be sharing a lane with trucks that might need 500 or 700 feet to come to a rest, and this is when the weather conditions are favourable.

The distances can also change dramatically depending on the load. A tandem van trailer with 40,000 lbs of cargo will certainly handle differently than a B-train hauling partially filled tanks of fuel.

These steps all guarantee that

drivers will be passed during the journey, but those who recognize they are not part of a race will move freight from Point A to Point B as safely as possible.

It is a matter of remaining relaxed and sitting back to enjoy the ride. The view through the windshield can actually be entertaining when viewed from the right perspective and when given enough time. □

– This month's contributing experts are Ron Harris and Rob Spencer. Ron and Rob are both Markel Safety and Training Services trainers. Ron has more than 17 years experience as a driver and trainer and has been sharing his expertise with Markel for more than seven years. Rob has more than 10 years experience as both a driver and a trainer. He has now been sharing this expertise as a Markel trainer for four years. 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 providing more than 50 years of continuous service to the transportation industry. Send questions, feedback and comments about this column to info@markel.ca. To read about more industry hot topics, visit Markel's website at www.markel.ca and click on the Articles & Essays section.

MAIL

Making the case for cabovers

Dear Editor:

RE: Long and tall dead and gone?

The long-nose tractor has been dead for a long time. It just won't fall over. If there was an offering of a COE like a Freightliner Argosy or the last Internationals, they might be adopted a bit more by the long-nose freedom trucker crowd.

These are the people that should recognize that a more versatile (we pull tanks, vans and long overdimensional loads and trains) unit that is very similar to a Class A motor home (what truck driver doesn't want one?) would be more valuable to them as they could go to any job from hauling bananas to bridge beams and then be re-sold into vocational service, instead of joining the thousands of big sleeper conventionals that are almost impossible to get rid of. But then if you spend all your time looking in the mirror, practical money-making decisions go out the window. Think what some of these people pay out in additional ferry charges purchased on a footage basis per year just to look "cool."

Try hauling 24-metre pipe and fit provincial regs without having to use an escort vehicle. If you do enough of this work you can buy a new truck two years sooner, but then who cares when looks matter most?

As a fleet owner, we have built our fleet and made 10 or 15% more net money consistently because our Super-B trailers are 30-32 which are pulled comfortably by a 210-inch wheelbase, 100-inch BBC cabover, that also pulls various lowbed combinations without

pilot cars and also moves bridge beams or long steel with long front projection. It is very frustrating to not be able to purchase the same trucks in North America that the Australians can get and use effectively there.

Many of the owner/operator bling types could also use the revenue generated by drome decks or boxes that a longer cabover would allow. But then I guess it's not about money when you can't recognize that speed limiters have a considerable impact on safety and efficiency.

I dare any of the long-nose crowd to test drive a late model Argosy and enjoy the view and the ride. They're not your grandfather's cabover anymore. With an automated transmission and a back-up camera you can't tell that you're not already driving that 40-foot diesel pusher that is first on the bucket list.

This debate will go on for a while I'm sure, but I know what I want to buy to be profitable and versatile. □

Bob Fedderly
Fort St. John, B.C.
Via e-mail

Long and tall dead? Say it ain't so

Dear Editor:

RE: Long and tall dead and gone?

I am Austen Naaykens and I am 16 years of age. My parents own a small trucking company in Beausejour, Manitoba called Naaykens Transport. I see myself in a couple years be-

If long and tall goes, I will follow

Dear Editor:

RE: Long and tall dead and gone?

An interesting debate brewing over the 'long-nosed' era coming to a close! I would have to join sides with the traditional stylists and say if the 'long and tall' era is coming to an end, then so is my career in the trucking industry.

Being around the trucking business ever since I was a child, now 40-plus years of age, I cannot imagine switching over to the 'slippery aerodynamic' versions of Class 8 trucks, not for the kind of work we do out here in Alberta and B.C.

The aerodynamic versions may be of some advantage when pulling a van across North America at 80,000 lbs GVW, but not pulling super-train loads of building materials over the Roger's Pass grossing 63,500 kgs! In my opinion, the advantages of the long hood conventional by far outweigh the disadvantages: Increased air-flow under the hood translates to lower operating temps (especially with the new 'environmentally-friendly engines').

Ease of maintenance; any mechanic will choose a clutch job on a long hood over an aerodynamic model in a heartbeat. As far as fuel efficiency goes, my 98 Kenworth long hood consistently averages 5.8-6 mpg when driven at a reasonable speed, which I think would be tough to better, even with a round truck. We are on a slippery slope in the trucking industry right now: over-regulation has already forced many drivers with years of experience out of our profession. No longer will we have drivers who pride themselves on providing an essential service with a classy looking rig; but rather employees with a unit number instead of a name, just in it for the paycheque. □

Chris Schmidt
S.T. Schmidt Transport
Olds, Alta.

people stare when one drives by.

I don't know if that's why I like a long-nose trucks so much, but those are the trucks that everyone looks at, not those new round-nose trucks you see every day, everywhere your go. I would truly be disappointed to see those long-nose trucks go away forever. □

Austen Naaykens,
Beausejour, Man.

OEM/DEALER NEWS

Punching above their weight class

Shell says today's lighter weight oils offer heavyweight protection

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Shell Canada held a recent customer information session here to espouse the fuel economy benefits of moving to a lighter weight oil and to prepare customers for EPA2010 engine requirements.

The Shell Fleet 2010 Technology Symposium featured the company's global experts, who urged fleets in attendance to consider moving to a lighter weight oil, such as a 10W-30, from the 15W-40 most fleets are currently comfortable with.

It's a trend that's already underway in Europe, noted OEM technical manager Dan Arcy, and is beginning to appear here in North America as well. He noted Mercedes-Benz's factory fill in Europe is a 5W-40 and Volvo and Mack have made a 10W-30 their factory fill in North America. Still, about 90% of heavy-duty engine oil sold in the US is of the 15W-40 variety, with 10W-30 and 5W-40 synthetic oils only slightly more popular here in Canada. Recent testing, however, has shown fuel economy can be gained by moving to a lighter weight oil, without sacrificing engine protection or durability.

"The viscosity grade of the oil gives you that fuel economy benefit," Arcy explained, suggesting a 1.6% fuel economy improvement can be achieved simply by moving from a 15W-40 to a 10W-30. Arcy said it's like swimming laps in a pool filled



INSTANT ANALYSIS: Dan Arcy, OEM technical manager with Shell, told fleet managers that consistency is key when running an oil analysis program. Machines like this one can provide customers with fast results.

with water rather than honey – the lighter weight oil provides less resistance.

"That's really what's happening in the engine," he said. "That's where the fuel savings are coming from – the ability to move that oil through the engine."

While a 1.6% fuel economy improvement may seem insignificant, Arcy warned against grandiose claims of larger fuel savings and pointed out 1.6% can save an operator \$960 per truck each year based on 120,000 miles per year at 6 mpg with

diesel costing US\$3/gallon. By that same math, a 100-truck fleet could save about \$96,000 per year.

"We've been able to demonstrate that the wear performance remains the same and the oil consumption remains about the same as it was with the 15W-40," Arcy said.

Preparing for 2010

Shell also addressed the new generation of smog-free engines that are coming on line this year, noting that for the first time a new emissions requirement has not required a new engine formulation.

Arcy said oil companies "overformulated" the API CJ-4 category of heavy-duty engine oils introduced in 2007 so that they'd be able to handle current engine requirements.

"Every year we went through an emissions change, we also went through an oil change starting back in 1998," Arcy said. "In 2010, this is the first time we have not needed to make any changes. The API CJ-4 quality engine oils are the engine oils recommended for 2010-emissions engines, so you can check that box off."

However, Arcy did make some suggestions on how fleets can prepare to integrate new generation EPA2010-compliant engines into their fleets, specifically those using selective catalytic reduction (SCR) exhaust aftertreatment. For starters, with the introduction of a new liquid (Diesel Exhaust Fluid), Arcy said technicians and drivers should be trained on the importance of keeping their fluids straight. While it would be difficult to mistake diesel for DEF, or vice-versa, misfills are a concern and an action plan should be put in place in case they occur.

"Is anybody going to put the wrong fluid in there? It's absolutely going to happen," he said of the new DEF tank, which will have a blue cap to minimize the risk of misfueling. "Diesel fuel is going to go in there by accident or you're going to see DEF end up in the fuel tank. These are things that need to be thought out when you're training drivers."

Drivers, Arcy said, should be instructed not to start the vehicle if they realize they've added DEF to their diesel tank, since the fluid is

67.5% water.

"If they start the truck up, they're 20 miles down the road (when problems arise) and now you've got a \$300 tow bill on top of it," he said. "If these mistakes are made, they have to call (the terminal) and work through the procedures you have in place. It may mean pulling and draining that tank, but the last thing you want to do is drive."

At the shop, Arcy said fleets will have to determine whether they want to stock DEF on-site and whether their bays are configured for its storage.

"If it was me owning a fleet, I'd want to have it on-site. Anytime a truck comes in, I'd fill it up for him because that's one less chance of a driver out there accidentally putting the wrong product in," he reasoned. It's possible drivers will be able to avoid filling up their DEF tanks altogether, since DEF will be consumed at a 2% rate compared to diesel. Arcy noted a 13-gallon DEF tank will get a driver about 6,300 kms between refills.

"You're talking about having to fill up every few weeks, not all the time," he said.

Oil analysis

Shell's Arcy also discussed the merits of employing an oil analysis program to extend drain intervals. The first step in establishing an oil analysis program is to ensure all information is entered correctly, he stressed. Poor record-keeping or data entry can leave a fleet looking for answers and playing the blame game. Arcy spoke of one fleet that saw its soot levels double on certain vehicles and began blaming everyone from the engine manufacturer to the oil supplier.

It was eventually discovered that one of the fleet's shops doubled drain intervals from 20,000 to 40,000 miles without communicating the change to the other shop.

"All the information has to be filled out properly," Arcy said. From there, consistency is key. Even changes in how the oil sample is pulled (hot vs. cold engine or from the sump vs. the dipstick tube) can throw off an analysis.

"Those things have to be taken into consideration and standardized in order to get the best results," Arcy said.

An oil analysis program will measure three types of metals: wear metals, contaminant metals and additive metals. Each will tell a story. For instance, Shell Rotella 15W-40 has a calcium baseline of 2,300 parts per million (ppm). A drop to 1,000 ppm may indicate hydraulic oil was mistakenly added in place of engine oil. The key to a successful oil analysis program is timeliness – pulling and submitting oil samples on a regular basis and then taking the time to read each report when it's received.

"Quite frequently, people get this report in the mail, they open the filing cabinet and file it. You've gotta look at them – filing these doesn't do any good!" Arcy stressed. And the same can be said for collecting and submitting samples. "It's meant to be done rapidly," he explained. "Don't sit on them until you have a box full. If they're sitting on the shelf for 30 days, it doesn't do you any good if you have a coolant leak running down the road for 30 days." □

Western Express orders 900 Cascadias

PORTLAND, Ore. – Freightliner has landed another major deal with a US fleet, with Western Express placing an order for 900 Freightliner Cascadias with EPA2010-compliant Detroit Diesel DD15 engines.

All the engines will come with Detroit Diesel's BlueTec selective catalytic reduction (SCR) technology.

Western Express is based in Nashville, Tenn. and operates dry van, flatbed, dedicated and brokerage truckload services.

"I am excited about this order and what it means to our customers and associates," said Wayne Wise, chief executive officer and president for Western Express. "This continues our commitment to going green, reducing our carbon footprint, and the EPA SmartWay program. We delayed our purchase of new tractors in anticipation of this new technology."

The order includes a three-year agreement covering nearly 2,800 trucks and will make the fleet a predominantly all-Freightliner fleet, Freightliner announced. □

J.B. Hunt opts for Navistar's EPA2010 solution

WARRENVILLE, Ill. – J.B. Hunt has shown confidence in Navistar's non-SCR emissions strategy by inking a long-term supply agreement with the company.

The agreement calls on Navistar to provide International brand trucks with the MaxxForce 13-litre engine using advanced EGR over the next five years.

The agreement will see J.B. Hunt take delivery of about 5,000 International ProStar+ trucks through 2014.

"We're excited to once again be J.B. Hunt's principal commercial truck provider and look forward to delivering them International trucks with MaxxForce engines as well as the full support of our parts and dealer network," said Jack Allen, president of Navistar's North American truck group.

"J.B. Hunt is an industry leader and one of the most metric-driven transportation companies in the world," Allen added. "They have tested our ProStar with MaxxForce 13 engine and this agreement demonstrates their confidence in the fuel economy, overall performance and no-hassle approach of our MaxxForce Advanced EGR engines."

"J.B. Hunt is continuously evaluating equipment alternatives to ensure we leverage the best solution available for our customers, our drivers and the environment," said Kirk Thompson, president and CEO for J.B. Hunt. "Through this supplier agreement with Navistar, we will be adding some of the most fuel-efficient and driver-friendly tractors in the industry to our fleet." □

Canadians among top Peterbilt dealers

SEATTLE, Wash. – Canadian Peterbilt dealers fared well during the truck maker’s Annual Dealer Meeting, with Peterbilt Ontario Truck Centres named Medium-Duty Dealer of the Year and Peterbilt Pacific Abbotsford named Truck Care Dealer of the Year.

Peterbilt of Springfield was named North American Dealer of the Year, but Peterbilt Manitoba was a finalist and one of only four ‘Best in Class’ award winners. Doug Danylchuk is the dealer principal of Peterbilt Manitoba. Best in Class winners are judged on market share, goal achievement and financial management.

David Climie is dealer principal of Peterbilt Ontario Truck Centres in London, Ont., which was named North American Medium-Duty Dealer of the Year. Peterbilt said the dealership contributed towards the OEM’s significant

market share gains in Ontario.

“Peterbilt Ontario Truck Centres has done an exemplary job of representing Peterbilt’s medium-duty line of trucks,” said Bill Jackson, Peterbilt general manager and Paccar vice-president. “The London team has been very successful in selling and supporting the entire medium-duty product line to a full range of applications such as utility, pickup and delivery, and towing and recovery. We are proud of their growth and accomplishments in the Ontario market.”

The Truck Care Dealer of the Year, won by Peterbilt Pacific Abbotsford, was awarded based on the dealership’s service excellence and full array of Truck Care programs, according to the company.

The dealer has five locations in B.C. and is headed by dealer principal Don Pasiuk. The Abbotsford

location consistently ranks highest in overall customer satisfaction, according to the company.

“The level of service that Peterbilt Pacific in Abbotsford provides is outstanding,” said Peterbilt’s Jackson. “The dealership demonstrates true value to the customer of a Peterbilt service facility, and supports and delivers upon the Truck Care program of services. This includes their dedication to our 24-hour service and support, QuickCare Services, and loyalty card program to name a few.”

Peterbilt also named 24 recipients of its Platinum Oval Award, which recognizes “outstanding performance in the Peterbilt Standards of Excellence Program.”

Winners hailing from Canada included: Peterbilt Manitoba, Brandon; Peterbilt Manitoba, Winnipeg; Frontier Peterbilt Sales, Lloydminster; Frontier Peterbilt Sales, Regina; Peterbilt Fort Frances; and Peterbilt Prince George. □

Canadian Kenworth dealers honoured

SEATTLE, Wash. – Kenworth recently honoured some of its top dealers, including several from north of the border.

Custom Truck Sales from Regina, Sask. was one of the truck maker’s Gold Award winners, qualifying for Dealer of the Year honours. However, it was MHC Kenworth in Kansas City, Mo. that won that distinction. Nonetheless, Custom Truck Sales was one of only five Kenworth dealers to win a Gold Award.

Silver Award winners included GreatWest Kenworth and Kenworth Quebec.

Kenworth’s Medium-Duty Dealer of the Year was Central Illinois Trucks from Normal, Ill. Kenworth Toronto was named a finalist in the medium-duty category. □

Laval dealer wins Hino Dealer of the Year honours

LAVAL, Que. – Laval Hino has been named Hino Motors Canada’s Dealer of the Year.

The Quebec dealership was awarded for its performance in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2010.

“Not only is Laval Hino the top selling dealer in the country, but it is also a recognized leader in customer service and support,” says Eric Smith, national sales manager for Hino Motors Canada. “It is very fitting that Laval Hino would win this title.”

Laval Hino has represented the Hino line since its inception in 1993 as a full-service and sales dealer. □

Peterbilt makes Cummins ISX11.9 widely available

DENTON, Texas – Peterbilt has announced the widespread availability of the new Cummins ISX11.9 engine. The newest offering from Cummins is available for immediate order across Peterbilt’s entire vocational and conventional truck line-up, including the Models 320, 365, 367, 384, 386 and 388.

“For Peterbilt customers who demand power and performance, yet are sensitive to vehicle weight, the new Cummins ISX11.9 is an ideal solution,” said Bill Jackson, Peterbilt general manager and Paccar vice-president. “The ISX11.9 is a versatile engine that will suit our customers’ needs in applications ranging from refuse and construction to short and regional haul.”

The EPA2010-compliant Cummins ISX11.9 boasts strong pulling power, excellent throttle response and high fuel economy numbers. It shares technology with the ISX15, such as the XPI common rail fuel system and electrically-actuated VGT turbocharger. It’s available in horsepower ratings from 310-425 with maximum torque of 1,650 lb.-ft. □



There’s A Better Way to Prepare for 2010

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

Benjamin Franklin

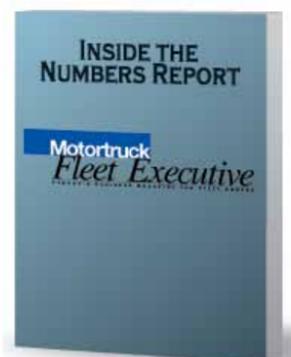
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The 2010 report will include the latest updates from the Canadian General Freight Index, which provides monthly analysis of rate performance for TL and LTL, domestic and transborder freight. It will also include both sectoral and industry specific breakouts for shipper projected freight volumes.

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Volvo vows to become bigger player in North American Class 8 market

'It's a whole new ball game,'

— Volvo/Mack CEO Denny Slagle

By James Menzies

ROANOKE, Va. — As new truck order boards begin to gradually fill in, the head of Volvo Trucks North America says he sees an opportunity to reshape the North American Class 8 market share landscape.

Speaking candidly to trucking trade press editors during a recent roundtable near the company's Virginia truck plant, Volvo CEO Denny Slagle said 2010 is "a whole new ball game."

No longer content with its place among North American truck makers, Volvo has a plan to gain market share by providing customers with the "best solution now and for the future," Slagle said. At the heart of the company's ambitious plan is its EPA2010-compliant emissions solution using selective catalytic reduction (SCR). Volvo feels it's best prepared for 2010, having been the first to get its 2010 engine certified by the Environmental Protection Agency and completing an extensive validation program that includes more than two million customer-driven miles.

Slagle admitted Volvo has stumbled in the past, including with the roll-out of its EPA07 product line.

"We weren't proud of how we

executed 07," Slagle admitted. "We learned from that, and since 2007 I don't think there's been any other manufacturer that has more test miles, more trucks on the road and is more ready for 2010 (than Volvo). We have some wounds to heal but I really like the story for Volvo Group, quite frankly."

In hindsight, Slagle said he wishes Volvo could've rolled out its SCR solution for the previous EPA emissions go-round in 2007.

"We should have gone to SCR in 2006," he said. "In my mind, you took the engine a bridge too far in terms of trying to accomplish (EPA07 emissions targets) through EGR in 2007. With 20/20 hindsight, you could build a case for going to SCR then, because then all you're doing is letting the engine do its job and putting an air cleaning machine behind it. (SCR) lets an engine be an engine again."

Confident in its 2010 truck and engine combo, Slagle said Volvo Group has the right solution for the ever-evolving North American customer, who is increasingly sophisticated.

"If you're a very sophisticated buyer, the things you have to think about now and for the next four to five years,

and that's the time your next purchase is going to span, is what is it going to be worth? How am I going to make money with it? Are they going to create more (emissions) standards? All I'm saying is, I think the market will benefit somewhat from the stability and the package that Volvo delivers," Slagle said.

And while Cummins will remain an important partner, Slagle said even greater efficiencies can be achieved when allowing Volvo to build the entire package.

"People used to buy an engine and put a truck around it," Slagle said. "Now, they're buying a truck. In order to meet all we have to do in terms of regulations and greenhouse gas emissions, the more we can design our whole truck from the engine to the transmission and synch it up, the better in control we are and the easier it is to achieve what's in front of us."

Slagle acknowledged that just because the company has a compelling product for customers doesn't mean it will achieve its ambitious targets, the specifics of which weren't shared with reporters except to say "our goal is not to stay where we are."

"We still have to execute," Slagle added. "In capitalism you get precisely what you deserve and I think we've gotten what we deserve. We will win back the day. I honestly think there's a rare opportunity here to make the type of (market share) movement that

happened in 2007."

In 2007, the roll-out of EPA07-compliant engines and several new product introductions shook up the North American market share picture, mostly to the benefit of Navistar. This time around, Volvo Group stands to be the benefactor, Slagle said with confidence.

Ron Huibers, senior vice-president, sales and marketing, agreed, adding Volvo will target new markets as part of its growth strategy.

"You'll see us having a broader customer base going into the future," he vowed. "The large fleets are important, but it's also the regional fleets and other customers — we have to have better penetration across all the segments. We have a good solution for the segments of the market we haven't done as well on."

The North American Class 8 market in general is poised to grow 20-30% this year, Slagle predicted.

"It feels like we have legs under us with the economic recovery," he said. "Trucks are getting utilized again, the parts business and aftermarket business is picking up quite a bit and that's one of the signals that trucks are going back to work... I believe there are a lot of fleets out there with their finger on the trigger."

Slagle hopes to see similar gains in 2011, but stopped short of issuing a projection because "the markets are so event-sensitive right now, everything spooks the market." □

Volvo plants ramp up EPA2010 production

Company refuses to let a good recession go to waste

By James Menzies

HAGERSTOWN, Md. & DUBLIN, Va. — Volvo Trucks North America recently invited trade press editors on a whirlwind two-day tour of its powertrain and truck plants here, where production of EPA2010-compliant trucks and engines is well underway.

The effects of the recession, which decimated the global truck manufacturing industry, could still be seen — but surprisingly many of those effects were actually upgrades to the facilities.

New buildings have been erected at the Hagerstown facility since this editor's last visit in 2005, including a \$40-million, state-of-the-art engine lab with eight test cells, where new technologies are developed and engineers can perform such work as weighing particulate matter right down to 10/millionths of an ounce.

During the downturn, Volvo continued investing in its North American facilities, to the tune of about US\$150 million at its Hagerstown powertrain plant alone. Ron Huibers, senior vice-president, sales and marketing, said Volvo invested 5.9% of its total sales into research and development last year.

"That's a big commitment," he said.

During its darkest days, when there were no orders to be filled, employees at Volvo's New River Valley truck plant were invited to show up at the plant, where they were handed a can of paint and put to work improving their workplaces.

Walls were given a fresh coat of paint, assembly lines were reconfigured for EPA2010 component installations and a Kaizen Shop was established, where workers with good ideas on how to improve efficiencies could go to find the tools and help they needed to turn those ideas into reality. Many workers, for example, have constructed their own customized, ergonomic tool racks in the shop.

"We have taken the economic downturn to rethink everything we have been doing," said New River Valley plant manager, Patrick Collignon. "Every down week, we send employees through training and let them experiment in the classroom. They discover you can build trucks in different ways. I want the intellectual involvement of all our employees — I don't care about payback."

During the tours, assembly workers at both plants appeared upbeat as they worked on EPA2010-compliant trucks and engines. While the plants are not yet humming at full capacity, they are busy. Huibers said Volvo has received more than 4,000 orders for its 2010-compliant vehicles to date and has been shipping them since April.

Volvo, which counts environmental care among its core values, has not lost sight of that mission during the recession.

Plant manager Collignon said the facility is in a race to become the first CO₂-neutral factory in the US. Collignon came to Virginia by way of Belgium, where Volvo Group al-

ready operates a CO₂-neutral truck plant.

Employees have been heavily involved in pursuing that goal and have contributed many ideas, like turning off the lights on the facility's vending machines.

That simple undertaking alone saved the equivalent of one household's annual energy consumption, Collignon explained.

Volvo has planted some 30,000 pine trees on its property at the plant and by 2012, it's on pace to have reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 20%. Other environmental initiatives include installing solar boards to heat water and the impending installation of two wind turbines.

So far, Volvo has reduced its energy consumption at the New River Valley plant by 810,926 kW per month, equivalent to about 900 households, Collignon said. Previously, the plant spent about US\$7 million a year on energy, and as Collignon said, "nobody benefits from that."

Back at the Hagerstown powertrain plant, a four-stage validation process has been implemented to ensure Volvo's 2010 engines are reliable. Jeff Granger, EPA2010 chief project manager, said Volvo began preparing for 2010 early.

"There's no substitute for time," he said. "We wanted to get this product out to customers extremely early."

The four-stage validation process included: Rig Testing, where vehicles underwent 47 durability tests, including some 29 million equivalent miles spent in a rig shaker as well as other "controlled abuse" tests; Accelerated Endurance Testing, where trucks were put through



BACK IN BUSINESS: A truck cab on the assembly line of Volvo's New River Valley plant.

extreme abuse over a six-week period; Vehicle Function Testing, where trucks were tested on the road and in the wind tunnel, including in extreme environments such as a Canadian winter; and finally Customer Field Testing where customers put the trucks and engines through their paces under real-world driving conditions and duty-cycles.

Volvo's currently in the Customer Satisfaction Vehicle phase of the roll-out program, where it's following up with customers on the performance of production model vehicles as they accumulate about 130,000 miles every week. Volvo officials said the company's 2010 products are living up to the company's fuel economy promises.

"We are meeting our 5% fuel savings we had given ourselves as a target," Granger said.

Curt Hassinger, vice-president key accounts, added "This is our most comprehensive effort to date and the most validated product we've ever put forth in this market." □

NEW PRODUCTS

Shell looks to change the way fleets change their oil

By James Menzies

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. – Shell has introduced a new oil change service to the Canadian market that allows operators to do a complete oil change in as little as five minutes when the engine's hot, without any of the mess that normally accompanies such work.

Shell LubeExpress is a new service being rolled out in Canada, which involves the closed-loop ESOC (Environmentally Safe Oil Change) machine that uses purged air to quickly remove old oil, resulting in a more complete oil change, the company announced during a recent customer demonstration.

To use the machine, a truck must first be fitted with the necessary couplings to accommodate two hoses, one of which purges the used oil and the other which replenishes the engine with fresh oil. The couplings cost about \$70 and can be installed in as little as 10 minutes using existing ports at the oil inlet and drain pan, the company claims. New trucks can be spec'd with the required connections, Shell's Chris Guerrero added.

When a truck requires an oil change, the air line purges the entire engine and filter while the oil's still hot, ensuring the complete removal of contaminants that will be suspended rather than settled. When the oil is purged into the drain pan, the

mechanic can begin removing the oil filter (the purged air ensures it cools quickly) or conducting other preventive maintenance.

Using purged air ensures the old oil is completely removed from every nook and cranny, explained Michele Collins, business manager with ESOC Commercial Truck, manufacturer of the machine.

"Because you're using air purging, you're getting all the contaminants and sludge out of all the recesses, so you're getting a cleaner oil change and extending the life of your engine," she said.

The operator follows simple prompts via the machine's touch-screen display to complete the oil change, including entering the amount of new oil required and whether or not an oil sample is desired. Pulling an oil sample is as simple as placing a bottle in the indicated location on the machine and since the oil is pulled mid-stream, the results are more reliable, Guerrero pointed out.

"You're getting a good sample, you're not getting the sediment that's settled in the bottom," he said.

If the operator should overfill the engine with fresh oil, the machine has the ability to remove the precise amount of the overfill, eliminating guesswork. But by entering the required quantity (in quarts or litres)

into the touch screen display, overfills should be eliminated, Collins pointed out.

Another advantage of the system is that oil pressure is built up instantly when the fresh oil is added, so there's no dry start which can cause bearing burn, Collins explained.

There are environmental benefits to the machine as well. Because it's a closed-loop system, there's no spillage and the used oil is routed directly to the waste oil tank. The system also removes most of the oil from the old oil filter, creating a safer and cleaner environment for mechanics when removing the filter.

Guerrero said Shell LubeExpress will change the way fleets change their oil, an evolution he said is overdue.

"We change oil the way we change oil, because that's the way we've always changed oil," he said. He pointed out the system is already gaining credence in other parts of the world, especially the Asia-Pacific region where roughly 100 machines have been deployed in recent months. The system is currently in the pilot stage in the US.

Here in Canada, Guerrero said fleets with trucks that usually return to their home facility for oil changes will benefit the most.

"If you use a lot of external facilities and don't do oil changes in-



EXPRESS JOB: Shell's new LubeExpress service allows fleets to change oil in as little as five minutes on a hot engine, while getting a more complete drain, the company says.

house, this may not be for you," he said. Fleets looking to add the system can negotiate the price into their lubricant supply deals with Shell, and the oil company will provide installation assistance, operator training and ongoing support. □

Tires & Wheels

Bridgestone has come out with a new R197 **low rolling resistance radial tire** for improved fuel efficiency and long, even tread wear, the company announced. The R197 has been EPA SmartWay-certified and is suitable for all-position use, but designed for single and tandem axle trailer and dolly applications in regional and long-haul service, the company says. The newest Bridgestone tire has shoulder protector ribs to protect the sidewalls from damage. For more info, visit www.BridgestoneTruckTires.com or speak to your dealer.

Taabs Wheel Balancers provide **dynamic wheel balancing** for



commercial trucks and trailers. They're built from a marine-grade aluminum outer casing containing 32-ounces of steel chromed ball bearings in an environmentally-friendly dimethicone silicone, the company says. In testing, Taabs says the wheel balancing system has proven to reduce tire wear by 10-30%. Over a five-year period, Taabs calculates the payback to be up to \$10,300 for a truck and

trailer. It's backed by a five-year, unlimited mileage warranty and a 90-day money-back guarantee. For more information, visit www.taabs-int.com or call 888-553-3005.

Components

Alliance Parts has introduced an expanded line of **air-conditioning compressors** for all makes and models of Class 6-8 vehicles. The direct drop-in replacement compressors were built for cost-conscious customers and are tested to OE specifications, the company says. They are equipped with double end-capped PAC oil with special anti-wear additive. For more information, visit a dealer or visit www.alliancebrandparts.com.

Accessories

Mizco International has come out with a new **Bluetooth headset** designed specifically for professional drivers. The Tough Tested Series of headsets are "designed, engineered, and manufactured to meet the exacting usage requirements of professional drivers," according to the company. They deliver six hours of talk time and up to 250 hours of standby time between charges. The headsets feature a boom mic, adjustable mic stem, adjustable headband, call waiting, three-way calling, voice-activated dialing, one-touch call answer/end and a USB travel charger and cable. The Lyte Comm 737 retails at US\$79.99 and the Pro Boom 747 at US\$109.99. For more info, visit www.mizco.com. □

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

Licence renewed

By Edo van Belkom

The story so far...

Mark is looking for a load. Bud has a sweet one to California that won't be ready for a few days. In the meantime, Bud asks Mark to help an older driver, Charlie Knowles, get his licence renewed. Charlie's a real character and Mark agrees to help out.

After a call to the MTO to get an idea of what's needed to renew an A/Z licence, Mark meets up with Charlie. The man is as abrasive as ever and is worried Mark will be charging him for his help. When Mark tells Charlie he's doing a favour for Bud and there's no charge, Charlie starts making demands, testing Mark's patience.

Charlie goes to do his written test. Mark had prepared cheat sheets to help the man, but replace them with blank pieces of paper just before the test so Charlie would pass the test on his own merits. He does pass without checking the cheat sheets and now he's getting cocky. Mark reminds him there's still a road test and Charlie comes back to earth hard.

Mark met up with Charlie early the next morning. Charlie's road test was at 2 p.m. and that gave them a few hours to go over things and do a few dry runs before doing it for real.

"How are you feeling?" Mark asked.

"Not so good," Charlie said.

Mark didn't doubt it. There was sweat across the man's bald pate and his skin looked pale. "You'll do fine."

Charlie nodded. "Let's get this done."

"We'll start with a circle check." They both got out of the truck and Mark stood back while Charlie went through his routine, beginning with the hood and cab. He did a walk around the entire rig, then asked Mark to help him out with the light and signal tests. Finally, after a detailed inspection of the brakes, Charlie uncoupled and coupled the rig.

"Done."

"Then let's go for a drive."

Charlie smiled and quickly got up behind the wheel. He seemed happy there... comfortable. And when they got underway, Charlie proved to be an excellent driver, sometimes doing a smoother job of running through the gears than Mark usually did. It was obvious that Charlie was an excellent driver, but the question was, did he do everything well enough to pass a road test?

"Well?" Charlie asked, when he'd finally come to a stop.

Mark shrugged. "I'm no tester, but you seemed to drive alright to me."

"You think I'll pass?"

"I think so, but you never know what they'll be looking for."

"So there's a chance I could fail?"

"I didn't say that."

Charlie looked worried now, biting his lower lip. "I want some cheat sheets for the road test too...to remind me how to do things the right way."

Mark was about to tell him that cheat sheets wouldn't help him on a road test, but he stopped himself. Maybe writing some of this stuff down would calm Charlie's nerves. "Sure, why not?"

They went to a Tim's down the road and got to writing. By one in the afternoon, Charlie knew everything he needed to know.

"I sure hope I do alright," Charlie said, taking the keys to Mother Load."

"Of course you will. You don't forget 40 years of driving experience overnight," Mark said, reaching over and discreetly removing the cheat sheets from Charlie's coat pocket. "You'll do fine."

"I hope you're right."

"I hope so, too," Mark said under his breath, watching Charlie leave.

Charlie returned a couple of hours later, a dark scowl on his face.

"Did you pass the test?" Mark asked.

"Did you get your licence renewed?"

"Of course I did, no thanks to you."

"What do you mean?"

Charlie glared at him. "Just before I was about to start my circle check, I reached into my pocket for my cheat sheets and all I found was a slip of paper from you saying, 'Good Luck!'"

"I didn't want you to fail just because you got caught cheating."

Charlie nodded. "That's very kind of you, except there's nothing in the laws that make it illegal to have something written down on paper to help you get through the road test."

"There isn't?"

"No, there isn't. I could have had the whole study book with me if I'd wanted."

"Oh, well then," Mark said, trying not to smile. "I'm glad it all worked out okay. I knew you could do it on your own anyway."

"Yeah, well, there were times when I wasn't so sure."

"Like when?"

"Like when the tester walked out to the truck and I realized he couldn't be more than 22 years old. He said he had his A/Z but you just know he did the test just to put the licence in his pocket. If he ever did a long-haul in his life it was to move his X-Box from his mommy's basement to college and then back again."

"You weren't disrespectful, were you?"

"Of course not, but I didn't have to like him now, did I?"

"You didn't like him?"

"If we were sitting in the pub drinking ale and watching the Rangers playing Everton, I might have liked him just fine. But it's hard to like a fella who has the power to decide whether you can go on making a living or not."

Fair enough, Mark thought. "Was the test difficult, then?"

"Not really. But when I asked the boy if I was getting the old-timer's test, he told me every test was the same." Charlie shook his head.

"I didn't appreciate that. After driving without a problem for 45 years I got tested the same way the kid who wants to drive daddy's truck on the weekend, or the lassie who wants to drive a few hours while her husband sleeps on a busman's holiday to Florida."

Mark shook his head. "You must have passed easily."

"I would have, but the tester kept saying things like, 'Are you sure that's right?' or 'Do you always do it that way?' It got so bad I was having trouble telling the accelerator from the clutch pedal."

"That could be a problem."

"Aye, so I asked him how bad I had to be to fail the test and he said, 'A fail's a fail no matter what age you are.' For example, if I uncoupled the trailer before I let the landing gear down, that would be a fail. And if I didn't signal a turn or went through a stop sign, those would be fails too."

"Sounds pretty basic."

"That's what I thought. So when I realized I'd be fine as long as I drove the way I normally do, the rest of the test was as refreshing as a cool breeze under my kilt."

Mark laughed. Charlie was a true character and the road needed drivers like him regardless of how old he was.

Charlie took Mark out for a steak dinner that night to thank Mark for his help, but cut the evening short right after dinner. "I'd love to share a pint with you, but I've got a sweet load waiting for me."

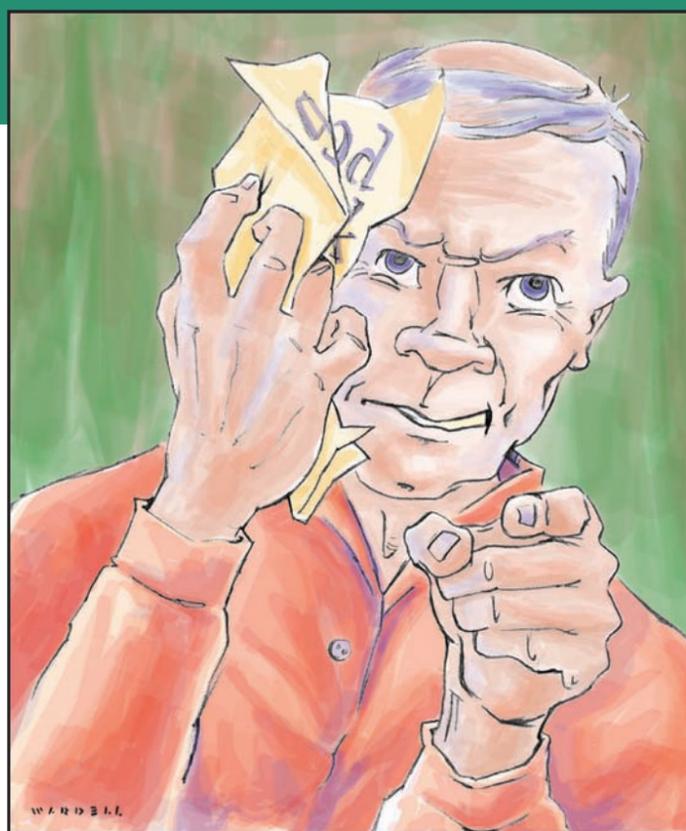
"Already?" Mark said. "Good for you."

"Hey, when you're as good a driver as I am, the good loads come your way."

Not to be outdone, Mark said, "Well, I've got a great load waiting for me too."

"Then I won't keep you," Charlie said, paying for the meal on his way out the door.

As he watched Charlie leave, Mark felt pretty good about the deed he'd done. Now all that was left was to head for California and make it a feel-good day all



around. He took out his cell phone and called Bud from the dinner table. "Hi Bud, this is Mark."

"Mark who?"

"Mark About-to-spend-three-days-in-California Dalton, that's who."

"Oh, that Mark."

From the tone of Bud's voice, Mark knew there was something wrong. "What happened to the load?"

"You should have called sooner," Bud said. "I just gave that California load to another driver."

"Who?"

"Charlie Knowles. Hey, thanks for helping him out with his licence renewal, by the way. He couldn't say enough good things about you."

Mark wished he could return the sentiment. "You gave my load to that, that... Scotsman?"

"Yeah, he said you were busy the next few days and would be happy if he got the load instead of you because, you know... he was your student an all. Besides, the load needed one of my best drivers and if Charlie's licence is good, then he's one of the best."

"Really?" Mark wanted to be mad, but all he could do was laugh.

"Relax," said Bud. "I've got plenty of other loads."

"Yeah, like what?"

"Lemme see, how 'bout a load of machine parts to a lumber mill in Timmins?"

Mark sighed. "I'll take it."

But while Charlie and Mark were headed in different directions, Mark was sure the two of them would meet again someday. Mark for one, was looking forward to it. □

— Mark Dalton returns next month in another adventure.

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

The continuing adventures of *Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator*

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OPINION

Better times for the industry are on the near horizon

As I write this column, we are smack dab in the middle of truck show season. The granddaddy of shows (Mid-America) started us off in late March followed by two tremendous events in Toronto, Truck World and the Canadian Fleet Maintenance Seminars.

Both were well attended and the majority of people I met were optimistic and believed all signals pointed to a return to better times. It may be in the form of baby steps but hey, we're going in the right direction and that's just fine by me.

If you check out the various truck magazine Web sites, you'll see what I mean. The truck manufacturers have been busy sending out press releases announcing their larger fleet orders.

The van segment has been doing the same and it looks like used equipment downtime has finally caught up to the many fleets who held off making large capital purchases over the last few years. Yes indeed, life breathes again for the Canadian trucking community.

Take a look at the 'Driving Careers' section of this issue. You can tell freight is starting to move

Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



again by the increase in the number of fleets advertising jobs.

It won't be long before you'll start hearing of the pre-recession driver shortage again.

The fundamentals haven't changed. We've all had more urgent 'today' issues to worry about, so the shortage was pushed under the rug. It will be back and with a vengeance.

This recession was the worst since the 30s. Most fleets had no choice but to make changes, they did what they had to do to survive. Now the biggest question facing owners and managers is not *if* to re-invest, but *when* to re-invest.

They all know it has to be done but they are a tad gun shy, not wanting to commit to the expense just in case everything goes south again. It won't (yikes, I can't believe I said that! Usually when it comes to these columns, I'm non-committal

– 'Which way does the wind blow? Wilkins' comes to mind) and even if it does, I doubt it's going to be an extended version, just another blip in the cycle.

Unfortunately, I don't own *Truck News* or *Truck West*. We're part of a large company that publishes doz-

ens of magazines in dozens of markets. I don't have a crystal ball but come budget time, I'll be preaching re-investment. □

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

PEOPLE

ArvinMeritor has named **John Nelligan** its new Canadian regional director, North American field operations. Nelligan will head the sales, service and support of fleets and dealers across Canada, overseeing eight district managers. Nelligan joined ArvinMeritor earlier this year as director of a specialty business unit. Prior to that, he served as dealer principal and general manager of Harper Truck Centres.

Meanwhile, ArvinMeritor named **Rick Decaire** its eastern regional sales director for the aftermarket business. Decaire most recently served as eastern area director for the northeast and eastern Canada regions, covering the northeastern US and eastern provinces of Canada.

Manac has shuffled up its sales force and executive ranks. **Roger Gendron**, formerly vice-president of sales at Manac since 1982 has taken on the position of vice-president, assistant to the president. He'll be in charge of special projects, relations with major clients and will take an active part in the company's future growth, Manac announced. He'll assume his new duties June 28.

Tom Ramsden, sales manager for Ontario, will take on the role of vice-president of sales. Ramsden will oversee the development of sales and market growth, the company announced.

Luc St-Jacques, previously sales manager for the Montreal region, will now direct the sales team for the entire province of Quebec.

Aaron Gorman is rejoining Manac on June 21 and will serve as sales manager, Ontario. He's currently the sales manager for another industry supplier.

Ankra International has named **Todd R. Walker** its new central region sales manager for its cargo

systems division.

Walker brings over 20 years' experience in management, customer service and sales to the position. Most recently, he worked for Kinedyne for the past 10 years. Ankra says Walker has extensive knowledge of current load securement regulations and is active in industry organizations.

Walker will be based in Hamilton and can be reached at 905-520-9481 or by e-mail at twalker@ancra.com.

Steve Clough has been named president and CEO of Arrow Truck Sales. Clough succeeds Carl Heikel, who is now leading international operations for Mack Trucks. □

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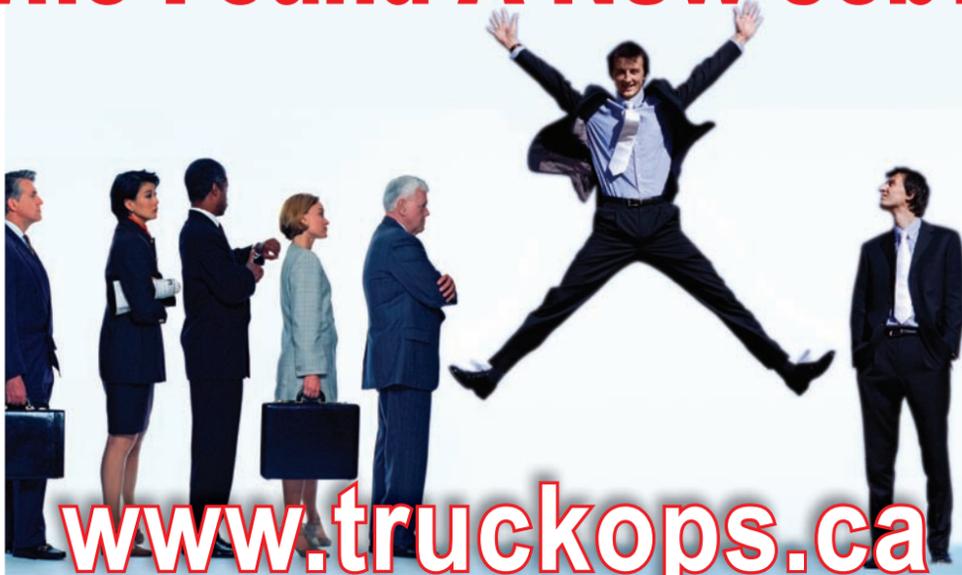
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TSQ

BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – Fuel economy standards for medium- and heavy-duty trucks have taken another step towards becoming reality as US President Barack Obama announced a forthcoming US government mandate in mid-May – with Canada expected to follow suit (see pg. 19).

In recognition of this soon-to-be momentous mandate, we thought we would ask truckers about the three “Ts” of fuel economy (targets, technology and training) at the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont.

We asked drivers what they think a reasonable mpg target would be for the mandate. We also asked what fuel-saving technologies, from the myriad available out there, do they think actually do the job they’re intended to do.

And finally, we asked if drivers were presented with the option to take fuel economy training, would they take their company up on it?



Truck Stop Question *What's your opinion on fuel economy targets, technology and training?*

ADAM LEDLOW



Joe Gallant

Joe Gallant, a company driver with TST Overland Express in Pickering, Ont., says that while he doesn’t keep track of his own mpg (the company does), he thinks 8-9 mpg seems reasonable.

As for fuel-saving technologies, Gallant says TST governs the fleet at 60 mph – which he says helps save fuel more than most products available out there.

“The load factor and dragging a truck up a hill, always screaming, always on the governors, always with your foot into the oil pan, that’s what wastes your fuel,” he says. “We have had many instances where the company will say, ‘We’ll have a driver drive aggressively across Toronto, and one that just drives more conscientious, takes it easy, and see how long it takes each one,’ and it’s only about a five minute difference. That’s fuel economy, that’s

safety, that’s easier on the driver, the whole ball of wax.”



Jim Stein

Jim Stein, an owner/operator with Warren Gibson out of Alliston, Ont., says that 7.5-8 mpg is the target he sets – and consistently meets – for himself.

Stein points to the aerodynamics of the truck itself being the biggest factor in (literally) dragging down fuel consumption, and questions the validity of many fuel-saving products.

“There are a lot of gimmicks out there,” he said. “All in all, the overall fuel consumption stays pretty close to the same.”

Stein says he would welcome fuel economy training, seeing as fuel is one of his biggest expenses. “It’s just into the beginning of June and I’ve spent over \$36,000 in fuel this year already. So anything to save that expense would be money in my pocket.”

Chris (last name withheld), a company driver with Beyond Transportation Ayr, Ont., says a fuel economy target of 6.5 mpg is fair.

As for products, he swears by his Webasto bunk heater – available in all Beyond’s trucks – which keeps him from idling in the winter.

As for training, Chris is all for it; a much better option than incentive programs that usually don’t end up working, he says. “A guy going from here to California will get better fuel mileage than a guy chopping four trips to New York and doing a bunch of city work. I find that usually doesn’t work, it’s usually the guy with the best trip gets the best economy.”



Jim Yarbrough

Jim Yarbrough, a company driver with Con-way Freight in Missouri, gave the broadest target of the bunch with 6-8 mpg suggested, noting that it depends greatly on the model of truck being driven. As for products, Yarbrough says his fleet runs super-singles which are supposed to help because they’re lighter, but that he can’t say for sure.

With training, Yarbrough actually takes part at Con-way. “I’m a finisher. I train drivers, so it’s my job to train them to be as fuel-efficient as they can.” □

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