

TRUCK WEST

July 2011 Volume 22, Issue 7

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



WHAT A SCAMP: Scamp Transport was recently recognized as the Best Overall Carrier by the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute. What goes into developing – and maintaining – a true safety culture? Jay Campbell has the answers, but he says it takes the commitment of the entire company to achieve a culture of safety.

Scamp doesn't skimp on safety

Award-winning fuel hauler takes its safety program seriously

By Jim Bray

LANGLEY, B.C. – If you talk to Jay Campbell, general manager/CFO of Langley, B.C.'s Scamp Transport, there's no real secret to the company's success.

It's just hard work and a commitment to excellence.

And it doesn't hurt to think outside of the box, too.

Scamp was honoured by the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute as its Best Overall Carrier for 2010 in a Calgary ceremony in late April. It was the culmination of years of safety-focused work from the fuel

carrier and to hear Campbell tell it, the award seems nearly inevitable.

A third-generation company, Scamp Transport was founded by Campbell's father, Stuart, whose name was truncated into the company moniker. And it started, it

Continued on page 9

Going postal

Strike brings pain for some, opportunities for other businesses

By Harry Rudolfs

OTTAWA, Ont. – Twenty-four-hour rotating postal strikes by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers appear to be accelerating across the country as Canada Post Corporation has countered by announcing that it is cutting staff and services at postal stations and limiting mail deliveries in urban centres to Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

The rotating strikes began June 3 and have affected service across the country. Since that time, Canada Post claims that volumes are down by up to 50%.

"Canadians are holding on to their mail because they are unsure what parts of the country are going to get service the next day," according to Canada Post spokesperson Anick Losier.

The union has upped the ante by increasing the number of regions affected by the rotating strikes. The work stoppages began in Winnipeg followed by Hamilton, Montreal, Moncton and Victoria. More centres seem to be added to the mix every night. As *Truck West* goes to press, 13 medium and small cities are

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Navistar's Heavy-Duty boot camp

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Inside This Issue...

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Mark Dalton O/O



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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

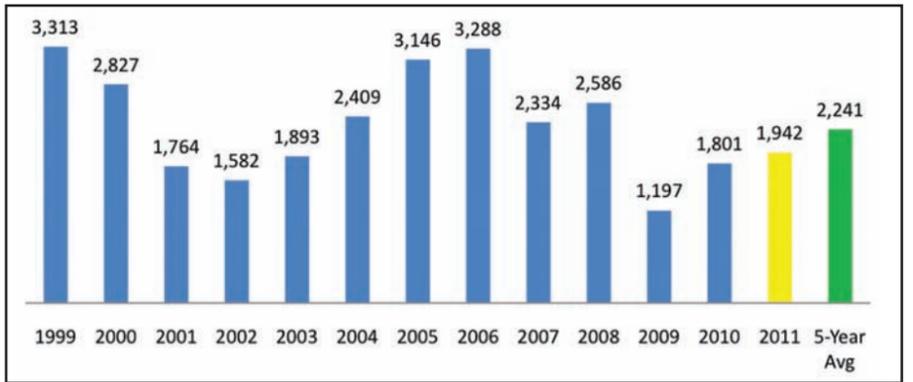
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Monthly Class 8 Sales - Apr 11

There were 1,942 Class 8 trucks sold in the Canadian market this April, starting the quarter on a positive note. The total was an improvement over not only the severely depressed 2009 totals for the month but also April 2010. More significantly April continued the recent trend of surpassing the April sales totals set back in 2001, 2002 and 2003. The month came in about 300 trucks short of the five-year average for truck sales.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	513	299
International	411	535
Kenworth	342	359
Mack	164	93
Peterbilt	219	209
Sterling	0	16
Volvo	191	169
Western Star	102	121
TOTALS	1942	1801

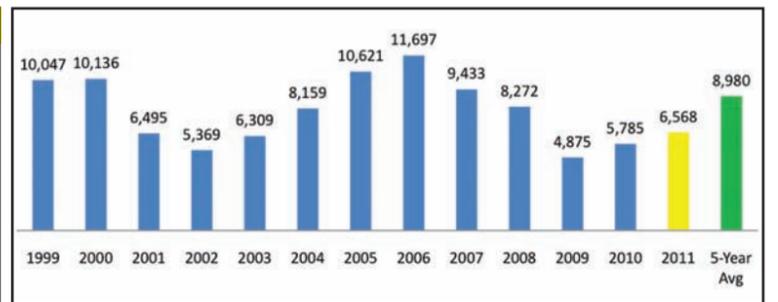
Historical Comparison - Apr 11 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD Apr 11) by Province and OEM

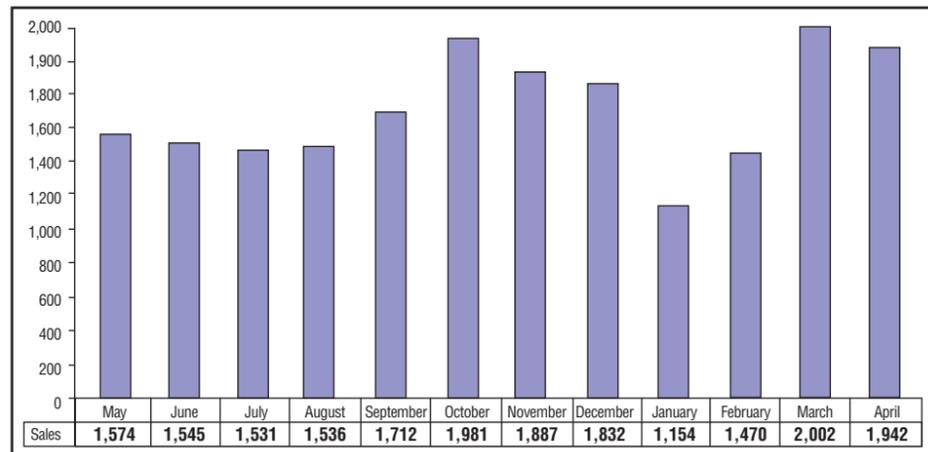
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	100	181	51	143	1,029	270	88	24	0	10	1,896
Kenworth	103	364	75	69	165	291	32	0	0	0	1,099
Mack	13	65	31	38	187	69	9	3	0	4	419
International	102	261	23	96	400	339	87	39	8	15	1,370
Peterbilt	57	213	50	35	171	107	47	9	0	0	689
Volvo	43	64	23	105	250	150	28	28	0	2	693
Western Star	101	129	23	14	57	48	9	14	1	6	402
TOTALS	519	1,277	276	500	2,259	1,274	300	117	9	37	6,568

Historical Comparison - YTD Apr 11



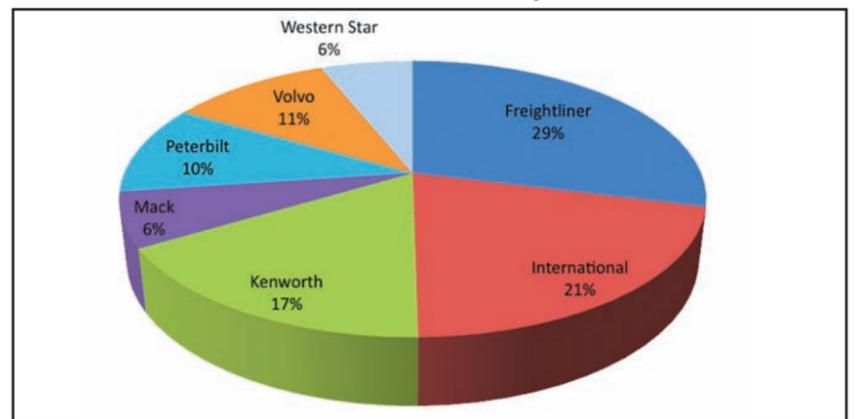
First quarter Class 8 sales totals finished strong thanks mostly to the numbers posted in March and now a strong April has started the second quarter on a sound footing. The YTD sales totals are significantly better than the sales figures posted in both 2009 and 2010 but also better than the results after the first four months of 2001, 2002 and 2003. And while this year's first quarter sales reached to only about half the first quarter sales during the record year of 2006, it was less than 1,500 units off the five-year average.

12 - Month Sales Trends



March proved to be the strongest month of the past 12-month period, climbing above 2,000 Class 8 trucks sold, but April is right behind with sales of 1,942 Class 8 trucks. After an improving close to 2010 with three straight months of truck sales coming in above 1,800 units, January was a disappointment with sales slipping below 1,200 again in January. February showed improvement with a climb to 1,470 before the sizeable jump in sales made in March and then April.

Market Share Class 8 - Apr 11 YTD



Freightliner, a market leader in the Canadian market for many years before International took over the top spot a few years ago, jumped out to an early lead at the start of the year with 28% market share and has since grown that lead. It now stands with a commanding 29% lead with International, whose market share has been on the decline over the past year, in second with 21%. Kenworth's numbers are also a drop from its 19% market at the end of 2010.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Lamenting the decline of the traditional truck show

The truck show, as it's known today, is at risk of extinction. The type of truck that attracts observers and participants to show 'n'shines across Canada is gradually being outlawed by overzealous enviro-minded regulators and replaced with slippery models that as columnist Mark Lee recently put it, all cast the same shadow on the ground.

Let's be honest, when the OEMs are all employing the same types of technologies to squeeze out microscopic gains in truck aerodynamics and fuel efficiency, there's not a lot left to the imagination. (The exception to this might be the International LoneStar, which – love it or hate it – combines classic styling with fuel performance worthy of a SmartWay endorsement).

The latest aero-styled trucks make good business sense, that much is undeniable. But they're not exactly showing up en-masse at the summer truck shows, which are still dominated by classic-styled trucks like Pete 379s, Kenworth W900s and the like.

This is tragic. The truck show 'n'shines will eventually become antique truck shows, as classic-styled truck models are faded out in favour of fuel-efficient designs that earn the EPA's nod of approval.

This disappointing trend coincides with another observation: reduced attendance at truck shows that were once can't-miss events. I chalk the attendance woes at many truck shows not to the impending doom of the traditional show truck, but rather to a general malaise towards the trucking industry. For the younger crowds, these shows have become a place to go to get drunk and rowdy when the sun goes down, with little time spent appreciating the show trucks and the work that went into them.

Is there a future for this type of event? I sure hope so. Is there hope that an interest in show trucks will be reignited in the younger generation



JAMES MENZIES

trucker? Maybe. I spent a couple days in early June attending the Shell SuperRigs show in Kenly, N.C. and the event had me second-guessing my own doomsday prognostication. The passion was alive and well at this show, with truckers coming from all over the US and even Canada to show off their rigs in hopes of earning a spot in the prolific SuperRigs calendar.

Shell, in organizing the event, has decided in recent years to reach out to the community and create a more carnival-like atmosphere, inviting nearby residents to a truck parade, light show and fireworks display. What's important, however, is that the trucks and their owners remained the focal point of the entire event. That can't be said for all truck shows today.

As I toured the show, I met Tyler and Mickey Gwillim, a father-son duo who were applying the final coat of polish to The Green Hornet, a lime green 1986 Peterbilt with the clever slogan “Going broke in style” painted on the back of the cab. It's Tyler's truck, and at 16 years of age, it has gotta be the envy of all his friends.

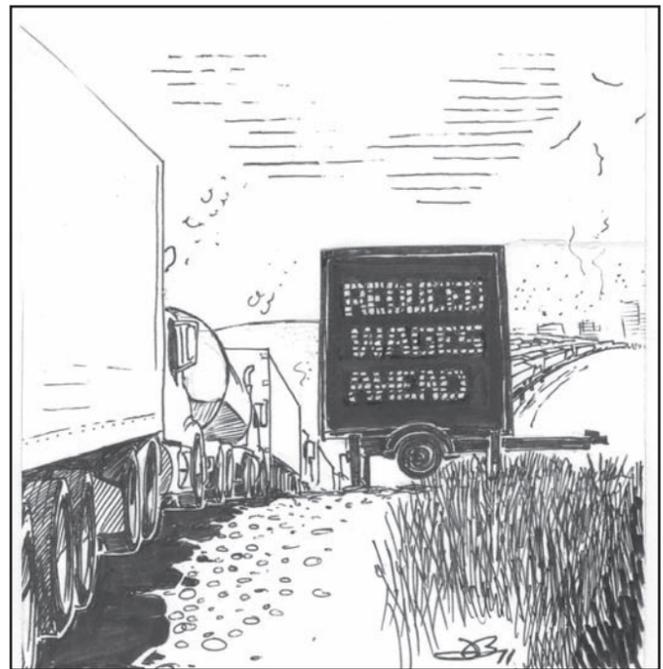
Over the last 10 years or so, Tyler and his dad Mickey have been painstakingly dressing up the truck to the point where it was one of the more attention-grabbing

rigs on the lot. Mickey told me the truck was a gift to his son that keeps on giving; whenever they have some spare time they get to spend it together cleaning or upgrading The Green Hornet.

That time spent together working on the truck and showing it at events (Tyler guesses he's attended 30 or 40 truck shows) has created a bond that so many other fathers and sons will never know.

So maybe the truck show isn't dying after all. If truckers like Mickey can instill in their kids an appreciation for fine trucks and for all the work that goes into them, there just may be some hope that the fire keeps burning. That is, as long as the EPA doesn't pass a law requiring them to tow the older-style trucks to the show behind a SmartWay-approved tractor. □

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Count on it – at last!

For years now I have complained that Canada was too far behind other countries in providing valuable statistical information on transportation and logistics areas. Just a couple of weeks ago I was speaking at an Idealize/PMTC event and chastised Ottawa for abandoning some of its own efforts in this regard, such as its annual reports on private fleets and for-hire carriers. Transportation accounts for 6.3% of Canadian GDP so why was Ottawa being so lax in ensuring it had good data on it?

As a result, I felt, too many supply chain decisions were made and too many opinions held in the absence of recent and reliable market data. In fact, much of the research we have taken on at Transportation Media Group has been due to a complete frustration with how little statistical information there was about the Canadian transportation and logistics market.

Of late, however, I am pleased to see things are starting to change. Supply Chain & Logistics Canada partnered with Industry Canada to provide a series of comprehensive reports, the latest being on global business strategy and innovation with an emphasis on Canadian logistics. The pioneering work done by Philippe



LOU SMYRLIS

Richer at Industry Canada is something I always keep close at hand.

The Canadian Industrial Transportation Association has partnered with Dr. Alan Saïpe to provide a very detailed annual report on shipping practices. CITA and CITT have partnered with us to provide an annual look at transportation buying trends and I've been fortunate to share the spotlight with Dr. Saïpe at several events over the last few years when he presents the results from his survey as I present our own. Two other indices focused on truck freight have also been very beneficial in driving more intelligent discussion over the past year: Transcore partnered with the University of Manitoba to produce a monthly *Canadian Spot Market Freight Index* while Nulogx partnered with Dr. Saïpe to produce the monthly *Canadian General Freight Index*, examining pricing for truck freight.

Both those reports appear monthly in our Dashboard section.

The latest addition is Royal Bank's *Canadian Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)*, published in partnership with the Purchasing Management Association of Canada. The RBC PMI is based on questionnaire responses from a panel of purchasing or senior executives in more than 400 manufacturing companies in Canada. A large number of the survey panel members are PMAC members. It will be released on the first business day of each month. In addition to the headline PMI, which is a composite indicator designed to provide a single-figure snapshot of the health of the manufacturing sector, the survey also tracks changes in output, new orders, employment, inventories, prices and supplier delivery times.

If we look at examples of similar indices in other countries, the PMI should turn out to be a comprehensive and early indicator of trends in the Canadian manufacturing sector and one trucking executives should watch closely as a barometer of the Canadian economy and one of the industry's most important clients. I know I will be sure to examine it in detail and to share the results with you in the months to come. □

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IN BRIEF

Kamloops trucker named Driver of the Year

LANGLEY, B.C. – Lorne Hanson, a longtime log hauling veteran, has received the B.C. Driver of the Year award for 2011 at the B.C. Trucking Association's annual management conference in Kelowna.

Hanson won for his 36-year, accident-free driving record, which includes 3.6 million kilometres without a preventable accident or injury.

Volvo Trucks Canada and BCTA sponsor the provincial Driver of the Year award annually to recognize and promote safe driving among professional drivers. In addition to excellent driving records, award winners have often distinguished themselves through service to their communities and acts of bravery.

For the last 27 years, Hanson has worked for family business Munden Ventures of Kamloops, transporting logs for the grandparents, parents and uncle of current presi-



LORNE HANSON

dent, Greg Munden. "Besides making safety a top priority, showing up every day and getting every load, knowing his equipment with the feel and sense that you can't teach, and leading by example, Lorne is also the memory of the business," said Munden.

Hanson's experience driving everything from five-axle long log

trucks in the 1970s for Munden's grandparents to eight-axle short log trucks for Munden have put him in the unique position of being able to speak from experience when the company requires advice on introducing new methods and equipment.

He has also applied his experience and standards in teaching other drivers for the company. Munden commended Hanson for the care he has taken of the Munden family's name and reputation in his work over the years.

"We're extremely proud to highlight Lorne's career, especially as it's something he would never do himself. Lorne is one of those quiet, consistent, knowledgeable drivers who set the standard for others. The industry could use thousands more like him," said Louise Yako, BCTA's president and CEO.

Terry Warkentin of Volvo Trucks Canada presented the award to Hanson along with a cheque for \$500 from Volvo Trucks. □

Becoming a Successful Owner/Operator

TORONTO, Ont. – *Truck West* and Michelin have teamed up to present a 10-part video series on Becoming a Successful Owner/Operator. The series, featuring ATBS Canada CEO Ray Haight and based on the *ATBS Business Manual for Owner/Operators*, will walk prospective owner/operators through the process of becoming an O/O while helping existing owner/ops improve their profitability and success.

The first part 'Is it the Right Choice?' examines some of the common traits of successful owner/operators and explores whether becoming an owner/operator is a good decision for you.

Part two focuses on record-keeping while Part 3 covers understanding and maximizing revenue. A new segment will be aired every two weeks, covering key topics such as: finding the right carrier; buying a truck; money management; and insurance. The series is sponsored by Michelin and available free of charge on Trucknews.com.

The videos features *Truck West* executive editor James Menzies as he asks key questions of Haight, a past owner/operator and fleet owner who has more than 30 years experience with O/Os. □

Zurich offering specialized insurance package for B.C. transport companies

VANCOUVER, B.C. – Zurich Canada has created a transportation package policy that it says is specially designed for B.C. truckers. Its British Columbia Transportation (BCT) package policy is geared towards the specific needs of transportation providers in B.C., the company says.

The integrated plan offers: excess auto liability, heavy equipment physical damage coverage, cargo and commercial general liability coverage combined into one policy to reduce gaps in coverage; coverage for terminals, warehouses, property, crime, environmental pollution and other needs; optional per-occurrence deductibles on specified lines of business affected by a single claim; maximum limits applied to each line of business separately; cross-border filings with 24-hour turnaround on US filings to keep trucks moving cross-border at no added cost; specialized transportation claims professionals to help truckers in the US and Canada, including a major case unit for catastrophic loss; risk services tools that help assess hazards and recognize safe drivers; and a spill reporting service that provides direct access to a dedicated team.

More info is available at www.zurichcanada.com/transportation. □



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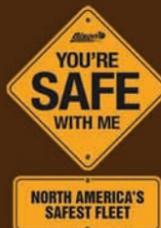
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CANADA

Courier companies step it up while fleets look for new ways to get paid

Continued from page 1

currently without postal services from coast to coast.

With Canada Post's recent decision to cut back on mail deliveries in urban areas, the two adversaries appear headed for a full-blown nationwide strike. At issue are wages, working conditions, a burgeoning pension plan shortfall and concessions that CUPW says Canada Post is demanding from its members.

The last postal strike occurred in this country in 1997 and lasted less than a month before workers were legislated back to work. This does not appear to be the scenario this time, as remarks by Labour Minister Lisa Raitt indicate that she would prefer to let the dispute run its course while the two sides negotiate a settlement.

While the rotating work stoppages are a nuisance to the public, a Canada-wide strike could have

a devastating effect on businesses reliant on the postal service for delivering invoices and receiving payment for services, as is the case with many trucking companies.

Trucking executives I talked to are worried and doing what they can to bypass the postal system – getting their drivers to drop off invoices and pick up cheques while making deliveries and pick-ups, and using courier companies to bill customers out of province. For the first time, some carriers are looking at electronic invoicing and direct deposit payments from customers. One company owner, who wished to remain anonymous, is desperately looking for a 'Plan B.' Currently he's using FedEx to deliver invoices but the premium he's paying is paining him.

"It's about \$20 to deliver an envelope with an invoice within Canada and \$35 to send one to the States. Right now I have to eat that cost."

Courier companies can certainly expect an increase in volumes as the situation deteriorates. According to David Turnbull, CEO and president of the Canadian Courier and Logistics Association, "Our members will step up to the plate and try and fill the gap," he says. "At the same time it's important for them to maintain a level of service to all existing customers."

"Some people may think that our industry is cheering for the strike but that's not the case. We all believe in stability and service," he adds. Turnbull expects that the strike will "fizzle out. It's a sector that's well serviced by a lot of courier companies."

Certainly many couriers are eyeing the dispute eagerly and making plans for servicing more customers as the situation heats up. Aidan Grundy, spokesperson for FedEx Canada, says he has seen "sporadic"

increases in volumes in some of their lanes.

"Right now it's business as usual," he says, "but we have contingencies in place should there be an escalation."

Some shippers may be holding on to their mail hoping for an end to the strike, but others have to get their products out in a timely manner and are relying on alternatives. Most are willing to pay the increased rates charged by couriers rather than risk losing business to competitors. I called a customer service representative for Dynamex in Victoria, B.C., on the day that the rotating strike hit that city, and she told me that customer calls were up about 15%. A representative at Midland Courier in Montreal confirmed that volumes were up as well.

But the big winner for now appears to be Purolator, which ironically is 95% owned by Canada Post. On the morning after a rotating strike hit Montreal, a manager at Purolator's Montreal hub told me they'd had "a very good night."

A foreman at the busy Ville St. Pierre depot, that services much of downtown Montreal, acknowledged that letter mail was up 25% while parcel freight was also climbing although not quite at those levels. Roughly, mail volumes at the Montreal hub are up from approximately 20,000 pieces daily to about 30,000, while mail volumes in Toronto, Purolator's busiest hub, have climbed to 61,000 pieces per day as compared to about 47,000 at pre-strike levels.

At the crux of the dispute are declining overall mail volumes which CPC says has decreased 17% since 2006. No doubt, these will drop even further as clients seek alternatives, including switching to fax machines and e-mails. "It's a new world out there and we have to re-adjust," adds CPC spokesperson Losier.

The top current wage rate for a Canada Post employee is \$24.15 per hour (slightly less than the average of \$24.73 for full-time Canadian workers). Canada Post wants to limit new hire wages at about 25% less, although its latest proposal for new hires has increased the pay scale from about \$17 per hour to \$19 and change. However, CUPW balks at the installation of a two-tier wage system wherein new hires would never reach the income levels of present workers.

The postal workers' pension plan is also a bone of contention, as the crown corporation is holding the bag on a shortfall of \$3.2 billion. Up until 2008, the pension plan was making money as the stock market was raking in profits. CPC's proposes "no risk" pension plan contributions which are also anathema to CUPW.

Whatever the outcome of this contract dispute, as with most strikes it's a lose-lose situation with no favourable outcome in sight. Canada Post will have to fight to win back its clients, and striking workers will have to work harder and longer to make up for lost wages. Needless to say, the public will be inconvenienced, and businesses will have to swallow increased shipping charges and struggle to keep servicing their existing customers. □



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Safety incentives provide motivation for drivers

Continued from page 1
seems, almost as a lark.

"There was a holding company that (Dad) had," Jay Campbell said, "and he thought 'let's start trucking.' Initially we thought it might just be a hobby more than anything and once it evolved, it was too late to change the name and so Scamp stuck and that's what we are."

Campbell says the third generation of "Scampers" came when, "We all got crazy with our own offspring. My Dad has 24 grandchildren and four of them are working for Scamp today and we see that number will surely grow in the future."

All the family members in Scamp's employ are based at the company's Langley terminal, which serves the Vancouver market.

There are also terminals in Kamloops and Edmonton.

Scamp was founded in 1981, and started hauling fuel four years later.

"At the beginning, like all other truckers, we jumped on the general freight train and were hauling to California and back," Campbell said. "You learn really quick that it's a vicious cycle that'll bleed you dry, so we had to make a change. Going into fuel was really driven out of survival."

The decision to haul fuel was an easy one for Stuart Campbell.

"My Dad had a background in it," the younger Campbell said. "He worked 25 years for Federated Co-op and that got us our first contract and from there we started to grow."

The business started with a single truck, run by the patriarch, three sons and two brothers-in-law. Scamp now runs 52 trucks. That growth took a lot of work and some creative thinking.

"The thing we learned when we started was that you can't just polish your truck up and show up at the door and expect the oil companies to want to use you," Jay Campbell said. "We had to reinvent ourselves and we went outside the box with that – this was in the '80s when the economy was in a downturn and stagflation was the word de jour and people were looking to save money and maximize market opportunities and everything."

So, he said, they built a custom-made inventory solution for customers. "We said that we can maximize your margin opportunities, reducing the inventories which will free up capital for you. It got their ear."

That was how Scamp's growth spurt began. "It was really built around customer intimacy in the early days," Campbell said, noting that, while it was a great beginning, it still wasn't enough. "As we grew, we realized that the thing that'll really take you around the track is safety. It took us a while to figure that out." Safety had always been a priority, he said, but, "It wasn't the predominate value you need to be a really successful company. Once we figured that out, we re-jigged everything without losing the customer intimacy we had built with the customers. We reformulated ourselves."

That was around 2004. Since then, Campbell says, Scamp Transport has put up not just industry-leading numbers in Canada but, with Imperial

Oil, globally as well.

"We've won their Carrier of the Year award four out of five years now," he noted proudly, "and we've been the runner-up in the world twice as a result of what safety has driven."

Not surprisingly, it took work and commitment to get to that level of performance and recognition.

"To build the safety umbrella takes a lot of energy sweat, capital, and too much infrastructure," Campbell said, "so you peel it all back because nobody can afford that. You have to realize that the investment in safety will lead to better efficiencies, it'll lead to better numbers."

Now, everything Scamp does is built around safety.

"Nobody gets hurt and we guarantee to our customers that we will meet and exceed their expectations with each and every delivery. And, fortunately, we've been able to deliver that to date and that's why I guess we've been recognized by the CPPI."

Moving the focus to hauling fuel gave Scamp a lot more to consider, safety-wise, than when it merely moved goods.

"You recognize right from the outset once you're immersed in the oil

showcase what they're doing well and what they aren't doing as well, and "the not-so-well stuff is what finds its way into the training sessions we have each month," Campbell said.

That's the "stick," as it were. Scamp also has a very big carrot: a safety incentive bonus it pays out bi-weekly. "Rather than paying them on an annual basis where you get a big bang at Christmastime and by January, February, March you're starting to lose the impact of what you're doing," Campbell said, "we recognize we live in a real-time environment and we reward our drivers in real-time."

How it works is that a driver gets a daily performance report that's tabulated bi-weekly. "For those who meet or exceed our bar," Campbell said, "it can tabulate as high as \$10,000 a year, so it's serious money for our drivers."

It's flexible too, so if a driver prefers the bonus to be paid at Christmastime, the money can accrue in a bank account that lets the employee make plans for the cash.

To design the incentive plan, Campbell said they looked at their customers' expectations and the legislated and municipal requirements,

Christmas party day.

"We bring everybody in to recapture what we were able to do for the year," he said, "and when you see the impact you've had on everybody involved, that is the most rewarding thing. There's an adage at Scamp that you never forget where you came from and what got us there, and it's our employees and our leadership team that has brought us to where we are."

Looking ahead, Campbell says Scamp embraces wholeheartedly such innovations as EOBRs. "We actually have our own IT department within Scamp and we're building leading-edge technology," he said. "We've built a new software platform drilled into the current GPS systems that provides data that's currently not available on the generic systems."

They've also built a new inventory management program that uses real-time data, so "rather than getting dips in the morning from a station and trying to figure out when they need it," Campbell said, "we have a platform that will dial into any station anywhere and bring continuous data feeds to keep our systems live."

Scamp's safety incentive program relies on the real-time data, Campbell said, admitting that drivers sometimes look upon the new technology as Big Brother, at least initially.

They sell it to them as "Here's the prize: you don't like the GPS box, don't use it, but you're not going to be rewarded," he said, "and once they see that management actually lives and breathes and sees the vision, they buy into it. You can never get into the 'Do as I say not as I do' mentality. As soon as you do you're done."

That vision includes a focus on the upside of the new technology – of what the real-time measurement can do to enhance on-time deliveries.

"With the programs we've built we've been able to massage our delivery windows to improve all efficiencies and that's better for everybody involved, drivers included," Campbell reported, noting that "when customers are winning, they're happier and they'll give you better security. And what more can the drivers want?"

Campbell's advice to those starting out is to be passionate and believe in what you're doing. "I always believe that if you can't be the best you can then why get into it?" he said.

"You should always strive to be the best; that's what I tell my kids on a daily basis: find your passion and just strive to be the best at it. When we walk away from the table and hang up our hat, we want to be able to say that we made an impact on what we were doing."

As for that "Do as I do, not as I say" mentality of which he's so proud: "We would never do something to someone that we wouldn't want done to ourselves," Campbell said. "So why would we give someone 50% when you expect nothing less in kind, right? We're driven by it, we live by it, our customers embrace it and I think all of our employees are extremely proud to be part of it." □

'You have to realize that the investment in safety will lead to better efficiencies, it'll lead to better numbers.'

Jay Campbell, Scamp Transport

industry and any dangerous goods," Campbell said, "that our responsibility goes well beyond just our employee or the customer we're working for. It's to society in general, because the ramifications of your actions can be catastrophic for everybody involved – not just society, but even the environment."

Campbell says Scamp recognized that to be successful in its chosen field, management had to actually believe in the value of safety, and not merely pay it lip service.

"You have to realize that safety is the core value that will bring that flawless execution to the table," he said, "and once they can live and breathe it, then you can sell it to the rest the employees."

Otherwise, he said, it's impossible to sell it, because of peoples' built-in inhibition to change. "We have this normalcy bias; we just want to stay the way we are – why would we go outside the box and do all these extra things? And it's getting everyone on that culture wagon that is really the key to the success of Scamp – that the drivers buy into it because of the leadership the management has brought down."

In Scamp's case, the company made it work for the drivers through communication via, for example, mandatory monthly safety meetings.

"We run the training platforms and the heart and minds modules that show why we are doing what we're doing," Campbell said. "That there is a purpose behind it and that it's not just to be a bee in the bonnet of someone."

They also do "loss prevention observations" on the drivers, which

creating a program that exceeded them, "and we put ramifications around each of those requirements, where if you do it, you're rewarded, and if you don't, there's a demerit that comes out of it."

Selling it to the drivers included telling them that nothing really had to change if they didn't want it to.

"You'll be paid exactly the way you're paid," Campbell explained to them, "but if you can meet or exceed the expectations, get above that bar, here's the reward. Is it worth it?" The answer from all of drivers, he said, was an unequivocal "Hell, yes!"

Scamp's training includes program from their partners, including Imperial, Husky and Shell. "There's a lot they've done globally that they're able to bring to the table," Campbell said, "and they share it for the betterment of the industry. We just believe in it. We're willing to go as far as we can with it."

It appears most of the drivers are still on-board.

"The turnover we have are the ones who struggle on the safety incentive program," Campbell said, "so it's almost like a purging mechanism where we've delivered a culture and those who live and breathe it are rewarded in kind and they're happy with Scamp."

For those who can't, he said, "maybe it's better somewhere else; maybe someone has a better wheel built."

Campbell's fondest memory of his time with Scamp is the company's annual Christmas party. "It's arguably the biggest gala in Abbotsford every year," he said, noting that they not only shut down operations on Christmas Day, but also on Scamp's

TAX TALK

Deducting the use of a car, van or pick-up for business

Know the rules or pay the price

Last month I got a call from a client with questions about a vehicle he planned to lease for his business. We've been his accountant for a long time and know each other well.

When he mentioned something about a pick-up truck, I envisioned a Ford or a Chevy – he's a pretty austere guy.

But my client, an owner/operator whose hard work and smart planning over the years certainly has paid off, had something else in mind: a Cadillac Escalade EXT.

He rattled off more features than an ordinary dealer sticker



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

should have room for. The only thing missing was a big red flag to wave at the tax auditor.

One of the great myths of being self-employed is that if you lease a service vehicle you can write off 100% of the payment and related expenses as business.

Others will tell you that the type of vehicle – ie. pick-up truck vs. car – affects the amount or

percentage of expenses you can claim. Neither is true.

In fact, a tax auditor doesn't care what type of vehicle you have or how you finance it. He only wants to see that your vehicle-related expenses were incurred to earn business income and that you have documents to support your claims.

Allowable expenses

CRA is clear about the type of vehicle expenses you can deduct. These include licence and registration fees; fuel costs; insurance; interest on money borrowed to buy the vehicle; maintenance and repair cost; and your lease payment or capital cost allowance (CCA or depreciation).

To support your claim, you must keep a record of the total amount of kilometres you drive in a year (ie. your odometer readings on January 1 and December 31). Then, each time you use the vehicle for business, list the date, des-

tinuation, purpose, and the number of kilometres you drive.

Now you can determine the percentage of business use to be applied against your expenses. Divide your business-use kilometres by your total kilometres for the year, giving you anywhere from 1% to 100%.

If you can't produce a journal or log detailing the business use of the vehicle, validating that percentage figure, CRA can deny or reduce your claim.

If you use more than one vehicle for your business, keep a separate record that shows the total and business kilometres you drive in each.

Calculate and deduct the cost to run and maintain each vehicle separately based on its own business use.

Valid trips

There are all kinds of business reasons to use your vehicle, from a revenue-producing courier delivery to a trip that involves banking, a run to the parts store, or a meeting with your carrier.

What's not valid is the drive from home to your truck. This is considered commuting – a personal trip. I've argued this with CRA numerous times, using the logic that since the business office is in the home, then driving from the "office" to a work site is business travel. I don't think I'm wrong, but I haven't found an auditor yet who has bought the argument.

Financing

If your vehicle is categorized as a "passenger vehicle," your claim for your financing expense (ie. lease payments or CCA and interest costs) has limits. Lease payments can't exceed \$800 per month.

If you purchased the vehicle, the cost can't be more than \$30,000.

If the vehicle cost more, you can only add \$30,000 plus the appropriate taxes (PST, GST or HST) onto your CCA schedule. The other cost of purchasing – interest on your loan – is limited to \$10 per day. So if you own the vehicle for the entire year, \$3,650 is the maximum claim. If you own it for less, you must prorate the interest expense claim for the appropriate number of days.

Resources

CRA's guide, *T4002 Business and Professional Income*, is a great reference on motor vehicle expenses (look for it online at www.cra-arc.gc.ca). Note how many times it mentions supporting claims with a detailed record.

My client knows it. When he picked up his sweet new ride, one of the first things he did was record the date, mileage, and reason for the trip in a fresh notebook and tuck it into the driver's side door pocket. □

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

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	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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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:

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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
jj) <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale
k) <input type="checkbox"/> Logging / Lumber
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TODAY!

CANADA

So, you want a rate increase?

Shippers say carriers had better back requests for rate increases with sound data and exhaust all other alternatives before asking

By James Menzies
TORONTO, Ont. – As the economy improves and capacity tightens, conversations between carriers and shippers will inevitably shift to rate increases. But sophisticated shippers are not likely to agree to increases before they've exhausted every opportunity to remove costs from the supply chain. That was the message from manufacturers and retailers at the recent Transportation Workshop hosted by *Motortruck Fleet Executive* and Dan Goodwill & Associates.

"In the past couple of years, my carriers have come to the table about rate increases and in most cases what I've asked them to do is to look equally at what my organization can do, what my store network can do and to look inside their own operation and find what I'm doing that's causing some work increases," said Heather Felbel, vice-president, supply chain, with Indigo Books & Music. "Come forward with ideas on how we can improve processes versus coming forward with price increases, because we're willing to uncover any rock. We really want to challenge our own folks on their practices and our stores on their practices and I'm willing to do anything to take the cost out."

Felbel said shippers and carriers alike must rethink their approach to transportation and unearth efficiencies that will keep costs in check, rather than simply hiking rates. And for the most part, Felbel said, carriers are responding. She cited the example of Canada Post, which has traditionally been a high-priced carrier and has recently begun sending engineers to Indigo's facilities to better understand the company's ever-changing transportation-related challenges.

"They have come to the table and brought engineers in to look at my organization, look at how they're handling things and they're challenging themselves," she said. "They're coming back to the table with a different face because they realize they have to think differently about how they approach the business. The fact of the matter is, you can't afford to be coming to the table without thinking through every component of your business and neither can I."

While rate increases may seem well-deserved following two years of intense pricing pressure, it seems carriers may be forced to work hard to justify those increases.

"I ask my carriers to come to the table in a very educated way," Felbel said. "I had one carrier recently that said 'Here's the price increase,' and I went 'No, thank you, unless you can tell me what this is for and justify it, right back atcha.' We need to know what is this price increase for? What do you need it to accommodate? Let's get to the nut of it. We ended up at a differ-

ent place than what they came in at and that shouldn't be a negotiation because quite frankly, it looks like they were fishing."

Brian Springer, vice-president of transportation at Loblaw Companies, agreed that carriers will not be awarded rate increases unless

is doing that are driving up transportation costs.

"There is no way I can know everything that is happening across the country with all my stores and all my distribution centres," she said. "That's where you rely on your carriers to have frank con-

'One of the frustrating things as a shipper, is the conversation with a carrier around wanting an increase without us understanding what's driving the increase.'

Brian Springer, Loblaw Companies

they can clearly show why they're needed.

"One of the frustrating things as a shipper, is the conversation with a carrier around wanting an increase without us understanding what's driving the increase. Quite often those arguments are presented without facts and without data," Springer said.

"We really have to let our guards down on both sides and engage in some meaningful conversations in understanding carrier costs, depreciation and labour, showing what their overheads are. We want you to make a margin, because any carrier that isn't making any margin doesn't do us any good – it's a short-term scenario."

Springer said he relies on his carriers to identify inefficiencies and to offer solutions rather than rate adjustments.

"The approach of 'I just need' really doesn't go very far, unless as a shipper I understand what it is you need and what I am doing as a shipper that's driving that cost up over the baseline that made you profitable previously," he said.

That message was echoed by manufacturing shippers.

Mike Owens, vice-president of physical logistics with Nestle Canada, said manufacturers are facing the same cost pressures that carriers are.

"Every input into our product is going out of sight," he said. "I can't go to the consumer and say we have a sugar index so we're going to charge you more for a Kit Kat this week, so we really have a lot of pressure brought to bear on our margins. But saying that, we want to make sure we're whole. So come to the table with facts and let's have an open discussion about what we are doing that's raising costs for you."

While shippers may seem resistant to rate increases, the good news is, they seem more willing to take a collaborative approach to working with carriers to remove inefficiencies.

Ginnie Vensolvaitis, director of transportation operations with Hudson's Bay Company, said she's all ears when it comes to hearing about "stupid" things her company

up to them to justify the increases. "Rates are going to be increasing, that's something that's going to take place. It's a necessity in our industry. We've had wage freezes in place for a number of years now," said Michelle Arseneau, managing partner, GX Transportation.

"But we need to justify it. We need to sit down with our customers and have open and honest conversations. I'm not opposed to sharing our costing models with our customers, saying 'This is exactly what it is costing, this is what we're paying our people, this is what our equipment costs and this is our profit margin. At the end of the day, we want to stay profitable and you want us to stay profitable.' It really comes down to having those frank conversations."

And Mike McCarron, managing partner with MSM Transportation, agreed that carriers that try to impose blanket rate increases on their customers aren't doing themselves – or the industry – any favours.

"I believe as an industry, we have created most of our own problems," McCarron said. "These blanket 'Our rates are going up 5%' are laughable. I wouldn't accept that as a traffic manager. One of the founding principles of any good relationship is open trust. If our industry wants to get its act together, we need to get away from 35% fuel surcharges based on \$1.20 a gallon and blanket rate increases that in many cases go out as form letters." □

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

TM-97 July © 2011 M. Jackson

Answers on page 26

Across

1. BC licence-plate word
6. Latest light type, briefly (1,1,1)
8. Bunk-equipped cab
9. Engine-control computer, slangily
10. Mobile-home transport power unit
11. Select a higher gear
12. The P in PSI
14. Dashboard info sources
18. Slang term for auxiliary transmission
20. The mighty St. Lawrence, for example
22. O/O component
23. ON-based carrier, ____ Terminals
24. Time on the road, briefly (1,1,1)
25. Stud pullers, in a way (5,4)

Down

1. City-transit pickup point (3,4)
2. Truck-insurance info source
3. Wheel-hub roller-bearing type
4. Ontario truck-show town
5. Oils and greases, briefly
6. Truck-purchasing alternative
7. Tim Hortons offering
13. Driveshaft sections, briefly (1,6)
15. Service-station fixture, frequently (3,4)
16. Suspension-system components
17. Dash control much used in winter
18. Toll-taker's workplace
19. Up, on a road map
21. Kenworth Aerodyne's ____ windows

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OVER THE ROAD

Intention, commitment and knowledge

The three keys to achieving a healthier lifestyle

Last month in this space, I said there were three things I did that led me to a healthier lifestyle on the road. They are: intention, commitment, and knowledge.

But it's not as if I woke up one morning with a brilliant idea that was going to change my life. My lifestyle change came about slowly over the course of a decade. My intention for a healthier more productive life is my spark, my commitment to that intention is the fuel that pushes me down the road to healthier living, and the knowledge I gain through my successes and failures as I travel down that road is the grease that keeps me moving along.

Adopting the intent to change our lifestyle is usually the result of an emotional event that has taken place in our lives – what many of us refer to as an epiphany or a paradigm shift.

For me this was the simple recognition that I was no longer bulletproof. A two-pack-a-day smoking habit, creeping obesity, a sedentary lifestyle, a family history of heart disease, and then a diagnosis of high blood pressure were the combination of factors that tore off the cloak of invincibility in which I had wrapped myself. I woke up to the fact that



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

I felt like crap and wanted to do something about it.

Well, that wake-up call came to me back in the year 2000. At that time my only goal was to stop smoking. I knew that if I tried to change everything in my life at one time that I would be doomed to failure.

After a year of remaining tobacco-free, I tackled the obesity issue. Over the course of the first year, I had managed to replace cigarettes with additional food in my mouth, which consequently went straight to my waistline.

At this point I made another commitment to myself. I intended to be in good physical shape by the fall of 2010, my 50th birthday, still nine years into the future. I figured that it took me 20-plus years to pack all the weight on so a little less than half that time to get it all off was still pretty optimistic. I was right. I knew at that time that I would have to eat a little less, make healthier food choices, and get some reg-

ular exercise, but I had no clue what an emotional roller-coaster ride the next nine years would be.

Only drivers understand how truly difficult it is to obtain the levels of exercise and rest prescribed by health professionals. Making healthy food choices is just as difficult for us.

Working the open board for most of the past decade, I, like many of you reading this, spent three to five weeks at a time living in the truck.

A 70-hour work week is a rarity to the great majority of people. As long-haul drivers this is routine for us. Then at the end of your day you go to sleep in your workplace.

Add to that the fact that your workday often lacks routine and your work shifts may shift around the clock at the whim of the people you provide service to.

Finally, cap that off with the fact that running water, showers, and toilets are communal and the concept of a kitchen is non-existent to a truck driver. We adapt to these difficult circumstances because of the passion we share for the trucking lifestyle.

The open road gets into your blood. I am loathe to give up the freedom and independence I find

in my work. Many of us pay for that passion for trucking, that freedom, that independence, with our good health. I think you have to live the life to truly understand why we do it. I can't explain it any better than that.

So the bottom line is that living a healthy lifestyle on the road is difficult; plain and simple. But if you want it badly enough, if it truly is important to you, it can be done. You start by being stubborn and pig-headed about meeting your intention. You recognize it will take time to reverse a lifetime of habits you have grown accustomed to. You recognize that you must practice patience. You recognize that your failures are only lessons in how not to reach your greatest aspirations.

Getting started on a healthier path to living is as simple as reading the food label of every product/food that you consume. At the start you don't need to change what you eat, but you need to learn what you're eating and its impact on you. Do that and go for a 20-minute walk every day. That's where I got started and I've dropped over 70 pounds along the way. More next month. Good luck. □

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

OPINION

Cooking in the cab is a healthier option

I'm a firm believer in practicing what I preach. However, I'm in danger of being a hypocrite when it comes to truck stops.

As I said in a previous column, I think we should all spend a little more time in them, do some visiting with our fellow truckers, share some of our knowledge and experiences – that kind of thing. My thoughts on that haven't changed, but my reasons for visiting a truck stop have. I now only stop for fuel or to use the facilities.

In most cases, being in my mid-forties would make me a middle-aged man, but in the trucking world we can expect to live, if statistics are to be believed, up to 15 years less than Joe Public. So while I'm not on the first page of The Grim Reaper's appointment schedule, I'm closer to the front than I would like to be and the main reason for this is my diet. So far I've been one of the lucky ones; I'm not overweight (by much), but as I said, that's down to luck, not judgment.

For far too long I've been eating the wrong stuff at the wrong time. Although I enjoy good food, often the job dictates that convenience takes priority over quality and this is where the truck stops come in.

They research their customer profile and for the most part they did a good job, we want a big plate of something yummy and we want it now, so that's what we get. Unfortunately, fine dining takes a little time



You say tomato, I say tomahto

MARK LEE

to prepare, so we get stuff from a can or a box. It does the job though and we walk away with a full belly for a reasonable price, the truck stop makes a bit of profit, everyone's a winner – or not.

As well as a decrease in life expectancy, we can also look forward to a higher than normal chance of being diagnosed with diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The thing that has the most impact on any of these is our diet, but it's a two-way street. If we can shorten our lives and increase the risks of disease, then surely we can do the opposite by eating a little better?

The researchers say that we can, but saying it is one thing, it's the doing it that's not easy. We've made sure of that with our appetite for quick and easy foods that don't hurt the wallet.

Most truck stops do offer a healthier option on their menus, but I've been looking into things and healthier and healthy are two completely different things. If your starting point is full of bad things then you don't have to reduce them by much to make it healthier.

The biggest problem we face is that a lot of the stuff we eat is not fresh;

preservatives in our food are among the worst things we can put into our bodies.

So how do we keep an eye on things? Our food arrives on a plate – not in a packet with a label – so we have no idea what goes into the meal. It may taste good, but for all we know it could be a dietician's worst nightmare.

There's only one answer: cook it yourself. Not only can you control what goes into your meal, you can expand your menu considerably compared to the same old stuff on offer in the truck stops.

There are a number of Web sites on the subject and people have even written cookbooks for in-cab cooking. You can get 12-volt slow cookers, grills and mini ovens – the possibilities are endless and you know exactly what's on your plate.

Or if you get home regularly, you can knock up some culinary delights in your own kitchen, stick them in your fridge/cooler and microwave them when you're on the road – it's a lot easier to do than you think. You just have to start, that is the hard part. Once you've started you'll notice another benefit from healthy eating, it's much less expensive than eating out, especially if you make stuff at home to take with you. You only need to add a little extra when you make a family meal to have enough left to take with you. Sometimes you don't need to make any more at all, you just give less to the dog.

Now as I said in an earlier column, we need to spend a bit more time talking to each other. My newfound healthy eating plan makes that even harder to do, but I do have a plan for that too.

As well as healthier eating, we need to get more exercise. Cooking in the cab means we don't even walk to the truck stop anymore. Walking around a truck stop is not a particularly safe thing to do, as losing weight and getting fit won't make you live any longer if you get 18 wheels running over you.

It's not so good with our weather either – a foot of snow or a swarm of Mozzies – it doesn't matter what time of year it is, there's always something that will get in the way. So my plan needed to be a year-round thing.

So I've started walking around in a grocery store, up and down every aisle a few times – it's amazing the distance you cover in 30 minutes. It's also heated in winter and air-conditioned in the summer.

To make it a little more beneficial, I also load up a shopping cart with jugs of water or car batteries and push that around. So if you see a slightly overweight middle-aged man pushing a cart full of batteries around your local grocery store, come over and say hi, we can talk trucking as we walk around! □

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

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SAFETY

Sleep apnea screening

Allowing everyone to rest easier

The threat of sleep apnea might seem like a safety manager's worst nightmare.

A widely-cited Stanford University study discovered that drivers with the sleep-depriving medical condition are seven times more likely to be involved in a crash than their well-rested counterparts. A 2009 report in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* linked 7% of 5,200 truck-related injuries to drivers who fell asleep at the wheel. And to compound matters, the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration believes that one in four commercial drivers would fail a pre-screening test for sleep apnea.

While US regulators have yet to decide if they should mandate this



Ask the Expert

EVELYN CARTMILL

type of screening – a key meeting on that topic is expected in late August – some fleets are already enhancing today's fatigue management programs by actively looking for drivers who might have the medical condition.

About 85% of sleep apnea cases involve something known as Obstructive Sleep Apnea, which is caused when relaxed soft tissue blocks the upper airway. The remaining cases involve the brain's respiratory centre, or a combina-

tion of the two sources. Sleeping drivers who have these conditions actually stop breathing for 10 to 120 seconds at a time, wake up gasping for air, and then fall back into a fitful slumber.

Of course, the real issue emerges during their waking hours. Deprived of sleep, the drivers reportedly feel irritable, depressed and plagued by headaches. They are tired all the time and struggle to remember things.

These are all factors that can affect how well someone performs on the job. At worst they emerge as the telltale signs of a fatigue-related collision, such as a truck that gradually drifts out of a lane when the roads are clear and traffic is light.

It doesn't have to be that way.

Many people are able to combat sleep apnea by wearing a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine whenever they head for a bunk. The equipment pumps a steady supply of a room's air into a fitted mask, maintaining

the opening in a sleeping user's upper airway. The result is a restful period of sleep.

There certainly seems to be a business case for fleets to address the topic.

In one study, Schneider National reduced preventable crashes by 30% after identifying and helping 339 of its drivers who had obstructive sleep apnea.

The potential budget impacts are not limited to reduced collision costs, either. A lack of restful sleep can affect overall productivity, and is also known to lead to higher medical costs linked to workplace injuries or contributing medical conditions which might otherwise go unchecked.

Indeed, those who have sleep apnea often struggle with other issues such as heart disease, eating disorders, Parkinson's disease, leukemia, acute and chronic pain or substance abuse.

Any final diagnosis would obviously be in the hands of a sleep clinic, but a simple pre-screening program can help to identify those who might need the medical support.

Some of the screening simply involves a look at a driver's neck size. For example, sleep apnea is more common among men with a neck size above 17 inches or women with a neck size above 15.5 inches.

A popular test known as the Berlin Questionnaire can also help drivers to tell if they face a higher risk. In addition to measuring weight and age, the checklist looks for those who snore, how loud that snoring can be (is it heard in other rooms?), how often it happens, and whether it bothers other people.

It also asks if anyone has noticed that they stop breathing during sleep, how often they feel tired, and whether they ever fell asleep at the wheel.

The score that emerges can identify whether someone might want to seek a related medical opinion.

Of course, a proper fatigue management program reaches well beyond these pre-screening efforts. Fleets can help to keep every driver alert through training programs and dispatching efforts alike.

Those who know about a change to their work schedule 24 hours ahead of time will always have a better chance to get the sleep they need. And drivers who are informed about departure times as well as delivery deadlines are also less likely to jump behind the wheel for an overnight drive after a full day of family activities.

When all the available steps are combined, everyone will have the chance to sleep a little better. □

– This month's expert is Evelyn Cartmill, STS senior advisor, CHRP, CRM. Evelyn has served the trucking industry for over 15 years in the areas of human resources, safety and compliance. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Markel is the country's largest trucking insurer providing more than 50 years of continuous service to the transportation industry.

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OPINION

Sweat the small stuff

It doesn't take long these days for any conversation with a truck driver to come around to the price of fuel. It was no different with an owner/operator I had the pleasure of meeting at the Shell SuperRigs competition in Kenly, N.C. last month, but with an interesting twist. This guy is zealous about fuel economy, and I think he has every right to be – his numbers are consistently in the high eights to low nines, and that's in American gallons.

Before all you naysayers get started, let me tell you he runs 20,000- to 30,000-lb loads, and his figures come from the engine ECM. Granted, he runs light, and the ECM numbers could be off by a small percentage, but his gallons used and miles run numbers, taken from fuel receipts and trip sheets, tally closely with the computer output.

Henry Albert of Mooresville,



Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

N.C., a 26-year veteran owner/operator who is part of the Freightliner Slice of Life program, was at SuperRigs all weekend explaining to anyone who'd listen how he gets such outstanding fuel economy.

It's not rocket science, nor does he have thousands of dollars worth of high-tech mechanical wizardry working for him.

He has a sensibly spec'd truck, he drives it properly, and he's always looking for ways to cut his fuel bill. In other words, he definitely sweats the small stuff.

And it pays off. Over a one-week period in April, his ECM produced

fuel economy reports showing from 8.98 to 10.42 mpg. His average road speed ranged from 56.7 to 59.5 mph. But that's just average.

Typically, Henry tries to run 64 mph to optimize the engine speed at between 1,375 and 1,400 rpm – a critical factor in preserving fuel economy.

What's Henry's secret weapon? There isn't one. No big silver-bullet solution, no experimental technology, no magnets, no precious metals, no exotic gases; in fact, no engineered modifications or enhancements at all have been made to the engine or the truck. It's a stock 2010 Freightliner Cascadia with a 72-inch raised roof sleeper powered by an off-the-shelf DD15 engine rated at 455 horsepower and 1,550/1,750 lb.-ft. of torque.

His trailer is a stock Utility dry van with less than \$3,000 tied up in gear designed to improve aerodynamics.

But he does have a few small tricks up his sleeve.

Henry runs Michelin wide-single tires on drive and trailer axles, but

it's the mudflaps that caught my eye. He's modified them to accommodate the tires; a standard mudflap is wider than the wide-single tire, so it presents a barrier to airflow around the wheel.

He has also cut two-inch diagonal chunks from the bottom corners of each flow-through mudflap, and he uses hangers designed for tight clearance with the trailer landing gear, tapered at a 45-degree angle on the top, and lower than a standard hanger.

On the trailer, he uses a NoseCone and SideBurn package to improve aerodynamics across the trailer front, and for better airflow around the sides, and he runs a Fleet Engineers trailer side skirt kit. You'll also find stainless steel wheel covers on all the trailer and drive wheels. To optimize rolling resistance, he uses an automatic tire inflation system to maintain a steady 100 psi in the trailer tires.

In terms of the small and innovative stuff, one of my favourites is the trailer licence plate, which he has moved from its stock position under the left-rear taillight and attached to the lower portion of the trailer body – out of the air stream.

Small stuff? "Just stick your hand out the window at 60 mph and you can feel the effect even a small exposed surface has on air flow," Henry says. If that licence plate is costing, say, half a gallon of fuel a day, it could add up to 150 gallons a year, and with fuel at \$3.50 a gallon, well, do the math. It may not seem like much in the grand scheme of things, but imagine how drivers would flip if the cost of the licence went up by that much.

I like Henry's attitude: his quest for ways to improve on his already remarkable efficiency is ongoing. "Anything that kills bugs also kills fuel economy," says Henry, which is why he tries to reduce the frontal profile of the truck any way he can, and keeps any of the peripheral equipment as directionally correct as possible.

Not surprisingly, you won't see a bug deflector or sun visor on Henry Albert's truck.

And by the way, what Henry *doesn't* sweat too much is the price of fuel. He's currently billing a fuel surcharge of 53 cents a mile, and his fuel costs are averaging around 47 cents, so he's actually making a six cent per mile profit on his fuel surcharge.

For any number of perfectly legitimate reasons, high eights and low nines may be physically impossible to achieve with Quads, Super-Bs and the like, but anyone running in the US can probably improve fuel economy significantly through better driving habits and diligent spec'ing.

Henry is living proof of what's possible, but don't take my word for it. Try it yourself.

And to see how Canadian owner/operators are doing in terms of fuel economy, check out the Fuel Economy Benchmarking study we just posted on OBAC's Web site: look in the Toolbox section under Green Trucking. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Has the price of fuel got you sweating? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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INDUSTRY

A fundamental market reality: All key operating costs are on the rise

Market fundamentals dictate supply and demand, which ultimately is reflected in prices. Price x Volume (revenue) – Cost = Profit, or if costs exceed revenue, Loss. That's economics and business 101.

Coming out of the worst recession in the post-war period, it is only natural that there has been a lot of focus on such fundamentals as volume (is it coming back and how quickly?), which reflects demand and the available capacity (the supply of trucking service).

Carriers and shippers are increasingly concerned about whether there will be sufficient capacity to maintain service to all customers now and in the future, even with modest economic growth.

But in all the concern over where the economy is heading, the fundamental reality that every key component of operating cost in the trucking industry – everything from labour to fuel, to equipment, parts and maintenance – has been increasing has, in my view, been given short-shrift. Another market fundamental are costs.

The number one operating cost for trucking companies – accounting for 40-75% of total costs – depending on the type of carrier, are labour costs. It is difficult to determine average wage increases for drivers in Canada, as it is dependent on a number of factors – region, type of operation, experience, etc.

A number of carriers report average wage increases of around 2%. Other information points to even higher increases where carriers who had to make significant wage cuts may be trying to get driver wages back to where they were prior to the recession.

However, everyone agrees that with the demand for drivers rising and with supply shrinking, the upward pressure on labour costs – wages, benefits and recruiting – is expected to continue to intensify.

The cost of group health and medical insurance is increasing virtually across the board and many provincial workers' compensation boards are raising premiums. In addition, the increased availability and accuracy of driver profiles with the introduction of programs like CSA, could also lead to an increased stratification of wages in the form of premiums for quality drivers. Along with rising labour costs for drivers, the industry is also experiencing increased costs for licensed mechanics due to the chronic shortage of skilled labour.

The second largest component of cost for motor carriers is the cost of fuel. Recent increases in the price of diesel fuel at both the retail and the wholesale level (as measured by rack prices) have been well documented, up 30-40% on a year-over-year basis.

Moreover, fuel is the number one cost for independent contractors, increasing the proportion of revenue that needs to be paid out to them. A number of North American jurisdictions have raised diesel fuel taxes over the past year and more are expected to follow. With a federal biodiesel mandate scheduled to kick in on July 1, increases in fuel costs are, based on US experience,



Industry Issues

DAVID BRADLEY

expected to be exacerbated.

The price of the primary feedstock for biodiesel in Canada (canola) is at record levels. Moreover, insufficient biodiesel production capacity exists in Canada, so about 85% of this country's biodiesel demand will be met through imports.

And, biodiesel cannot be shipped by pipeline which should also add to cost pressure.

The costs of equipment and parts are also on the rise. The purchase price of the new smog-free generation of heavy truck engines has contributed to a 10-15% increase in the purchase price of a new tractor. In addition, the new tractors re-

quire additional maintenance. Some OEMs are changing their warranties. The price of trailers is being pushed up by the increased cost of steel, aluminum and lumber. Carriers report increases in the purchase price of trailers up by more than 15% compared to a year ago.

The cost of tires is also up significantly on a year-over-year basis by over 20% in many cases (and over 7% in the last month alone) reflecting a worldwide shortage of natural rubber and increased oil costs. Installation of environmental packages (ie., aerodynamic fairings, auxiliary power units, trailer skirts, etc.) on new equipment or as retrofits on existing equipment – in order to improve fuel efficiency or in preparation for the new North American fuel economy/GHG regulations – is also adding to equipment costs.

Used equipment has been subject to increased valuation, with carriers

reporting prices for used tractors up by more than 15% in some cases. Used prices are expected to continue to rise, reflecting tight availability of low-mileage and late model units.

With an aging fleet reflecting deferred vehicle replacement, and increased maintenance intervals in part reflecting increased regulatory oversight of the mechanical fitness of vehicles under programs like CSA, as well as the labour costs of mechanics referred to above, maintenance costs have increased by as much as 15% on a year-over-year basis.

Regardless of what happens with volume and capacity, the market is going to have to deal with the fundamental reality that these costs have to be paid for. □

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

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SUPERRIGS

Super Rigs



It's not the money or the trophies (though both are nice) that draw truckers from across North America. It's the calendar.

By James Menzies



KENLY, N.C. – Shell SuperRigs is a truck show unlike any other, and not only because the cash prizes are more generous and the trophies larger and shinier than at most other show-and-shines.

It's different because the aforementioned prizes are not the main allure that attracts truckers from all over the US and Canada. Ask any of the truckers at the show and they'll tell you the same thing: they're there for a shot at the calendar.

The prolific Shell SuperRigs

the truck. "How many hours do I have left to go? I can tell you that; probably at least another 20 hours to go because that's the judging deadline," he said with a grin.

The same scene was playing out all across the Kenly 95 Petro parking lot, as truckers from all over spent hours working on their rigs in anticipation of earning a spot in the SuperRigs calendar.

When asked how much it would mean to make the calendar, Larry Ell said "It would be pretty important. That's what we're here for." Ell was working on Born to Lead, a stunning 1982 Pete 359 taking part in only its second truck show. Most of the time, Born to Lead is hauling wheat around Anthony, Kansas. But this truck also has a Canadian connection; much of the stainless work was done by 12 Gauge Customs out of Guelph, Ont., Ell noted.

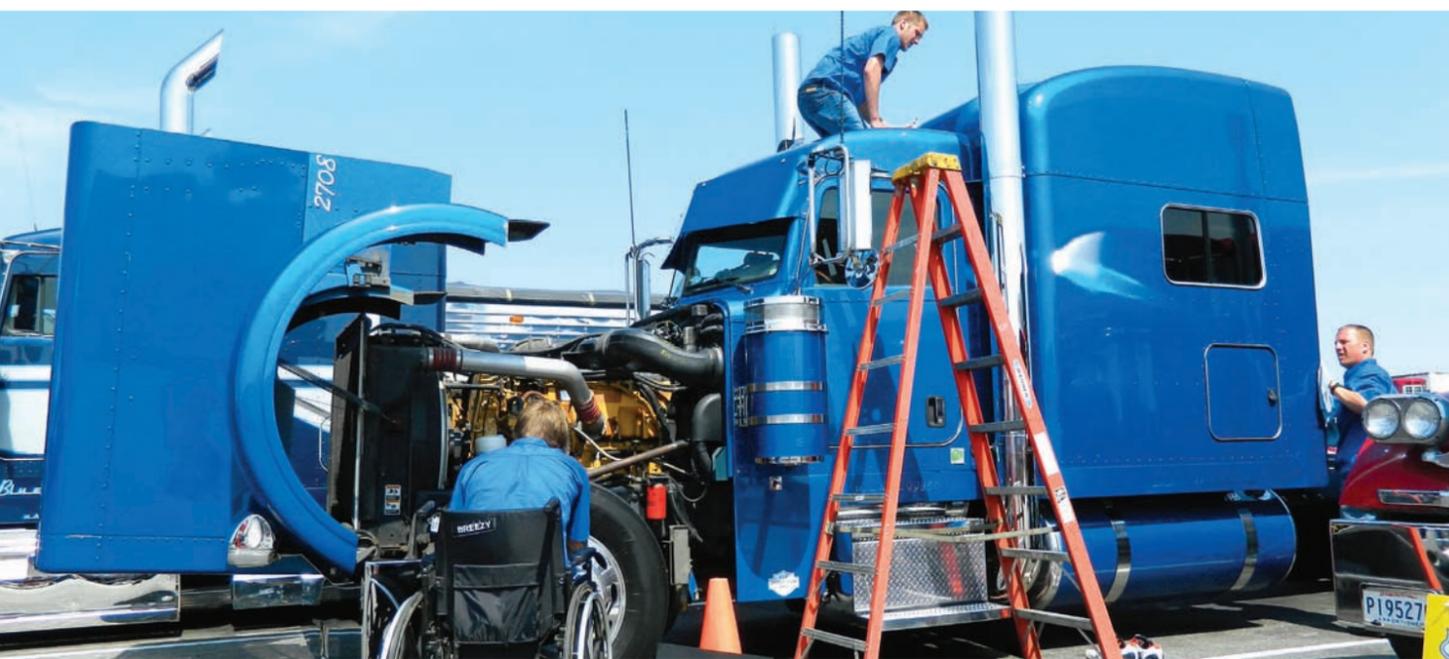
Like any truck show, the SuperRigs event is in many cases a family affair. Tyler Gwillim was most certainly the youngest entrant at the show. The 16-year-old was showcasing The Green Hornet, a bright green 1986 Peterbilt he helped customized with his father Mickey.

"I was young when we built it," he told me. "I was like seven or eight, so I didn't get to do too much myself, but if I could do anything, I tried. I really love this truck. I don't think you can get any better than it."

Tyler guesses he's been to 30 or 40 truck shows, and he can often be found bouncing from truck to truck and offering the other contestants a hand with polishing.

"He's little, so he can fit into spots nobody else can so they all want him there to help," Mickey joked. However, owning one of the trucks in the competition has instilled in Tyler a new appreciation for all the work that goes into preparing a rig for judging.

"I usually used to help other people but then I started clean-



calendar consists of a dozen rigs, handpicked from among the SuperRigs show'n'shine entrants and photographed at scenic nearby locations.

"The main goal is the calendar, and then do the best you can in the actual judging," said Nathan Tompkins as he took a break from polishing a Pete 379 belonging to Winnipeg, Man.-based Jade Transport. Tompkins had been prepping Truck #199 for weeks and as he applied another coat of polish under the scorching North Carolina sun, he strained to calculate how many hours he'd put into cleaning



FAMILY AFFAIR: Dad Mickey Gwillim and son Tyler entered Tyler's truck The Green Hornet and enjoyed spending the weekend together.

ing (The Green Hornet) and I said 'Man, I feel really bad. I left him (Mickey) doing it himself all these years,' Tyler said.

Now in its 29th year, the Shell SuperRigs competition is one of the highlights on the truck show calendar for any serious truck enthusiast. David Waterman, North American marketing manager for Shell, said the show is held at a different truck stop each year to ensure it's always accessible to a fresh crop of trucks.

"That's what makes it fun, seeing new contestants," Waterman said. "I think by moving it around as we do, we have the opportunity for drivers that don't necessarily have Oak Grove, MO (where the 2009 SuperRigs show was held) in their route, they can come to Kenly because it's more in the region that they run. It's gratifying to see we get some new talent and there's some old ones too that may do some changes to the truck; it could be a paint job, it could be new chrome that they put on. It stays fresh."

Shell also is taking steps to involve the local communities in the

event, by putting on a big rig parade for local residents and inviting them to a fireworks display.

"What we've done in recent years is try to make it more of a community event, because these drivers are on the road more than they're at home," Waterman said. "We try to make it more of a home feel, where we invite the local community out and give it more of a carnival atmosphere."

As for the calendar, only one truck show category winner is guaranteed a spot. The Best of Show winner is always included, but all other trucks are hand picked by the photographer and creative director, who have visited in advance to find 12 perfect spots for photo shoots. During the show, they are on the lookout for the trucks that would best suit each of the landmarks they had earlier identified.

"When the trucks start showing up, we're travelling the parking lot, looking for trucks that have some unique image to them and would be ideally suited to place in this particular backdrop," Waterman explained. □

Pete 379 wins top honours at Shell SuperRigs competition

KENLY, N.C. – A blue and silver 2003 Peterbilt 379 owned by Jeremy Heiderschait of Peosta, Iowa will be one of the trucks to grace the pages of the Shell Rotella SuperRigs calendar in 2012.

Heiderschait's Pete won Best of Show honours at the 29th annual truck show hosted by Shell at the Kenly 95 Petro in Kenly, N.C. in early June. He took home a \$10,000 cheque as well as a coveted place in the popular SuperRigs calendar. The Model 379 also took top honours for Best Chrome.

First runner-up honours for Best of Show went to Cory Radke and Vinnie Diorio of Ridgefield, Wisconsin. Their 2007 Pete 279 earned them \$4,000. Jerry Kissinger of Stoughton, Wisconsin took home \$2,500 for earning second runner-up honours in the Best of Show category with his 1991 Mack Superliner, which also won Best Engine. That truck also won Best Interior.



A 2005 Kenworth owned by TJ Timblin won first place in the Tractor Division, while Sean Cielke of Haugan, Montana won the Tractor-Trailer division with his 2006 Kenworth W900B.

Local Brandon Smith of Raleigh, N.C. won the Classic Division with his 1996 Pete 379 while the People's Choice Award went to Eric Heatherman of Kansas and his 2011 Pete 389. Best Lights went to JR Schleager's 2003 Kenworth W9L while Best Theme went to Big D Koslicki's 2001 Freightliner Classic.

In total, \$25,000 in cash and prizes was awarded at the show, in addition to pages in the SuperRigs calendar. □



BEST OF SHOW: Jeremy Heiderschait collects his winnings as Best of Show winner at this year's Shell SuperRigs competition.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

From the passenger seat to the head of the class

Simon Fraser University student studies gender-related issues in the trucking industry

By James Menzies
VANCOUVER, B.C. – Amie McLean is all too familiar with the challenges encountered by female drivers in the Canadian trucking industry. Some of her earliest childhood memories involve bouncing around in the passenger seat of a big rig, handing her mom wax paper-wrapped sandwiches and thermos lids filled with coffee as she steered her big rig down city streets and over Lower Mainland highways.

“My mom worked for a long time in the trucking industry and moved into long-haul as we got older, which makes sense for a single mom,” McLean recalled in an interview with *Truck West*. “Over the years she faced a lot of issues in trying to navigate the industry. She received a lot of support from male drivers out there and a lot of problems as well.”

Today, McLean is a Ph.D candidate at Simon Fraser University, conducting a comprehensive research project on the sociology of the B.C. trucking industry with plans to write a dissertation on the subject in the fall. Trucking, McLean admits, isn't a subject that garners a lot of attention among academics but it's a cause that's close to her heart, especially gender-related issues affecting professional drivers.

“You would probably laugh if you saw the number of books in the uni-

versity library on trucking – especially ones that aren't just about policy and actually focus on the people and the work,” McLean writes on her Web site: www.bctrucking.posterous.com. “It's no big surprise that academics haven't really been interested in trucking, since not a lot of academics are or were working class. That's changing a bit now, and as a trucker's daughter I want to give back to the community that has given me so much – including great friends, a strong work ethic, and better chances in life. The best way I can see to do that is to learn and teach about what's really going on in the industry.”

McLean's research involves interviewing B.C. truckers and spending some time with them on the job and in the cab. She wants to gain a better understanding of the issues the province's drivers are facing on the front lines. So far, she says the response has been good.

“So far they have been quite open,” she says. “It helps a lot that I – to some degree – know my way around a truck and some of the issues that are out there. I think there's a real eagerness for some of these issues to be addressed.”

As she has immersed herself in the project, McLean has learned gender issues in the trucking industry can be as daunting for men as for women. For instance, she feels

the macho image of the traditional trucker puts pressure on many males to push themselves too hard.

“I think what we don't think about as much is the ways that it being a ‘real man's’ job can push drivers to feel like they have no choice but to drive longer, work harder and not take rests when they're tired,” she contends.

She also says many male drivers struggle in coping with issues such as post-traumatic stress, which may affect them after they witness an accident.

“It seems anybody who has been out there for any length of time has a horrendous story,” she says. “The amount of times truckers are first on the scene at accidents and the sorts of traumas and trials they deal with.”

Very little research has been done into the sociological aspect of the trucking industry, and McLean's goal is to provide some meaningful research that will be of value to policymakers and drivers.

“I'm hoping this will have real practical results in terms of addressing real issues truckers on the ground are facing,” she says. “Hopefully it can foster greater quality and openness in the industry and better working conditions for all truckers.”

Some of the changes she'd like to see?

“I think there's a need for drivers

to get paid for all the hours they work,” McLean says. “Right now, I'm hearing a lot from drivers for whom that's just not happening.”

She has also identified a need for improved training.

“The idea that trucking is not skilled labour just doesn't reflect reality,” she notes. “There is a lot of skill involved and a huge amount of responsibility when truckers are taking big rigs through downtown Toronto loaded with fuel.”

McLean would also like to see a greater work-life balance restored to the profession.

“I don't think a conventional work-life balance is possible, but I think the industry can do a lot better than it is right now,” she says. “There's a lot of pressure and it's a lot harder for truckers to have a family and maintain those ties. Look at the stats of what truckers go through in terms of family life and health; achieving that work-life balance will go a long way towards improving driver health and probably productivity as well, because as work-life balance becomes better productivity increases.”

If you're a B.C. trucker wanting to provide some insight into the realities of the profession, McLean would like to hear from you. You can e-mail her at amie_mclean@sfu.ca or visit her Web site at www.bctrucking.posterous.com. □

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 Local Lease Purchase Driver Trainer Moving Other _____

Owner Operator? Manufacturer _____ Year/Model _____ Engine/Size _____

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

Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply)
 Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van
 Tanker Straight Truck Super B Reefer
 Van Other _____

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

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

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

Last Employer _____

Name _____ Company City _____ Prov/State _____

Tel _____ Start/End Date _____

Job Description _____ Reason for Leaving _____

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

Name of School _____ Name of Course Completed _____

City _____ Prov/State _____ Start/End Date _____

Can you lift 50lbs? Yes No

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CANADA

The new normal

More consolidation. Better cooperation. Modal shifts. These are just a few of the things on the minds of carrier and shipper executives as they look ahead to the future.

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – As shippers and carriers came together for this year's Transportation Workshop organized by *Motortruck Fleet Executive* and Dan Goodwill & Associates, the mood was noticeably improved compared to previous years.

Mike McCarron, managing partner of MSM Transportation may have summed up why in one simple sentence: "It's a lot more fun having 10 extra loads a day than 10 extra trucks a day."

Still, as the economy emerges from recession and the trucking industry's survivors collectively lick their wounds, it's quickly becoming clear the lessons learned from the past few years will leave a profound and lasting impression on the truck transportation landscape. Some changes will be for the better while others may present new challenges and may even reshape the industry.

"I like to think we'll emerge stronger and more unified as an industry," said Michelle Arseneau, managing partner with GX Transportation. And MSM's McCarron heralded a new era defined by "a newfound level of cooperation" between shippers and carriers.

But while optimism permeated the day's discussions and the mood was nearly celebratory, the hard reality was that nothing in trucking comes easy or stays static and new challenges are already presenting themselves.

Shipper-carrier relations

One thing shippers and carriers at the workshop agreed on, was the need to work more closely together.

"We were very good a holding our cards close to our chest," Brian Springer, vice-president of transportation with Loblaw Companies admitted about the past. "We didn't share a lot of information and we expected to be able to pick up the phone when we needed service and get it on demand. I think over time, you realize that's not a strategic, long-term way to operate and we have become more collaborative in sharing information with the carrier community."

Ginnie Vensolvaitis, director, transportation operations with Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), says the shift towards greater information sharing is also underway in her organization.

"In the past, no-one but a Hudson's Bay employee would talk to a Hudson's Bay store," she said, noting carriers are now able to contact the store directly to arrange delivery times and discuss other opportunities to improve efficiencies. "All of these things are coming together. Not only are we coming out of recession, but we're awakening to the making of a really slick supply chain and everybody is collaborating with all sorts of ideas."

That, says McCarron, will be the key to the industry's success going forward.

"I think what you're going to find

is a newfound cooperation between shippers and carriers," he said.

Freight volumes and capacity

All the shipper panelists at the workshop projected modest freight volume growth for the remainder of 2011 and 2012. However, the make-up of that freight is changing, especially in Heather Felbel's world. She's the vice-president, supply chain for Indigo Books & Music, which has seen its stores stocking more non-traditional items such as gifts and toys as consumers purchase more of their books and music online.

"We're looking at a change in freight itself, from a very compressed heavy freight (books) to a different type of freight with a higher cube as we move towards toys and gifts," she said. "The whole portfolio of freight inside our business is the biggest change we're seeing."

Carriers, Felbel said, need to understand their customers' changing requirements and come to the table with transportation solutions. While carriers boldly promise they'll be more restrained when it comes to

"The trucking industry is not going to attract new entrants.

It's not an attractive business model and no-one is going to go out and invest the millions of dollars required for compliance and for security to get in the game to maybe make five to seven cents on the dollar."

Mike McCarron, MSM Transportation

adding capacity as freight demand grows, shippers are hopeful that better planning on their part will make it easier for carriers to meet their requirements.

"What we've been doing over the last six to eight months, is having weekly supply chain meetings where we're looking all the way back to China or India at what's coming at us and we're able to forecast right from the ship to the port, from the port to the DC and the DC to the store," HBC's Vensolvaitis said. "Fixed delivery schedules to our stores allows for a tight forecast and I expect our carrier partners to be able to meet that demand."

As volumes pick back up, McCarron said he expects to see carriers exhibit more self-restraint than in the past when they were all too eager to add new equipment.

"I think where the concern lies is in our industry's appetite to add equipment," he said.

"It's bad business for our industry to add trucks. You can't throw trucks at problems unless you have commitments from customers to work together. I think capacity will solve itself over the course of time if we work together (with shippers)."

However, Loblaw's Springer warned that too much restraint



(ALMOST) ALL SMILES: Participants at this year's shipper-carrier Transportation Workshop were in much better spirits than in past years, but acknowledged that there still may be new challenges ahead. Pictured from left to right are Chris Raynor of CH Robinson, Mike McCarron of MSM Transportation, and Michelle Arseneau of GX Transportation.

could cause carriers to miss out on opportunities.

"Carriers need to be very cautious in terms of walking that line," he warned. "If they don't reinvest in their business, they could lose out on some growth opportunities."

Chris Raynor, branch manager with CH Robinson, said new entrants to the trucking business will emerge to ensure there's adequate capacity.

"Anybody can go and get a truck and with that low cost of entry, people will start coming back to trucking," he argued. "They can come in, make money, then rates go down because there's too much capacity so they leave the industry. I think capacity will follow the rate."

MSM's McCarron was less apocalyptic about the driver shortage.

"No-one wants to do the job anymore," he agreed, believing the answer lies in learning how to better train and work with immigrant workers.

Driver shortage or not, shippers are already taking a closer look at other modes – particularly rail.

Mike Owens, vice-president of physical logistics with Nestle Canada, said his company has been shifting freight to rail over the last couple years and "I expect that to continue." Owens warned rail performance is improving, with the company paying CP Rail a performance bonus last year for the first time ever.

Another source of competition in some cases may be the expansion of private fleets. Loblaw's Springer noted the company spends \$1.6 billion a year on transportation and having gotten its own costs under control, it will be looking to bring more of that in-house using company-owned equipment.

"As an organization over the last 30 years, we allowed our internal operating costs to get out of touch with the industry," he said, noting the company has renegotiated deals that make running its private fleet more viable. "We're not looking to bring it *all* in-house but there are certainly some strategic opportunities now because we have competitive rate structures in place."

GX Transportation's Arseneau said to achieve success in the future, transportation providers will have to be more than just a one-trick pony.

"I think we saw the birth of the new transportation company take place about 10 years ago as people quietly started adding services they didn't normally offer to their portfolio," she said.

"A new-style transportation company is able to offer a consultative role that hasn't normally been in place with the trucking industry in the past and to play an active role in the logistics process and be entrenched in the rail, the air, the ocean as well as the road and to stand behind it and have it be seamless to your customers. At the end of the day, that is going to bring value to the marketplace and bring value to your customers and that's what people want."

And for the smaller carriers that lack the resources and the sophistication to compete on that level? MSM's McCarron said carriers with 50-80 trucks will be hard-pressed to survive as a "pure trucker." □

FEATURE

Becoming a 'Best Fleet' to drive for

Contest provides insight into what it is that drivers want

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Having completed its third year, the Best Fleets to Drive For program is beginning to provide real insight into what drivers and owner/operators value from their carriers.

The program, administered by Canadian tech firm CarriersEdge and the Truckload Carriers Association (TCA) identifies the best fleets to drive for in Canada and the US. The contest is open to US and Canadian for-hire carriers with 10 trucks or more, however they must be nominated by one of their drivers or owner/operators. Canadian carriers have traditionally fared quite well, winning six of the top 20 positions in the 2011 edition. Canadian winners this year included: Bison Transport of Winnipeg, Man., Erb Group of New Hamburg, Ont., Brian Kurtz Trucking of Breslau, Ont., MacKinnon Transport of Guelph, Ont., Vedder Transportation Group of Abbotsford, B.C., and Yanke Group of Saskatoon, Sask. Trimac Transportation's Houston, Texas operations also made the cut.

But what is it about these companies – and the 14 US carriers that also made the list – that makes them special in the eyes of their drivers?

Mark Murrell, president of CarriersEdge and founder of the program, has interviewed thousands of drivers over the past three years to find out what it is they like – or don't like – about the carrier they work for. Some of the findings are surprising. Others, not so much. For the past two years, Murrell has taken to the road and conducted a cross-country seminar series through which he shares the secrets of the Best Fleets to Drive For.

Money matters

Compensation, not surprisingly, is important to drivers. But it's not always the most important consideration. As part of the evaluation process, Murrell has determined that Canadian fleets are, for the most part, paying their drivers and owner/operators a whole lot more than carriers to the south.

The Canadian winning fleets paid their company drivers an average of \$61,637 while their owner/operators grossed \$172,034. US company drivers meanwhile, were paid an average of \$48,387 and their owner/operators earned \$145,821.

"Our American friends are paying their people a whole lot less," Murrell surmised at the Mississauga seminar in June. However, he noted an increase this year in the number of fleets offering profit sharing (seven of the participating fleets now offer some form of profit sharing, up from just one a year ago and none in the first year of the contest).

"It will be interesting to see what happens with that over the next several years," Murrell said, noting three carriers that were in the program last year have added profit sharing to their compensation packages over the past year.

While compensation is impor-

tant to drivers, it's interesting to note that the top placing fleet for company drivers, Fremont Contract Carriers, only pays its company drivers about \$50,000 a year. It's an incentive-laden compensation package that, when 30,000 miles are reached in a quarter, offers a one cent per mile bonus for: running safely; delivering on-time; having fewer than 8% out-of-route miles; and purchasing 90% of their fuel from the carrier's preferred network. That can add up to a four cent a mile bonus, or \$1,200 per quarter based on 30,000 miles.

In interviews, most drivers said while FCC doesn't offer the best pay, they offer steady miles and treat drivers fairly.

Comments like 'I get paid okay, (other) companies pay a lot better but run you too hard or may not have the miles,' indicate that drivers enjoy working at FCC for reasons beyond the pay package, Murrell noted.

"FCC came up with a compensation program that pays people for doing what they're supposed to be doing and disincentivizes them from doing what they're not supposed to be doing and it is only costing them \$50,000 a year. That's a really well

put together program," Murrell said.

Based on survey results, Murrell has concluded that drivers are more concerned that there's a connection between performance and pay than they are about the overall pay package.

"If they're a good driver with seniority, they want to be paid more than the next guy," Murrell noted.

Techno-trends

An interesting trend that revealed itself during this year's competition is the increased use of technology to improve driver satisfaction. Specifically, Murrell noticed a more widespread use of Google Maps – especially Streetview – to provide drivers with more detailed information on what to expect when they deliver a load. Dispatchers can easily send drivers a Streetview link that allows them to see the lay of the land before arriving at a receiver's destination. If there are any tight turns or obstacles, the driver can seek out a safer route beforehand with a few clicks of the mouse.

"Something like this is a lot more useful than old-style illustrated maps," Murrell pointed out. "It gives you a lot more information about where you're going and what you can

expect when you get there."

Drivers can use Google Maps to plan their delivery approaches and back at the terminal, Murrell said progressive fleet managers are using the same tool to scout out prospective customers' properties and even for accident reconstruction and training.

"This year, everybody is doing it," Murrell said of Google mapping technology. "It makes so much sense and gives you so much information, everybody has jumped on it."

Another emerging trend is the increased use of social media to keep drivers connected. Murrell cited the example of Kennesaw Transportation, which has a Facebook site drivers and operations staff can visit to exchange information. It also serves as a good recruitment tool, Murrell noted, since prospective new hires can visit the site and interact with current Kennesaw staff. The carrier's Facebook page has more than 480 friends and the fleet runs just 225 trucks, so it's obviously been effective at drawing in visitors beyond its own workforce.

Another social media tool being used by a growing number of carriers is Twitter. Paramount Freight Systems uses Twitter (@DrivePFS) to broadcast announcements such as driver birthdays and anniversaries as well as weather alerts. Drivers receive the updates via their smart phones and can respond themselves, providing two-way dialogue that can't be achieved with a notice pinned to the bulletin board in the lunchroom.

One surprising trend that caught Murrell's attention was an increased interest in daycare facilities. Prime Inc. built a terminal several years ago that includes a daycare centre, which prompted Murrell to survey drivers on the issue. The first years' surveys indicated drivers were indifferent about daycare service at their terminals, but this year interest suddenly spiked, Murrell said.

"We were going to pull the plug on that question and then all of a sudden this year, surveys came in that showed us that at Schneider National, 39% of drivers surveyed said daycare would be very valuable or valuable," Murrell noted. "If we see 39% of people at Schneider National have an interest in daycare, there's a shift that's about to take place."

Murrell concluded the younger generation of drivers just now coming into the workforce sees value in employer-provided daycare services.

"As we see younger drivers coming into the workforce, that is going to be a differentiator," Murrell suggested.

While employer-provided daycare is not outlandish, some of the suggestions from drivers were borderline. One anonymous driver said a drop-off laundry service would be the "next frontier" of driver retention.

"Every terminal in the company would eventually have some of my clean clothes, just like mom's house," the driver pointed out. "And it would tie me on because if I quit, how would I get my clothes? It's about \$20 to do laundry at the truck stop.

In their own words

WHAT DRIVERS WANT:

'Hey – how about a company ID so drivers aren't subjected to –Identity Theft– by allowing a shpr/cn to copy drivers license info– all they're concerned w/ is THEIR SECURITY!!! – NOT MINE!!!'

'laundry drop off services at each terminal, then I would buy more clothes and just pay a service to do it. every terminal in the company would eventually have some of my clean clothes, just like moms house, and it would tie me on cause if i quit ,how would i get my clothes? its about 20 dollars to do laundry at the truck stop, laundry is clutter, effecting safety, the next real frontier in driver retention is drop off laundry service.'

'being allowed to take truck home a couple times a year to give good cleaning and polishing and do some public education. Most of my neighbors flock to my yard to see what a truck looks like in side and start asking about the job and are surprised to find out what it's all about from someone doing the job'

Laundry is clutter, affecting safety. The next real frontier in driver retention is drop-off laundry service.”

Other interesting suggestions for improving life at the terminals included a fishing pond for relaxation and a room where drivers could go to “get personal.”

Secrets of the large fleets

Large fleets evaluated as part of the Best Fleets to Drive For program shared much in common, including the use of driver scorecards to measure performance.

“We see driver scorecards as being pervasive at these companies but they’re starting to go to the next level and take that data and aggregate it to do things like build a risk profile,” Murrell noted. He singled out Trimac’s predictive modeling tool, which identifies drivers who are more likely to be involved in an accident and singles them out for remedial training.

Surveys indicated that scorecards are in most cases welcomed by the drivers, who see them as being a fair and consistent form of performance evaluation.

Large fleets identified as the best to drive for also tend to have mentoring programs in place for new hires, Murrell noted. Bison Transport, for instance, has a Driver Advisory Board that is consulted by management when it’s looking to implement new policies.

For its part, Schneider National has Training Engineers – essentially roaming mentors – who other drivers can approach anytime for help. The TEs have decals on their trucks and special clothing to identify them and they’ve become known as the go-to folks when other drivers have a question or need some advice. In some cases, Murrell noted, they are even approached by drivers who work for other companies, as the program has become well known.

Ongoing training is another benefit offered by most of the best big fleets to drive for. Murrell pointed out Dart Transit put its owner/operators through a training program that saw them improve their earnings by an average of US\$3,500 per year.

Secrets of the small fleets

While the large fleets have more resources for large-scale training programs, the little guys are also getting creative to achieve the same types of results, Murrell pointed out. The main advantage of small carriers is their ability to get to know driv-

ers by name, something the surveys indicate is important. Brian Kurtz Trucking stands out in this area, Murrell said. New hires have a weekly meeting with management for their first 90 days.

“It’s a great way to make sure those people are ramping up properly and any problems don’t sit there for long,” he said.

Small fleets are also generally able to offer more consistent delivery routes, since they serve a smaller customer base. The philosophy at Kurtz, Murrell said, is to send drivers where they want to go. As a result, the program’s evaluation process has determined that Kurtz has the highest productivity of any of the Best Fleets winners, and also the highest average income.

“They send drivers where they want to go, so they are more productive,” Murrell concluded.

While small fleets don’t have the sophisticated mentoring programs that some of the mega-fleets have, Murrell said they generally assign driver liaisons that serve as a middleman between drivers and upper management.

“It covers the same objectives as a driver advisory board but on a much smaller scale,” he noted. Small carriers are also better able to recognize driver achievements.

Where carriers fail

There are two areas where carriers struggle to satisfy their drivers – areas Murrell identified as minefields: maintenance and operations.

The Best Fleets program has found that maintenance-related concerns are among the top complaints from drivers. Drivers often feel mechanics don’t take their complaints seriously and too often they feel their concerns are ignored.

On the other hand, a well-run shop with technicians that listen to the drivers can have an enormous impact on driver satisfaction, as evidenced by this comment from a Con-way driver: “Con-way/CFI has the best shop,” he wrote. “It has the very best shops in the industry, outperforming dealerships in terms of what it is able to do. They might as well just hang out a Kenworth sign.”

The other most common source of driver complaints is operations, or more specifically dispatch. Drivers frequently complained that upper management may buy into its safety program but dispatch and operations

does not. Drivers also are easily upset when they raise concerns about shipper or receiver facilities and there is no follow-through from the carrier. Murrell said many times drivers identify issues such as inconsistent service levels at shippers and receivers (one shift being more responsive than another, for instance) and yet the carrier does little to address the problem. Non-responsiveness can create hard feelings that fester.

How to be a best fleet

So, what does a carrier have to do to make the list in the 2012 edition of the Best Fleets to Drive For program? Murrell said there’s no one magic bullet that will land a company on the list. He said to look at repeat winners like Bison and Yanke for inspiration.

“We see year after year, they’re get-

ting on the list and there are certain things they are doing that’s making a difference,” Murrell said. He also emphasized the importance of ensuring buy-in from upper management.

“If your executive team is not engaged, get them engaged or dust off your resume and move on,” he suggested. From there, fleets should make sure they “walk the walk,” or follow through with their promises. Driver scorecards and benchmarking can help carriers identify and address problem areas before they get out of control, Murrell suggested.

Finally, Murrell encouraged all fleets to survey their own drivers and find out how they’re feeling.

“Find the low-hanging fruit and start doing those and very quickly drivers will see you’re paying attention and listening,” Murrell added. □

In their own words
THE LIGHTER SIDE:

On safety: ‘sometimes i still wish i were an outlaw riding the open range, desert stars, full moon, no headlights.... but alas, i have been civilized’

On sharing best practices with other drivers: ‘i don’t really like truck drivers so i really can’t say. i’m kind of a sociocotic introvert with narcissistic tendencies. (I made that up, can you tell?)’

On what drivers would like to have available at their terminal: ‘a place where you might be able to get personal’

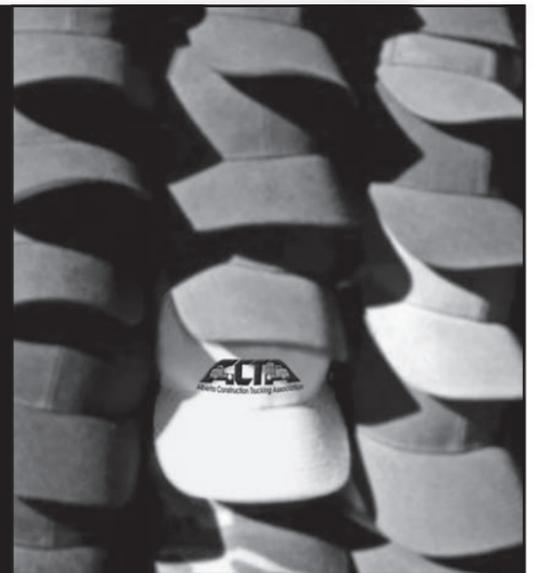
What do drivers really want?

Here are a few perks drivers indicated they’d like to have available from their companies:

- Shelters for pets at the yard
- A fishing pond where drivers can relax
- A lease/purchase plan for costly APUs
- Company ID cards so shippers/receivers don’t record personal identification like driver’s licence numbers
- Allowing drivers to take the truck home occasionally for a thorough cleaning and to show the neighbours
- Walking paths at terminals
- ATMs at terminals
- Local shuttle services or company cars that can be signed out
- Bicycles at terminals
- Mailroom access, including fax and photocopiers so drivers can take care of business while at the terminal
- Truck wash

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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Navistar hosts Heavy-Duty Boot Camp for dealers

Company aims to identify where it's stronger – and weaker – than its competition

By Jim Bray

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – It was billed as a “Heavy-Duty Boot Camp,” and saw North American Navistar dealers converge on Salt Lake City, Utah, to learn the ins and outs of their own products while also getting a close-up look at the competition.

The camp not only gave the folks in attendance a chance to drive the new Internationals equipped with MaxxForce engines, but to do it head-to-head along with their chief competitors. And if that wasn't enough, examples of the heavy-duty trucks' engines were on-hand, torn down so attendees could see what made each one tick.

It wasn't Navistar's first such boot camp, but it was by far the most extensive.

“We started these on the medium-duty side about a year ago all over North America,” said Jim Hebe, Navistar senior vice-president, North American sales operations. “We went into that camp for the single specific reason that we were getting a lot of new competition and to some extent it was competition we'd never seen before.”

That competition, Hebe told assembled editors, coupled with changes to the overall medium-duty business, prompted the company to “get out in front of all our dealer salespeople and

communicate with them directly all the things we were doing, as well as give them the opportunity to see all the competitors products face to face, head to head – to drive them and let them make their own decisions.”

Hebe said last year's camp was such a success that “when we met with our dealers afterward, they said we had to do it for the MaxxForce 13 and the ProStar.”

So they did, not by retooling the medium-duty camp but by going in a different route entirely. It ended up being perhaps the most monumental marketing event the company has ever taken, Hebe said, making last year's Boot Camp look like “a quarterly staff meeting.”

“We had been on the defensive with our emissions strategies and our engine decisions and where we were going with 13-litre versus 15-litre,” Hebe admitted, “so we decided to start playing offence, but with facts, with a sales team that understands not only our product but our competitors' product as well.”

One big difference between last year's Boot Camp and this year's, besides the change in focus, was the location. Last year's extravaganza was more or less a travelling road show, but they decided to do it the other way around this year: set up at a single venue and people come there instead.

“Last year, we had seven different events in seven cities,” Hebe said, remembering what turned out to be a logistical nightmare. “The worst day was when we hired a company to move trucks into Canada and found the guy doing it had a criminal record. He was in jail and our truck was impounded at the border! We didn't want to go through that again!”

And that's why they set up this year at Miller Motorsports Park, located in Tooele, Utah, about an hour outside of Salt Lake City. Opened in 2006, Miller Motorsports Park includes a 4.5-mile, 23-turn road course the owners claim is the longest track in North America. It's an excellent facility and, as it turned out, it was perfect for Navistar's needs.

“This is the only place in North America we could find where every single one of our salesmen, whether he has a commercial licence or not, could drive the trucks for three-and-a-half miles on an inside guarded course pulling 80,000 lbs;” Hebe said.

Attendees also participated in a seminar dealing with market forces such as CSA, hours-of-service legislation and EOBRs. “Not only what they are,” Hebe said, “but how they're going to affect our customers and how they're going to affect us.”

The senior VP admitted that the



sessions showcasing the differences – and the similarities – between Navistar's MaxxForce engine and those of competitors such as Paccar, Volvo, and Detroit Diesel took a bit of extra commitment on their part to get up and running.

“We went and bought trucks and took the engines out of them,” Hebe explained. “We have every single one of them disassembled; we've weighed all their components and we've said ‘here's where their engine's good, here's where what they're saying is, frankly, BS, and here's our engine and here's why we did what we did.’”

“If someone beats us in something, you're going to see it,” Hebe added. “We're not going to hide that, because our salespeople have to know we're not pulling punches. If they're going into a situation where they're up against Freightliner, for instance, they need to know where they're better than we are, if it's good technology or something we never thought of.” □

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Navistar's Hebe discusses market challenges

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Jim Hebe, Navistar senior vice-president, North American sales operations, had plenty to say about today's truck market when interviewed by media the company had invited to Navistar's Heavy-Duty Boot Camp. Noting that the medium-duty segment has come back much stronger than the company expected it to, he said “35% of the medium-duty business this year is full-service leasing, and what's driven that is the strength in the used truck market.” Leasing companies, he said, are “purifying their portfolio in rental and to some extent in their lease portfolio to get the old trucks out. It's been phenomenally strong.”

Hebe anticipates “pretty brutal” competition in medium-duty trucks in the not-too-distant future and predicted not all comers would be successful.

“There's just not a lot of room for many more medium-duty competitors,” he said. “It makes you wonder if it makes sense for anybody else to show up.”

He sees the biggest barrier to entry for anyone thinking about jumping into the sector is having the dealer, distribution and support network, a fact that makes him think Navistar is positioned well.

“If a company doesn't have a distribution base that can handle medium-duty customers and product,” he said, “it's not a real threat.” □



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NEW PRODUCTS

Michelin upgrades most popular steer tire, promises 30% more miles

By James Menzies
GREENVILLE, S.C. – Michelin's popular XZA3 steer tire is being retired to make room for the XZA3+ Evertread, which promises the same fuel-saving performance while providing 30% more miles than its competitors. The company is so confident in its claim, that it is guaranteeing it.

"Michelin is so confident in the XZA3+ Evertread tire that we guarantee fleets and owner/operators will get more road than competitive tires," said Ted Becker, vice-president of marketing, Michelin Americas Truck Tires. Full details of the guarantee are available online at www.Michelin-Truck.com.

"We have a testing method that's explained in great detail on our Web site," Becker told *Truck West* in an interview. "We're so confi-

dent that we'll reach that performance guarantee that there are monetary incentives should it not."

It's not just large fleets with the means to conduct head-to-head comparisons that will benefit from the guarantee, Michelin noted. Single-truck owner/operators will also be able to take advantage of the guarantee, as long as they have good before and after data on their tire mileage, Michelin officials told *Truck West*.

Michelin is also promising fleets and O/Os will get at least three retreads out of the XZA3+ Evertread's casing.

"We guarantee fleets and owner/operators will get more road than competitive tires."

Ted Becker

The longer life offered by the new steer tire is attributed to a new patent-pending dual compound tread. Michelin uses multiple rubber compounds at various places

on the tread to address different concerns. One compound is engineered to control tread stiffness and stress to reduce irregular wear and extend life while another is designed to

maximize fuel efficiency and keep operating temperatures low to protect the casing.

"By blending these two compounds, we get maximum, industry-leading tread life with the top compound and the bottom compound allows us to maintain the fuel efficiency that came with the XZA3," Becker explained.

The benefits of the dual compound tread are lost when the casing is retreaded, at which time a conventional tread is applied.

"It would be a regular retread that is applied to it, but it's the casing that brings the real retreadability and that's why we're offering a three retread guarantee," Becker said.

The XZA3+ Evertread is in-



XZA3+ EVERTREAD

tended for linehaul applications and is a good match for tractors with X-One wide-base tires on the drives, Becker said, adding the new offering is Michelin's most fuel-efficient steer tire.

Becker also said the tire offers good traction, making it suitable for Canadian winters.

"We tested it in all markets in North America and we're confident it will perform well in Canada, just like our XZA3 has performed well in Canada," Becker told *Truck West*. The XZA3 has been Michelin's most popular steer tire in North America and has been on the market for about six years. The XZA3+ Evertread is available now through Michelin dealers. It is offered in four G-load range sizes: 11R22.5, 275/80R22.5, 11R24.5 and 275/80R24.5; as well as two H-load sizes: 11R22.5 and 275/80R22.5. □

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PeopleNet's Blu.2 coming soon

Blu.2 is faster, lighter and costs no more than the unit it replaces, company says

By James Menzies
TORONTO, Ont. – PeopleNet has come out with a sleeker, more powerful version of its Blu in-cab computing system, which will be available to customers for about the same price as the original version, the company announced. The company unveiled Blu.2 at its PeopleNet Canada Transportation Symposium in Toronto June 10, where it received rave reviews from beta-tester MacKinnon Transport.

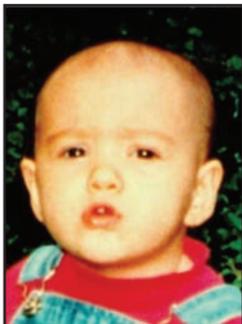
Linehaul coordinator Shelley Hickey said MacKinnon appreciates Blu.2's new functions,



BLU.2

including the ability to change duty without having to contact the firm's safety department and a panic alarm feature that alerts a designated contact of any dangers encountered on the road. She

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also liked the ability to display electronic logs on-screen for enforcement officers, which usually relieves dispatch from having to print and fax logs to an inspection station.

“The lighter, more compact unit is easier for mounting,” added MacKinnon Transport maintenance manager, John Gibson. “I’ve also heard some of our drivers comment about how driver-friendly they are to use and how much they like them.”

In a conference call with media, Matt Voda, vice-president of product management, said the Blu.2 device is 65% lighter than the first generation model it replaces. Transitioning to the new model is simple, he added, because it can be installed using existing mounting hardware.

The new-generation computing system is also designed for improved performance in cold temperatures, which is sure to be appreciated by Canadian customers.

“Especially for our friends in Canada, we wanted to provide a device that’s faster in cold weather start-up and we achieved that with this new design,” Voda said, noting the Blu.2 system can get up and running 40% faster in cold weather than the Blu.1 system.

Existing customers can swap out and replace the displays without having to replace their back-end systems, Voda said.

“It’s a very efficient upgrade for our customers,” he pointed out, adding there is no retraining required for drivers, as the system will be intuitive to use for anyone familiar with the original Blu. Fleets can deploy a mix of Blu.1 and Blu.2 devices if they wish, as the support and maintenance requirements of both systems are the same.

And perhaps best of all, it won’t cost any more than the first-generation systems. Voda said underutilized features, such as extra USB slots, were eliminated in order to keep costs in check.

“You’re getting more features and value, really for the same costs,” Voda said. “It’s a stronger platform going forward for about the same price.”

Some of the enhancements offered in Blu.2 are a brighter display and more dimming options for nighttime use. Drivers also have greater control over the audio feed and it’s Bluetooth-compatible so drivers can safely use the system while driving. Drivers can also choose to have inbound messages read to them so they don’t have to divert their eyes from the road.

Blu.2 is currently in the late stages of beta testing and will be rolled out to industry in the third quarter, Voda announced. PeopleNet promised “attractive pricing” for existing customers looking to upgrade.

In the fourth quarter, PeopleNet plans to roll out “significant capability enhancements” across its entire Blu platform.

The new product launch affirms PeopleNet’s commitment to the Blu platform, Voda indicated. Currently, there are about 120,000 Blu units deployed in the industry, he added. □

Accessories

Paylude has come to market with a **100% recycled, reusable dunnage product line** to protect cargo travelling by truck, rail and intermodal modes. It is aimed at replacing corrugated cardboard and wooden dunnage. Introductory offerings include: bulkhead spacers, separator pads, void panels, lateral void fillers and plastic boards. The company says its products



cushion loads without crushing to protect freight. And since they can be reused hundreds of times, the products are also environmentally friendly, the company announced. The new Paylude products are already being used by shippers such as Heinz, MillerCoors and Morton Salt. For complete info, visit www.Paylude.com.



Rand McNally’s **truck GPS systems** – including its popular IntelliRoute TND truck GPS – are now available in Canada, thanks to a distribution deal with Synnex Canada. The Intel-

liRoute TND features truck-specific navigation, a speaker and mounting device designed for truck cab use, an extra long power cable and a suite of specialized trucker business tools. The units will be available in Canada through Traction Heavy-Duty Parts stores, Lordco and through Amazon.ca. For more info, call 514-683-1771, ext. 8935.

TRP Aftermarket Parts has announced the availability of an **AM/FM CD player** that allows drivers to answer calls on their cell phones while keeping both hands on the steering wheel. The radio allows drivers to sync their cell phone to the audio system using Bluetooth wireless technology, allowing them to hear calls on their radio speakers and to speak through a built-in microphone. The company says its Bluetooth-enabled radio provides a higher power output for better sound quality. For more, go to www.TRPParts.com. □

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Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

Till Theft Do Us Part

By Edo van Belkom

THE STORY SO FAR

Mark is awakened by a mechanic working on a truck in a yard where Mark has parked overnight. He talks to the mechanic but the man is not too friendly. In the morning Mark learns the mechanic wasn't fixing the starter motor, but stealing it...

Mark leaned back against the grille of Mother Load as the police officer investigating the parts theft asked him a bunch of questions.

"So what did the guy look like?"

Mark thought about it, but couldn't really recall. "Hard to say. It was dark and he had his back to me most of the time. And when he did turn around to face me his face was covered with grease."

"So you didn't get a good look?"

"No," Mark said, feeling like he'd let the cop – and the owner of the Western Star – down. "But he did have a name on his coveralls."

"Oh yeah, what was it?" The officer put his pen against his notebook in preparation for the name.

"Joe."

The officer's hands went to his sides. "His name was Joe?"

"That's what the patch said."

"Uh huh." He paused for a moment. "Let's talk about the truck."

"Right, it was black, sort of a matte finish, like it had a quick coat of flat black primer on it."

"That's something at least. You get a licence plate number?"

Mark slowly shook his head. "I never thought to check it."

"Did it ever occur to you that this guy might be stealing something off the truck and not repairing it?"

The cop's tone was condescending and Mark didn't like it one bit. "Why would I think that? I've been driving for years and every mechanic I've ever seen is covered in dirt and grease, is wearing someone's old clothes, and drives a beat-up old van like that. I'm telling you, there was nothing special about this guy."

The officer sighed. "I suppose you're right, but there've been a string of these thefts in the area and we haven't been able to get much on the people doing it. It's frustrating to have an eye witness who can't help us."

Mark conceded that point, wondering how he could have been so easily fooled by the mechanic. Just the way the man had talked to him should have tipped him off, but so much of it made sense. After all, who else but a guy who didn't like dealing with people would be working

on trucks at midnight? "I guess I'll keep an eye out for these guys in the future."

"We'd appreciate that," the officer said, handing Mark his card. "And tell all your trucker friends. The more people we have looking for these guys the better."

A few nights later Mark was parked overnight in a large yard in Vaughan, Ontario that served the container traffic coming and going through the nearby rail yard. As he slept, he found himself dreaming about Angelina Jolie and how she had come to his hotel room for a drink, but had sat down on the edge of the bed as if she had intentions of spending the night.

"Making yourself comfortable, I see..." he said.

She answered him, but Mark couldn't quite make out the words. That's because there were people out in the hallway, talking loudly and making plenty of noise.

"Excuse me," he said, intending on asking the people on the other side of the door to shut up because he had Angelina Jolie in his hotel room, but at some point before he reached the door his eyes fluttered open and he found himself not in a hotel room with a hollywood icon, but inside Mother Load in a truck yard in Vaughan.

And the voices? There were people outside, working on a truck. Mark checked his watch. It was two in the morning. This can't be on the level, he thought, and decided to check it out.

This time Mark brought his flashlight with him, intent on seeing the mechanic's face and making sure another trucker wasn't getting ripped off.

"Evening," he said as he approached.

"How you doin'?" came the friendly response from behind the cowl. He was working on a Freightliner and the engine cowl had been pulled up to expose the engine compartment. Just past the truck was a dark minivan with its back hatch open.

"Well, I was asleep," Mark said, making note of the minivan's licence plate number. "But something woke me up."

"Sorry about that," said the voice. "They don't give you a lot of space to work."

Mark peered around the corner of the truck and saw the mechanic installing a part onto the engine. When the man noticed Mark standing there, he stopped what he was doing and looked Mark in the eye. "I should be done in a minute... let you get back to sleep."



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

Mark noted the man wasn't hiding his face. "Hey, that's a big flashlight," he said. "Maybe you could shine it over here for me?"

The fact that the man was asking for Mark's help, getting him involved, told Mark that this repair was probably on the level. He switched on the flashlight and shone it on the engine, allowing the mechanic to easily tighten the bolts he was working on.

A moment later there was a voice behind them. "Are you done yet?"

"Just finishing up," the mechanic said.

Mark held the flashlight in place, but turned around to see who had joined them. There were two men standing there, one an older man in his late fifties, early sixties, and a younger one, twenty-something and wearing a jacket that had the word "Security" emblazoned on it in several places.

"This is my truck," the older man said, probably noticing the inquisitive look on Mark's face. "I need it first thing in the morning."

"Not to worry, I'm done," the mechanic said, pulling himself out of the engine compartment.

Mark switched off the light. Obviously this was a legitimate repair. The driver was there and so was the security guard for the truck yard. "I'm going back to bed," he said. "Good night." He turned to the driver. "Good luck in the morning."

"Thanks," the driver said.

Mark awoke to the sound of more voices outside his truck. Without getting out from under the covers, he peered out the windshield... "What the hell!"

Several York Regional police cars were parked around the truck that had been serviced the night before. Minutes later Mark was changed and out of his

truck desperate to find out what had happened. One of the officers saw Mark approaching and said, "Were you here through the night, sir?"

"Yeah," Mark said.

"Did you see anything?"

"I talked to the mechanic who fixed the truck. I even talked to the driver. He was supposed to be gone at six. Did something happen to him?"

The officer shook his head. "The owner couldn't get his truck started this morning. When he looked under the hood he noticed about six pieces missing from the engine."

"No," Mark shook his head. "He was installing something. I held a light for him while he bolted the part on."

"Which side were you on?"

"Driver's side," Mark said.

"Take a look on the other side."

Mark walked around to the passenger side and gasped. Everything on that side of the engine that could be removed was gone.

Mark thumped his fist against the truck. "I was sure they were legit," he said. "I talked to the mechanic, the owner, even the security guard for the yard was here..."

The officer laughed under his breath. "This yard doesn't have a security guard." □

– Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 3 of *Till Theft Do Us Part*.

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

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MILTON, Ont. – Whether you’re looking for a great trucking company to drive for or you’re hungry for tips to make your fleet the best it can be, the Best Fleets to Drive For seminar series may be right up your alley. Founded by CarriersEdge back in 2008, the Best Fleets competition ranks the top Canadian and US fleets based on driver evaluations on a wide range of criteria.

The current cross-country tour showcases the best practices of the winning fleets (*see story pg 22*).

While most drivers would say pay rates would top their list of desires when searching for an employer, *Truck West* went to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Milton, Ont. to find out what other attributes they think define a “Best Fleet.”

Brent (last name withheld), a driver with Valley Express in Woodstock, N.B. says that an honest employer is a great start-



Truck Stop Question *What makes a fleet one of the best to drive for?*

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Brent

ing point for a “Best Fleet.”

“Honest people to work for... to work with your fellow man and get along (is ideal). This company here is great. (My boss) is just a great guy to work for,” he told *Truck West*, adding that the company’s

equipment is also a plus at Valley Express.

Rob Tehkumnah, a driver with Canada Cartage out of Milton, Ont. says steady work, decent equipment, reasonable benefits, cover costs, pension, good supervisors, and flexible hours are the marks of a great fleet.

As for what his current employer does particularly well, Tehkumnah says the company has a variety of contracts available and will work with their drivers to find out what suits their individual needs.

“If you don’t like one contract, they have enough work where

they can find work for you at another contract. If one job is too physical for whatever reason then they can find you other work that is not as physical that will meet your needs,” he says.



Arnold Jakob

Arnold Jakob, a driver with Nexio Solutions in Mississauga, Ont., says proper communication from management and dispatch is very important to drivers because, “when you leave drivers in the dark they are going to get very frustrated,” he says.

He says well-kept facilities are also a perk for drivers (“You don’t want to work in a place that is always dirty and grungy”) and having “good people” as fellow drivers make the job much more enjoyable.

As for his current employer, Jakob says that after 20 years, his familiarity with customers and Nexio’s flexibility with his hours make it a “comfortable atmosphere” for him.

Jimmy Moar, a driver with M&M Resources out of Village Green, P.E.I., has been with his current employer for more than 29 years. What’s kept him around all these years?

“Pension plans, dental, bonuses and stuff like that,” he says, adding that good equipment is a bonus, as he usually hauls dump trailers out East.



Don Richard

Don Richard, a driver with TNT Enterprise out of Calgary, Alta., says respect should be the number one factor in determining whether a company qualifies as a “Best Fleet.”

“Treat them like people and like employees,” he says. “There is very, very little of that in this industry.”

But Richard admits that pay would still be number two on his list. “We are grossly underpaid. They don’t pay us for hours, and that’s where it boils down to respect. If I sit on a loading dock for four hours waiting for a shipper, I have to eat that.” □

– Have an idea in mind for a future Truck Stop Question topic? Send a message via Twitter to @adamledlow or e-mail adam@transportationmedia.ca.



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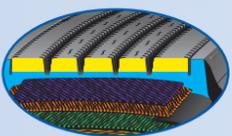
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