

TRUCK WEST

August 2011 Volume 22, Issue 8

Golfing
FORE
Wishes

Pages
20-21

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

The new west

B.C., Alta., Sask.
harmonize truck regs

EDMONTON, Alta. – The three westernmost provinces of Canada have inked a landmark deal to harmonize truck weights and dimensions regulations.

Highlights include a 500-kg increase in steer axle weights (to 6,000 kgs) to accommodate fuel-saving technologies such as APUs and the harmonization of length and width limits for tri-drive trucks, tractors and trailer configurations, allowing fleets to standardize vehicles in western Canada. The provinces also agreed to increase length limits for A-, B- and C-train combinations by one metre, so fleets can use full-length tractors in these configurations.

B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan also harmonized pilot car rules and the provinces announced they will coordinate enforcement activities so a truck isn't subjected to three inspection blitzes as it travels through the western provinces. The provinces will also focus on "coordinated enforcement and training," they announced.

Continued on page 5



CANADA'S CAT: J.F. Kitching & Son of Queensville, Ont. has been running this Cat CT660 – the first in Canada – all summer. The only drawback, its driver says, is that productivity has been reduced because everyone wants to take a peek inside whenever the truck is stopped.

Photo by James Menzies

A peek inside Canada's first Cat CT660

By James Menzies

QUEENSVILLE, Ont. – The first Canadian Caterpillar CT660 is being put through its paces hauling aggregate to landscapers in the Stouffville, Ont. area by J.F. Kitching & Son, a

family-run company that has played a key role in the truck's development.

As a longtime Caterpillar customer, J.F. Kitching & Son was selected by Cat to serve as a test fleet, and to operate what the company calls a "field

follow" unit. There were five such units in the States, and Grant Kitching said it was an honour to be selected as the lone Canadian test fleet.

"We were pretty pleased that

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Truck show season is here

Stirling results, see pg. 27



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Mark Dalton O/O



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Why dogs make the best travelling companions

I wasn't planning to write about this subject this month, but circumstances have warranted a short out-of-route detour.

I have just spent a sleepless night beside my eight-year-old mutt Monty, whose constant whimpering signaled, unmistakably, that the end is near. In just two short weeks something ('Bone cancer?' 'Hip dysplasia?,' the vet shrugged) has sucked his vibrancy from him, crushed his spirit and left him a whimpering mess. I administered pain medication in the middle of the night, but the relief was minimal at best, imagined at worse.

But I'm not writing about Monty to garner sympathy for him or for me. Rather, as a tribute to the dog lovers among you who travel daily with a four-legged companion. For many of you, I know that your canine companion is likely the best team partner you've ever had, even if they don't contribute much in the way of revenue-generating miles.

I have spent a lot of time driving with Monty, but our driving relationship got off to a rocky start. As a new dog owner, I was determined to bring him everywhere with me, including short jaunts to the store. One of our first trips was a quick run to Subway for sandwiches. I left him for a few short moments and when I returned to the car, subs in hand, I noticed Monty was cowering in the back seat, guilt written all over his face.

I prepared to put the car into gear before the pungent smell explained my dog's sheepish reaction. I glanced all around for the evidence: back seats, passenger seats, rear and front floor mats. Nothing. Then it hit me like a kick in the teeth. I slowly stood, and sure enough discovered he had chosen the driver's seat as a home for



his stinky deposit. You can imagine how long I spent scrubbing the cloth seat. I don't think I ever did eat the sub.

I eventually forgave Monty and continued to take him with me on short trips. But our greatest trip together – and possibly our best time together, period – was the four-day drive from Calgary back home to Ontario. I was initially reluctant to bring him with me by car; after all, he was now prone to car sickness. But lacking any real viable alternative, I decided to give it a shot.

Soon after we left Calgary city limits, headed east on the Trans-Canada, Monty climbed up onto a suitcase I had in the backseat and that would remain his perch for the rest of the journey. I was aware that a sudden panic stop may have reduced him to a black smudge on my windshield – like so many bugs on the other side – but he was so content back there, I let him stay.

During our trip, we stopped at the occasional park or field to stretch our legs. I even welcomed the short breaks he imposed on me, despite the inconvenience. At nighttime, we checked into pet-friendly hotels and he burned his ex-

cess energy by jumping from bed to bed.

Never once did he complain about the long hours on the road or my choice of music. No wonder so many professional drivers prefer the company of a four-legged companion to that of another human.

I'll always have fond memories of that road trip.

But soon, it's now clear, I'll have to make the unenviable trip to the vet that all pet owners dread. Six legs will walk in, attached by far more than just a leash. Two legs will walk out. It's the sad reality of pet ownership: they expire far too soon.

So, do me a favour and if you've got a four-legged pal riding shotgun with you today, give them a pat on the head for me and enjoy every mile. □

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Melting in the heat

All winter and spring, I have been hearing from carrier executives about the need to get aggressive on rates. Carrier executives were looking to a confluence of events – an improving economy, higher freight volumes and tighter capacity – to create the right conditions for significant rate increases.

This was no wishful thinking brought on by several years of downward pressure on rates, the likes of which the industry had not experienced in some time. Many transportation industry analysts were forecasting the same thing. Consider this statement from a report I recently read entitled *Domestic Transportation, Finding the Right Balance of Volume, Capacity and Pricing*: "Supply chain professionals who are responsible for securing transportation services – regardless of mode – are about to reap the benefits (or pay the price) for how strategic and mutually beneficial their company's carrier relationships have been over the past two years. But make no mistake, costs are on the rise in either case. The only question is whether a company's increase will be closer to 2% or 20%." (The report, published by Tompkins Supply Chain Consortium, was written for the US market but it reads true



easily enough for the Canadian market as well).

By April, the Canadian General Freight Index was showing signs motor carriers were indeed able to make good on rate increases. Up to that point increasing fuel prices were the major factor affecting rising truck transportation costs for shippers but in April, the Base Rate Index, which excludes the impact of fuel surcharges, increased 1.1%.

The much-awaited upward momentum on rates was here at last. Or so it seemed. That momentum seems to have melted with the warmer weather. The latest economic and trucking indicators do not look particularly promising. Manufacturing output and new order growth weakened further in June, according to the *RBC Canadian Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index*, a newly launched monthly survey, which offers a comprehensive and early indicator of trends in the Canadian manufacturing sector. The headline RBC PMI, a

composite indicator designed to provide a single-figure snapshot of the health of the manufacturing sector, registered 54.8 in May, down from 56.3 in April. It fell again in June, down to 52.8. (Anything above 50 indicates a growing economy).

Across the border, US truck tonnage dropped 2.3% in May after a revised decline of 0.6% in April, according to the latest data from the American Trucking Associations. Tonnage was up 2.7% year-over-year, but May's total was the smallest year-over-year gain since February 2010.

ATA economist Bob Costello believes truck tonnage in recent months shows the economy has hit a soft patch. Both Scotia Bank Group's senior economist Carlos Gomes, the opening speaker at our annual Profitability Seminar held in partnership with Dan Goodwill & Associates, and Robert Hogue a senior economist with RBC Royal Bank, who spoke at the recent SCL-CITA annual conference, forecast continuing but "unspectacular" growth for the economy. It all adds up to carrier executives having to work on their patience while hoping the analysts who believe the soft patch is a temporary event are right. □

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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

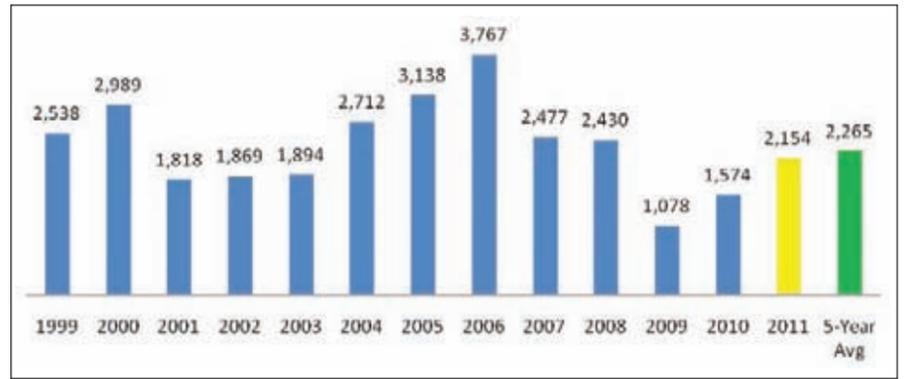
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Monthly Class 8 Sales – May 11

The 2,154 Class 8 trucks sold in the Canadian market this May continued the healthy upward movement in Class 8 sales for the second quarter. The total was an improvement over not only the severely depressed 2009 totals for the month but also May 2010. More significantly, the recent trend of surpassing the monthly totals set back in 2001, 2002 and 2003 continues. The month came in just about 100 trucks short of the five-year average for truck sales, also an encouraging sign.

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	468	277
International	444	416
Kenworth	448	342
Mack	174	83
Peterbilt	257	168
Sterling	0	30
Volvo	186	153
Western Star	177	105
TOTALS	2154	1574

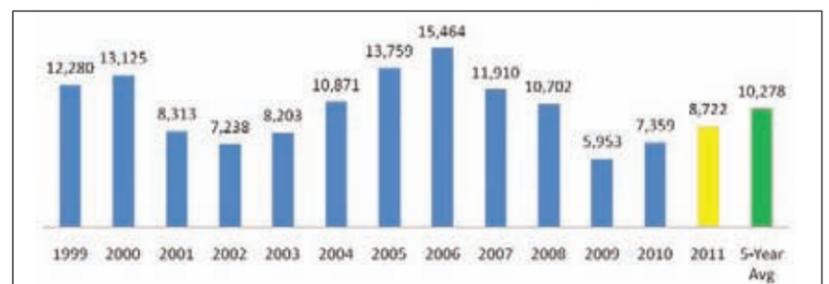
Historical Comparison – May 11 Sales



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

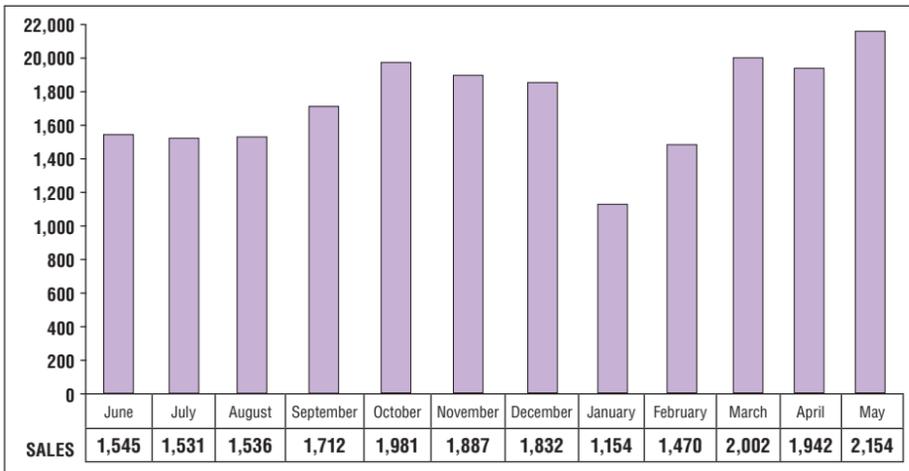
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	124	220	65	182	1,232	373	123	34	0	11	2,364
Kenworth	142	532	104	85	273	367	44	0	0	0	1,547
Mack	20	84	43	47	279	91	13	10	0	6	593
International	144	298	31	127	579	439	111	48	8	29	1,184
Peterbilt	72	308	65	67	225	152	52	10	0	0	946
Volvo	53	79	23	117	346	181	45	31	0	4	879
Western Star	141	186	30	19	79	82	20	14	1	7	579
TOTALS	696	1,702	361	644	3,013	1,685	408	147	9	57	8,722

Historical Comparison – YTD May 11



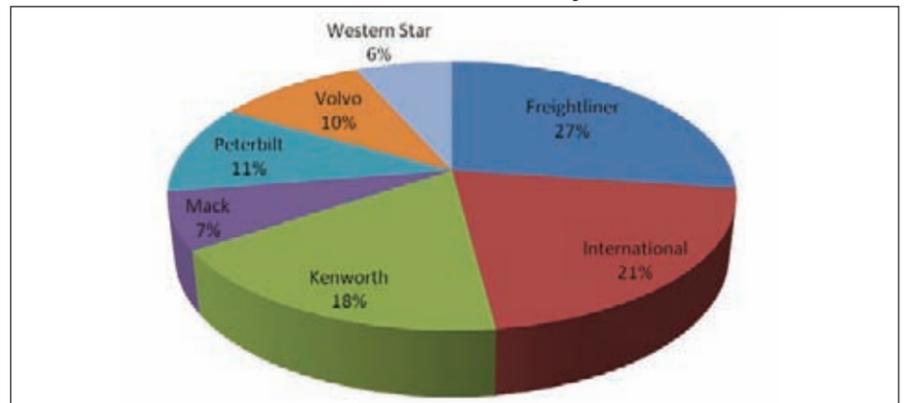
So far the YTD sales totals are significantly better than the sales figures posted in both 2009 and 2010 and also better than the results after the first five months of 2001, 2002 and 2003. The YTD totals are about 1,500 units off the five-year average but still far below the industry's greatest growth years of 2004 to 2008 and also behind the sales totals of 1999 and 2000, which indicates trucking in Canada may still be a year away from true strong growth.

12 - Month Sales Trend



May is now the strongest month of the past 12-month period, climbing above 2,000 Class 8 trucks sold. This is the second time this year that Class 8 sales have managed to rise above 2,000. April was close 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. February showed improvement with a climb to 1,470 before the sizeable jump in sales made in March and then April and May.

Market Share Class 8 – May 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 continues to hang on to that lead. It now stands with a commanding 27% lead, a 2% drop from the previous month, but still far ahead of International, whose market share has been on the decline over the past year, although it is now holding steady at 21%. Kenworth's numbers are also a drop from its 19% market share at the end of 2010.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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IN BRIEF



SUMMER FLOODS: Severe flooding remains an issue in parts of Western Canada. Driver Michael Gower took this picture of Hwy. 39 at Macoun, Sask., where traffic was reduced to one lane on July 6. Gower estimated there were eight inches of water on the road. Gower said the area is so flat, there's nowhere for the excess water to go. □
Photo by Michael Gower

Industry lauds harmonization efforts

Continued from page 1

All these changes were made as part of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement and came into effect July 1. The provinces' leaders said they will continue working together to ensure that once a truck crosses the eastern border of Saskatchewan, it will have just one set of rules to worry about all the way to the west coast. Following consultation with industry, a new set of improvements is already being worked on and is expected to be introduced by July 2012.

"Different standards, rules and regulations in each of our respective provinces create costly inefficiencies for shippers and, ultimately, their customers," said Luke Ouellette, Alberta's Minister of Transportation. "Harmonizing trucking regulations helps move people and goods more efficiently and contributes to continued economic growth and prosperity for

our three provinces."

"These changes will result in more flexibility, higher productivity and lower costs for the trucking industry while still keeping our roads safe for all travellers," added B.C. Transport Minister Blair Leckstrom. "Together, Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia are making it easier to do business in the west."

And Jim Reiter, Saskatchewan's Minister of Highways and Infrastructure said "Export goods produced in western Canada are being trucked on the highways between our provinces every day. Through the New West Partnership our three provinces will now have consistent trucking regulations to allow for a more seamless flow of goods, with less red tape and lower costs for shippers, which ultimately leads to a more attractive investment climate." For more information on the agreement, visit www.newwestpartnership.ca. □

Saskatchewan continues to build high clearance trucking corridor

KENASTON, Sask. – Saskatchewan continues to develop a high clearance corridor for overheight loads, most recently turning its attention to Hwy. 15 east of Kenaston.

The province will spend a bout \$45 million to rebuild Hwy. 15 between the junction of Hwys. 11 and 2. Currently, this stretch is a thin membrane surface road. It will be paved to accommodate heavy loads and will be capable of handling the heaviest loads allowed by the province.

The first stage of construction will begin this winter with the project slated for completion in 2015, the province announced. Part of the project involves burying all utility lines to allow overheight loads to be transported over the highway.

"This is one of many initiatives we're putting in place to simplify business for shippers and make Saskatchewan's business climate more attractive to companies that ship their goods by truck," Highways and Infrastructure Minister Jim Reiter said. "By upgrading the highway and burying the utilities, we are literally removing a barrier to trade and industry will now be able to move such things as large machinery, oilfield equipment, ready-to-move homes or parts more efficiently."

SaskPower is in the process of moving or burying power lines that interfere with the movement of oversized loads along Hwys. 7 and 15. Previously, shippers had to work with the utility to have lines raised or cut with each move.

Shippers and truckers will have to pay a permit fee to use the overheight corridor, but it will cost significantly less than paying the utility to raise or cut the lines. It's hoped the \$2.3 million cost of burying the lines will be recouped through permit fees, the province announced.

Once the initial cost is covered, the permit fees will be allocated to ongoing maintenance and highway upgrades. □

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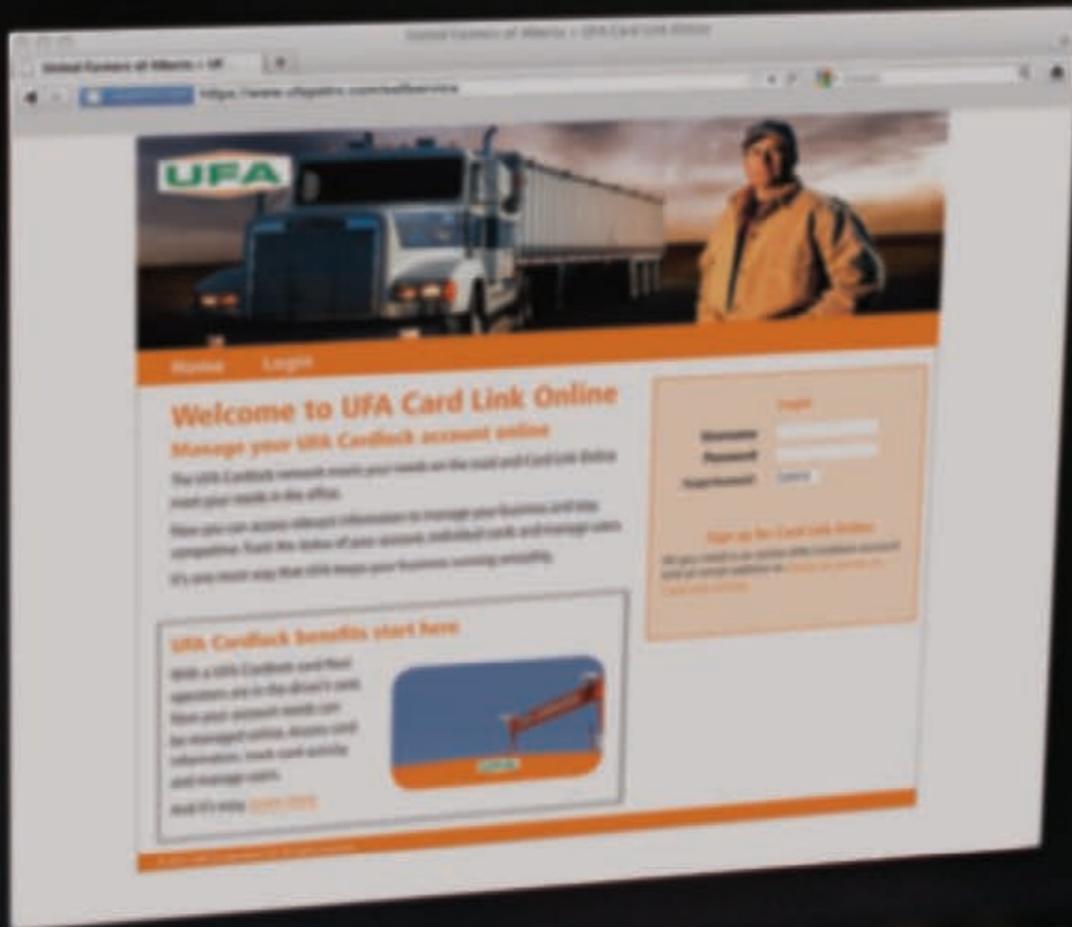
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BRITISH COLUMBIA

B.C. approves higher payloads for pony trailers with roll-coupling hitch connection

Using a roll-coupling hitch to connect a tridem pony trailer to the towing vehicle now allows three extra tonnes of payload

By James Menzies

VERNON, B.C. – After years of stability testing and hundreds of thousands of dollars in research and development, Wolf Trailer Company has convinced B.C.’s Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement Branch to increase the maximum allowable weights for tridem pony trailers.

B.C. now allows full weights of 24 tonnes, provided the pony trailer is connected to the towing vehicle by a roll-coupling hitch system. That’s a three-tonne increase over previous weights, says Eric Amlin, a former researcher with the Forest Engineering Research Institute of Canada (FERIC) and now a technical consultant with Wolf Trailer Company.

The increased weight allowance will benefit truckers in the forestry, construction and oilfield sectors, he noted. And better yet, the combination, when used with a roll-coupling hitch system – is actually more stable than the same configuration connected via pintle hook, even at the lower weights.

“Roll-coupling the trailer to the truck at the higher weights is a more stable vehicle than the truck without roll-coupling at the lower weights,” Amlin told *Truck West*.

And there has been ample testing done to support that theory. FERIC began examining the stability of vehicle combinations using roll-coupling hitch systems several years ago and at the same time, Wolf Trailer Company was doing its own research and development on just such a device.

“Individually of each other, we both came to the conclusion that roll-coupling would be the best way to improve the stability of pony trailers,” Amlin recalled. “So, we brought our strengths together. FERIC did the testing and the vehicle dynamics modeling and (Wolf Trailer’s) Larry Wulff was doing the actual hitch design.”

There are currently four Wolf Trailer roll-coupling hitch devices in the B.C. market and Amlin said now that the higher weights have been approved, the next batch of 12 is already spoken for. Interest is also picking up in Alberta and Saskatchewan, where work is underway to prove the benefits of the systems in those provinces as well. The hitches are manufactured locally in the Okanagan and pony trailer manufacturer Lang-Fab has worked out a deal to supply the hitches.

“With this technology in place, carriers will realize a three-tonne increase in trailer productivity and be taking a significant step forward in terms of heavy truck safety through improved trailer stability,” Amlin said.

Wolf Trailer itself has spent four years and more than \$300,000 de-

veloping its roll-coupling hitch design and Amlin guesses FERIC has spent a comparable amount of time and money testing the concept.

The stability improvements, Amlin estimates, are as great as 12-20% for a fully-loaded tridem pony trailer when compared to the same combinations connected by pintle hitches.

For more information, visit www.wolftrailer.co (note, no ‘m’ on the end). Or you can contact Amlin at 250-540-9410. □



SAFER AND MORE PRODUCTIVE: A roll-coupling hitch design like this one (inset) allows for three extra tonnes of payload on tridem pony trailers in B.C.



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ALBERTA

Calgary truck safety blitz makes for media hype

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – If you only get your information from the CBC, you might think Calgary Police's spring inspection blitz on commercial vehicles proved the city's streets are asphalt-topped death traps.

It's easy to see how one could get that impression. CBC News' headline covering the three-day initiative blared: "Nearly 40% of trucks fail police safety blitz." Meanwhile, the *Calgary Sun* headlined its story "Safety blitz nails rickety vehicles" and led with "Officials say more than a third of commercial vehicles pulled over in a two-day blitz this week weren't roadworthy."

Both claims are true as far as they go, but they don't tell the whole story.

What actually happened, besides the *Sun* proving its writer can't count the number of days over which the event was held, is that only a small number of trucks were actually pulled over out of the thousands that ply the streets daily, and all the offenders – big and small – came from that relatively small number.

"It's random stops," said Const. Derek Emmott of the Calgary Police Service Truck Unit. "We pull over anything from your little 4,500-kg landscaping truck right up to the big 63,500-kg commercial haulers and long haulers."

Don Wilson, executive director of the Alberta Motor Transport Association, agreed. "The bottom line is that is that it's all selective," he said.

"So when you get a number like (was reported) you have to put it into perspective. It's only of the trucks they actually bring in."

The check stop itself, according to Emmott, is a biennial event. "We do it in May and September," he said, adding that it's "a joint force check stop where we have ourselves and the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Branch,

other law enforcement branches and the city bylaw department." The blitz, he said, is designed to make sure everyone's properly licensed for the city and that their vehicles are up to snuff.

The check stop was set up in random locations, Emmott said, usually hitting a different quadrant of the city for an entire day.

Emmott said they checked a total of 385 commercial vehicles, out of which 148 were out-of-service – which means they had problems ranging from steering component items, air braking systems or load securement issues to driver issues such as suspensions, no driver's licenses, etc.

This spring's fling, as it were, gave results Emmott said were consistent with other such blitzes. "We usually find between 33% and 38% out-of-service during our spring and fall checks," he said, "so it fell in right where we were expecting."

Emmott said there were no repeat offenders from other check stops.

Perhaps surprisingly, some of the bigger carriers also found themselves afoul of the authorities, Emmott said, "but not one of the big companies stands out as a huge offender."

Wilson, who attended one day of the blitz, recounted the tale of one driver for a major carrier with whose truck everything was definitely not tickety-boo – and that led to a situation of "tickety-boo hoo."

"They put it right out of service," Wilson said. "Parked it and probably wrote about \$3,000 worth of fines." The driver, he said, had pulled out his log and claimed he did his pre-trip but, "his air brakes couldn't maintain pressure and the brakes had rust on them, were out of adjustment. And he did a pre-trip?"

Wilson didn't know if that particular driver got any paper but "They certainly wrote to the com-

pany. And that's not a Mom and Pop operation, it's a big company, with a safety guy and a department. So that's disconcerting. I know it's only one driver and one truck, but you shouldn't be seeing any of that."

Such incidents undoubtedly led to some embarrassing moments back at the yard, Emmott said. "It's a Level 1 inspection, and we give you a piece of paper once we're done that has three categories: a pass, require attention or out-of-service. And for most of the big companies who have safety officers, it eventually ends up on their desk because we send a copy up to Red Deer and that goes on the carrier profile. You get enough negative ones and all of a sudden Carrier Profile is phoning the company and if (the driver) didn't turn them into the safety guy he's kind of wondering what's going on."

Safety-related check stops such as these aren't carried out on passenger vehicles, Emmott said, because the province hasn't mandated the same type of inspections.

"We're strictly commercial vehicle enforcement in the truck unit," Emmott said. "We're all CVSA-trained and we go by the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance spec's."

That doesn't mean passenger cars can merely cruise by, their drivers thumbing their noses smugly as they pass.

"There are provisions in the Traffic Safety Act where you can pull them over for a traffic stop if you find some violations under section 66 of the traffic safety act," Emmott said.

And that, added Wilson, is exactly what happened while he was there.

"I saw probably 14 different cars pulled in for tinted windows," he said, "even though it was a commercial vehicle stop, they were writing tickets for those. So even though they wouldn't be part of the

stats, they weren't just looking at commercial vehicles."

While many of the more minor offences consisted of such things as failure to produce documentation, that wasn't always the case.

"When I got there, a number of the vehicles they'd stopped were basically lawn and maintenance guys, with the trailers with the weed whackers and the lawnmowers, with problems like safety chains missing," the AMTA's Wilson said. "Who knows how long they were pulling these trailers around?"

Still, since it was a comparatively small number of trucks that were pulled over, perhaps it isn't time yet for civilians to buy armoured vehicles to defend themselves from dangerous, rampaging truckers.

"Remember, it's selective enforcement," Wilson said. "They're waving through the shiny new Peterbilts and all that. I look at it that, if they only found a third of the people they selected (were in violation), that's pretty good – not that I'm excusing the others. But the trucks that were pulled over were pulled over because they looked suspicious. They waved through tonnes of them."

For his part, Emmott said he finds it frustrating to not see any improvement over his four years in the gig. "Hopefully we'll get that message out and in the next checks that we have the numbers will drop," he said, "but historically they haven't."

Wilson agreed. "It's a message we just have to keep pounding away at, and it has to be part of the company – they have to live and breathe safety."

It goes back to enforcement, he said. "It's like the road tests, where people say you should be tested ever year, or every five years, but do you honestly think people are going to drive the same as they usually do if the examiner's in the next seat? If we all drove like we did on the day we got our licence there'd be no problem, but that's not how it is."

Wilson thinks these enforcement check stops are a good step, but that there should be more of them. "They should be happening year round, and random, just like the alcohol check stops," he said, "to help keep things on the straight and narrow."

The problem is resources, Wilson said. "Transportation's doing the best they can, but they only have so many auditors for however many thousands of trucking companies there are." He said a lot of trucking companies have never been audited since they've been in business and "unless something goes wrong they may never be audited."

At the same time, Wilson said, "If you're keeping your nose clean, there's probably no reason for you to get on anyone's radar scope. As long as you do things right, you're fine."

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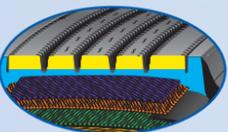
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TAX TALK

Recording the use of your service vehicle

In July, I wrote about how to deduct expenses for the business use of your personal car, pick-up, or van. The “service vehicle” is a red-flag item for Canada Revenue Agency, so you need to know how to make claims that will stand up in the event of an audit.

I want to build on last month’s column because I get a lot of questions about “company cars.”

The big issue has nothing to do with what type of expenses you can write off or whether it’s best to lease or own a vehicle.

The number one reason claims are denied is for failure to properly log business-related travel.

Whether you buy or lease, whether the vehicle belongs to your company or to you personally, CRA needs an accurate record of the total number of kilometres you drive in a year as well as the date, destination, purpose,



Tax Talk

SCOTT TAYLOR

and the distance in kilometres for each business-related trip.

Without it, your audit report letter will read like this: “As no mileage log was kept, your total kilometres to date were used for calculation of personal kilometres.”

Lots to lose

If you can’t prove that your vehicle was used for business, consider what’s at stake:

Expense claims: All your kilometres will be deemed to be personal and your service vehicle expense claims will be denied. Since CRA can audit three years at a

time, you may lose three years of claims.

GST/HST input tax credits on those expenses: This includes the GST/HST in your lease payments, purchase price, gas, repairs, etc. which can be refunded to you at the percentage of business use. You may have to pay back part of your GST/HST refunds. If you’re a sole proprietor buying a new service vehicle, you can claim 100% of the GST/HST immediately on your next return if you can show that the vehicle is used for business 90% of the time. If the business use is less than 90%, you have to calculate the GST/HST included in the depreciation of the vehicle each year and claim it back over time.

Don’t count on that GST/HST being refunded on your service vehicle purchase unless you are

prepared to prove 90% or more business use.

If you’re an incorporated owner/operator whose company buys or leases the service vehicle, then a travel log is even more crucial. Like a sole proprietor, you too can lose the business expense claim and have to pay more tax (in your case, corporate tax). You also can lose the right to claim GST/HST and have to pay it back.

Taxable benefit: If your company leases or owns the vehicle, there’s the added risk of having a taxable benefit applied to your personal income.

CRA uses two factors to calculate the taxable value of the company car: a “standby” charge plus an “operating expense benefit.” The standby charge represents the benefit the employee enjoys when the automobile is available for his personal use.

If your company leases the vehicle, the standby charge is two-thirds of the cost of the lease.

If it owns the vehicle, the standby charge is 2% of the vehicle’s cost to the company.

If the cost of the vehicle is \$40,000, including taxes, the stand-by benefit is \$800 per month.

When an employer pays operating expenses incurred for personal use (including gas and oil; maintenance and repairs; insurance; and licences), this also constitutes a taxable benefit to the employee.

Corporation owners can be hit with double taxation.

Without a log to validate the business use of the vehicle, your corporation won’t be able to deduct expenses, and you personally will pay more tax because the taxable benefit of using the company car will be added as income on your T4.

What to do

The best evidence to support the business use of a personal vehicle is an accurate logbook.

Talk to your accountant for advice about these two important points:

Proper setup: Ask for a template of a travel log to help you record the information CRA needs. This includes the date, the destination, the reason for the trip, and the distance covered for each trip.

Sample logs: After one complete year of keeping a logbook, a three-month sample logbook can be used to extrapolate business use for the following years, provided the usage is within the same range (within 10%) of the results of the base year. Ask your accountant to help make sure you’ve hit that target.

It takes discipline, but the simple act of writing down your business trips is vital to making valid expense claims. □

– 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 to become a client.

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ALBERTA

Burning rubber for a good cause

Calgary truck racer salutes military with 2011 season

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Everyone knows the trucking business can be a drag at times. One Calgary trucker, however, thinks that's a good thing.

Gordon Cooper, owner of OCEAN Hauling and Hotshot, is also the "driving" force behind the Smokin' Gun, a 1968 Canadian Kenworth Diesel Pro Rig he bills on his Web site as "Canada's first and fastest Diesel Drag Semi." Cooper,

now in his tenth season with Smokin' Gun, is using this year's activities to pay tribute to some of the people who keep the rest of us safe in this crazy world.

"We've dedicated our program, my crew and I, with the Smokin' Gun this season, to a salute to our Canadian troops," Cooper told *Truck West* after his Father's Day weekend 2011 season kick-off with the Calgary Motorcycle Ride for Dad event to raise funds for pros-

tate cancer research.

"Everybody supports the military, and I want to bring more attention to them," Cooper said. "I'm basically doing it with my crew – Jim, Frank, Daryl, Kelly and Rob." He and two other crewmembers have a combined total of almost 50 years military experience between them, which obviously puts the cause close to their hearts – but there's also a practical aspect. "Without our men and women going after the terrorists in their own countries," he said, "if they were over here interfering with our freedoms here in North America, then it'd be pretty tough to carry on extreme motorsports."

The idea came to Cooper as he noticed over his years running the

Smokin' Gun that individual racing facilities usually have a military day or some kind of military tribute, whether it be a break on the admission price or whatever. He's hoping that can be expanded upon to include demonstrations honouring the Canadian Forces at their neighbouring bases as well as the local tracks.

The idea is to organize a date with the local track and, if he can get permission from the base, organize local racers to come out with his Smokin' Gun for an afternoon there.

"Right now I'm working on the Canadian Forces Base in Edmonton for a date in the first part of August," he said. "If I can get permission to put on a display then we'll show up there with the local racers before we go to the track and do a tribute to the military families and the serving members at the base."

Cooper's own military experience ended in 1980, after a 6.5-year stint in military engineering. "I wanted to move back to Alberta," he explained, "so I left my job and started my own company." OCEAN Hauling, an acronym of Oilfield, Construction Engineering Agricultural and Aviation Necessities, will be 30 years old in October of this year.

Cooper currently hauls "a lot of oversize stuff, everything from soup to nuts, anything that will fit on the flatbed," up to and including aircraft with wingspans approaching 40 feet. "Anything that's a lot of fun," he said.

It appears that Cooper's heart is really with the Smokin' Gun, however. "How many guys get the opportunity to put over 3,000 hp into a truck and get to play with it?" he asked, rhetorically. "It's kind of unusual and as long as other people enjoy it as much as I do, I guess we'll just keep doing it."

The truck weighs 9,500 lbs and is powered by a T-N-T Detroit Diesel 8V92 Twin Turbo, Supercharged, and InterCharged diesel that cranks out approximately 3,100 horsepower. "I've redesigned it three different times since I bought it as a show truck," Cooper said. "I found the opportunity 10 years ago to make it into a dragster, sort of along the lines of the old Tyrone Malone Super Boss," a 1974 Kenworth Malone billed as "The World's Fastest Truck."

While Malone's celebrated truck used a V12 engine, Cooper's research showed that a V8 should be able to deliver better power, pound for pound.

"That sure is proving itself right," he said. "I've got seven times the horsepower coming out of an 8V92 than what it's designed for, and we're actually under 12 seconds now on the quarter-mile pretty regular."

Cooper said his best time to date has been 11.83, backed up by 11.89. "11.83 seconds quarter-mile for nearly 10,000 pounds is pretty neat," he noted, adding that his best 60-foot launch time is a respectable 1.64 seconds.

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that has been a weight reduction program on the Smokin' Gun. "It's gone from almost 13,000 lbs," he said proudly. "It's a single axle. I shortened it up, but it's basically what I call a super pick-up truck. It's still got dual wheels on the back; I run a 315/225 dual wheel set-up on the back."

A healthy dose of nitrous oxide doesn't hurt, either. "I run a double 650 shot through the Detroit," he said. "It's incredible that it will take the punishment and the power that we're putting through it."

Cooper said he learned the hard way how much fuel he needs to get going through the engine before he can introduce the nitrous oxide.

"I've broken injectors, I've blown up turbos - I've never damaged as much equipment on my commercial trucks as I've done in 10 short years racing the little Smokin' Gun," he noted with a hearty laugh. "I've learned a lot of valuable lessons and it's cost me nothing but sponsorship money - but I kind of look at it that if you don't push the edge - you know, go big or go home."

His racing slicks are made by Bandag. "They're not a retread but actually a rebuilt tire that the local KalTire/Bandag dealership sponsors for me each year," he said. "They've rebuilt some Michelin 315/225 tires with a compound we've worked out that gives me better traction to launch on the drag strip. They only last about a year, with burn-outs and everything, but it's really good."

Safety, of course, is paramount. "Everything I've done on the truck has been certified either by the NHRA or, since there's no organized big rig drag racing association right now, the National Hot Rod Diesel Association (NHRDA). I've got an NHRA-certified roll cage and all kinds of safety equipment," he said, noting that he also does demonstration runs with the NHRDA.

Without a specific big rig drag racing organization, finding competitive trucks can be a challenge. That doesn't stop Cooper from finding opportunities to showcase his technology, though, even if it means racing apples against oranges.

"I've raced (NHRDA) pick-up trucks but they're all way faster than me now," Cooper said he can bracket race with them - which allows for handicaps between vehicle classes - but he isn't really into that.

"The idea is head's-up racing," he said, "and then get out and show the crowds how fast a rig can get to the end of the quarter-mile."

This summer, Cooper is also working on a show partnership with Kerry Watson and his 1930s Chev wheel stander pick-up truck "Full-tilt Boogie" they're promoting as the Smoke-n-Fire Show. They plan to hit a few drag racing events and air shows.

There are a few other drag racing big rigs in various stages of activity, Cooper noted, "But for various reasons, there's only a couple running this season," he said, speculating that the downturn in the economy may have made it difficult getting sponsorship.

It's a problem Cooper has been able to avoid, so far. "I've been fortunate to keep my sponsors even though the program is downsized,"



READY TO ROLL: The Smokin' Gun will pay tribute to the military this year.

he said. "Shell has supported me for six years, and that's been really key for me." He also has Kenworth on board, through Great West Kenworth in Calgary and Inland Kenworth in B.C., "and when I was running down east with Shell, I had the Kenworth Truck Centres group out of Concord, Ont. sponsoring me."

Local sponsors include Hampton Power Systems and Waterous Power Systems, two completely different companies with completely different systems. "Hampton have electronic equipment and they're a very good customer," Cooper said, adding that he's hauled a lot of their oversized buildings and panels and whatnot out to the field. Waterous helps him with his Detroit Diesel and Allison automatic transmission.

Naturally, he's grateful for the support. "We couldn't keep up our ambitious summer racing program without all of our great sponsors, including BD Turbochargers, Capstan Hauling, Jim's Racing, Truck Spa 2003, and West Country Supervision to mention a few."

Cooper has taken Smokin' Gun to joint events with the North American Big Rig Racing gang from time to time, but that isn't without its own challenges.

"They're really great guys," he said, "but they seem to have their organizational issues as well." Still, he noted that the public really seems to enjoy it when they've run events on both the drag strip and the oval track in Calgary. "We've had great attendance and I've actually had several other fellows from the circle track come out and drag race us on the quarter-mile. That's been a blast."

That turns out to be another apples-to-oranges comparison, however. "My truck is not designed for the oval track," he said. "I have been on the oval with the boys for promotions and I actually got dizzy going around in circles. I don't know how those guys do it!"

Cooper has attended most of the NABBR oval races in Calgary over the last two decades, but was never drawn to participate.

"I just never got into that type of racing," he admitted. "I'm not a stock car driver and most of the guys that are very successful on the oval track have driven stock cars, they've got nerves of steel and I admire the hell out of them. I can't compete with them on the oval, though, and so far they haven't been able to catch me on the quarter-mile."

Cooper's plans for his first Smokin' Gun weekend of the year, the Father's Day events in Cal-

gary, didn't turn out quite as he'd hoped. An event at Race City Motorsports Park on the Sunday was rained out, though the Ride for Dad went ahead as scheduled, albeit with weather-mandated changes.

"There were about 400 motorcyclists that showed up for the prostate cancer ride," he said. "And they had guest speakers and excellent representation from the Sheriff's Department and the City of Calgary Police Department, clubs and whatnot, including the Blue Knights, the retired police officers and corrections officers and the Third Canadian Army Veterans."

Cooper had planned to participate in the event on two wheels, since "I knocked one off my bucket list last summer and got an 1800 Honda VTX after not having a bike for over 20 years," he said. His reputation preceded him, however. "One

of the organizers mentioned that he was all excited about me bringing the Smokin' Gun out, basically inside the trailer because it was so damn wet that day, so I put it on display."

Not surprisingly, 2011's wild western weather has been a bugaboo for Cooper's plans to get his military tribute events screeching off the line, but he's hoping the summer sunshine will come to his rescue.

"We're looking forward to better weather in July, when another event's scheduled," he said. "And I'm trying to set up dates in Gimli, Manitoba and different places in Alberta."

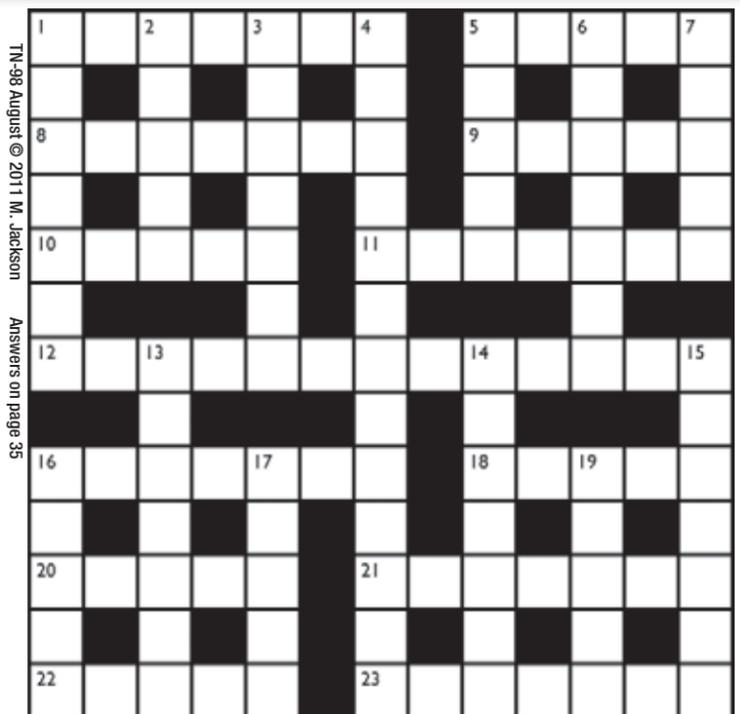
He hopes to participate in Drag Wars in Grand Prairie in August and at Thunder in the Valley in Drayton Valley on the Labour Day long weekend. He's working on other deals in B.C. as well.

But before any of these events happen, he said, he needs some track time. "I haven't run the truck on the track yet this year, to get the bugs out of the driver," he said. "You've got to smarten the driver up, and that's me. Oh, and get the bugs out of the truck, too."

The 58-year-old Cooper hopes to keep working and drag racing for another 20 years. "My dad retired just before he was 80 and lived till he was 86," he said. "I kind of see myself doing the same thing."

In the meantime, he has high hopes for his military tribute tour. "I think it'll be a heckuva summer for everybody," he said. "I'll think we'll have a good time with it." □

THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

1. Mack or Peterbilt product
5. Radio code for R
8. Flip-up driver's-seat feature, frequently
9. '70s Chevy clone of GMC General
10. Truck brand once sold by Chrysler Canada
11. Urgent shipment, slangily (3,4)
12. Non-cabover tractors
16. Winter-morning heater setting
18. A house hauler, you might say
20. Beach Boys Little ____ Coupe
21. Pneumatic suspension system (3,4)
22. Big brand in drivetrain parts
23. Truck-stop offerings, often

Down

1. Vehicle volume, in a word
2. Truck detailer's protectant, ____ All
3. BC's Coquihalla Hwy 5, slangily (3,4)
4. Certain cargo-containment devices (7,6)
5. Unpaid truck-plant worker, perhaps
6. Bracebridge, ON-based transport company
7. Possessed a truck's title
13. Auto-insurance type (2,5)
14. Province with 13-Down insurance system
15. Avenue crossers, often
16. Brand on '45-'68 Power Wagon trucks
17. Word on NS and RI plates
19. Three-wheel motorcycle, slangily

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BIOFUELS

The Great Debate

Are biofuels an environmental saviour or a government-imposed scam?

Government-imposed scam:

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Biofuel. Is it a product whose time has come or something being foisted upon humanity by well-meaning but nosy neighbours? The answer appears to depend on who's talking about it. While some people happily push biofuels, others are worried about having it forced upon them against their will.

It's safe to say you can put a lot of the trucking industry on the "worrying side" of the ledger, partly because there are many questions that need to be answered about the stuff, including why they're having to use a substance that could raise prices at the pump at a time when prices are already high.

Still, it appears governments are damning the torpedoes and going full speed ahead with the biofuel bandwagon. Not only has Ottawa mandated the inclusion of at least 2% biofuels in all diesel and home heating oil sold in Canada after July 1 of this year, the government of Saskatchewan has also introduced its own Renewable Diesel Act, which provides for \$26 million over the next five years in direct incentives to "eligible renewable diesel producers."

Is Saskatchewan's subsidy an altruistic green initiative or a cynical vote-buying scheme? Al Rosseker, executive director of the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, says it's the latter.

"We really feel that the whole rise in biodiesel was summed up pretty well by the federal Agriculture Minister, who basically said it's a farm subsidy," Rosseker said. He sees a variety of problems with biodiesel and, while he says he certainly isn't against anything that can bring down the price of fuel – anything that works, anyway – the jury is still out on biofuels.

Part of his concern is about the consistency of the stuff.

"We understand that some of the blending is going to be splash-based," he said. "Basically, it's some guy throwing a five-gallon pail in, I guess. It doesn't sound like it's being well handled." And while some cold weather tests have apparently given biodiesel a clean bill of health for winter use, Rosseker pointed out that "they did one test in Edmonton with a small fleet, but we've since been led to believe that the fuel was from only one source, which is a major issue."

Supply problems Rosseker cited include where exactly the biofuels will come from, and what will be in them.

"We don't know what they're making it out of," he said. "Are they making it out of canola? Are they making it out of corn stalks? We don't know." As for the source of the fuels, Rosseker

said "we are of the understanding that there just isn't enough production in Canada, so we think that probably 80% of it is going to come from the US, which means there are going to be additional trucking costs on that."

Rosseker said the Canadian Trucking Alliance has been lobbying Ottawa for answers but they don't seem to be forthcoming.

Trucking in the fuels could actually be good for the industry, Rosseker admitted, in that they'll be paid to haul the stuff, but when all is said and done, he said trucking in the biodiesel could add six to eight cents per litre to the price of a gallon of fuel.

He isn't alone in his assessment. The Canadian Trucking Alliance said the federal government's own regulatory impact analysis statement (RIAS) claimed the mandated use of biofuel will cost taxpayers \$2.5 billion over the next 25 years, increasing pump prices for diesel fuel and reducing the fuel efficiency of commercial vehicles, all while generating little in

ted. "But the whole notion of trying to reduce greenhouse gases by burning more fuel doesn't make a lot of sense."

Besides, he said, there are other ways to reduce emissions and save fuel.

"We're making great strides in terms of long combination vehicles," he said. "So rather than having two tractors and two trailers we're trying to burn less fuel which of course helps our industry – fuel's our number one cost so we're trying to burn less. Of course with this bio stuff we'll probably burn a little more, but I guess the farmers will be happy."

So is biofuel merely a grand scheme to screw the trucking industry? Rosseker didn't go that far, though he did note that the trucking industry may not be the squeakiest wheel there is.

"The thinking is sometimes a little fuzzy in terms of how these programs gather momentum," he said. "If you look around the province, a number of our MLAs come from rural backgrounds – they've all grown up on or know people who've grown up on farms."

That would tend to reinforce the view that biofuel mandates are nothing more than farm subsidies.

'The whole notion of trying to reduce greenhouse gases by burning more fuel doesn't make a lot of sense.'

Al Rosseker, Saskatchewan Trucking Association

the way of greenhouse gas reductions. Reducing efficiency?

"This is a fuel that basically doesn't return the energy that is put in to manufacture it," Rosseker said. "We have to burn more of it because there are some octane issues – it just doesn't burn as hot. So we'll burn more of it to get to the same (mileage)."

As far as using less fuel is concerned, Rosseker says his organization has been trying to get wide-base tires approved at weight parity with duals, since studies have shown that wide-base tires can save 5% or more fuel, depending on the length of the run and other factors.

"The government has balked," he said. "They will allow the tires here at lower weights, but that sort of defeats the purpose."

Companies such as Michelin, whose research is "pretty extensive," Rosseker said, should be taken seriously, but "either the government has to do their own research or maybe they just don't believe Michelin, but they're not convinced that wide-base tires at parity is a good thing."

As for reducing greenhouses gases, which some enviro-conscious folks might say is worth paying a little extra money, "it's a bit of a wave that's going across Canada," Rosseker admit-

He pointed to the New West Partnership as having been a boon in terms of harmonizing regulations, weights, dimensions and the like, "so there's certainly been an upside for us and we're happy with that. And we're always meeting with government to try and get some more changes made, but in terms of biodiesel we were sort of on the outside looking in. It's really been handled by the environment department and I guess we didn't have as strong a liaison with that department as we might have needed."

If he'd had the opportunity, Rosseker might have advised the government to introduce biodiesel in a way that makes more sense to the industry. For example, instead of mandating an average of a 2% bio-component, he'd rather have seen the 2% figure as a hard rule.

"Give us consistency," he said. "Don't give us 'In the summer it might be 5% and it might be up to 7% in British Columbia.' These engines are tuned to certain specs."

And that opens another potential can of worms.

"You buy a Class 8 truck and it has a diesel engine in it that's spec'd to certain things," Rosseker said. "And if all of a sudden you're using the wrong kind of fuel or some kind of wrong component, they're basically going to take that motor apart and say the motor blew up because you didn't follow the rules and they won't give you warranty."

Rosseker also wants to see a level playing field where governments don't pick winners and losers – whether through subsidies, exemptions, or whatever – that could leave the trucking industry on the short end of the biofuel stick.

"We're hopeful that the farmers and the railways aren't going to be exempted from using it," he said. Otherwise, "that's a real tilt on the playing field – to start implementing policy that is sort of directed at certain sectors. We understand that the railways have gotten an exemption in British Columbia and we don't think that's a good idea."

He's also worried about a possible slippery slope, that the 2% figure may merely be the opening salvo.

"Two per cent's the wedge," he said. "Once they start thinking that they need more farm subsidies here – cause there's votes out there – they can start jacking it up."

Rosseker also questions the timing of the current mandate. "We're still trying to climb out of the recession here," he said. "It's certainly getting better, but then you have horrendous flooding in Manitoba – something like a 300-year flood – which shuts down roads that means trucks don't move, commodities don't move and products don't move."

Bottom line for Rosseker is that the issue isn't being handled well at all.

"We're all in favour of reducing fuel consumption and fuel costs," he said. "In fact, any time we can eke out a saving, whether with aerodynamics or with wide-base tires, we're all for it. But we just don't see this form of biofuel as a solution."

If government must bring in such a mandate, he said, "Give us a biofuel that you can guarantee performance, that you can guarantee the supply across Canada, and that you can guarantee consistency across Canada. That's what we're asking for." □

Environmental Saviour:

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Like it or not, it appears that biofuels are here to stay. The move to embrace them is driven by a desire by some to reduce those pesky greenhouse gases and extend a finite petroleum supply, thereby also decreasing North America's dependence on foreign powers that may not have our best interests at heart.

The transportation industry, therefore, must get used to the concept of biodiesel. But according to one expert, it may not be as onerous as it may seem – and there could even be legitimate benefits.

“The transport industry has been squeezed with fluctuating fuel prices and changing engine technologies,” admits Adam Gagnon, transportation and energy efficiency program manager for Climate Change Central, or C3. C3 bills itself as “An Alberta-based, not-for-profit organization with a vision of a world powered by efficiency and clean energy.” C3 runs the Alberta government-funded Trucks of Tomorrow program of education and cash rebates meant to help the industry adopt aerodynamic and fuel-efficient technologies that will “cut costs and curb emissions.”

Gagnon is bullish on biodiesel, and says the trucking industry needn't worry about it because it shouldn't really change the way it works.

“There are standards for the pure fuel and its blends with diesel,” Gagnon says, “all of which are set by the Canadian General Standards Board,” which he says has petroleum people and experts from related areas on it. Gagnon points to quality standards that guide the pure fuel as it's mixed with diesel and recommends fleet managers visit www.biofleet.net for answers to questions such as how it performs in the cold, how it works with the equipment, etc. “We tried to tailor (the Web site) specifically to fleet managers,” he says.

As for the question of compatibility with equipment, Gagnon says biodiesel isn't an issue at low blends.

“Essentially, the fuel is compatible with all diesel engines. You can run at varying blends and it puts out almost exactly the same amount of energy (as regular diesel).”

Not that there isn't a slight difference, however. “Biodiesel has better lubricity than regular diesel,” he says. “Lubricating injection pumps, and the chemical formula also contains some oxygen, which means it's kind of like adding a bit more turbo, in that you've got a little bit more oxygen in there to help the fuel burn.”

That's why biodiesel burns a little cleaner than straight diesel, Gagnon says. “Instead of just containing hydrocarbons and getting oxygen from the air, there's a little bit of oxygen in the fuel itself. As a result, there's a little less energy in the fuel, but the net result is that at blends up to B5 you basically can't tell the difference in terms of mileage, power, torque, that sort of thing,” he insists.

The fact that biodiesel also has higher cetane – a liquid hydrocarbon you'd generally find in a fuel additive – means it's also a little quicker to combust. Because of that, Gagnon says, biodiesel should actually be better than normal fuel for

starting in the cold.

“The flame front will start a little quicker and has a little more time to burn completely in the combustion event,” he says.

As for biodiesel's mileage compared with conventional fuel, “If you get into really high blends, like B100,” Gagnon says, “you may notice a slight decrease in mileage, but no one's going to be running on that. What we're talking about in the marketplace is low level blends – up to B5.”

So will such premium performance mean premium pricing?

“That remains to be seen,” Gagnon admits. “When the federal government put out their renewable fuel regulation, they had to do a regulatory impact assessment, and their statement on that is that any (cost) change in the marketplace is likely not to be noticed among the day-to-day variability of fuel prices.”

In other words, prices fluctuate already, and biodiesel shouldn't make them fluctuate any higher.

If fleet owners can expect no drop-off in performance and no real increase in prices, that would seem like a win-win. “It seems to be that way,” Gagnon says. “If someone wanted to do a dyno test and dial it right in to half a per cent difference, there might be a difference theoretically, but for all practical purposes you're talking about the same mileage, power – and price-wise, it ought to come out relatively transparent.”

As for the state of the fuel itself, Gagnon says it appears quite rosy in Alberta, which already boasts a number of producers and prospective producers. “Economics will dictate how everything rolls out,” he says, “and whether all the plants that are now planned actually get built in Alberta. It all has to do with commodity markets, fuel markets and whether or not

and they had Environment Canada weather station data – every time they passed by a station they got all the downloads digitally from all that stuff and they could compare it all in a database.” (The report can be downloaded from www.biofleet.net).

“It's actually an interesting arrangement,” Gagnon notes, “because Alberta's renewable fuel requirement places the onus on fuel suppliers to include a percentage of biofuel, and when you link a biofuel company with a trucking company, there's actually the potential to capture compliance units for using higher level blends.”

Compliance units are like receipts, providing proof of having put biofuel into the market. Gagnon says the trucking company used B10 year-round and the results of the trial show “there can be economic value in over-complying with the regulations, because the fuel supplier can sell compliance units to somebody else who needs them.”

As for supply and demand, Gagnon estimates that if all the members of the Alberta Biodiesel Association built plants and operated them to capacity, they'd produce more than enough biodiesel to supply the entire Canadian market. “So Alberta has the potential to be a real powerhouse in terms of producing and exporting biodiesel,” he says. Creating motor vehicle fuel from agricultural product has some people wondering about what that could do to food prices or availability, but Gagnon says that's a non-issue. “The truth is that we're talking about commodities,” he says. “Some of the newer oil seeds that are used for biodiesel production can be grown in more marginal soils that aren't good enough to be producing foodstuffs, land that's now used as fallow, grazing, or whatever.”

And oil seeds such as Pennycress (a “stinkweed” kind of thing) and mustard seed that are coming onto the market could expand the production of biodiesel without affecting the food

whether it be from public roads, university research, etc.”

Gagnon points out that governments putting up “seed” money is a longstanding approach for economic development.

“Alberta's \$239 million bio-energy plan started about five years ago,” he notes, “and it recognized that building a biofuel industry in the province would require some R&D, as well as investment in plants to help get that part of the industry off the ground.”

Since it's a new industry and it needs to attract investment, Gagnon says, putting some government money into it levels out the risk and makes it more attractive for investment to come to Alberta – when otherwise it might go where conditions are more attractive. Besides, he says, the government also sees the potential for revenue generation from the new industry down the road, through taxes.

“We're still in the process of trying to show that the economics are good enough on the heels of the recession,” Gagnon says. “These are big plants – we're talking hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of investments for each one. Money has become more scarce, and more expensive, and that's been challenging, so the government is trying to help get this off the ground.”

It's also a competitive issue, Gagnon says, because the industry is subsidized in the US. “If we're going to use biofuels here for the same kind of reason – greenhouse gas reduction, energy security and all that good stuff – we have to compete with fuel from the US. Up to now, the American supply of biodiesel has traditionally been less expensive and more easily accessed in the west and that's why a lot of fuel is coming in from the US.”

Gagnon says the production incentives are designed to decrease over time until they're eventually gone. “In B.C., for example,” he points out, “in trying to get biodiesel and ethanol off the ground, they removed the fuel tax on the renewable parts, until they got to a point where it looked like they had an industry, then slowly put the tax back on.”

That appears to have rubbed some B.C. truckers the wrong way, however.

“For a while it was cheaper to have higher blends of biodiesel at the pump in B.C.,” Gagnon admits, “and so some trucking companies were using higher blends, like B20, B40, because it was cheaper than diesel. Then they put the tax back on and the prices went up. Nobody likes it when their costs go up.”

Gagnon's message to the industry is that renewable fuel standards are coming into force across the country and they might as well get used to it – but not to worry about it too much.

“It's happening,” he says. “But there's been a lot of work done here and in the States about understanding its performance. The fuel that's sold in Alberta is going to have the same winter cloud point as the diesel that's currently sold here, and it'll be the same with all the other provinces.”

In short, the same basic rules apply as with conventional fuel. “Don't contaminate your fuel, don't use summer fuel in the winter, obviously,” Gagnon says. “Don't let water get in, all those things. But essentially any fuel containers that meet spec' are going to be fine for the new biodiesel component.” □

‘The fuel that's sold in Alberta is going to have the same winter cloud point as the diesel that's currently sold here.’

Adam Gagnon, Climate Change Central

it makes sense to do it here.”

Gagnon says it makes sense to make the fuel locally because, if you're going to require the use of renewable fuel, “you presume that it should be coming from (here) as well.” That said, however, the regulations for renewable fuels can't demand it be “locally grown,” lest the World Trade Organization strike them down.

Western Biodiesel, a producer in High River (south of Calgary), has been producing biodiesel mostly based on tallow (as opposed to canola or soy-based biodiesel), Gagnon says. He also points to Kyoto Fuels in Lethbridge, which he says has a partnership with a trucking company there to produce fuel for its use.

Gagnon says the trucking company participated in a demonstration project funded partially by the province to prove the concept.

“They were totally transparent as to how it worked, how it ran through the winter, in cold weather operation,

supply, he says.

While he admits there's only so much tillable land on the Earth, Gagnon says there are actually more oilseeds and grains worldwide than there is demand. The problem with people around the world starving to death, he says, has more to do with our trade systems and “our ability to get food into the hands of people who are hungry and don't have money. There's not just a simple answer, but there is potential for expanding the production of these commodities.”

Which begs the question of why then, if the future of oilseeds for biofuels is so rosy, farmers need subsidies to start growing them, and companies need tax dollars to build their soon-to-be-profitable plants?

“The challenge is getting it up and running,” Gagnon says. “You're starting a whole new industry from scratch and it's competing with a mature industry (oil and gas) that has been supported pretty heavily in many different ways over a long period of time,

EQUIPMENT

Ontario fleet pleased with Cat CT660's performance in the pit



CAT ON CAT: Caterpillar expects its CT660 vocational truck to complement its other heavy equipment offerings in a range of applications including aggregates and roadbuilding.

Photo by James Menzies

Continued from page 1

they chose us to represent them in Canada," he told *Truck West* during a recent visit to the company's facility north of Toronto. "There are a lot bigger fleets and a lot of other fleets across Canada that could have been doing the same thing we're doing, but they chose us and we were quite pleased to be a part of it."

J.F. Kitching & Son just took delivery of its CT660 about 30 days ago, but Mike Kitching and longtime mechanic Bruce Daily have been involved in the design process since long before the truck was first unveiled to the public in March.

"I went down to Peoria, Ill. with our mechanic – who's been with us for 42 years – and we gave our input on some of the designs and modifications they could make on the truck to improve it for the drivers and mechanics," Mike Kitching recalled. Suggestions like stainless steel door hinges and the placement of certain controls were adopted by Caterpillar. The company also provided valuable input on preventing corrosion, which is something J.F. Kitching & Son is no stranger to, as a transporter of road salt in the wintertime.

Ken Robinson was chosen as the dedicated driver of the Cat CT660, because he's been a longtime employee and has earned the reputation of being a straight shooter.

"He tells it like it is and that's what you want," Grant Kitching said.

Robinson was happy to oblige.

"I thought 'I'll take it,' because there are none of them around," Robinson told me as he geared down and slowly descended into Kitching's gravel pit, Bachman Turner Overdrive's 'Let it Ride' appropriately playing on the truck's radio. "I like the big ugly hood (of classic-styled trucks), so it took some getting used to. But the visibility

really got me and it's so driver-friendly. That makes a big difference to me."

Robinson's former truck was a Pete 379 and he admitted he's still warming up to the Cat's sloped hood. But he does appreciate the visibility and he loves the dash layout.

"All your main gauges are right there," he said, gesturing to the dash console. "When you're driving straight down the road, you can see everything – you don't have to turn your head."

He loves the fact Caterpillar has combined the speedometer and tach into a single gauge.

"Awesome," he said when asked about that unique attribute. He also likes the attention the CT660 is

getting on the road.

"People are always asking about it," he said. "Whenever you stop for coffee, they want to look inside it." He has even seen drivers lower their windows to take pictures of the truck as they passed it on the highway.

Kitching's Cat CT660 has an 18-speed transmission paired with Cat's CT13 engine. It can also be spec'd with Caterpillar's CX31 automatic transmission, but Mike Kitching said the company spec'd an 18-speed manual to allow for more accurate comparisons to existing vehicles in its fleet.

While Robinson cares for the truck as though it's his own and repairs have



ONE GAUGE: Cat has combined the tach and speedometer.

not been necessary, Grant Kitching admitted the three-piece bumper and composite plastic fender panels should help lower repair costs.

"Those big one-piece chrome bumpers are expensive," agreed Lynne Paxton, Grant's daughter and an office manager focusing on health and safety.

J.F. Kitching & Son's CT660 is not yet broken in, but so far Robinson is averaging about 5.5 mpg hauling 37,600 kgs of payload, which is good for the duty cycle, Mike Kitching said. Does that mean the fleet will be ordering a lot more Caterpillars in the future?

"At this stage, we don't want to commit," said Grant Kitching. "In all fairness, we've had good luck with Kenworth and Peterbilt as well. It really is a test. If you ask us that question a few months from now or a year from now, we'll be better qualified to answer."

For now, the company is in regular contact with Caterpillar engineers to provide feedback and suggestions on how the truck can be improved. There have been no major performance issues; just small glitches that have been quickly addressed by local dealer Toromont Cat.

"They're quick to respond if there has been any issue at all," said Paxton.

J.F. Kitching & Son was founded in 1946 by Grant's parents, John and Elma. It started out with a few trucks, backhoes and excavators. The company moved into its current home on Kennedy Road in Queensville, Ont. in 1969 and today runs nearly 50 trucks, delivering product from its expansive gravel pit to local landscapers and construction firms. In recent years, the company has diversified, adding live-bottom trailers and flatdecks to its fleet in an effort to keep its drivers busy year-round.

Drivers are paid by the hour and home every night, resulting in a content workforce with very little turnover, noted Paxton. Drivers also appreciate the quality of the equipment; trucks are replaced every five years, which is extraordinary in the vocational segment. Robinson, one of the company's many long-serving drivers, has been with J.F. Kitching & Son for 17 years. "I came here to work part-time," he recalled. "They treat me like gold and I've stayed here. I don't plan on leaving."

Grant and his wife Betsy are very much involved in the company today, as well as their children Mike and John Kitching and Lynne Paxton. A fourth generation recently started working there as well; two of John's sons and Lynne's daughter are now J.F. Kitching & Son employees. □

Cat to give away CT660

PEORIA, Ill. – Vocational truck owners hoping to be among the first to get behind the wheel of the new Cat CT660 vocational truck have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when Caterpillar launches its 'Win a Cat Truck' contest on Aug. 1.

One winner, chosen through online voting, will be presented with a brand new CT660.

To enter the contest, individuals must submit a video, essay or audio recording describing the vocational application in which they work and explaining how owning a new Cat CT660 will make them more successful. Submissions will be accepted at DriveCat.com between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30.

"We hope people will have fun with their entries," said George Taylor, director of Caterpillar's global on-highway truck group. "Some entrants may want to show us their work environments, their existing trucks or their plans for the new CT660. Others may choose to get their families and co-workers involved or prove they're Caterpillar's number one fan. We're excited to see how creative people get with their submissions."

According to Taylor, creativity is important because online voting ultimately will determine the winner. Between Oct. 1 and Oct. 15, visitors to DriveCat.com will be able to view all the submissions and vote for their favourite. On Nov. 1, the entrant who receives the most online votes will be named the grand prize winner – and will receive a new Cat truck. The winner will choose either a CT660 dump truck or day cab tractor painted in Cat Yellow.

For more information, visit DriveCat.com. □



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SAFETY

Expanding our hiring horizons

There is a good reason why many fleets have turned to family farms in the search for future truck drivers. Those who grow up in these surroundings are obviously familiar with heavy equipment, know how to work independently, and are often anxious to explore life beyond the fields.

But while family farms might continue to be a valuable source of potential employees, there is no mistaking the fact that this pool of workers continues to shrink. Only one in 46 Canadians now lives on a farm, according to Statistics Canada. Compare this to the one in three who lived there in 1931. It is hardly the only recruiting challenge for a modern trucking industry. As the shortage of qualified drivers intensifies, fleets also need to find job candidates who can manage information, electronic tools and the stresses of just-in-time delivery schedules.

But progressive carriers have been answering these challenges by expanding their searches and reaching out to under-represented demographic groups.

A number of tradespeople offer a perfect example of those who could be a perfect fit for careers in trucking. Carpenters and electricians are often attracted to jobs where they can work independently, and those in the construction industry might also be very familiar with heavy equipment. These candidates may not be ready to abandon their existing careers altogether, but carriers are often able to hire people who are looking for work during another industry's seasonal downturns.

Of course, there are still some risks when reaching out to people who work in other businesses. Many of the laid-off automotive workers who accepted trucking jobs during the recent economic downturn simply returned to their jobs on the assembly line as the economy recovered. Those who want to retain employees with these backgrounds might need to re-examine everything from their schedules to career paths.

But there are some distinct advantages to reaching out to different demographic groups. Younger workers, for example, tend to be very comfortable with electronic tools and communications systems. That means they are quicker to embrace new technology used to generate bills of lading, communications equipment, or electronic on-board recorders. These skills are so valuable that some fleets are even exploring different routes and schedules to attract and retain their younger workers who place a high value on their personal time.

A long list of cultural groups is also earning some well-deserved attention. Fleets in southwestern Ontario have certainly been able to attract many drivers from Poland and Russia, and several communities such as Vancouver, B.C. and Brampton, Ont. are recruiting a growing number of employees from regions such as Asia and the Middle East.

Existing workers from any cultural group can be a great resource when trying to reach out to people in their respective communities. Some fleets even offer their multicultural ambas-



Ask the Expert

JIM MCMILLAN

sadors a signing bonus for attracting new drivers who stay on the job for a specific period of time.

The companies that actually extend their recruiting efforts to other countries have discovered another benefit: the successful job candidates who are prepared to move to another part of the world will obviously be dedicated to their new jobs.

Fleets that have been successful in retaining these workers usually take steps to address a few unique needs. Someone who is recruited from another country, for example, might need some help to improve

their language skills or even adjust to life in Canada. Those who leave their families and friends behind in the search for a new career may also need support from other resources in their cultural communities.

The under-represented groups are not limited to different cultures and business backgrounds, either. Women, for example, are largely absent from the world of truck drivers.

Companies have been able to reach out to more female job candidates by investing in equipment like automatic transmissions which reduce some of the job's traditional physical demands. Revised schedules and local routes have made a difference of their own, particularly among those who have young families at home.

Regardless of the demographic group that a recruiter might explore,

it's the targeted retention efforts that can help to keep these new hires behind the wheel. Trained mentors and coaches will be better equipped to understand and address any group's unique needs, and help anyone prepare for life on the road. The added focus may involve some new thinking, but it will give any fleet a competitive edge in the search for the industry's next generation of drivers. □

— This month's expert is Jim McMillan. Jim is a senior advisor with Markel Safety and Training Services. Jim has served the trucking industry for over 40 years and has been with Markel for the last 23 years. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Markel is the country's largest trucking insurer providing more than 50 years of continuous service to the transportation industry.

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A huge thank-you goes out to all those who participated in, sponsored and donated prizes to the 6th annual Truck News/ Chevron charity golf event which took place at Wooden Sticks on June 7. Once again, the event exceeded our expectations. Things got off to a very good start by selling out well before the early bird deadline. For the first time, we had a waiting list. Sorry to all of those who didn't get the chance to play. Don't forget to register early next year to secure your spot!

Although all of the weather forecasters predicted rain for the big day, we lucked out and had sunshine all day long. This must have boosted the giving spirit in people because, with our silent auction, live auction and grand prize draw added to the sponsorships, we raised \$22,036.75!! This puts us at a total of \$83,480.00 raised for children's charities during the past six years.

This year, our goal was to send Nathan, a courageous six-year-old who is battling Sickle Cell Disease on his dream vacation to Disney World. Thanks to everyone who contributed, his wish will be granted. We are also able to grant the wishes of two other children!

At this year's awards banquet, we were fortunate to have a few special guests join us. Anthony, the child we sponsored last year, and his family came out to thank us for the wonderful trip we granted them and to tell us about their most excellent adventure. When you get the chance to meet the children you are helping and see the joy in their faces as they talk about their trip and how much fun they had, it becomes abundantly clear how important our fund-raising efforts are. So, thank you again to everyone who helped make the day such a success!



CANADA

A DEF delivery dilemma

Measurement Canada has approved just two meters for bulk delivery of diesel exhaust fluid. So why is DEF so widely available in bulk form?

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Canadian fleets that have been receiving diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) in bulk form, may have been receiving it illegally with little assurance they were getting the volume they were paying for.

Canadian Weights and Measures (W&M) regulations require fluids distributed by bulk and sold by volume to be measured using a Canadian W&M-approved meter.

“A retailer may legally sell DEF by meter or dispenser only if the device has been authorized by Measurement Canada to do so,” Lauren Hebert, media relations rep with Industry Canada confirmed to *Truck West*.

Pre-packaged product falls under a different set of regulations and does not need to be delivered using a W&M-approved meter, Hebert pointed out. On July 6, Hebert told *Truck West* Measurement Canada had only approved two meters to dispense bulk DEF. Wakefield Canada, manufacturer and distributor of H2Blu diesel exhaust fluid, claims to own the first two meters approved by Measurement Canada.

“We have been working for over a year to get something that would meet the criteria for Weights and Measures,” Don MacKinnon, national transportation service manager with Wakefield Canada told *Truck West*. “We have a unique design and it’s proprietary.”

Until now, Wakefield has not been delivering DEF in bulk, but the company announced internally that it will begin making bulk deliveries in the Ontario region now that its first two meters have been approved by Measurement Canada. Other suppliers, however, have already been advertising the bulk

delivery of DEF and since Wakefield was the first to gain Measurement Canada’s stamp of approval, that raises some questions.

“A lot of (DEF suppliers) are claiming to be able to deliver in bulk and some of them are delivering in bulk, but they don’t have the government-approved equipment to do so,” said Wakefield Canada’s Nikolette Gayk. “Wakefield Canada is the first and only company at this point to have a Weights and Measures-approved meter for delivering bulk DEF, so anybody who’s claiming to do so doesn’t have the approval.”

Measurement Canada requires the use of W&M-approved meters primarily for consumer protection. Each individual meter must be submitted to Measurement Canada for calibration and then periodically inspected. Hebert said “when a device is found to be in compliance with the requirements, a notice of approval is typically issued within 120 calendar days of receipt of the application and all appropriate documentation.”

Customers have good reason to ask their supplier whether it is using W&M-approved devices, Wakefield’s Gayk explained.

“If you’re not accurately measuring the DEF, something else is possibly getting in there,” she pointed out. “If a meter shows the supplier has pumped 1,000 litres but his meter and pump aren’t working properly, it could be that you’ve got 876 litres and the rest of it is air.”

That could go unnoticed if a fleet is using stainless steel tanks, Gayk pointed out. And if a distributor is not using a W&M-certified meter, disputes over volume are difficult to settle.



STAMP OF APPROVAL: The Measurement Canada sticker indicates the meter is certified.

Similar requirements exist in the US, but Canada’s standards are more stringent.

“I know their tolerance is a little different than it is in Canada and that’s why we haven’t been able to bring pumps and meters up from the States,” Gayk said. MacKinnon added “The Canadian government has put a closer tolerance on the requirements for meeting the standards than what is in Europe or the US and this is what has caused the hurdles for everyone that is attempting to be a DEF supplier.”

Now that Wakefield Canada has cleared that hurdle and developed a meter that has finally met with Weights and Measures’ approval (its first meter was rejected the first three times it was submitted for verification), the company has more units awaiting approval.

“I have three more meters set aside to get approved next week,” MacKinnon said. “Once they’re approved, they will be distributed to other regions of the country.”

Eventually, Wakefield Canada plans to have eight W&M-certified meters deployed on delivery vehicles across Canada.

It’s not clear how much demand there has been for the bulk delivery of DEF. An executive with a

major fleet told *Truck West* the company was ordering DEF in totes, so it could be easily stored in its shop.

“We don’t buy bulk, similar to most fleets in Canada because the infrastructure and requirement to heat is too expensive,” he said. “Totes are easy to store in a heated shop or wash bay.”

However, MacKinnon expects demand for bulk DEF to ramp up, and pointed out it can be delivered cost-effectively in bulk form to a fleet’s existing tote, provided it’s suitable.

Fleet customers that have placed bulk orders for DEF should ask their distributor to see the meter and look for an official Measurement Canada certification sticker (pictured). If the sticker isn’t there, MacKinnon warned there’s no way to ensure the DEF is being delivered in a proper manner and that customers are getting what they’ve paid for.

Industry Canada’s Hebert said a database of notices of approval is available on the Measurement Canada Web site.

For their part, Wakefield representatives say customers should be aware that not all equipment used to distribute DEF is appropriate, which could compromise the purity of the product.

“We’ve noticed some suppliers are using aluminum tankers with a meter that is approved for windshield washer fluid and delivering through a hose that’s approved for lubricant,” MacKinnon warned, noting aluminum and rubber can leech into the fluid and contaminate it. The Measurement Canada verification sticker should not be confused with the black American Petroleum Institute label that appears on containers of API-certified DEF.

“The API approval is for the actual fluid itself and that approval does not carry over to the equipment that’s used with it,” said Gayk.

Fleets that have taken bulk deliveries of DEF may want to follow up with their supplier and ask for proof the meters used were W&M-certified, MacKinnon suggested. “The sad reality is there is going to be a lot of people getting into this industry and then leaving this industry and the effect they will have on the market until it sorts itself out could impact the end-user,” he said. “We are trying to guarantee our customers that we will not allow them to be impacted by an inferior method of delivery.” □

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CANADA

Goodbye, Linda

Popular leader of the CTHRC retires

By James Menzies

OTTAWA, Ont. – Having spent the last 16 years helping the Canadian trucking industry come to terms with its human resources-related challenges, Linda Gauthier, the popular executive director of the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council officially retired in early July. But that doesn't mean the avid cyclist will be riding into the sunset.

When *Truck West* caught up with Gauthier for one last interview, she was busy working at home on a project that will provide the European Union with some guidance on how to harmonize driver training and qualification standards across its many member countries. Canada has some experience with this, given the hodgepodge of training standards that exist across its 10 provinces and three territories.

"Because I'm tied with the international project, I'll still be working with the Council and also at some point in time, contacting industry on a number of things," Gauthier said. "I did make a lot of friends and a lot of acquaintances and I will continue to work with these individuals."

Gauthier joined the CTHRC in January 1995, nine months after its formation. Having spent the previous 21 years working for the Red Cross, trucking was a foreign world to her.

"When I was reading the application and the job requirements, one of the items that was listed had to do with grandfathering," she recalled. "It was a term I'd never heard before and I couldn't figure out what it meant."

Gauthier learned early on that the trucking industry had its share of HR-related challenges and she was shocked to learn that triple-digit driver turnover rates were not only common, but generally accepted.

"I remember one of my first meetings was out west, and there were a number of companies sitting around the table. They were some of the more prominent companies in Saskatchewan and Alberta and what struck me was the high level of turnover," Gauthier recalled.

"One of the companies at the time said they had a turnover of 125% and having come from a management position where I knew how difficult it was to hire people and keep people, I thought 'How can these companies operate if they have that high level of turnover?' But it seemed to be an accepted fact; it wasn't something the companies were struggling with. At the time there were a large number of drivers moving from company to company and it was just taken for granted that this was the way the business worked back then."

Gauthier was also cognizant that she had three things working against her as a newcomer to the industry. "One, I was a woman. Two, I was from Ottawa. And three, people perceived me as being government," she recalled.

"But I wasn't discouraged about those kinds of issues. I figured it takes time for people to appreciate the potential the Council could provide and I bided my time quite a bit. I was most

interested in hearing and understanding what the issues were and I hopefully didn't come in there thinking I have the answers to all the issues."

Looking back, Gauthier admitted those early years were at times rocky, and she even wondered if the Council would survive certain challenges around the turn of the century.

"In 2000, we didn't know if the Council was going to survive or not," she admitted. "We didn't have all the support we were expecting to have and government was sitting on the fence. But some people stepped up to the plate and we were able to resolve the issues that existed back then."

While driver turnover remains a challenge in the trucking industry, Gauthier is encouraged by the progress that has been made in recent years.

"HR, for a long time, was a guarded secret," she said. "We didn't tell our competitors what we were doing because it was a competitive advantage. I kept saying to industry, 'You've got to realize, not only are you competing with yourselves, you're competing with every other industry sector and if you don't work together as an industry, you'll be short-changing yourselves.' And I think that has come about."

"We started to see companies focusing on the people issues, not only focusing on the technical aspect of the industry," Gauthier added.

"People spent a lot of time, energy and money on their equipment but when it came to the people side, there was very little investment. Over the years I've seen a change in focus; yes, the equipment is important, but we're coming into this century in terms of how we manage people and we now consider people to be one of our more important assets."

One of the greatest challenges of managing the Council has been to provide useful tools to industry in a timely manner.

"We walk a fine line between identifying the needs the industry has today and being able to address them," Gauthier explained. "When you're depending on government funding, you can't turn yourself around quickly enough, so what you have to do is project far enough ahead of time on what the issues will be and be successful in getting the funding to develop the tools and services required by industry so when they're available, it hits the mark."

She's confident the Council remains in good hands, as she passes the baton to her successor Angela Splinter (see side story).

It seems everyone who has worked with Gauthier in some capacity has kind words about her contributions to the industry.

"It would be difficult to identify anyone who has contributed more to upgrading the profession of truck drivers than Linda Gauthier," Bruce Richards, president of the Private Motor Truck Council told *Truck West*. "Over her 16 years with CTHRC, Linda nurtured and developed an extremely competent staff group who tackled industry issues with enthusiasm and

produced remarkable results."

Roy Craigen, president of Transcom Fleet Services, suggested "While leading CTHRC, Linda advanced the Canadian trucking industry further than anyone else in our industry in the past 10 years."

"She made a lot of individuals, organizations and government departments better during her time at CTHRC," he added.

Gord Peddle, current chair of the Council and an executive with Atlantica Diversified Transportation Systems, said: "She breathes trucking. As a person, she is very patient, strategic and most of all, very kind and considerate."

It's clear Gauthier's personal presence at industry events will be missed as much as her professional contributions.

"I will miss trading stories from the road with her and hearing where her next cycling trip was taking her," said

David Bradley, president and CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance.

The last words go to NRCan's Lynnda Harvey, one half of what she called the "Twin Linda" force that graced the same stage at many industry functions over the years.

"Linda has worked tirelessly for the betterment of drivers and employees of the trucking industry," Harvey said. "While one might think the CTHRC's challenge has been to develop and implement driver training standards, the real challenge has been to educate the industry as to why good HR practices, occupational standards, certification and research are important in the first place. It is thanks to Linda, leading her team of professionals that the industry is waking up, taking down the roadblocks and recognizing the importance of becoming a modern workplace that will be attractive to future employees." □

CTHRC names new executive director

OTTAWA, Ont. – Angela Splinter has been named the new executive director of the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) following a national search by the organization's board of directors.

Splinter has extensive experience in human resources management, particularly in the area of sector council programming. She recently served as the Electricity Sector Council's director of projects and development following six years as a management consultant for councils serving the electrical, mining, automotive repair and contact centre industries. In that time, she worked on projects including national occupational standards, certification and training, labour market information and foreign credentials recognition.

Linda Gauthier, who had served as the Council's executive director, assisted with the transition before formally stepping down in early July.

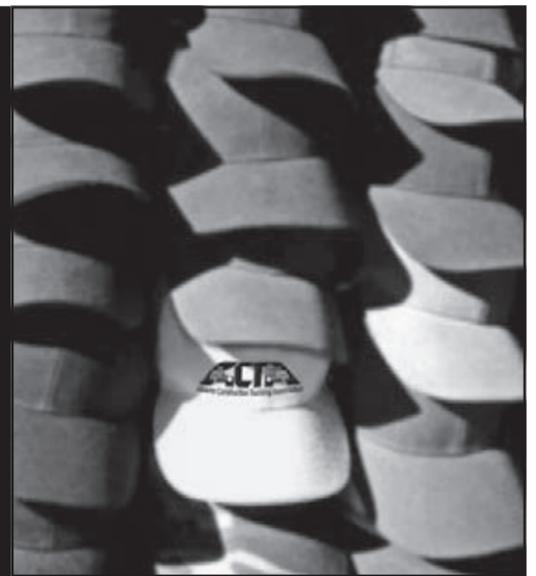
"We are confident that Angela Splinter has the skills to build on the solid foundation established under Linda Gauthier's leadership," said CTHRC board chair Gord Peddle, vice-president and chief operating officer of Atlantica Diversified Transportation Systems. "By finding an executive director with her broad experience, we enjoy the added benefit of a fresh outlook for our programs, services and business practices."

"With half a million workers, the trucking industry continues to play a key role in the Canadian economy. But it faces numerous human resources challenges that threaten the bottom line of every business," Splinter noted, referring to examples such as shortages of qualified workers. "I am thrilled to join the CTHRC team that knows the trucking industry and is committed to addressing these HR needs."

In the coming months, Splinter says she plans to focus her attention on ensuring that the needs of industry stakeholders continue to be met by developing a business plan that will help make the council's new strategic direction a reality. □

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PMTCC CONVENTION

You're tired, take a rest

Praxair's high-tech fatigue management system provides early warnings of driver fatigue

By James Menzies

KING CITY, Ont. – Imagine being able to roll back the clock and speak to a tired driver before they are involved in an accident. A high-tech, real-time fatigue advisory system being tested by Praxair's Canadian fleet is allowing the company to do just that, Bob Miskelly told delegates at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual convention June 24.

The Advisory System for Tired Drivers (ASTID) was developed by the UK Universities of Liverpool and Loughborough. Loughborough University contributed its expertise on the science of sleep and fatigue while Liverpool provided the technical wizardry. The knowledge-based component of the system provides an electronic template predicting hour-by-hour the likelihood of the driver falling asleep, while the hardware consists of a "steering sensory" system that can detect monotonous driving and the steering inputs that are indicative of a drowsy driver.

A small box inside the cab displays a red light when the driver is showing signs of fatigue, accompanied by an 85-decibel alarm in case the light doesn't get the driver's attention. At the same time, an alert is sent to the fleet manager, who can then call the driver and discuss their state of drowsiness and determine whether it's safe for the driver to carry on.

"I want to know at least an hour or two before you are going to fall asleep that you're going to fall asleep," Miskelly explained. The ASTID system provides that opportunity. "Within two minutes (of

an alarm) I have a message on my Blackberry and the driver has 15 minutes to pull over. He's not yet at that stage where he's going to physically nod off, so it gives us the opportunity to have a conversation with that driver prior to him being upside down in a ditch."

Generally, a 20-minute "tire check" break is enough for drivers to recharge and fall back within the system's acceptable level of alertness, however Miskelly said "if his score doesn't reset (after a break), all the breaks in the world won't help him and he needs to take eight or 10 hours."

Praxair's pioneering of the ASTID system is part of an ambitious global fatigue management program called Fit for Duty. Praxair's other operations around the world are testing various technologies. In Brazil, for instance, drivers are required to connect the dots on a computer screen within a prescribed time to prove they're alert enough to begin a driving shift. However, Miskelly notes pre-trip screening has its flaws, as drivers usually get a rush of adrenaline before taking a test. The Canadian ASTID pilot has great promise, however, and Miskelly said the technology could eventually be deployed in Praxair's operations around the world.

The ASTID system is non-intrusive, as the unit sits silently when a driver is not exhibiting signs of fatigue. Miskelly said most drivers have welcomed the technology, however he admitted drivers have occasionally objected to the system's warnings.

"We've had arguments with driv-

ers, but we would rather have those arguments than sitting down with them and saying 'Tell me what you did and why it went over,'" Miskelly said. "A truck that's laid over on its side or a driver that's no longer going to be on this earth, that's a lot harder to deal with."

The ultimate goal, Miskelly said, is to help drivers modify their behaviour to eliminate fatigue on the job. Findings from the test are also prompting Praxair to take a hard look at its own operations and how they can be modified to reduce driver fatigue.

"It may tell us the driver is okay, but the route we're travelling on isn't," Miskelly said.

For example, the ASTID system has found that drivers who start a driving shift during a low point in their circadian rhythm (times when the body is naturally more fatigued, generally from 2-5 a.m. and 2-6 p.m.) are going to be fatigued by the time they reach their next circadian low point. As a result, long-haul drivers travelling routes such as Edmonton-Winnipeg or from Saint John-Montreal are discouraged from setting out during either of their circadian low points, since they are certain to be fatigued before the end of their driving shift. Beginning a driving shift at 4 a.m., for instance, will virtually guarantee the driver is fatigued by 2 p.m., Miskelly indicated.

"This is how we may end up changing the parameters of how we run our business in terms of trying to accommodate fatigue management for drivers," Miskelly said.

Praxair has also found that in most cases, a 20-minute rest period is sufficient to reduce a driver's level of fatigue to within acceptable parameters.

Miskelly said a 20-minute break for every three hours of driving time appears to be effective, but

it also depends on how that downtime is spent.

"We hope maybe they go for a walk and don't load up on French fries and gravy," he said.

The ASTID system isn't perfect. Miskelly said the lights on the unit can be another in-cab distraction, so the fleet has taped over the green and yellow lights that appear when the driver is still alert enough to be driving. And there have been some false reports caused by things like the vehicle drifting in bad weather, however Miskelly said he'd rather follow up on a false alarm than not know about a driver who's fatigued and at risk of an accident.

"It's better to have the phone call to talk about those types of things than other types of things, like where do we send the tow truck?" he reasoned.

Another potential concern for fleets is the cost of the units. Miskelly said they're about \$1,200 each. He also said it's not enough to install the units in the trucks and forget about them; the ASTID system requires constant oversight by management.

The benefits of the program outweigh any of the negatives, Miskelly said, and drivers are also warming up to it; now they have some validation when they call dispatch and say they're too tired to continue.

"That warning light in the cab is support for the driver when calling dispatch to advise that he's fatigued and can't drive anymore," Miskelly said.

He also indicated there has not yet been an instance where a driver reported being fatigued without it first being detected by the system. Miskelly is so optimistic about the effectiveness of ASTID that he is hoping to move beyond the pilot stage and to further deploy the system across the fleet before he retires in August. □

Is there an ROI on driver training?

By James Menzies

KING CITY, Ont. – It's a constant source of frustration for Rick Geller, director of safety and signature services with Markel Insurance. Carrier executives often tell him they're reluctant to invest in driver training programs for fear the driver will move on to another company only to have *them* benefit from the initial training investment. Geller's response is always the same: "Ask yourself what happens if you don't put that training into them and they stay? That's when they're going to hurt you."

Geller was presenting at the recent Private Motor Truck Council of Canada's annual convention on the value of driver training.

Too often, he said, training programs are perceived as an expense when they should really be measured by how much value they bring to the company in the form of reduced accidents, lower insurance premiums and improved bottom line.

"Let's look at training as a capital investment rather than an expense," he implored delegates before providing some pretty convincing evidence on the value of driver training.

Calculating the potential return on

investment for a driver training program begins with fully understanding how much accidents are truly costing your business, Geller said.

"I can't urge you strongly enough to make sure you are capturing all the costs associated with crashes," he said. "It's very important to collect that data and make sure that the cost doesn't get hidden in a maintenance budget."

Even the costs of repairing small dings and scratches should be included in the calculations, Geller pointed out.

In addition to the obvious direct costs – such as towing, equipment and cargo damage, medical bills and payment to injured workers – there's also an assortment of indirect costs, which often get overlooked. Indirect costs can include loss of productivity, the cost of training replacement workers, reputational costs and rising insurance premiums. Geller suggested one way to get a bean-counter's attention is to highlight the true costs of accidents and other mishaps that could be prevented through proper training.

With the trucking industry's notoriously low profit margins, an accident that incurs \$10,000 in hard costs along with \$11,000 in indirect costs would ultimately cost a carrier \$21,000. While

that may seem manageable, Geller point out with profit margins of 3%, a trucking company would have to bring in about \$700,000 in revenue to pay for that one accident.

Put another way, Geller draws comparisons to the well-publicized Tax-Free Day, after which a typical Canadian has paid his or her share of taxes to the government and can begin earning money for themselves, usually occurring in late spring.

"I asked the executive of a large carrier in Atlantic Canada, 'If you think of the revenue you have to generate to pay for the crashes that are going to happen in the next 12 months based on your historical performance, when do you think your Tax-Free Day is?' I suggested to him that he circle May 26 on his calendar, because up to and including May 25 they didn't have a prayer of making a penny, it was all going to covering crashes."

If that doesn't get a CEO's attention, nothing will. But Geller warned it's not a good idea to start rolling out a training initiative without first knowing what problem areas to address. He recalled working with a carrier that was eager to launch a training program to address rollovers.

"When we ran the numbers, about 60% of their losses were actually sideswipe and a few rear-end collisions,"

Geller said. "When we really dug deep into the numbers, almost 50% of their sideswipe and rear-end collisions happened within two miles of their Mississauga terminal because they had a first-in, first-out dispatch system. The first one in got the best load and they had road races going into their terminal."

In that instance, simply changing dispatch methods was enough to significantly lower crash costs. Before starting a training program, Geller suggested researching historical crash data to determine what is driving crash-related losses. He also warned that not all drivers learn the same way, so a mix of in-class, simulator, online and on-road training should be offered.

When a training program is developed or purchased off-the-shelf, the cost of the program should be compared to the actual or projected savings. Almost always, there will be a tangible return on investment, Geller said.

"Training is an investment, it's not a cost," he stressed. "Most companies today claim that their people are their greatest assets but when you look at the effort they put into developing this human capital, you can see it continues to be seen as an expense by most companies and not as a capital investment. It's up to you to turn this around." □

CANADA

Eastern Ontario's top show trucks converge on Stirling

STIRLING, Ont. – Henri Roy's 1988 Peterbilt won the Lions Choice Award for Best of Show at the Stirling Truck Show June 19.

Other winners in a full field of show trucks included: Blayne Speers, 2010 International, Best Owner/Operator

Working Tractor with Sleeper; Chris Scaletta, 2011 International, Best O/O Working Tractor Without Sleeper and Best 2011 or Newer O/O Working Tractor; Todd Holstein, 2011 International; Best 2011 or Newer Company Working Tractor; Than Vermilyea,

1999 International, Best O/O Multi-Axle and Best pre-04 Working Tractor, Conventional; Mark Clifford, 2010 International, Best Company Multi-Axle; Brent Pecarski, 2009 Peterbilt, Best 09-10 Working Tractor; Gilles Robichaud, 2008 Peterbilt, Best 07-08 Working Tractor; Shawn Andrews, 2005 Kenworth, Best 04-06 Working Tractor; Phil Hall, 1999 Peterbilt, Best Cable; Paul Davidson, 1977 Kenworth, Best Vintage Highway Tractor (pre-89), Best Light Show – Combination and Best O/O Tractor-Trailer Combination.

Other winners included: Kirk

McClure, 2009 Kenworth, Best Tractor-Trailer Combination; Bill Kempt, 2008 Kenworth, Best Working Tractor-Dump Trailer Combination; Kevin Hunt, 2000 Western Star, Best Chrome, Best Light Show – Single and Best Professional/Flagship Truck; Mike Roy, 2009 Kenworth, Best Interior; Jason Swan, 2009 Kenworth, Best Tanker Truck; Drain Bros. Excavating, Best Fleet and Best Light Show – Fleet.

Next year's Stirling Truck Show has already been scheduled for June 16-17, 2012 at the Stirling Fairgrounds. □



SINGING FOR A CURE: Anne Finley performed her new song Convoy for a Cure at the Stirling Truck Show in mid-June. She plans to donate proceeds from the song to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation. *Photo by James Menzies*



HOT POTATO: W.D. Potato showcased two classic Kenworths at the Stirling Truck Show. *Photo by James Menzies*

Singing for a cure

By James Menzies

STIRLING, Ont. – Anne Finley still remembers when the song first began to take shape in her head. She was tarping a load last October just two weeks before her participation in the Ontario West version of the Convoy for a Cure when the lyrics came to her.

She scrambled down off the trailer and grabbed her cell phone and quickly recorded the first few verses of what would go on to be Convoy for a Cure – the song.

After securing her load and heading south towards Atlanta, Finley called Bill Petrie, bassist and producer for her band Anne Finley and Bar None.

"I let him know I had this idea for a song and 'I know it's two weeks before the Convoy, but do you think we can pull it together?' He was like 'Hell, yeah – absolutely,'" Finley recalled in an interview with *Truck West* shortly before performing the song at the Stirling Truck Show June 18.

Finley and Petrie hit the studio when she returned to Canada and she played an early version of the recording over the CB radio at the 2010 Ontario West version of Convoy for a Cure. The song was a hit, prompting Finley to return to the studio. A more polished version was released June 28 on CDBaby.ca, with proceeds going to the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation.

From there, she hopes to sell 1,000 downloads which will qualify the song for distribution on

iTunes.

Ultimately, Finley says her goal is to reach 100,000 downloads at a dollar each, which after admin fees are paid to CDBaby.ca and iTunes, would raise about \$71,000 for the Foundation.

"Step one is to get 1,000 downloads on CDBaby and get the song on iTunes so we can make it go viral and raise money for the Foundation," Finley said.

So far, Convoy for a Cure has been performed at the Stirling Truck Show, a few private parties and at last year's Convoy. Already, the song seems to have touched many.

"I had women come up to me at the Convoy with tears in their eyes, saying 'What you are saying in that song is exactly what we should be doing, we should be fighting and we have to figure out a way to solve this,'" Finley said.

When she wrote Convoy for a Cure, Finley was a professional driver with Tandet Dedicated and an Ontario Trucking Association Road Knight. After her Road Knight term ended, Finley hung up the keys so she could spend more time at home with her family. She's now a recruiter with Sunbury Transport when she's not gracing the stage as the lead singer for Anne Finley and the Bar None.

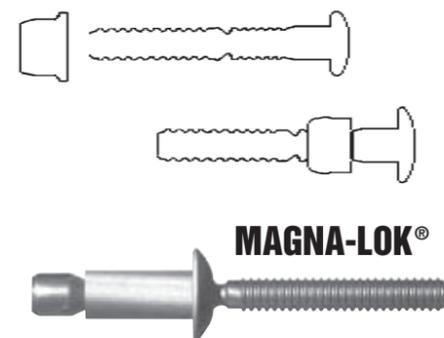
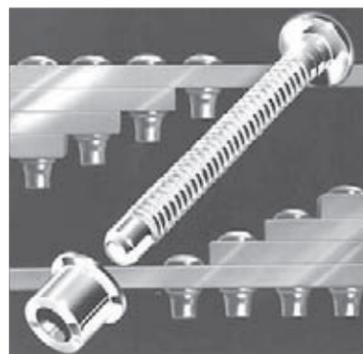
For more information, visit her Web site at www.annefinley.com.

To purchase the latest version of Convoy for a Cure, visit www.CDBaby.ca. □



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OPINION

Will trucking get thrown under the bus?

Our friends in the motor coach business south of the border are in the unenviable position of being tops on FMCSA's hit list these days. A rash of nasty bus crashes over the past couple of years has prompted the US Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to laser focus on passenger carriers.

In recent months, FMCSA has shut down more than a dozen charter bus operators for various and flagrant safety violations.

Mechanical defects do not appear to figure prominently in several recent high profile crashes. Instead, many involve drivers apparently asleep at the wheel or demonstrating extremely poor judgment. And administrative, recordkeeping, and driver credentialing violations that often go unnoticed until the inevitable happens don't cause crashes, but they are harbingers of the quality of the operation.

Bus safety has become such a priority for the agency that it now issues



Voice of the O/O

JOANNE RITCHIE

a press release each time a major enforcement action is taken against a motor coach operator. Whether a justifiable response or one driven by political expediency, it shows that FMCSA is taking this pretty seriously. Today it's the motor coach industry; could it be us tomorrow?

Take hours-of-service. In Canada, our bus industry lives under the same scrutiny as trucking, but I remember in 2004 when FMCSA made a major change to HoS, its bus industry got a bye. FMCSA's reasoning? Publicly, they said the industry didn't have the same pattern of HoS violations as trucking, and was, by and large, safer than trucking.

In reality, the "new" rules were just too restrictive. Taking away the ability to stop the clock during the workday would have devastated tour operators whose stock in trade was delivering a load of people to a venue, sitting around all day, and then driving them home. Bus operators can still stop the clock, and let the driver continue the trip hours later in the day.

Given the number of recent crashes where fatigue was determined to be a critical factor, my guess is the bus people will soon be grappling with a new set of HoS rules. But, I'm straying a bit from my point, which is this: despite an otherwise enviable safety record, the bus industry has come under intense scrutiny because of the actions of a handful of poor drivers.

Just like trucking, the whole industry suffers whenever a few bad apples get into the barrel. Safety groups and the regulators, however, tend not to discriminate. When their political spi-

dey senses start tingling, they get busy making rules that generally apply to everyone.

What has me worried is not so much the performance of the bus operators, but the future safety of trucking if the predicted labour crisis materializes and carriers start grabbing people off the street and throwing barely trained and highly inexperienced drivers into the trucking barrel.

Carriers large and small are already gearing up to deal with what could be an unprecedented driver shortage, and there's some evidence that attitudes toward recruiting and retention are slowly changing. There's a better understanding of the demographic make-up of the Canadian workforce and the variety of attitudes and values out there with respect to careers; there's a refreshing discussion underway about jobs and workplaces that promote better work-life balance. And yes, there's even some talk that driver pay and benefits need to be re-evaluated if we hope to compete with other professions.

At the same time, there are still those cheap, lazy, and greedy carriers out there willing to do anything to make a buck. Some will pick up the driver dregs that good carriers won't hire, others will set up lease-to-own programs for new hires and hook people on the attraction of owning their own truck (which seldom actually happens in such cases). New motor carriers will spring up to meet capacity demands, and among them will surely be carriers – and drivers – who won't meet the safety requirements.

When demand for drivers goes up, more training schools are needed, and we could also see an increase in the number of licence mills churning out poorly trained drivers.

And remember, it will take only a few of these bad apples to taint the whole barrel. I can't think of a better pre-emptive strike against an FMCSA-bus-type scrutiny of trucking than getting our training-and-licensing-standards house in order.

The Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council (CTHRC) is working with industry to address the priority of a good supply of qualified truck drivers. Under its "Closing the Gap" initiative, the licensing requirements of each jurisdiction were analyzed for gaps between these requirements and the National Occupational Standard for entry-level drivers. As a result, many jurisdictions are reviewing their driver licensing standards. Perhaps there's never been a better time to push provinces to look seriously at apprenticeship and mentoring programs to finish driver entry level training to a standard the industry can live with.

With this country's fragmented, multi-jurisdictional responsibilities for training and licensing, it's probably a pipe dream, but I would truly love to see a mandatory driver training requirement in place – before a potential driver ever steps through the door of a testing facility – even if it means additional cost to bring these people into the industry.

We simply can't afford to have an influx of less-than-capable drivers these days – these are the drivers that will end up throwing trucking under the bus. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Any bad apples in your barrel? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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OVER THE ROAD

Healthier eating begins with counting calories in the cab

Recently, I did a trailer switch in Headingley, Man. with one of our Edmonton-based drivers. I thought I would be a nice guy and pick up the tab for dinner.

Dinner was simple, a Caesar salad and coffee for me, a banquet burger with fries and coffee for my buddy.

The quality of the food was so-so and the same goes for the service. With tax and tip it was over \$27 at the truck stop.

If you have to depend on buying all your meals on the road, it's not unreasonable to budget \$30 to \$40 a day for meals, coffee breaks, and snacks.

So if you spend 25 days a month on the road, your monthly budget for food alone would be in the neighbourhood of \$750 to \$1,000 per month.

Like many drivers out here on the road, I pack a lot of my food and spend a little extra time preparing my own meals in the truck, taking the time for a sit-down meal when I'm just too worn-out to bother 'cooking' in the truck.

I'm glad I find some enjoyment in preparing my own meals because I couldn't afford it otherwise. I appreciate that some folks have no interest in cooking or food preparation while on the road.

A lot of people would rather spend what little free time they have doing something else. But



Over the Road

AL GOODHALL

that choice comes at a premium, doesn't it?

And with all the same restaurants and fast food joints in every city and town we stop in, it can be difficult to find any joy in eating a meal.

Tobacco and snack foods play an important role in the course of a day for many drivers.

They are often the source of relief for boredom, fatigue, and stress.

Driving for many hours a day can be mind numbing. Eating and smoking are very effective ways of bringing the mind back to the present moment.

In the past I have been dependent on smokes and snacks for what I felt was a very beneficial purpose, staying alert and calm. Of course the long-term effect is destructive.

It took me a good number of years to come around to the full realization that healthier food choices, sleep, and exercise were a far better combination for combating that mind numbing feeling we more commonly call fatigue.

I had myself convinced that smoking and eating were some-

thing I had to do to get through my day. In fact they had become a crutch and were not a solution to keeping me alert, awake, and stress-free as I went about my daily routine.

But it was hard to break the routine I had fallen into. Besides, I love snack food.

I've never met a nacho cheese Dorito I didn't like, plus I can never eat just one.

It doesn't matter the size of the bag, if it's open and by my side, it's getting emptied. I admit, I have no willpower when it comes to Doritos.

I know many of you have a similar weakness for your own favourite snack. In the past couple of columns I have said that the key for me to making a change in what I eat comes from starting to read food labels.

Doing this very simple thing set me on a path of discovery and understanding about my body, my health, the food I eat, and level of exercise I require.

After I had quit smoking, my weight continued to climb. I was snacking more to compensate for the smoke that wasn't in my mouth.

Knowing that I would continue to gain pounds if I continued to consume more calories than what I was burning off in a day I looked up my Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR).

That is how many calories I require in the course of a normal day. I posted this number up in the truck where it was always in my face.

Back in 2001 that number was about 2,500 calories for a 235-lb male with a sedentary lifestyle.

Then I just started reading those food labels and pretty soon I was calculating in my head what I could and could not eat. It became something of a game I played with myself and it was a great source of motivation.

I started to look for alternative foods that gave me more volume for fewer calories.

This all happened slowly, I didn't try to change my life overnight, I just allowed it to happen in its own way.

I know this sounds a little too simple but that's the beauty of it. Any changes we make to our lifestyle out here on the road must be done in small increments if we want those changes to be lasting and to be permanent.

Making those changes is good for your health and for your pocketbook. □

— 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

Bring on the World Truck

And make bloody sure it has disc brakes

Trucking is a worldwide industry. No matter where you go in the world, trucks move the goods. Even in the third world countries, old trucks have been imported from Asia, Europe or North America to help them feed the population. Conditions vary greatly between countries and continents, so trucks are very different throughout the world, but I don't think they need to be.

I have many years of experience driving European trucks, as a driver, an operator and as a judge of sorts during my tenure as a road tester. Now I'm earning my stripes in a North American truck.

The two are very different beasts, yet they do the same job. In my opinion, one does it better than the other. You guys will agree with me, my former colleagues in Europe will think I'm crazy, but the North American truck is really far better at its job than any other truck on the road.

Each market is very different, so manufacturers tailor the product to match the conditions, but in North America we have run of the mill over-the-road tractor units that, without modification, will withstand a temperature range from 50 below to 50 above, it will run highway speeds or pull mountains, can cope with paved highways or run gravel roads, with a few modifications to gearing they will be able to run heavy haul or we can tear off the bunk and use them as city



You say tomato, I say tomahto

MARK LEE

trucks. All in all they're a very versatile piece of machinery.

Yet a truck built for any other market will be very different. In Europe, South America and Asia the trucks are all different. Not just the look – they mainly run cabovers due to length laws – but under the skin they are different too. They run different engines, sometimes due to emission regulations (don't get me started on that), but more often due to market demand.

This just goes to show one of the problems that we have in this industry: we have a passion for it. We actually have an affection for the huge chunks of metal and we like what we like, but that does hold us all back.

The preferences that we have dictate the trucks we buy, or like to drive. In Europe my preference was for a Scania cabover with a stonking V8. Now I wouldn't have one if they were giving them away. I'm all about the 379 with a big yeller dozer motor under the hood, but I'm selling myself short with this choice. The Pete may be very good, but it's not perfect, not by a long way and there are parts from European, Asian and South American trucks

that would make it a lot better.

If I could make one transplant from my trucking school sweetheart to my current love, it would be the braking system; those drums would be junked in favour of a set of discs all around.

When I first arrived in Canada I was behind the wheel of a big truck before the Timmies I bought at the airport had gone cold.

I pulled out of the yard and when I got to the first stop sign I was shocked to find that the middle pedal didn't work properly.

I pushed it down, it just didn't appear to be connected to the brakes. So I pushed it some more and it slowed down a little. By the time I reached the stop sign I had to do a panic stop. Now if I had used the same pedal pressure on a disc-braked truck I would've been chewing on the steering wheel way before the stop sign.

I do not understand why drum brakes are allowed anywhere near a big truck.

Disc brakes have an answer for every shortcoming the drum brakes have and there are lots of them: they're heavy, they're labour intensive to repair and replace, they're more expensive long-term and worse of all, they contribute to death on the road.

How many rear-end shunts would never have happened if the truck could've stopped quicker? We have government trying to force legislation down our throats, all in the name of safety.

The safety campaigners are calling out for more restrictions to stop us from killing off the human race and yet we're using technology from the days of the horse and cart to stop

our trucks.

We could switch to discs, reduce our stopping distances dramatically and get this lot off of our backs. We'd save some time and money in the process too; it's a no-brainer, surely?

The way I see it, resistance to disc brakes comes from us, the trucking industry. The manufacturers are all talking about vertical integration.

They're all worldwide conglomerates: Daimler is the number one truck producer in every market throughout the world, Paccar has plants in Europe, Volvo is a European company, Navistar has close ties to a European manufacturer that is in bed with another European manufacturer.

As my earlier example proves, under the skin we don't need things to be very different at all.

We want a truck that is reliable, fuel-efficient, easy to maintain, has enough power to do the job, is comfortable and stops when we hit the middle pedal and that can't be any different from what our cousins in Asia, Europe and South America want.

If manufacturers made a World Truck, costs would come down as specific parts could all be made in one place and best of all, they'd need shipping around the world to the local manufacturing plants, so there'd be more freight for us to haul. □

— 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. You can read his blog at www.brandttruck.com/blog.

OPINION

Construction truckers need to get with the (fuel surcharge) program

One of the most pressing issues facing the trucking industry is the spike in fuel prices and the lack of fuel surcharges by a few sectors in the trucking industry. If you can believe it, there are still some sectors of the trucking industry that still don't universally charge a fuel surcharge (FSC), like the construction trucking industry and the dry bulk industry.

These two sectors of the trucking industry have not worked with their sector to establish a fuel surcharge. Most industries work together to protect themselves and their best interests. Not so in some sectors of the trucking industry. They are divided and conquered and cannot see the forest for the trees. The concept is unique to the trucking industry. Not to say everyone in the industry is this way, just 50%-plus.

Increases in fuel prices were absorbed by annual rate increases in the past. Unfortunately that practice doesn't work anymore. When fuel prices rise on a daily basis you must charge a FSC to survive.

In the past year fuel prices have increased by 27% base rack. Try increasing your rates by 27% and see what your customers say. It will be the last load you haul for them.

Quite simply, if you do not have an acceptable FSC in place, you and your company are going out of business soon. There is no way your company can absorb daily fuel price increases.

Your customers and shippers know you must charge an acceptable FSC. They are taking advantage of you by not paying a surcharge. The only reason they are not paying a FSC is because of you. Stand up to them. Until these sectors of the trucking industry get their heads out of the sand there won't be much change any time soon.

The federal government has decided to bring the oil companies, fuel suppliers, refineries, retailers, and wholesalers before parliament to explain how they justify increases in fuel prices.

The trucking industry members should take this opportunity to solicit their MPs and MLAs to review other factors regarding the fuel suppliers, like: how they determine fuel credit limits; payment terms; how they limit the volume you use; and what method do they use when they limit the fuel they sell you when there is a shortage of fuel?

The fuel companies arbitrarily decide what your credit limit will be, what your credit terms will be, and when they can cut you off without notice. They don't care if you may have a driver stranded or what you need to do to get him or her fuel. When they decide to cut you off, they don't have to call and warn you and payment must be in their bank account before they will turn your fuel back on. Some fuel suppliers are worse than others. Some will work with you and others hold you to ransom. It is highly recommended to have more than one supplier to protect yourself if they decide to flex their muscles and cut you off or they run out of fuel.

The fuel suppliers have tightened up their payment terms. I have heard some fuel suppliers require weekly payments. I don't know if that is true, but it makes it tough if your customers' payment practices are 60 to 90 days.



Constructive Dialogue

RON SINGER

How far do you think we would get if we demanded our customers pay us on a weekly basis?

The trucking industry needs to change to effectively deal with this issue. We need to support each other and support the members of our industry that represent us morally and financially. We have to take responsibility for our industry and utilize our strength and unity to make effective changes. □

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

MISSING

NICOLE MORIN
5004-S

D.O.B.: April 01, 1977
Missing since: July 30, 1985
Missing from: Etobicoke, Ontario
Eye Colour: Brown
Hair Colour: Light Brown
Height: 4' 0"
Weight: 56 lbs.



Photo age-enhanced July 2001 to 24 yrs.



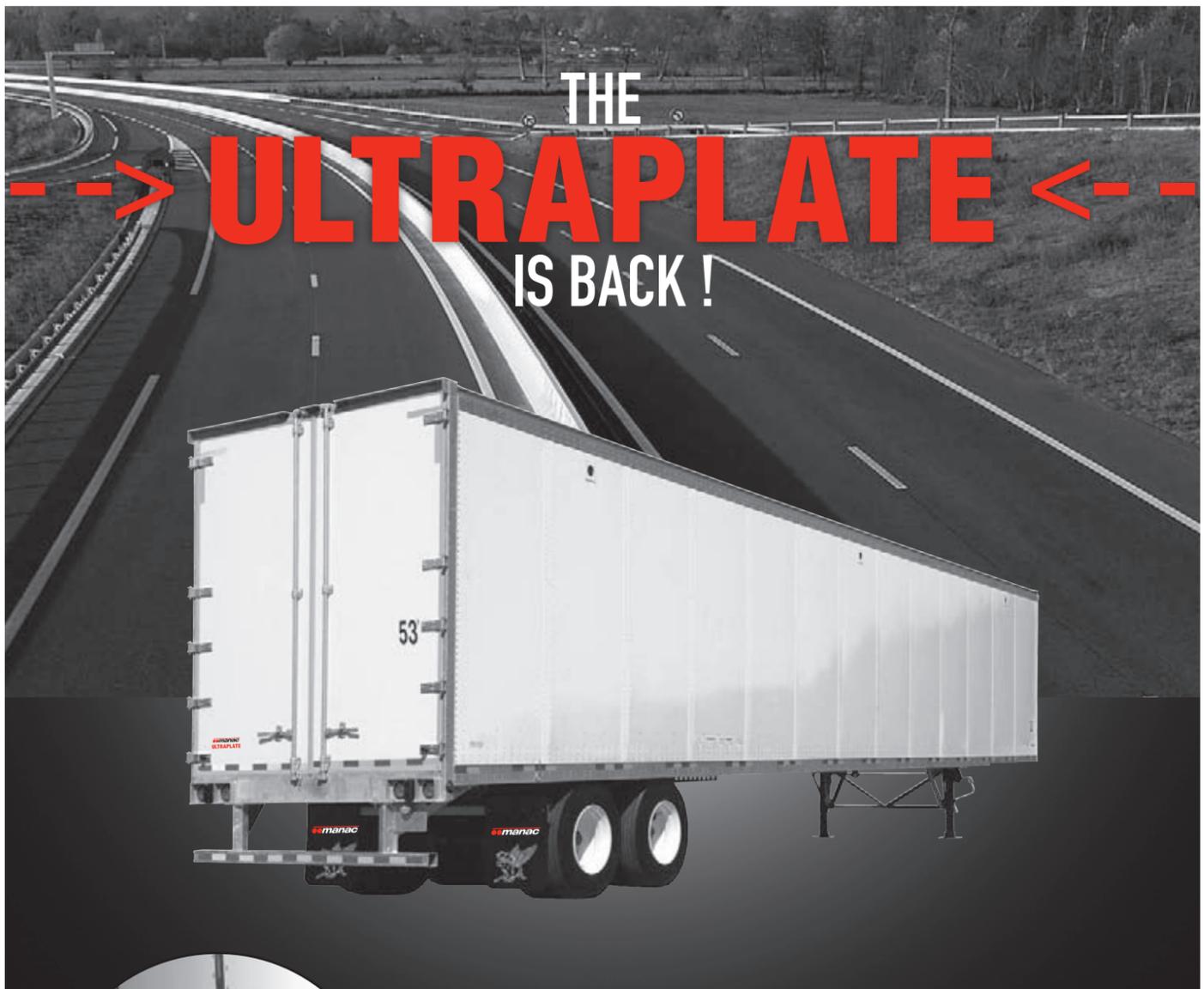
Characteristics: Slim build. Speaks French and English. Nicole was last seen entering the elevator in her West Mall apartment building. She has not been heard from since.

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NEW PRODUCTS

NAL returns to roots, launches roadside assistance program

By James Menzies

LONDON, Ont. – NAL Insurance is returning to its roots and offering a roadside assistance service for truckers.

When it was first founded in the 1950s, NAL was known as National Auto League and as such, it provided roadside assistance to customers of automakers including Lexus, Toyota and BMW. NAL sold that segment of the business in 1998, but recently decided to offer a similar service to the trucking industry.

Glenn Caldwell, vice-president of sales with NAL Insurance, said the company was inspired to create the new service after one of its member owner/operators was badly injured while trying to find a tow truck in the US. The driver was struggling to find a local heavy-duty tow operator and as he paced around the rear of his trailer with the cell phone to his ear, another truck driver who was stopping to help struck the driver and pinned

him against the guardrail.

“He’s lucky to be alive,” Caldwell recalled in an interview with *Truck West*. “The challenge this individual was having was trying to find somebody at the time that could come out and service him. He had made numerous calls but he wasn’t able to find anybody.”

Through its newly formed Truckside Assistance program, NAL has built a network of more than 16,000 service providers throughout Canada and the US, most of which have promised to offer preferred pricing to Truckside members.

“On average, our members can save anywhere from 10-30% and we can get them back on the road two to three hours quicker than if they were trying to get a service provider on their own,” Caldwell said.

He added the service frees up dispatcher resources, as they can simply call one number and then get back to focusing on their reve-

nue-generating activities. Members also enjoy the peace of mind in knowing they are dealing with reputable service providers, Caldwell added.

“When you go to the Internet, you’re basically not sure who you are calling,” he pointed out. “Are you going to get the best possible rate and is this guy going to be out in a short period of time?”

Truckside Assistance offers a single phone number available 24/7 in the US and Canada. Various pricing packages are available, depending on the level of service desired by the fleet or owner/operator.

In addition to roadside assistance, other available services include: accident downtime protection, providing up to \$850 per week while the truck is being repaired; legal protection, reimbursing owner/operators with costs incurred while fighting fines for moving violations; hazardous weather protection, providing payment in the

event O/Os are stranded due to weather events such as avalanches or flooding; and major mechanical breakdown coverage, providing payment to cover hotel bills and/or a rental truck while the O/O’s truck is out of service for major mechanical repairs.

All members also receive \$10,000 driver protection coverage if they are injured while driving a vehicle that’s registered with Truckside Assistance.

Caldwell said the program can be used by fleets as an incentive for owner/operators as well as providing them with assurances owner/operators will be back on the road quickly in the event of a breakdown.

Owner/operators can also purchase coverage on their own. Basic roadside assistance coverage costs \$19.95 per month while comprehensive Premium Membership is available for \$59.95 per month.

For more information, visit www.truckside.ca. □

Goodyear’s DuraSeal technology rolled out to new wide-base tires

AKRON, Ohio – Goodyear has come out with wide-base single drive and trailer tires that combine the company’s Fuel Max technology with its DuraSeal self-sealing properties.

The G392 SSD drive and G394 SST trailer wide-base singles are aimed at long-haul and regional-haul applications, the company announced.

“We feel our new wide-base tires are game-changers in the wide-base tire segment,” said Donn Kramer, director of marketing for Goodyear Commercial Tire. “If a standard wide-base tire hits a nail or other debris and goes flat, there is no limp-home capability, and in about 30% of the cases, the tire deflates to a level where it ruins a \$450 wheel. With Goodyear’s DuraSeal Technology, our customers can now run confidently with wide-base and reap the weight-saving benefits of the tires, while gaining excellent fuel economy and long miles to removal.”

Goodyear’s DuraSeal technology has proven itself in mixed service and trailer tires for several years, the company noted.

When a tire’s tread is punctured, a gel-like inner liner is released to instantly seal holes



GOING WIDE: Goodyear’s DuraSeal technology is now available on its wide-base tires.

up to a quarter inch in diameter. DuraSeal doesn’t fix sidewall punctures.

The newest Goodyear tires are both SmartWay-certified.

“While our line of long-haul dual tires with Fuel Max Technology continues to deliver fuel economy improvements of up to 5% over traditional non-SmartWay-verified tires, there is a segment of the market that wants the weight savings of wide-base,” said Kramer.

“The combination of our G392 and G394 can save more than 1,100 lbs over a dual assembly, and achieve comparable fuel economy numbers to other SmartWay-veri-

fied tires in the marketplace. But, while DuraSeal Technology sets us apart, the tire also offers superior handling characteristics, with optimized tread depth in the drive position and a tread pattern that helps resist irregular wear. All combined, our new wide-base combination provides exceptional performance and value to help drive down cost-per-mile for our customers.”

The G392 SSD drive tire with DuraSeal and Fuel Max technologies features a nine-rib design, with eight wide circumferential grooves providing good traction

in all conditions, the company says. It also boasts a deep 25/32-inch tread depth for long life and a casing designed to prevent irregular wear. It’s available in load range L in a 445/50R22.5 size.

The G394 SST trailer tire with DuraSeal and Fuel Max has a five-rib design, a 12/32-inch tread depth for excellent fuel economy, weight and tread life, the company says. It’s available in load range L in a 445/50R22.5 size.

Matching retreads for both tires will be available beginning in the fourth quarter, Goodyear announced. □

Roadranger offering O/Os extended protection for automated transmissions

GALESBURG, Mich. – Roadranger Marketing is now offering an extended protection plan for its automated transmissions to owner/operators.

The company says the new extended protection plan for owner/operators provides protection after the original factory warranty has run out. Customers can purchase an extra year of protection for linehaul applications, bringing the warranty to a maximum of seven years or 850,000 miles. The plan is available both in the US and Canada.

“In addition to the added warranty period, the automated transmission extender program allows customers to immediately take advantage of the many component and software upgrades Eaton has made in the evolution of its automated transmission technologies,” said Rick Muth, Roadranger Marketing manager for lubricants and extended warranty.

“It’s a great way to limit potential costly repairs and maintain or enhance the residual value of trucks. In addition to trucking professionals that operate their own business, beneficiaries of the program include fleets holding on to their trucks longer than their normal trade-in cycle and dealers with older Eaton automated transmissions in their used truck inventory.”

The program was initially developed for fleets and is available for customers in linehaul applications only. The coverage begins at the point of registration and is transferrable to subsequent owners. It covers the Eaton AutoShift and UltraShift transmissions. □



Western Star launches new suspensions

Western Star has announced it is now offering two new suspension options. A Neway 60,000-lb capacity AD 260 tandem air suspension system is now available on Western Star trucks using Dana D60-190 axles.

The company says it contributes to road-holding and handling and positive axle alignment, eliminating tire hop and providing better traction. The Neway offering is the highest capacity air suspension in the industry, Western Star claims, and it provides predictable

roll stiffness for high center of gravity loads, ideal for front and rear discharge mixers.

Also new is a 40,000-lb TufTrac All-Wheel Drive vocational suspension, available on the Western Star 4800 with 40,000-lb axles.

It’s designed for on- and off-road high articulation operations with bumps, ridges and washboard and will prevent bottoming out. Western Star says the 40,000-lb TufTrac is a more affordable, lighter alternative to the 46,000-lb option. □

FLEET NEWS



READY TO ROLL: Gord Smith, Manitoulin president and CEO (left) joins local Mayor Rod Shaigec (centre) and Doug Smith, chair of Manitoulin Group of Companies in cutting the ribbon at the company's new 100,000 sq.-ft. terminal in Acheson, Alta.

Manitoulin's push west continues

ACHESON, Alta. – Manitoulin Transport celebrated the grand opening of its new 100,000 sq.-ft. terminal in Acheson, Alta. last month. Officials say the terminal will enable “significantly more” shipping capacity for Manitoulin and provide its customers with access to a full suite of transportation services.

“We’re thrilled to open this major new terminal in Acheson,” said Gord Smith, president and CEO of Manitoulin Transport. “This is the latest of a number of major investments Manitoulin Transport has made in recent years in western Canada and demonstrates our commitment to the region. Not only does this new terminal position Manitoulin for future growth in the west, we believe it also helps position Alberta businesses to become more competitive through improved connections across Canada and the rest of the world.”

Manitoulin Transport’s two existing terminals in Edmonton have been consolidated into the new facility and all incumbent personnel have transferred to the new premises at 402-53114 Range Road 262, Acheson Industrial Area.

Officials say the new terminal is one of the largest transportation facilities in western Canada, with a terminal and garage building, including a large freezer and cooler area, situated on 30 acres of land. The extensive property enables over-dimensional shipments to be staged and maneuvered, while the cross-dock terminal boasts 80 dock doors.

“It is very gratifying to see private investment such as this in Alberta,” said Luke Ouellette, Alberta’s Transportation Minister, commenting on the event. “Clearly, Manitoulin Transport recognizes the business opportunities and potential for growth in the region and is positioning itself to serve its customers as they grow.”

“Having access to a reliable, quality carrier, such as Manitoulin Transport and its extensive global network, is essential to local businesses and the future economic growth of the area,” said Parkland County Mayor Rod Shaigec. “We believe this new terminal will significantly benefit the region.” □

Safest private fleets honoured

KING CITY, Ont. – The Private Motor Truck Council of Canada and Zurich Insurance recently awarded three of Canada’s safest private fleets. The winners were selected by an independent panel based on the companies’ overall safety regime and road safety record. Representing large fleets was Home Hardware Stores, represented by national transportation manager Dennis Shantz. This year marks the fourth time Home Hardware has won the award. The fleet currently consists of 132 power units and nearly 500 trailers and delivers 95% of the product sold by its network of 1,080 stores.

The Home Hardware fleet runs about 17 million kilometres a year and has developed thorough written policies for the hiring, orientation and training of drivers. At Home Hardware, driver performance is monitored using on-board recorders and drivers are kept apprised of their perfor-

mance and that of the entire fleet. The company offers bonuses for safe and efficient driving. Home Hardware’s CVOR violation rate is just 10.9%.

John Deere was awarded as the safest medium-sized private fleet, with John Van Geest, manager of depot operations accepting the award. John Deere’s fleet runs cross-border and is FAST-, C-TPAT- and CSA-approved. The fleet has been in operation for 29 years and currently runs 36 tractors and 80 trailers along with some straight trucks. The John Deere fleet runs more than seven million kilometres per year.

Also awarded was Maple Leaf Foods, which was recognized as the fleet with the Most Improved Safety Record. In the last three years, Maple Leaf has worked its CVOR violation rate down from 32% to 22% and its incident per million kilometres rate has gone from 2.11 to 0.6. □

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INDUSTRY

It sure feels like we're on our way back

Well, things are certainly beginning to look up, aren't they? Weather-wise a horrible spring in most parts of the country has been followed by definite signs of the promised warm summer. Shippers are starting to ship and carriers are talking about rate hikes and sounding like they mean it – both signs of a turnaround.

In a tangible way we saw some positive signs of that turnaround during the PMTC's annual conference at the end of June. The number of exhibitors exceeded our going-in expectations and the exhibitors' area was packed with attendees who showed some real interest in what those exhibitors had to offer.

We were also pleased with the apparent loosening of the corporate purse strings as it were, with the number of conference attendees on the rise. This is yet another sign that we are returning to better times.

Along with the variety of exhibitors, our post-conference survey of attendees indicates that they were impressed with the quality of the speakers and the educational forums that were presented. As I've referred to in past columns, continuing education is a must in most industries, but I think it is an imperative in ours, and the seminars covered a variety of topics that are important to fleet operators.

The most recent column that I



Private Links

BRUCE RICHARDS

wrote on the subject of continuing education garnered some interesting responses from readers – and by the way, I do enjoy receiving comments, whether or not you agree with me. In that space I suggested that continuing education is an important, even necessary part of being successful in the trucking industry. There are so many new products and services, rules and regulations that it is entirely possible to be passed by if you're not trying to keep up.

While most responders agreed with my sentiments, some took issue, not so much with the concept of ongoing education, but with the availability of same for all the different positions in the industry. In particular, one reader took the time to suggest that the available training for drivers who may aspire to grow into other positions, was less than satisfactory.

That may be a valid point of view, but only if the driver's employer isn't taking an interest in the ongoing training and development of the driving contingent.

There are a number of programs available for the certification of new drivers, as well as for the on-

going training of experienced ones who may wish to consider another role in the industry. A few examples come to mind:

Truck and other equipment manufacturers are often happy to attend driver meetings to talk about the equipment they provide and to explain how the drivers can get the best out of it.

Natural Resources Canada has some excellent programs – Smart-Driver for example – that teach the best ways to conserve fuel and reduce maintenance.

The Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council has not only developed the Earning Your Wheels program for training new drivers, but has programs designed specifically for owner/operators (currently being updated) and experienced professional drivers. They also have programs to train and upgrade dispatchers and driver trainers that can provide a foundation for drivers who aspire to take on a different career while staying in touch with driving.

Transcom Fleet Services delivers an often sold-out training program for dispatchers and those who aspire to the position. The regularly sold-out nature of this offering indicates clearly that it provides value.

While ultimately the responsibility for seeking out training and upgrading rests with the individual, it is fair to say that employers with

an interest in seeing their people develop should make such information readily available. Companies do it for staff positions all the time and they should demonstrate the same interest in their drivers.

And now to switch gears a little, we at the PMTC would like to offer special congratulations to three accomplished drivers that any of us would want to have as part of our fleet. In June all three were inducted into the PMTC Hall of Fame for Professional Drivers, which is sponsored by Huron Services Group.

Luigi Colosimo of Maple Leaf Foods, John Stell of John Deere, and Claude Rivard of Tona Transport were honoured at induction ceremonies during the PMTC annual conference. Between them they have accumulated 75 years and over 12 million kilometres of accident-free driving. These are outstanding records and each of these gentlemen fully deserves the honour bestowed on them.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution that Linda Gauthier has made to the trucking industry during her sixteen years as executive director of the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council. Linda retired at the end of June with the intention of enjoying more golf and more travel, and we wish her well. □

– *The Private Motor Truck Council is the only national association dedicated to the private trucking community. Direct comments and questions to trucks@pmtc.ca.*

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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Shell Rotella offering warranty on heavy-duty oils

BURLINGTON, Ont. – Shell Rotella is now backing its heavy-duty engine oils with a lubrication limited warranty.

The Shell Rotella Lubrication Limited Warranty, which comes free with the purchase of Shell Rotella T6 full synthetic, Shell Rotella T5 synthetic blend or Shell Rotella Triple Protection heavy-duty engine oils, covers 10 heavy-duty diesel engine parts for do-it-yourself and installed customer oil changes for up to 10 years or 800,000 kilometres.

“Shell Rotella engine oils provide protection to critical en-

gine parts to help maintain and potentially extend engine life,” said Chris Guerrero, global brand manager for Shell Rotella.

“Now our Shell Rotella T6 full synthetic, Shell Rotella T5 synthetic blend and Shell Rotella Triple Protection heavy-duty engine oils offer a lubrication limited warranty, reinforcing what millions of truckers already know – that they can depend on Shell Rotella engine oils now and down the road.”

For more information, visit www.Rotella.com. □

Synergy Design to distribute all-aluminum liftgates

THOMASVILLE, N.C. – Synergy Design and Production has announced it has inked a deal to become the exclusive distributor of AHT all-aluminum liftgates in Canada and the US.

Synergy builds lightweight medium-duty trucks including its SynergyLite Green Truck. Austrian company AHT claims to be the world’s only manufacturer of lightweight, all-aluminum liftgates as well as a manufacturer of hydraulic equipment. It constructs its liftgates of high-tensile aluminum alloy.

“AHT is the only company in the world that manufactures an all-aluminum liftgate. Our partnership with Synergy Design and Production is the perfect combination of their lightweighting strategies and our liftgates. We are proud that they will be our exclusive, authorized distributor in the United States and Canada,” announced AHT president Walter Weber.

“We have been using AHT’s lift-

gates for many years on our patent pending SynergyLite Green Trucks, and coupled with our lightweighting strategies utilizing aluminum and recycled composite materials, AHT liftgates have saved our customers a substantial amount of unneeded weight on their vehicles,” added Ralph Haire, managing partner, Synergy Design. “Compared with steel liftgates you typically see on trucks, AHT’s all-aluminum liftgates help us significantly reduce the weight of the vehicles while still keeping the payloads high, which has saved our customers millions of dollars in fuel costs and other ancillary areas such as eliminating DoT fees. The life-cycle of these trucks is also longer because aluminum does not rust or corrode like steel and wood which also translates to faster ROIs.”

More info on Synergy is available at www.synergydesignand-production.com, while further info on AHT is available at www.aht-mhw.com. □

West Van Inc. now offering shunt truck rentals

TORONTO, Ont. – West Van Inc. has announced it is now offering shunt truck rentals as part of its service offerings.

“With shunt truck rentals added to our fleet, we are able to better ensure our customers have the correct equipment for whatever task is at hand,” said West Van’s Jordan Gladden.

West Van Inc. offers short- and long-term leasing as well as the purchasing and selling of new and used shunt trucks, the company announced.

“Equipment is available that will suit every need and budget,” Gladden said.

The company says it can now provide complete trailer, container chassis and shunt truck rental and sales and support it with a team of mobile mechanics and a 14-bay shop. For more info, visit www.westvaninc.com. □



MINISTER’S AWARD: Chris Deckert (left), president of Flo Components was recently presented with the Minister’s Award for Apprenticeship Training for his company’s support of Ontario apprentices. Presenting the award on June 15 was MPP Linda Jeffrey. The awards are presented each year to companies that demonstrate a commitment to apprenticeship training. Flo was short-listed in late May and named a winner in June. □

EBI opens Canadian office, warehouse

AMHERSTBURG, Ont. – Express Brake International (EBI) has opened a Canadian office and warehouse just south of Windsor to better serve the Canadian market.

Over the past few years, Canadian distributors and customers have been serviced from EBI’s Ocala, Fla. headquarters. The company has also named Scott Deslippe president of EBI Canada.

“With the products coming up from the manufacturing facility in Ocala, Fla., having our Canadian head office and warehouse close to the border just makes sense for us,” said Deslippe. “It allows us to tap into the transportation network passing through on the 401 daily.”

EBI’s current product line consists of the: Xtreme Brake; Xtreme Dust Cover; Xtreme Cam; Brake Alert; and Drum Caddy. Its staple product is the Xtreme Brake, a stainless steel core brake shoe with a non-riveted replacement lining.

“Xtreme Brake has many improvements over the standard riveted shoes, addressing many concerns and offering unmatched performance compared to riveted shoes,” Deslippe said.

“It’s a much safer brake to use with shorter stopping distance, better wear and performance.”

Deslippe said the company has been testing its products in a variety of vocations, including garbage disposal, dry van, aggregate operations and heavy-haul applications.

It has been building a distribution network throughout Ontario and now has its eye on national expansion.

“We will be aggressively working to partner with dealers in every province to achieve coast-to-coast coverage within the next year,” Deslippe said. He added all EBI’s products are built in North America.

For more information, visit www.expressbrake.com or contact Deslippe at 519-796-5919. □

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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.

Later, Mark is in another truck yard and sees a mechanic working on a truck. He talks to the man, helps him with a flashlight and is sure the truck is being repaired. In the morning, he learns the mechanic was stealing parts off the truck...

Mark had never felt more stupid in his life. He'd been an eyewitness to two different parts thefts and he hadn't thought anything was amiss. Two of his fellow owner/operators who worked with razor-thin profit margins had taken a hit that they really didn't have to...if he'd been more on the ball.

What was the saying?: 'Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.'

'Yeah,' Mark thought. 'Shame on me. I'm Mark Dalton, the guy who dupes the other guy. The one who turns the tables on the bad guy, not the gullible one who doesn't even know a crime's taking place right under his nose.'

Mark was on the lookout now. Every mechanic was a criminal in his eyes until proven otherwise. Which got him to thinking, how many stolen parts did he have on his truck at the moment? There had to be a few. If truck parts were being stolen so often, no one could drive for years without having a hot part or two installed on his truck. Hadn't he always opted for the least expensive option? And wasn't it a bit uncanny how some mechanics could always undercut the others not by tens, but by hundreds of dollars? You couldn't really blame drivers for doing everything they could to save some money, but was there really any savings to be had? Sure you'd save a bit on the repair but everyone in the industry is forced to pay more for their insurance.

Just the other day he'd heard someone on the radio talking about car insurance costing more in some cities because there were so many scammers in the area staging accidents and making big medical claims that insurance companies were practically helpless to defend against. Sure, some people win that way, but everyone loses in the long run.

At that moment, a truck yard appeared on his left. It was late in the day instead of the middle of the night, but what did that matter to these brazen

thieves? The more they acted like they belonged, like they were doing an honest repair job, the less someone would suspect they were stealing.

Mark scanned the truck yard and spotted a repair truck tucked into the corner of the yard. It was absolutely the worst repair van he'd ever seen, with a broken window (probably where it had been broken into), four different types of tires and no visible licence plates.

"Ah hah!" he said, as if catching a burglar in the act with the flick of a light switch.

He turned into the yard and slowed as he neared the far corner of the lot. When he reached the mechanic's van, he parked Mother Load, but left her running as he wrote down as much information about the mechanic's van as he could. After he'd made a full page of notes, Mark got out of his truck.

"What's going on?" he said, approaching the Volvo under repair.

"Eh?"

"You making a repair?" Mark said the last word as sarcastically as he knew how.

"Yeah," said the mechanic. "What's it to you?"

"Funny how this truck couldn't be brought to your shop in the middle of the day and you had to fix it here...on site."

"I've been here since six this morning. I didn't think it was going to take me this long." A pause, then: "What the hell does it matter to you? You a cop or something?"

"That would be bad if there was a cop here, right?"

The mechanic finally stopped working on the Volvo and turned to face Mark. He was a large man, with the kind of forearms and hands that had gotten thick and hard from years of wrenching big rigs. He looked upset, like he might use the mallet in his hand on Mark's head.

"Why don't you climb back in your truck and get the hell out of here before one of us gets hurt?"

Mark considered his options. Not only was this guy stealing truck parts, but he was threatening Mark as well. "Alright, I'll leave and let you get back to work."

"Buddy," the man said. "What is your problem?"

Mark decided to leave the question unanswered and climb into Mother Load while he was still in one piece. But, the moment after he exited the yard he dialed 911. As he waited for a call taker to answer he said under his breath, "Let's see how tough you are when you're confronted by the law."



Illustration by Glenn McEvoy

It was late the next day when Mark got a call from the police. He'd expected them to call earlier to ask him to give a statement and talk about his availability for court. But instead of a thank you, Mark got an earful.

"You the guy who called about stolen truck parts?" the cop asked.

"Yes, I am," Mark answered.

"Yeah, well, just so you know, that guy was the company mechanic. His repair truck never leaves the yard, that's why it's in such bad shape."

"He wasn't stealing parts?" Mark asked with a slight laugh.

"No, in fact, he's a part owner of the truck he was working on."

Mark was at a loss as to what to say, but then said, "Good job, officer," and hung up the phone.

As he drove along in silence, Mark wondered what came after 'Fool me three times?' Then it came to him: 'Don't go out in public anymore.'

That night, Mark tried to lift his spirits by having a steak dinner at one of the roadhouses that surrounded the truck yards out by Pearson International Airport. What he needed right now was a thick, juicy steak cooked rare, smothered in mushrooms, with a baked potato and sour cream on the side, a few small carrots and a garden salad...all washed down with two domestic beers and one imported draft.

The meal was delicious, and as he finished the last bit of cheesecake and coffee, Mark truly felt better about things despite the fact that his belly seemed to be at the bursting point. He decided to walk back to Mother Load, figuring

the exercise and fresh air would do him some good.

Fifteen minutes later he was approaching the yard, noticing that there was another repair truck working at the far end of the yard close to where he'd parked.

'Repairman or thief?' Mark wondered. Who could tell anymore? Surely, he couldn't. Best just to ignore the whole thing, crawl into bed and get an early start in the morning.

But the closer Mark got to the mechanic the more sure he became about what was going on.

"Another breakdown, eh?" Mark said.

"Yeah, but I've got a handle on it. Should be done in a minute."

'I bet,' Mark thought. Then, walking away, he said aloud, "Have a nice night."

"Will do."

Mark reached into his pocket and dialed 911. At first, Mark couldn't be sure if the mechanic was legitimate or not, but as he'd gotten closer there had been a few clues that convinced Mark that a theft of truck parts was taking place.

Chief among those clues was the name painted in black and yellow letters on the back of the truck being repaired that read "Mother Load." □

- Mark Dalton returns next month in another exciting adventure.

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



The continuing adventures of *Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator* brought to you by **MICHELIN NORTH AMERICA (CANADA) INC.**



OPINION

Dealing with an iPhone addiction

It's been six months since I purchased my smart phone, so I thought I'd give you an update on my attempt to join the tech revolution.

Fortunately, some very talented IT people support the *Truck West* team. They were kind enough to set up my iPhone and give me a quick overview.

One of the first e-mails I accessed was from a co-worker who congratulated me on making the quantum leap. In the same sentence, she also gave me her condolences.

Little did I know, she was referring to the never-ending 24/7 work shift that I had just signed up for.

Checking e-mails became an addiction. They were the last thing I did before I went to bed and the first thing I did in the morning. My Frosted Flakes had to wait until I checked that all was well in *Truck West* land. I quickly discovered that even at the cottage I could get access. "Hi, my name's Rob and I'm a iPhone-aholic" comes to mind. The company had me and there wasn't anything I could do.

A few days in, I discovered that there's a little e-mail alert icon that tells me how many e-mails are waiting to be viewed. That number stares at you until you tap on it.

Trying to ignore it won't help, since it's only going to get bigger. So I did what every responsible publisher would do; I turned it off.

Kidding, I accessed it and a list of e-mails waiting in the wings

Publisher's Comment

ROB WILKINS



appeared. Opening one from my boss, I find there are problems. It's 5:30 on a Friday so what can I do? Absolutely nothing! Everybody had left for the weekend, enjoying some well-deserved R&R. All I did was ensure that this would sit in the back of my mind and cause me pain and anguish the entire weekend. Damn you, Apple!

I've heard there are physiological similarities between iPhones and slot machines. I suppose it's got something to do with uncovering the unknown. You know, maybe one day one of the dozen messages I receive every week offering to bank some Ivory Coast widow's fortune will be legit. Surely they can't *all* be a bunch of frauds? Note to everyone: they are!

For all of you who suffer the same addiction, the first step in recovery is admitting you have a problem. (Do I sound like Dr. Fraser Crane or what)? Everyone needs some downtime so when it's your turn do the right thing. Turn it off and leave it off. You won't regret it. □

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

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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 _____

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TSQ

MILTON, Ont. – It's not too often that the health issues of an entire industry are in such a poor predicament that it warrants a research project, but that's just what's happened in the world of trucking.

A new research group called the Transportation Industry Health Promotion Research and Policy Planning Group recently conducted a workplace health survey to address health risk factors, working conditions, access to primary health care services and health behaviours among Canadian truck drivers. Perhaps not surprisingly, preventable health and wellness risks such as obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, high blood pressure and tobacco use were found to be all too common among drivers. But what can be done about it? *Truck West* went to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Milton, Ont. to find out what drivers think should be done to address this ever-looming industry issue.

Alfonzo Mendez, a driver with Tri-star Transportation out of Cambridge,



Truck Stop Question *What can be done to help improve the overall health of truck drivers?*

ADAM LEDLOW



Alfonzo Mendez

Ont., says that while drivers spent a disproportionately high amount of time sitting, there are ways to incorporate more physical activity into the job itself. "That is the problem with trucking: you eat and you drive. I do flatbed which is more physical and that

is the reason that I do flatbed," Mendez said, adding that he's lost almost 40 lbs since switching to flatbed work.

If working flatbed isn't an option, Mendez said that it's still possible for drivers to do a number of little things during the workday to help shed those extra pounds.

"Try not to be so sedentary. Park your truck at the far end of the truck parking lot, that way you have to walk. Go for a walk before you go to bed and then go for a walk when you wake up. Change your diet and try not to eat too much fried food and buffets."

Steven Spidle, a driver with County Line Trucking out of Wilmont, N.B., says the high stress levels from a floun-

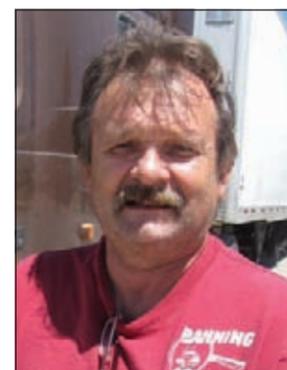


Steven Spidle

dering economy may have played a part in the current health crisis in trucking. "Everyone is trying to make a living and the economy is tighter," he says. "With poor eating habits, when you get stressed you don't pay attention (to what you're eating)."

As for Spidle, he does his best to bring food from home with him in his truck and tries to stick to soups and salads when eating out on the road.

"I try to stay away from as much fried food as I can but I do indulge in French fries now and then which I do like," he says, but adds that sometimes the availability of healthy options at truck stops is poor. "The availability is whatever is available when you decide to stop, and that's all you have to eat."



Jerry Bzdak

Jerry Bzdak, a driver with BZJ Enterprises in Carbon Springs, Fla., says the demanding schedule and lifestyle of a trucker can make getting proper exercise a difficult task – even if your intentions are good.

"It is the type of work – 11 hours sitting and then you are too tired to exercise most of the time. You just go to the back and sleep. Again and again. There is nothing to force you to do any activity," he told *Truck West*. "I see some drivers with bikes, but in our case we are team drivers so we run. I have a Step Master in the truck so when she's driving I do it a little bit, but it doesn't always work. After you drive all night you want to go to sleep. And when you get home you'd rather watch some TV and be at home than go to the gym."

Dan Link, a driver with East Can Transport Services out of St. John's, Nfld., says that with fast food choices being the prevalent choice for truckers when they stop to eat, some of the responsibility should fall on the truck stops' shoulders to provide healthy options. "Truck stops could put a better menu on – healthier stuff – or a fitness centre, though I don't know if anyone would ever use them. I've seen them but I don't know if I've ever seen anyone using them, so that might be a waste of money," he admits.

As for himself, Link has seen his health improve over the past couple of years because of some changes in his workday habits. "I eat a lot healthier than I used to. I have lost a lot of weight in the last couple of years because of it," he says. "My blood pressure is up right now so I'm doing a lot of walking around parking lots just to try and help that out." □



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