

TRUCK WEST

September 2009 Volume 20, Issue 9

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



— Photo by James Menzies

MOTORMANIA: Michael 'Motor' Rosenau wears his heart on his sleeve. The truck enthusiast proudly shows a tattoo of his friend Gord Cooper's 1957 Kenworth. Rosenau was named the 2009 Owner/Operator of the Year at the Fergus Truck Show.

'Living the dream'

Michael 'Motor' Rosenau named Owner/Operator of the Year

By James Menzies

FERGUS, Ont. — It seems appropriate that the prestigious *Truck News/Truck West* Owner/Operator of the Year award went to a guy who's better known by his nickname 'Motor' than his given name.

Michael 'Motor' Rosenau of Calgary, Alta. was named the 2009 *Truck News/Truck West* Owner/Operator of the Year during a special ceremony at the Fergus Truck Show July 24. He was weighed down with prizes including: \$3,000 in cash, a vacation valued at up to \$2,500, a diamond ring fit for a champion, a trip for two to the Fergus Truck Show and an armful of other gifts from the award's sponsors. The award is sponsored by Freightliner, Goodyear and Castrol with supporting sponsors Natural Resources Canada and the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada also contributing.

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Price points

Navistar, Daimler announce 2010 engine pricing.

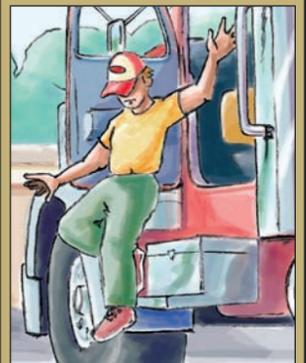


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- **Power in numbers:** Construction truckers in Alberta are struggling like never before. So why are they reluctant to work together through an association? Page 14
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Mark Dalton O/O



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CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

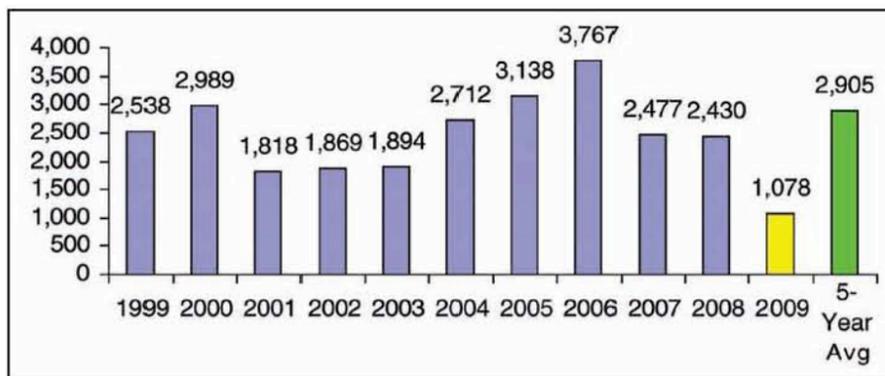
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The blood bath continued in May on the Class 8 sales front. There were just 1,078 Class 8 trucks sold in Canada in May, which was by far the lowest May sales tally for the decade. It was also about 1,800 units off the five-year average. (It should be noted that five-year average includes the industry's peak years of 2004 to 2006.) April's sales of just 1,197 also marked the lowest April sales in a decade. The industry's excess capacity situation combined with an economy that continues to slump is resulting in a significant drop in sales even from last year's lackluster performance and the first five months of 2009 proved even worse than expected.

Monthly Class 8 Sales - May 09

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	293	381
International	270	534
Kenworth	149	412
Mack	82	212
Peterbilt	47	272
Sterling	81	235
Volvo	136	246
Western Star	80	138
TOTALS	1,078	2,430

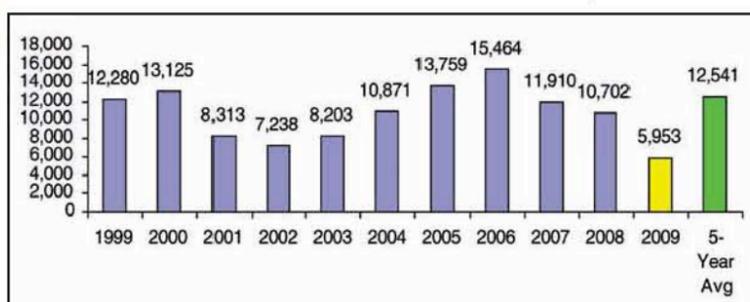
Historical Comparison - May 09 Sales



Class 8 Sales (YTD May 09) by Province and OEM

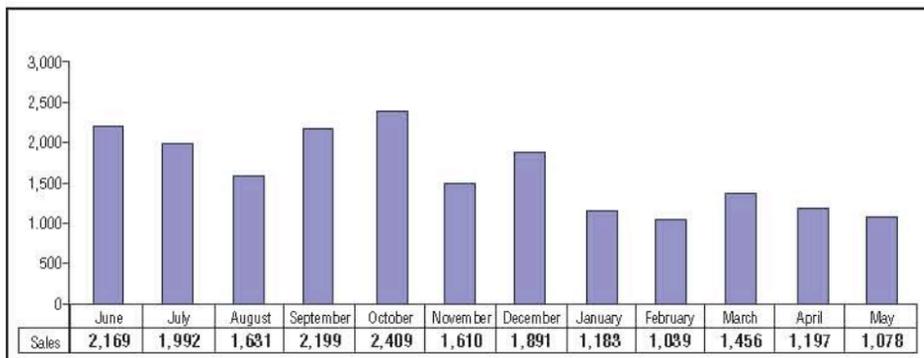
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	69	154	65	81	496	291	92	64	0	3	1,315
Kenworth	77	172	45	37	107	144	18	12	0	0	612
Mack	22	49	44	33	247	60	17	9	0	0	481
International	62	251	34	61	740	412	59	35	10	19	1,683
Peterbilt	29	80	36	17	56	54	12	5	0	0	289
Sterling	63	65	17	5	132	170	17	5	1	3	478
Volvo	33	60	38	104	258	89	22	35	0	2	641
Western Star	49	142	24	19	79	71	30	39	0	1	454
TOTALS	404	973	303	357	2,115	1,291	267	204	11	28	5,953

Historical Comparison - YTD May

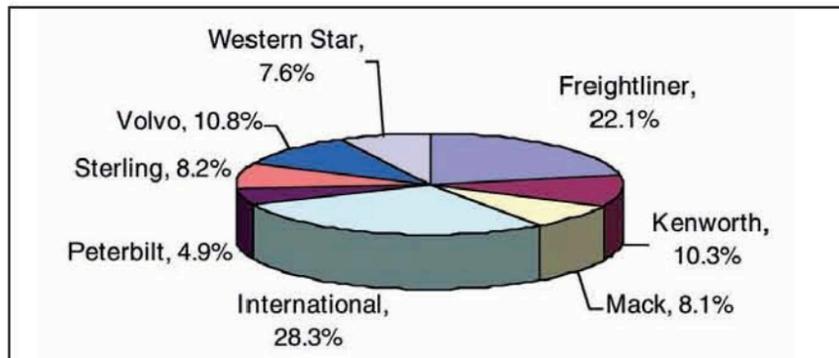


This year's truck sales definitely started off with a whimper. In fact, the first quarter of 2009 has proven to be the quietest first quarter in terms of sales of the past decade, coming in about 100 units below the 2002 total. Just three months into this financially challenging year and sales were more than 2,000 off last year's YTD pace, hardly a banner year in itself, about 3,000 off the five-year YTD average and about 5,000 off the banner year of 2006. And things are looking no better for the start of the second quarter with first April and now May rolling in very anemic numbers. With just 5,953 Class 8 trucks sold year-to-date, 2009 is ranking as the worst sales year of the past decade by a considerable margin.

12 - Month Sales Trends



Market Share Class 8 YTD



Looking back over the past 12-month period and also looking ahead to the conclusion of the second quarter in terms of Class 8 truck sales, it is difficult to feel any confidence for an immediate surge. Sales for the first quarter were anemic and the second quarter is looking worse as an expected uptick in summer freight does not appear likely. Sales have not hit the 2,000 unit mark since October of last year, despite the fact this was supposed to be a pre-buy year. Last year was far from a banner year but April, May and June did show Class 8 truck sales above the 2,000 mark for each of the three months as did September and October.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

International retains its lead in this downward market, controlling 28% of Class sales in the Canadian market YTD. But Freightliner, a former front runner for many years, is at 22% of total sales and appears poised to close the gap. Strong performers Kenworth and Peterbilt continue to fall back considerably so far this year compared to previous years. In fact, Peterbilt is down to just over 5% of the market and Kenworth's share is just over 10%. Volvo is the only truck manufacturer other than Freightliner, International and Kenworth with more than a 10% share of the market.

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TRUCK WEST

September 2009, Volume 20, Issue 9
 Canada Post Canadian Publications
 Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 40069240
 "Return Postage Guaranteed"
12 Concorde Pl., Suite 800, Toronto, Ont., M3C 4J2
 Sales: 416-510-6892 / Editorial: 416-510-6896
 Fax: 416-510-5143

Truck West, USPS 017-178 is published monthly by Business Information Group, a division of BIG Magazines L.P., a leading Canadian information company with interests in daily and community newspapers and B-2-B information services.
 US office of publication: 2424 Niagara Falls Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY 14304-5709. Periodicals Postage Paid at Niagara Falls, NY. US postmaster: Send address changes to Truck West, PO Box 1118, Niagara Falls, NY 14304.
SENIOR PUBLISHER – Rob Wilkins
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER – Kathy Penner
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MANAGING EDITOR – Adam Ledlow
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CIRCULATION ASSISTANT – Anita Singh
CREATIVE – Carolyn Brimer, Beverley Richards
V.P. PUBLISHING – Alex Papanou
PRESIDENT – Bruce Creighton
Circulation inquiries: 416-442-5600 ext. 3553
Change of address: Please include subscription number from mailing label.
Subscription rates: Canada (Includes GST) – One year \$40.60; U.S. – one year \$66.95; foreign – one year \$66.95
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PAP Registration No. 11065
 We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Canada Magazine Fund, towards our editorial costs.
 We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program, towards our mailing costs.

Canada

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Missed opportunities and a shout-out to Motor

This summer I hosted a family barbecue as a send-off to my brother-in-law who was headed to glorious far-off lands in search of fame and fortune.

Alright, the glorious far-off land is Sault Ste. Marie and he's unlikely to find either fame or fortune awaiting him there – but it sounded good, no?

The part about the barbecue is true, and over a few beverages talk eventually turned to the environment.

I told the assembled members of my family that in 2010, heavy-duty truck engines will be essentially smog-free and that in some cases they may actually churn out cleaner air than they suck in. This was met initially with disbelief, which soon gave way to amazement.

My father, incidentally, is a small-time shipper but a shipper nonetheless, and this was the very first he had heard about the trucking industry's progress towards eliminating its on-road emissions.

I've said it before – we're missing a huge opportunity here folks, by failing to inform the non-trucking public and shipper customers alike about our accomplishments as an industry.

I also told them about the cost the industry will endure to achieve this – up to \$10,000 more per engine purchased in 2010 and beyond. To this, the response was "Where is the government?"

Even as non-truckers, they were of the opinion that the trucking industry deserves a hand in the form of grants and incentives.

At any rate, it's always interesting to take a step outside our bubble and see how we're perceived by people from outside the industry.

On another note, I want to give

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



a huge shout-out to 2009 *Truck News/Truck West* Owner/Operator of the Year Michael 'Motor' Rosenau, and his family. If you've driven out west, you've likely seen the Rosenau name on the side of a tractor or trailer.

The Rosenaus are a true trucking family, and it showed in the support Motor received upon winning the award.

Making the trek from Alberta to attend the presentation at the Fergus Truck Show were his wife Dana, father Len and mother Jen. His aunt Val and uncle Gord also made the trip.

They weren't given a lot of notice, but they didn't think twice about making the trip to Fergus.

You can read about Motor in this issue and you can hear him in his own words on our WebTV show *Transportation Matters* at Trucknews.com.

Last month, I turned this space over to an O/O of the Year finalist who respectfully withdrew from the selection process citing concerns with the industry.

He raised some

valid points and I received a handful of calls from other owner/operators (and even a former pilot) who expressed similar sentiments. Motor, however, acknowledges the industry has some challenges, yet it hasn't dampened his passion or enthusiasm one bit.

He says he's "living the dream" and he couldn't be happier doing anything else for a living.

Amid all the negativity surrounding this business at times, it sure was refreshing to spend some time with an owner/operator who still loves what he does. □

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You're right to remain cautious

The Ontario Trucking Association's latest Business Pulse Survey of its members shows fleets remain divided about their economic expectations. About a third are expressing optimism things are about to get better while virtually the same amount remain pessimistic. Is such uncertainty warranted, particularly in view of the fact that more than half also felt the Canadian economy had bottomed out?

Let's first tackle the belief that the Canadian economy has bottomed out. At our second Profitability Seminar this year, hosted in coordination with Dan Goodwill and Associates, Carlos Gomez, senior economist with Scotiabank, was able to outline several economic indicators showing the much hoped for bottoming out was at hand.

Car manufacturing was basically frozen after inventories grew to dangerous levels. In a healthy market, cars sit on lots for about, on average, 65 days. Yet by late 2008 they were sitting on lots for up to 95 days.

That caused car manufacturers to slash production from 13-14

Viewpoint

Lou Smyrlis
 Editorial Director



million units to only about 5-6 million at an annual rate in the first quarter. The good news is that inventories have started to come down once again. They're still a little bit higher than normal, but they're down to a 69-day supply, Gomez said.

Of course, it was the collapse of the US housing market that started the economy rolling the wrong way.

By 2006, housing affordability had reached dangerous levels. But the combination of falling house prices with very low interest rates means the pendulum has swung the other way with affordability now at a record level in the US. The main problem now is that there is still a very large supply of houses on the market in the US.

Other indicators pointing in the right direction include the Baltic

Dry Index, which measures the cost of shipping goods throughout the world. From mid-08 onward, that index plunged but is now showing some stability.

The inventory-to-sales ratio for manufacturing index and the Purchasing Manager's Index are also pointing towards improving conditions as is Scotiabank's own index measuring financial conditions overall.

So the economy has bottomed out and the usual strong recovery is about to set in – the pessimists need to lighten up, right? Well, not exactly.

Gomez explained that the recovery won't start till 2010 and it will be a slow one; rather than the usual 3%-5% growth, he expects 2%-2.5% growth next year.

Part of the reason the recovery won't come til 2010 is because the largest segment of the stimulant packages that most major countries have put in place goes into effect in 2010. And hold on to your seats – it's going to remain choppy til then. □

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

Rosenau has been driving since he could reach the pedals

Continued from page 1

Since early childhood, Rosenau seemed destined for a career in trucking. Eleven years before he was born, his grandfather founded Rosenau's Delivery which later became Rosenau Transport.

"I grew up in the industry and wanted nothing more than to drive trucks," Rosenau recalls. "What kid back then didn't love trucks?"

Rosenau got his start early, under the watchful eyes of his father Len.

"My father was teaching me how to drive when I was eight or nine," says Rosenau. "A pillow on the seat and a hat on my head and we'd go for a drive in the pick-up truck. He used to take me down the road in the big rig and he'd let me drive and he'd kick my foot off the clutch as we were rolling and he'd say 'That's for starting and stopping only'."

Asked if he uses the clutch today, Rosenau says "For starting and stopping."

Some of Rosenau's fondest childhood memories involve riding in the big rigs with his father.

"I grew up with two brothers and a sister and we all liked going with dad whenever we had the chance," he says. Len would put a small stool between the seats of his Kenworth W900 and bring the kids along. Though they could barely see over the dash, they would all wave at oncoming truckers in unison, their little hands giving the illusion of a four-armed trucker as they waved along with their father at passing truckers.

Back at the Rosenau Transport yard in Edmonton, the younger Rosenau would keep busy by helping out with odd jobs – and climbing behind the wheel whenever possible.

"My grandpa used to have me drive the truck around the yard and load it up with garbage," recalls Rosenau. "I'd come in and tell him I'm all done cleaning up the yard and he'd say 'Well, take it to the dump.' I was just 14 and all I had was my learner's permit, so I'd say 'Well grandpa, I don't have my driver's licence,' and he'd look at me and pull his glasses down and say 'Well then don't get caught.' Back then, you could get away with it – they'd slap your fingers and call somebody to come get the truck. I was quite happy to drive that truck to the dump."

When he finally was old enough to drive trucks legally, Rosenau wasted no time in getting his Class 1 licence. From there, he gathered a wide range of experience, including hauling on the ice roads in the Northwest Territories, pulling a mobile mine museum across the country and even hauling doubles and triples across the prairies.

His dream, however, was to buy his own truck. It all came together for him in 2004, when he learned of a 1997 Freightliner FL120 day cab for sale in Saskatchewan, which once belonged to Rosenau Transport. For reasons unknown, it was back on the block, so Rosenau called his uncle to ask about its condition.

"He said it was a good truck, so I called my uncle Tim and he went and had a look at it. He fired it up, it sounded good so I went down there and I picked it up," Rosenau recalls. He still drives that truck today, although it looks nothing like it did when he first bought it. Rosenau has slowly dressed the truck up with chrome, LED lighting and custom lettering. His wife Dana's name appears on the door and a checkered flag on each side carries the names of his sons Mark and James. On the back of the truck, his personal motto reads: "If it don't shine, it ain't mine."

It has more than 1.31 million kilometres on it, but the truck looks like it just rolled off the showroom floor. In fact, one weigh scale inspector recently thought that it had.

"I just went through an inspection last month and the inspector thought it was a brand new truck," Rosenau says with a grin. "He didn't think it needed an inspection, but when I told him the year and the mileage, he was pretty impressed."

Needless to say, the truck passed the inspection. Rosenau treats the truck with care and jokes that he may keep running it until he retires. The key to keeping an older truck running like new is all about maintenance, he says.

"Without maintenance, the truck doesn't run and if the truck doesn't run you're not making money and if you're not making money, you're pretty much not in the game," Rosenau reasons.

Motor's truck has become a crowd favourite at many western Canadian show'n'shines, and he also uses it to give back to the community. He's been involved in the World's Largest Truck Convoy for Special Olympics and volunteers his time and his truck hauling a customized trailer around Alberta and Saskatchewan collecting food donated to the 18 Wheels of Christmas campaign. He has also entered the truck in local parades where it's been put to good use pulling floats for community

'I don't think I could do anything else and be as happy as I am as a driver.'

Michael 'Motor' Rosenau

groups such as a high school jazz band.

"If everybody did a little bit for the community, it would be a whole lot better world that we live in," he says. "I probably got that instilled in me from a young age through my family and my grandmother. My grandma was always the type of person to say 'No matter how bad it is for you, it's probably worse for somebody else'."

The trucking industry is not without its challenges, and Rosenau counts heavier traffic and lax training standards among its biggest issues. However, his



IF IT DON'T SHINE...: Rosenau's 1997 Freightliner FL120 has his motto inscribed on the back: 'If it don't shine, it ain't mine.'



CONGRATS: Michael 'Motor' Rosenau (centre, with plaque) is congratulated by (l-r): John Bennett, Freightliner; Rob Wilkins, Truck West; Lynda Harvey, Natural Resources Canada; Joanne Ritchie, OBAC; J.P. Soucie, Wakefield Canada/Castrol; Brad Houle, Goodyear; and James Menzies, Truck West.

passion for the industry has not faded.

"I had a buddy of mine tell me once that he's living the dream, and then he laughs and chuckles about it," Rosenau says. "So I picked that up from him and I say that a lot of the time, I really am living the dream, doing what I want to do...I don't think I could do anything else and be as happy as I am as a driver."

Rosenau wears his heart on his sleeve, quite literally. On his left arm he proudly shows a tattoo of his friend Gord Cooper's 1957 Kenworth. And his right arm carries his nickname, which he earned several years ago. As the story goes, Rosenau was on a bike run with some friends when they stopped for lunch and ended up playing an arcade racing game.

you would say," he says. "She does my books and gets a little bit upset when I'm spending on chrome, but with her guidance and everything else, I do pretty good. My truck's paid off, so I don't have a lot of overhead, so as long as I can keep steady through slow times it shouldn't be a problem as long as the truck holds up."

Rosenau admits the first months as an owner/operator are the most trying, and offers the following advice to aspiring O/Os: "The first thing you have to remember when you buy a truck is you have to be able to live with no money for two to three months. If you don't have money in the bank and you're financing a new truck, it's going to be a struggle for a while, if you make it, especially with fuel the way it is today. And you want a decent contract so you know you're going to get a decent paycheck."

He says buying a used truck is the best way to get started.

"Big and shiny is nice and I wanted big and shiny too, but I bought something I could afford," he says.

"Even if I could have afforded a new truck when I was shopping, I don't think I would have bought one. I bought what I could afford and slowly fixed it up to where it is today. I didn't do it overnight – I did a little bit this paycheck and a little bit the next paycheck. And where it is right now is probably where it's going to stay."

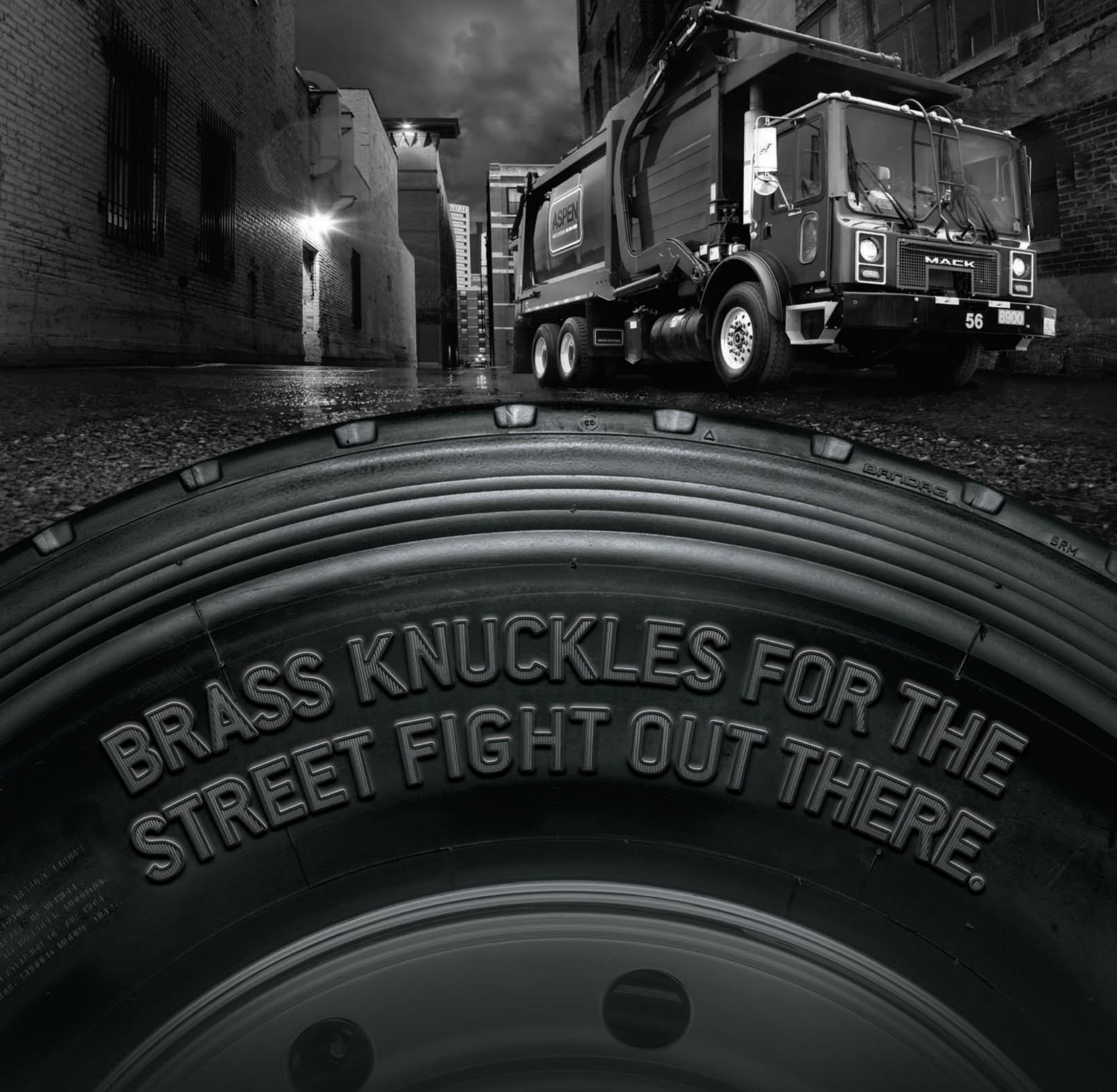
To see video of our interview with Rosenau, watch the Aug. 5 episode of our WebTV show *Transportation Matters* at Trucknews.com. Rosenau will also be featured in several future episodes. □

Upon winning, Rosenau entered his initials: MTR.

"The guy I was racing looks at me and he goes 'MOTOR' and that was it – everybody started calling me that and it just stuck," he recalls.

Rosenau has spent most of his summer hauling farm chemicals around Saskatchewan. It meant three months away from home, but he was grateful for the work. He knows economic conditions have been tough on owner/operators and credits his wife for helping him steer the business through these turbulent times.

"She's my controller, I guess



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Alberta

RTAC attack

Alberta truckers worry their non-RTAC trailers will be about as useful as boat anchors, despite their good condition.

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – New regulations forcing some trailers to be taken off Alberta's roads will be burdensome for many of the province's smaller operators, according to the Alberta Construction Trucking Association (ACTA) and the Alberta Motor Transport Association (AMTA).

ACTA president Ron Singer says the anticipated 2011 deadline requiring trailers to comply with RTAC standards is one of the most important issues on his desk currently.

"This is really going to hurt the users of these trailers because after 2010 they'll not only be unable to use them, but they won't be able to sell them either since they'll be virtually useless. It's a very bad scenario."

It isn't a huge issue for most transport carriers, according to Mayne Root, executive director of the AMTA, but it has "a huge effect on construction truckers and people hauling anhydrous ammonia who

use the trailers only for short periods of the year."

And though these trailers may be old enough that they pre-date the RTAC standard, "they often don't have a lot of miles on them."

The national RTAC standard covers such parameters as roll resistance, sway factor, vehicle length, weight and height, supposedly to ensure fewer issues from province to province. Singer notes that "some trailers didn't meet the new standards back then, and some trucking associations told the provincial government these particular units would expire within 10 years or so."

Singer says that led the province of Alberta to decree that, as of 2011, use of the units in question would be restricted by reducing their gross vehicle axle weights progressively.

Alberta is allowing anhydrous ammonia trailers to be grandfathered, according to Root, so they can be used until they wear out, but construction truckers will find their trailers' capacity reduced by 1,000 kg per year until it's no longer vi-



DEADLINE LOOMING: Trucking associations in Alberta hope the province will provide some flexibility when phasing out non-RTAC trailers.

able financially.

This promises to be especially tough on smaller operators who use such trailers to haul gravel in the warm months, after which they sit idle for the rest of the year. Root says these operators want to see their trailers – which they bought in good faith before the RTAC standard existed – grandfathered as well.

Otherwise, says the ACTA's Singer, "it's like taking money out of (our members') pockets."

Root acknowledges that companies have had 10 years' notice to upgrade their trailers but "their profit margin is small enough that to spend that kind of money will put them in the hole. It isn't that they mind replacing the trailers when the time comes, but the trailers are still operable."

There's also the issue of fairness between provinces. Root says Alberta carriers are being singled out unfairly because the non-compliant trailers are being grandfathered in British Columbia and Saskatchewan and that will make Alberta's operators uncompetitive in those provinces.

The ACTA has reached out to the Alberta government already. "We told them we have all kinds of these units still in use," Singer says, "and it doesn't make financial sense in an economic time like now, especially for older members, to sell off their old equipment and buy a new one before they retire."

Singer's hopeful they can make their case to Alberta Transportation Minister Luke Ouellette. "We have a really good minister in Alberta," he acknowledges. "But I don't think he understands how this issue is going to affect the construction trucking industry."

Singer says Ouellette appears to be following the lead of his people, who he says are looking at the technical data but not taking into account the practical, real-world implications.

"We'll also be approaching the engineer in charge of this for the province," he says, "because it's too important an issue and there are so many operators out there who aren't even aware that their equipment isn't going to be allowed – and will, in fact, be worthless."

The ACTA and AMTA are cooperating on a proposal to put before the provincial government that they hope will address the situation. One of the associations' aces in the hole may be the fact that these non-compliant trailers haven't been safety concerns in the past.

"Some think that because they're usually short wheelbase trailers their

stability to tip isn't up to standard," Root says. "But these gravel trucks aren't loaded high and stability shouldn't be a major issue."

He says one of the major points they'll stress to the government will be the effect on the smaller operators. "And maybe we'll look at controlling cheating," he says, referring to some carriers who have rebuilt their old trailers into as-new condition. "So that if there's an issue with a particular carrier we can address it individually."

As far as the provincial government is concerned, it appears to be the cheaters who ruined it for the rest. Alberta Transportation spokesperson Trent Bancarz says the province "tried to be accommodating" and had been willing to grandfather the trailers but "unfortunately, some people chose to literally rebuild their old trailers from scratch, to the point where the only thing left from the original was the serial number. So we put the sunset clause in to curb that practice."

Bancarz says the province's goal was to get the improved trailers into service and to encourage safer vehicles.

"We don't want to put people out of business," he says, "but we're trying to have as safe and efficient vehicles on the road as we can get."

He says he's also aware that some operators have trailers that aren't used often, and so they're still in good shape. "That's a tricky one for us," Bancarz admits. "When the dimensions were changed in 1993, we originally grandfathered anything built before then. And since these trailers have a life span of 12-15 years we kind of expected that all the old trailers would be gone."

The bottom line for the province is that, while it would've been nice to have let things run their course naturally and not to have put in the sunset clause, "we're trying to find a balance between enhanced safety and performance," Bancarz says. "We don't want to harm the industry."

If the industry's pleas fall on deaf ears, it'll be good news for trailer makers, at least temporarily, but it could be devastating for the industry. "It'll put some of the older, smaller guys out of business," says Root.

Singer agrees. "It's a detriment to anyone who has this equipment." He's confident they can make their case, though, while realizing there are no guarantees. "I think we'll convince the government, and that's my goal," he says.

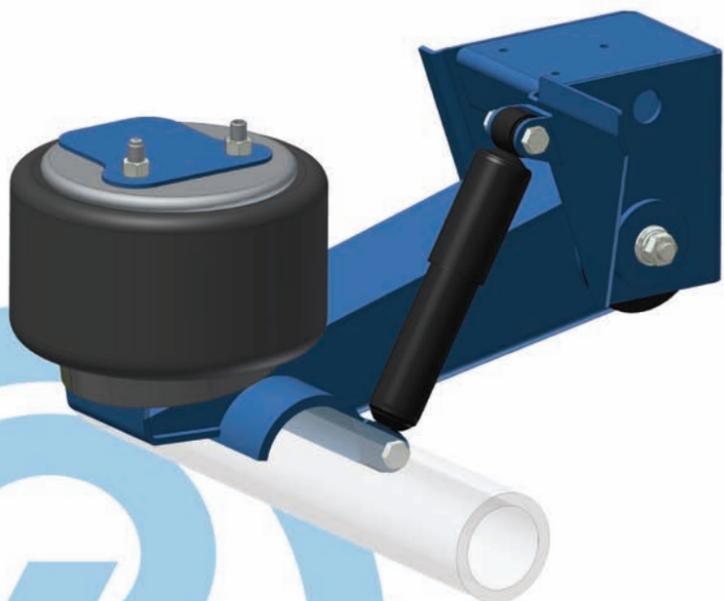
Otherwise, Root says it's "going to lead to a lot of trailers being junked. It's an unnecessary dismantling of all that equipment." □

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Responding to recessionary challenges

By James Menzies

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Ont. – Today's recessionary challenges are requiring fleet and supply chain managers to look beyond their traditional spheres to identify opportunities to drive down costs in all aspects of the business.

For the TDL Group (more commonly known as Tim Horton's), this has meant a multi-pronged approach to improving efficiencies on the road, in the warehouse and across the entire supply chain. Maple Leaf Consumer Foods, meanwhile, recently challenged all its distribution-related employees to look for opportunities to improve efficiencies – not only in their direct area of expertise, but also in other distribution-related departments. And the results for both companies are paying off in a big way.

Mark Mostacci, national fleet manager for TDL Group, shared some insight into measures taken by his company at the recent Private Motor Truck Council of Canada (PMTC) conference.

On the fleet side, Tim Horton's has slowed its trucks down from 100 to 95 km/h while also training drivers on progressive shifting and eliminating unnecessary idling. As a result, the company's fleet-wide fuel mileage has improved from 2.96 km/litre (6.96 mpg) to 3.09 km/litre (7.27 mpg). Slowing down just 5 km/h saved TDL \$1,279 per truck each year, delivering a fleet-wide savings of \$130,458 per year.

Mostacci said the fleet also re-gearred its tractors, setting gear ratios at 3.73 to ensure optimum performance at the slower speed and keeping RPMs below 1,500 at cruise.

In the warehouse, TDL Group has converted from fluorescent lighting to T8 lighting and installed motion sensors so lights automatically shut off in areas where there's no activity. The company has also installed 'Big Ass' fans (that's their actual brand name), to improve ventilation. Meanwhile, TDL staff are

required to use re-usable travel mugs when enjoying the product the company's most famous for as part of its environmental mandate.

On the supply chain end of the business, TDL Group is testing clamp-style forklifts which could eliminate the need for pallets. It's also looking at adding an extra two pounds of pouch coffee to each case, which could reduce inbound truck volumes by 250 truckloads per year, Mostacci said. Likewise, by increasing the number of cups per case, TDL hopes to eliminate a further 250 truck trips per year.

The group is also considering increasing the quantity of product it can stack on each pallet for high-volume items, eliminating pallet returns by 100 truckloads per year.

In Maple Leaf Consumer Foods' case, the company has already found ways to drive more than a million dollars per year out of its supply chain costs through five simple steps, according to Kevin Riley, senior director of distribution optimization:

Pallets vs slip sheets: Maple Leaf has re-evaluated its use of slip sheets in place of CPC pallets and found that it can reduce costs by using traditional pallets. "This is due to the fact that we palletize all our product from our plants on CPCs and by not transferring this product onto slip sheets for inter-DC shipping, there was the cost avoidance of additional warehouse handling at both ends," Riley explained. "As well, this change did not add any significant empty pallet transportation movements – in fact, it helped us balance our CPC transportation flows... We were able to shed considerable costs on both ends, ease up on dock congestion and have better flow through our DCs." **Total annualized savings: \$542,635.**

Direct plant shipping: "We're always pursuing direct shipping opportunities," said Riley. Maple Leaf has 12 secondary processing plants

in the Greater Toronto Area, and "whenever we have the opportunity to ship direct to our customer or to one of our seven distribution centres that will ultimately ship to our final customer, we want to do that. Historically, that's been a challenge. We have clients that don't have the most robust shipping docks." Despite some resistance from clients, Riley said the effort to ship more loads direct has been paying off. "There are some challenges with our manufacturing folks; it complicates their life a little bit. But when you explain to them the benefits and the impact it has on our cost structure and our customer service, it's simple to win them over." **Total annualized savings: \$255,886 (expected to nearly double with the recent buy-in of another key client).**

Product pallet configuration: Typically, this has been the responsibility of the sales and marketing departments, but at Maple Leaf the distribution folks are now getting involved, Riley explained. He said a quick examination revealed as many as one-third of the company's pallets could accommodate an extra layer of product. "It's an easy thing to do, and the right thing," he said. The company is now looking at ways it can increase package sizes. "These are non-traditional distribution initiatives, but we have a lot of visibility into it, so we can provide recommendations to the company," said Riley. **Total annualized savings: \$65,210.**

Reducing delivery frequencies: Maple Leaf explored all the regions it serves throughout the country and looked for areas it could work with customers to "still meet their needs, but where possible reduce delivery frequency, increasing load sizes and reducing costs," explained Riley. This took some convincing with customers, but Riley said a strong business case was made to show customers how the changes could help con-

trol costs. **Total annualized savings: \$100,000.**

Maximize re-supply order quantities: Maple Leaf is also looking at requiring full pallet re-supply orders on movements between distribution centres. In some cases, Riley said Maple Leaf was picking product from the same pallet as often as three times per week and shipping it to the same DC. "We can eliminate that," he said. "Sending full pallet quantities once a week saves on labour, better maximizes our equipment and saves some money." **Total annualized savings: \$100,000.**

None of the cost-saving measures discussed at the PMTC convention involved slashing safety and compliance budgets, and that's a good thing according to Angelique Magi, national director of transportation with Zurich Insurance. She urged fleet managers to keep their safety department intact – even during challenging times. Cutting costs on safety will ultimately drive up insurance costs, she warned.

She explained the insurance industry traditionally relies on two sources of revenue: underwriting and investment income. We all know what's become of investment income in recent months, meaning insurance providers are more dependent on profit generated through underwriting. If an insurer sees a fleet reducing its safety programs, underwriters will get nervous and premiums may go up, she warned.

However, for fleets that absolutely must find ways to reduce costs, Magi offered four tips on how to reduce costs without sacrificing safety: reducing road evaluations from yearly to an 18-month cycle; reviewing driver abstracts on an 18-month cycle rather than twice yearly; conducting driver meetings by Webinar, rather than face-to-face; and outsourcing the safety officer position to a reputable firm (although she added insurers would prefer this be done on a temporary basis as an in-house safety manager is preferred). □

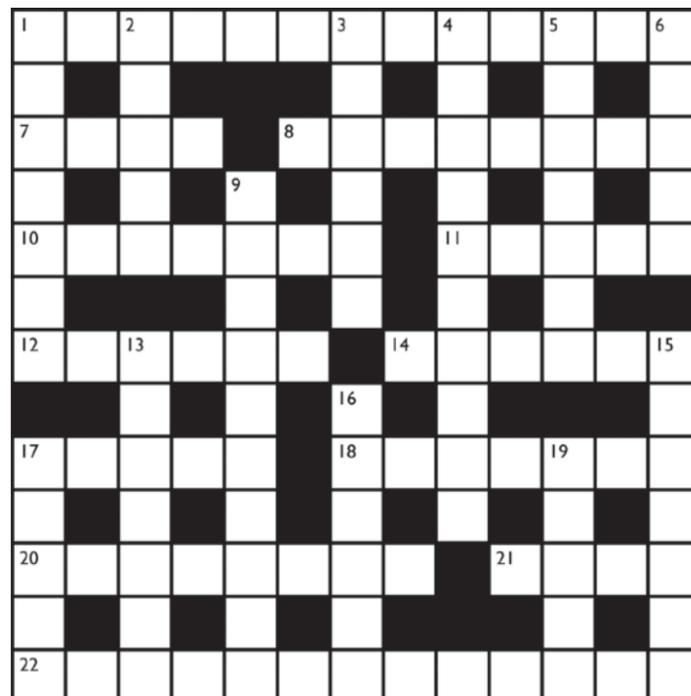
THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1. Big-rig power-plant brand (7,6)
- 7. Material cast into engine blocks
- 8. Interstate relaxation station (4,4)
- 10. With 20-Across, History Channel trucking series (3,4)
- 11. Pistons' jewelry
- 12. Maker of Select and Air Cruiser drivers' seats
- 14. Adds coolant or oil (4,2)
- 17. C&W singer and NASCAR racer Robbins
- 18. Semitrailer's tow vehicle
- 20. See 10-Across clue
- 21. Winter-traction reducer
- 22. Pasadena driver in Jan & Dean song (6,3,4)

Down

- 1. Trucker's occupation
- 2. Accident outside a steakhouse, perhaps (1,4)
- 3. Grooved tire surfaces
- 4. Ship-rail or rail-truck freight movement
- 5. Suspension-system items
- 6. Truck-related bank transactions
- 9. Town or city cop, slangily (5,5)
- 13. Dashboard channel (3,4)
- 15. Highway type, e.g. the Don Valley
- 16. Truck-tunes source
- 17. Roadside-accommodation option
- 19. Toddler's sandbox-truck brand



Answers on page 23

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BCTA mad as hell!

Sensationalist reporting draws the ire of B.C. Trucking Association

By Jim Bray

LANGLEY, B.C. – The British Columbia Trucking Association (BCTA) appears to be having a Howard Beale moment.

Beale was the fictional TV anchor from the movie *Network*, whose on-air breakdown and cry of “I’m as mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore!” became famous after the movie debuted in 1976.

Now, it’s Paul Landry, president and CEO of the BCTA, who’s upset after an article in some CanWest newspapers hinted that the industry in his province is unsafe. The article’s tone came despite, Landry says, the study on which the article was reporting actually showing the opposite was true. And he isn’t taking it.

The June 11 article by Lori Culbert of the *Vancouver Sun* bore the headline *Report on truck safety singles out B.C. truckers* and was accompanied by a graphic photograph showing the aftermath of a multi-vehicle collision involving a loaded dump truck. The photo’s cutline told a damning tale: “Canada’s Worst Truck Drivers. B.C. Truckers the nation’s worst in multiple vehicle fatal collisions involving alcohol, illicit drugs, speed.”

Culbert was reporting on the June, 2009, *Best Practices for Truck Safety* report developed by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) with the support of WorkSafeBC, the B.C. Trucking Association, and the Trucking Safety Council of B.C. The overly graphic image, which also ran in the *Victoria Times-Colonist*, almost made it appear as if B.C.’s roads were death traps thanks to the speeding, alcohol or drug-impaired truck drivers there.

Landry doesn’t question the facts and statistics used in the story, but he does wonder about how they were used – and about the spin of the picture and caption.

“I don’t know what their intention was,” he says, “because the article itself was factual. My concern is that this rather disturbing headline is also inaccurate because, as the report actually shows, B.C. drivers are as good as or better than others in Canada. Truck drivers are responsible pros who do a much better job of operating their vehicles than other drivers.”

And while Landry admits there’s always room for improvement, “Even with the growth in the industry, our record is improving,” he says, pointing out that fewer injury claims are being made and “casualty collisions on a rate basis are declining. Heavy commercial trucks are involved in less than 4% of crashes in B.C., and the truck crash rate has been steadily declining for years.”

Landry cites RCMP crash data showing that trucking-related fatalities in the province went down by more than 40% over the last seven years and that truck drivers are less

likely than other drivers to be impaired by drugs or alcohol.

“Random tests of truck drivers suggest the presence of drugs in less than 1% of drivers tested,” he says, “and coroners’ toxicology reports indicate that fatally injured truck drivers are 12 times less likely to be alcohol impaired than fatally injured passenger vehicle drivers.”

Landry says the TIRF report actually shows that the area in which there’s the most room for improvement is “other drivers.” And to combat the impression that it’s the pros the public should fear, he’s taking to the media himself to get out that message.

His first salvo was aimed at the *Vancouver Sun* directly, via a letter to editor (which it printed) in which he complained about the one-sided and shrill headline and photo. “I am amazed the *Sun* would overlook the importance of an industry’s efforts to protect its workers...to focus on one statistic out of hundreds in the report, to create public fear,” the letter said, concluding with “to take one statistic out of context to slam an entire industry is opportunistic, simplistic and irresponsible.”

He also prepared an OpEd editorial of his own that the BCTA circulated to various media outlets. “We wanted a chance to emphasize the positive,” he says.

Which is exactly what he did. In his OpEd, Landry explained the broader challenge that everyone – regardless of the vehicle they’re driving – must learn how to share the road properly. “Since heavy trucks share their workplace with

the travelling public, trucking companies and their drivers must ensure that they operate safely and responsibly,” he wrote. “But the trucking industry cannot do this without public understanding, support and cooperation. Reducing traffic injuries and fatalities requires all road users to learn to share the road safely.”

Truck drivers, Landry says, have demonstrated time and time again to be very safe and responsible and far more likely to be the victim in multi-vehicle crashes than other users of the road. “Even if truck drivers were no longer responsible for any multi-vehicle collisions, (collisions) would still happen because of the other drivers.”

Landry quotes the TIRF report as saying that the truck driver was responsible in only 19% of the fatal crashes between a truck and another vehicle, while the fault in 57% of the same crashes was “attributable to the non-truck driver.”

Landry also mentions an older University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute study that looked at tens of thousands of crashes involving trucks and other vehicles.

“Head-on crashes took place in the truck’s lane eight times more often than in the passenger vehicle’s lane,” he quotes, “while passenger vehicles were six times more likely to sideswipe a truck than the reverse and passenger vehicles were five times more likely to rear-end a truck.”

Part of the perception problem tarring the totality of truckers as troublesome, Landry says, is the fact that safe companies have to compete with “companies that scrimp on maintenance, hire unqualified drivers and overload their trucks in order to offer cut-rate freight rates.” He’s calling on the industry to work with B.C.’s new Trucking Safety Council, the provincial government, law en-

forcement, ICBC (the Insurance Corporation of B.C.) and other stakeholders to “improve truck driver training and licensing standards, take unsafe trucks and trucking companies off the road, adopt speed limiters, reduce fatigue and recognize and reward safety excellence in the industry.”

While that could work to help improve the situation on the industry side of the equation, the BCTA boss would also like to see a major initiative to raise public awareness of the importance of sharing the road with trucks.

The emphasis, he says, should be on these points:

- On the highway, civilian drivers should leave 20-25 car lengths behind a truck so the truck driver’s view isn’t obscured and the driver following has time to react to what’s on the road;

- Civilians should remember that if they can’t see the driver’s face then the driver can’t see them;

- When passing a truck, drivers shouldn’t linger in the passing lane, and they should also make sure they can see the truck’s headlights in their rear view mirror before pulling back into the driving lane.

The last point is the one he hears about the most. “I think if truck drivers have one common complaint, it’s about drivers passing them and coming back into their lane immediately, then hitting the brakes,” Landry says.

While this particular outreach to the public would necessarily be a longer term strategy, Landry’s recent media outreach is meant to help counter immediately the impression left by the newspaper story that B.C. truckers are death on 18 wheels. Time will tell whether or not it will have the desired effect but for Landry, it’s all part of the job. “Our obligation is to deal with the public and correct problems,” he says, “Not get into a pissing match with the *Vancouver Sun*.” □



NOT SO BAD: A report on truck safety in B.C. contained many positives, but they were ignored by the mainstream press.

Unferry!

Feds continue to charge icebreaking fees to Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry while letting others off the hook

By Ron Stang

WINDSOR, Ont. – The Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry is crying foul after the federal government waived icebreaking fees for a couple of other regional ferry services but kept its fees intact.

“It’s very frustrating,” company vice-president Gregg Ward told *Truck West*. The company has been fighting for a waiver of the fees for more than a decade. The federal

government has also brought legal action against the firm four years ago over fee non-payment.

The company has so far paid the fees into a trust fund pending the court outcome. About \$150,000 is in the fund, from fees amount to \$25,000 a year.

The government in late June published a remission order waiving fees for the Bluewater Ferry between Sombra, Ont. and Marine City,

Mich. and the Walpole Island, Ont.-Algonac, Mich. ferry.

Both ferries operate across the Saint Clair River near Sarnia. The Detroit-Windsor Truck Ferry carries trucks and hazardous materials across the Detroit River.

In the case of the Bluewater ferry, the company won’t have to pay more than \$200,000 dating back to 2001 nor approximately \$20,000 in each of future years but will still have to pay a small amount, according to Conservative MP Pat Davidson (Sarnia-Lambton). The Walpole-Algonac ferry will be spared \$450,000 in back charges with similar undisclosed small amounts payable in the future.

Both companies had the fees waived after they petitioned on the basis of economic hardship.

An assessment found the fees “were ‘unjust’ and ‘unreasonable’ for those companies,” noting the ferries “support cross-border commerce for surrounding communities with frail economies, and if the two companies were to cease operations during winter months, local populations would suffer undue financial hardship.”

The Bluewater handles transport trucks while the Walpole does not, though the Bluewater handles cars to trucks in a 90:1 ratio, according to Lambton County Councillor Steve Arnold.

“I’ve been on the ferry with them myself,” he said. An owner of the Bluewater refused comment. “I promised I’d keep my mouth shut from now on,” he said.

While the two St. Clair River operators applied for an assessment of economic hardship the Detroit-Windsor ferry did not.

Ward said he did not know of such an application until hearing about it from an owner of the Bluewater.

“But the difference in operations was that they weren’t sued, we were,” he said, even though those companies had also withheld payments. “If we had found out about this earlier and we hadn’t been sued there would have been a different take on it.”

Asked why his company was sued when the others were not Ward said he had “not a clue...it’s completely bizarre.”

He figured the government might use the argument that if three cars are speeding and one is pulled over “it doesn’t really matter” who’s

stopped. “But I think that discretion is used in a peculiar way. It’s not a very transparent application of their authority.”

The company is also the only one that is American-owned.

The two St. Clair operators, and the small Boblo Island ferry also on the Detroit River and which has been exempt from fees, are Canadian-owned. “That’s just a fact,” Ward said.

He also questioned the political representation in each area. The ferry operators along the St. Clair River are in the federal constituency of a government representative. The Detroit-Windsor ferry is in a riding represented by an opposition member, the NDP’s Brian Masse, who has strongly supported the ferry.

“He’s in a different party of course,” Ward said.

Meanwhile the Detroit-Windsor ferry has received support from Windsor City Council, the Windsor Port Authority and the Ottawa-based Chamber of Marine Commerce.

Masse wrote Fisheries and Oceans Minister Gail Shea that the ferry is “vital” because it is the only crossing in the area allowing HazMat.

Requests for an interview with Fisheries and Oceans were turned down because of “matters that are currently before the courts,” spokesman Alain Belle-Isle said.

Ward has protested the fees on the grounds that icebreaking is useless. He has never had assistance from the Canadian Coast Guard but has been assisted by American icebreakers which do “the majority of the ice-breaking in the river system.”

Ironically, he said, icebreakers have been more of a hindrance than help. “Every time the icebreaker goes up the river it clogs your ice path so it’s very unproductive.”

Lambton county councillor Arnold agreed, noting the same complaint by local operators. “The only time they do not run is when they’re ice-locked, and the icebreakers manage to do that more than they should,” he said.

Davidson said a reason the government waived fees for the St. Clair River operators and not the Detroit-Windsor one may have been because of litigation.

“If it’s a court case that they’re looking at that’s probably where it’s being resolved,” she said. □

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WHITING

US truckers back higher fuel taxes

ARLINGTON, Va. – It may seem peculiar, a trucking industry lobby group lobbying for higher fuel taxes, but that’s exactly what’s happening in the US. The American Trucking Associations (ATA) recently told the House Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures, House Committee on Ways and Means, that increasing the federal fuel tax is the most effective way to fund infrastructure improvements.

Speaking on behalf of ATA, second vice-chair Barbara Windsor, said the US trucking industry would welcome a fuel tax increase if the additional revenue was invested into projects and programs that address national highway infrastructure needs.

“With collection costs at just 0.2% of revenue, no alternative funding schemes can match the efficiency or equitability of the federal fuel tax,” said Windsor, who is president and CEO of Hahn Transportation, based in New Market, Maryland.

The ATA says there’s a method behind its madness in asking for a fuel tax increase: fuel taxes offer minimal opportunities for evasion; it can be collected and enforced without imposing an administrative burden on carriers; it’s based on readily-verifiable measures of highway and vehicle use; it applies uniformly to all classes of highway users; and it does not impede interstate commerce. □



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Alberta

A rocky business

Alberta construction truckers face uphill battle, but new ACTA president says progress can be made by working together.

By Jim Bray

CALGARY, Alta. – Like the legendary phoenix, the Alberta Construction Trucking Association (ACTA) is an entity that went down in flames, but which is now going through a rebirth. It's proving to be a difficult delivery, however.

Formed originally in the early 1980s, the ACTA grew out of the Alberta Gravel Truckers Association, expanding to encompass logging and other sectors of the construction trucking industry. The organization was successful until around the turn of the century before it started going downhill. Part of the reason for the bust? Alberta's boom.

"Unfortunately," says ACTA president Ron Singer, "times were too good in the last 10 years and the membership felt they didn't need us."

Singer says one of the problems is that construction truckers are independent-minded and prefer working on their own and, while that's great to a point, "it's critical to have associations because that's what polices the industry, sets standards, creates a good working environment, deals with issues."

The association's fall was worsened by a leadership vacuum Singer admits led to membership numbers dwindling until they reached the point where "It basically became non-functional."

The resurrection process began in 2005 when some industry members in Calgary revived the ACTA as an entity. But since the phoenix was essentially burned out, it's been slow work to not only gain members, but to restore the relationships and credibility lost when the organization foundered.

"It's been an incredible challenge," Singer admits. "The industry has changed so significantly that none of the old rules apply and it's very difficult now to get anybody to stand as a director or form a board of directors or executive."

And some of the challenges are generational. "New guys don't see the value of joining because they haven't had the same training, the same background as the old timers who got the association going," Singer says. "It's a different culture, a different mindset."

Singer attributes part of the changed mindset to today's driver training, which he thinks should go beyond merely learning how to drive a truck and fill out a log book.

"You're there for three days and that's the extent of your training. But there's so many other things a professional driver needs to know." He cites the potential for mentoring by and networking with more experienced people in the industry as an important reason why younger drivers should support the association.

"You get someone who's been out on the road for 30, 40 years and it's just incredible the knowledge that they have," he says. "Common sense knowledge about things like what to do in a snowstorm – do I stay where I am overnight or do I drive on? – just the knowledge that your life could depend on. We've lost so much of that over the years."

The regulatory climate has changed as well and Singer says that, since the ACTA hasn't been supported by a strong membership, the influence it's had on the industry and regulators has been limited – to the industry's detriment.

"Regulations haven't been very supportive," he says. "There's been way too much conflict between legislators and the people in the industry."

Associations like the ACTA, Singer points out, are a way to help ensure the trucker's side is taken into account in pending rule and regulation changes. "Government and private interest groups want to change the regulations all the time – but they don't take into consideration how they're going to affect the industry. That's why we need an association – we're going to be the guys out there living with the regulations."

One regulatory area Singer would like to see the ACTA get involved with is the implementation of car pool lanes. He says putting such lanes in where there's a bad transportation network will cause turmoil for construction truckers because "They're going to be sitting in the right lane while the traffic is flowing in the left lane. That's not right because we pay taxes too, a lot

of taxes and we have the right to be on those roads. It's a big issue in Calgary."

Then there's the matter of leveling the playing field between big and small companies. Singer accuses some contractors of fostering a "divide and conquer mindset," where truckers are played against each other to keep rates low and individuals weak. "The big companies have been very successful at that," he says. "We've spent years trying to improve the industry but (some) don't want it improved."

Alberta's is the freest, most enterprising system in Canada, according to Singer, but it's a two-sided coin that has led to a cut-throat business climate. "We're operating in a crisis mode," he says, "Because just this year the market has gone from 2008 rates to below 2000 rates." Singer names as culprits an oversupply of equipment and a lack of sustainable growth.

"You can grow an industry but it has to be healthy and sustainable. Things were so good for so long that we got big-time fat and lazy, with a lack of concern and responsibility. You could buy a truck and cut the next guy's rate and take a job from someone else. That isn't sustainable."

He points to the Maritimes as an alternative way to handle the industry. "All the work (there) goes through the association," he says, "And you're guaranteed to work on certain projects, which is a credit to them." He mentions a policy where one contractor can't have more than 20% of the work on a particular project, with the rest going to association members and local compa-

nies. "It helps ensure fairness and that everyone has work and can make a living," he says. "They really protect themselves; they have a good structure, regular elections, and (the association representatives) have to do their job or they won't get past the annual meeting."

But east is east and west is west. "There's no way we can do it the same way in Alberta," Singer admits, "because people here would never accept it."

Despite Alberta's different climate, though, Singer says construction truckers still need to support their association. "You don't have to be president or even a director," he says. "Just an active member – show up for the meetings and pay your dues and grow with the association. There's strength in numbers, and it's better for everyone."

Singer says there are also strictly financial reasons that should encourage truckers to join the ACTA: its various programs. "We have a fuel rebate program again, through Chevron," he names as one example, "and they've been awesome to work with. A member can get a cheque at the end of the year that can easily pay the membership dues, so it seems like a no-brainer."

Singer would like to get the support of at least 5,000 companies in the construction trucking industry to help ensure a healthy industry and association. "If you have enough members, enough strength, you're a force to be reckoned with," he says. "If we had that kind of support, what we could do would be unlimited."

It'll take work though. "We have to rebuild our liaisons, and all our government contacts – many of whom have moved on and so we have to build relationships with entirely new people," he says, claiming to have several pages worth of action plans he'd like to work on but lacks the resources for.

"Networking and partnership building is really important," he says. "And we need people to get involved." The ACTA is located at 400, 1040 – 7 Avenue SW in Calgary and can be reached by phone at 403-244-4487. □



POWER IN NUMBERS: Ron Singer, president of the ACTA, says construction truckers need to band together if they hope to achieve common goals in dealing with government.

Photo by James Menzies

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Is Ice Road Truckers series truly 'reality' TV?

By Jim Bray

YELLOWKNIFE, N.W.T. – A cable TV show focusing on the trucking industry brings viewers the cold, hard facts about the challenges of driving in the north. Or does it?

History Television's *Ice Road Truckers* follows a group of drivers hauling supplies over ice roads built on frozen northern lakes. According to the channel's Web site: "Sometimes the ice cannot support the heavy rig, and driver and cargo plunge through the ice and sink to the bottom." The blurb ends with the invitation to "Hitch a risky ride along with the *Ice Road Truckers* as they drive headlong into bone-chilling danger," as if life on the ice is reminiscent of the old-time bush pilots who helped open the arctic decades ago.

But is *Ice Road Truckers* really an inside look or is it merely some Hollywoodized entertainment show?

"It came across as a bunch of cowboys up there," says Glenn Bauer, president and general manager of Ventures West Transportation, which hauls fuel to the diamond mines featured in the show's first season. "But in reality it's very, very controlled."

Bauer also says that, unlike the image of drivers being lone wolves prowling the wilderness, "trucks go out in convoys of two or four and in the height of the season you have four trucks going out every 20 minutes, with experienced convoy leaders to ensure speed limits are adhered to and that there's proper spacing. You're never allowed to travel alone."

Bauer's company hasn't participated in the show, though some of its equipment was seen in the background.

"We had mixed feelings," he says, "because of how they sensationalized and portrayed the ice roads."

He claims the show wasn't allowed back to the original venue for the second season because the mines didn't like the portrayal, either; season two was set in Canada's high arctic while season three moved to Alaska.

As for a much-repeated segment showing a tanker disappearing through the ice, Bauer just doesn't buy it. "The only incident of a breakthrough I know of was with the equipment building the road and getting it to the proper thickness," he says. "I know of no-one transporting on that road who has gone through."

Bauer says the tanker incident portrayed actually happened at Mackenzie Crossing, on the highway south toward Alberta. "There was a fully loaded truck," he remembers, "and the road was apparently open to light loads only; whether he missed the sign or whatever, I don't know."

According to a *Toronto Star* article on the show by Wheels editor Mark Richardson, the TV truck was actually a one-sixth scale model "being pulled through a snowy scene that's made from sugar and shaved ice." Richardson's piece credits the series' DVD with spilling the beans that the scene was actually filmed in California by "some of Hollywood's greatest special effects masters.

After all, transport trucks don't crash through the ice anymore."

To Bauer, the ice is perfectly safe – as long as you follow the rules.

"There's lots of security there," he says, pointing out that the critical issues are speed and following distance (follow too closely and you can stress the ice), and "as long as you follow the rules the risks of going through are nil."

Quite different from the TV version. "I understand TV and all that," Bauer says, "but the ice road is done very, very seriously – the engineering, how they measure ice thickness, security and the rules of the road. There's never been a concern of anybody going through."

Another issue Bauer has with the show was how it portrayed truck maintenance.

"You can't afford to go up there and have a truck break down," Bauer says. "There's nowhere to fix it up there so if you break down on the road you have to be hauled out of there." Bauer says his company is particular about the trucks because "the cold brings out the worst in anything and you can't afford to have issues up there."

Driver TJ Tilcox, on the other hand, thought the show did a reasonable job. One of the stars of the first season, Tilcox was a comparative newcomer when he went to the ice roads from his stomping grounds in southern Ontario.

"I'd only been driving for about a year and it was still hard to get work," he says. "So I thought I'd go out west and haul Super-Bs of grain, and (the owner) said he was going to send me up to the ice roads. I didn't know what it was at the time."

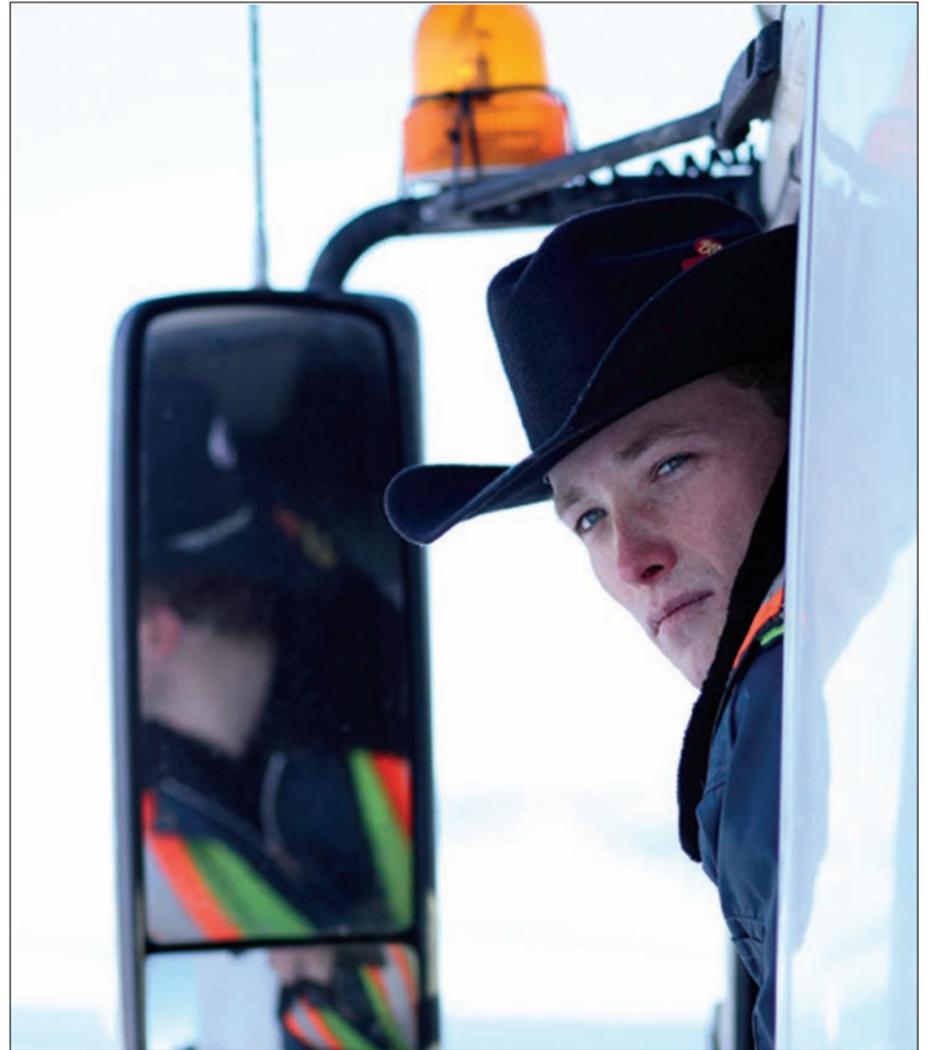
It was a steep learning curve.

"The first trip scared the snot out of me – getting going in the middle of the night and not being able to see well, with snow blowing around and hearing the ice cracking – I thought for sure I was going to be swimming."

With a little experience under his belt, however, he had a good time.

His adventures included "nearly freezing to death in the first truck," and having to be evacuated from the area by plane. "I got hurt doing up a load binder, ended up slipping on the ice and got slammed into the rub rail of the deck. I got bruised ribs, torn muscle – it hurt something else." Tilcox says they shut down the road, landed a rescue airplane on the lake and took him to Yellowknife.

Tilcox made 24 trips, 23 of which were filmed, and remembers the last one in particular, when water on the lakes came up to the bottom step of the truck. "It was melting in early April and I was coming down from the North," he says. "There were a few lakes that had water on top of the ice and I said I wasn't going up there again without a life jacket or a rubber dingy. That was sure nerve-racking."



STARRING ROLE: TJ Tilcox earned a promotional deal with Volvo Trucks and met his wife thanks to his appearance on the first season of *Ice Road Truckers*.

Photo courtesy Volvo Trucks North America

He says his experience working with the TV folk was pretty good – he even ended up marrying one of the producers – and he thinks the show did a decent job of portraying the ice roads.

"I think some stuff was a little different than what happened," he says, "but for the most part I believe what you saw was what really happens. Now some stuff, like the dollar figures they put on loads, were best case scenarios, not necessarily reality," he admits. "And some things that happened were a bit exaggerated – like the accident I had with a new truck." Tilcox says the show made it look as if he were doing 50 km/h at the time whereas "I was almost stopped. But for the most part I think they did alright."

For better or worse, the *Ice Road Truckers* show has had an effect on the industry. "There was a bit of a rash of interest from people who wanted to come up for the experience, for the sense of adventure," says Ventures West's Bauer. "We were getting calls from various places in the US, places where they probably haven't seen snow, let alone ice."

Bauer never hired any, though. "They don't have the experience with Super-Bs and they don't have the winter knowledge either." Besides, he says, "we have a waiting list because drivers can make a premium dollar over their regular work."

The ice roads are open for about

two months, from about the last week of January until perhaps the first week of April. Bauer says it's a good seasonal job for the right drivers.

"It's the type of thing where drivers do other stuff during the year but with the ice roads they can make good money in a short period of time."

How has fame affected the drivers featured? It appears to be a double-edged sword. "From what I've been told," Bauer says, "those drivers are not allowed back on the winter road to the diamond mines." Tilcox, however, looks on it as a positive experience, one that has paid dividends.

Besides "meeting lots of new people," Tilcox has also become an ambassador for Volvo Trucks North America, going to truck shows and getting to see how his preferred truck is made at the factory. And of course there's the adoring public. "People recognize me and come up and say 'you're the guy' or 'we really respect what you do up there.' I'm famous!"

He also thinks truckers' portrayal in the show helps the public see them in a better eye. "It explained things about the routine, coupling, the industry; it helps drivers look better."

Would he travel the ice roads again? "They asked me to go to Alaska for the third season," he says, "but I couldn't. Maybe another year." In the meantime, Tilcox wants to become an owner/operator. "My family owned trucks and it's in me to drive," he says. "I tell a lot of people that I'd go back, but as an owner/operator."

"But if you want to go for the experience," he advises, "go as a company guy first and figure it out."

Assuming you can get to the top of the waiting list. □

'We were getting calls from various places in the US, places where they probably haven't seen snow, let alone ice.'

Glenn Bauer, Ventures West

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Tax Talk

Keys to successful IRP, IFTA, MJVT reporting

The concept behind the International Registration Plan (IRP) is to make it easier to register and pay licensing fees to each jurisdiction you travel to. And I think everyone would agree that it does. Today, 10 provinces and the 48 contiguous states participate in IRP.

For Ontario, joining IRP meant figuring out a way to apply the province's proportional 8% retail sales tax (RST) on multi-jurisdictional vehicles used in the province. RST was assessed at the time of purchase on a pro-rated basis among Canadian provinces. You probably remember applying for sales tax refunds on your vehicle purchases and yearly on your lease payments.

Ontario's solution was an annual pro-rated sales tax known as "multi-jurisdictional vehicle tax" (MJVT). Collected at the time of your IRP licence registration, the MJVT applies to purchased and leased vehicles and is calculated annually on proportional distances travelled in each jurisdiction in the previous calculation year (July 1 to June 30).

Since Oct. 1, 2001, owners of multi-jurisdictional vehicles based in Ontario have paid the RST in annual installments over the life of the vehicle rather than up front, in a larger lump sum. It's still pro-rated based on the number of kilometres your

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



fleet travels in each jurisdiction that charges sales tax.

A vehicle that switches from multi-jurisdictional travel to travel in Ontario only (ie., exits the IRP system) will be liable for 8% RST on the depreciated value of the vehicle – an exit tax. It's something that often gets overlooked by owner/operators when changing from an IRP fleet to an all-Ontario fleet. The Ontario Ministry of Revenue will bill you for the full 8% RST on the depreciated value of the vehicle.

Now that Ontario plans to make RST fully refundable, through a harmonized sales tax with GST, like Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, it will be interesting to see what happens to the MJVT. In its own literature, Ontario describes the MJVT not as a tax but a "new way" to collect RST.

So when RST becomes fully refundable like GST, what happens to the MJVT?

I'm sure the OTA will be lobbying the Ontario Ministry of Revenue hard on this issue.

If you get a chance to shake

hands with an MPP in the coming months, take time to mention that trucking wants the MJVT to be refundable.

IFTA: More audit exposure

Another program that's made the administration side of trucking easier is the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA). It provides a single tax filing, with your local jurisdiction handling the audits, and a consistent, manageable risk in terms of audit exposure.

Lately, though, we're hearing about a lot of complacency and sloppiness when it comes to compliance.

Why? We know from attending the annual IRP/IFTA Audit Workshop that jurisdictions have been stretched thin. Many carriers haven't seen an auditor in some time, if ever. So audit experiences just aren't on the radar as carriers focus on more common day-to-day challenges.

Other carriers think IFTA allows a margin of error up to 5% and that penalties are minor.

Not true. Redistribution with penalties and interest can be severe depending on which jurisdictions are swapping mileage and fuel. Our practice is to account for all kilometres and litres to get the correct KPL for tax calculations. Missing "miles and fuel," or the use of dispatch "practical miles" or unanalyzed "satellite"

miles, are an invitation to a big assessment.

If you think you'll never face an IFTA audit, think again. Auditors are being dispatched on multiple assignments: tri-part audits, encompassing IFTA, IRP, and MJVT all in one shot.

Take that supposed 5% error factor and apply it to not only the IFTA redistribution, but also to sales tax and licensing costs, and you're awash in a wave of new taxes, penalties, and interest.

Remember, too, that states apply mileage taxes unilaterally. If you haven't been through a mileage tax audit, be forewarned: it's a process designed to favour the jurisdiction, not the taxpayer. The smallest error factor will be fully exploited and you will pay, unless driving around the state is an option.

Accurate reporting is even more important with the advent of tri-part audits.

It's worth the cost and effort to be accurate when you consider the risk of a big assessment – not to mention the benefit of having solid information to help you make better decisions about your business. □

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

Opinion

Big Brother is already watching

Few things symbolize the post-9/11 Western world more than the iconic surveillance camera. When strange-looking vans began prowling the streets of Canadian cities earlier this year snapping pics for Google's controversial Street View feature, the ire of privacy watchdogs across the country was raised. And when US Homeland Security hoisted a high-tech camera in a balloon over Port Huron/Sarnia to monitor the St. Clair River and the Blue Water Bridge, normally polite Canadians were motivated to stage a cheeky "Moon the Balloon" protest.

Many other forms of surveillance aren't quite so obvious, and don't inspire the sort of mistrust associated with eyes in the sky, yet they're often far more effective at capturing personal information that can affect our lives dramatically.

At the same time many truckers are concerned about electronic monitoring of their activities with black boxes, electronic logs, and even cab cams, they're freely giving away information that's far more personal and probably no less sensitive.

We're spending increasing amounts of time hanging with our friends on various social networks – Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and others – and increasingly, marketers, employers, and law enforcement officials watch those sites to find out what we're up to.

Discussions about our whereabouts and activities, likes and dis-

Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie



likes, hobbies, vacation plans, and even those "25 random things" lists we share with our Facebook pals provide valuable insight into our personal and professional lives, and leave behind indelible records that can come back to haunt us.

Records such as the time you posted a message, for example. While there are lots of time markers DOT might use to verify your logs, in cases involving fatalities, officials have used Facebook and MySpace postings. Some of my trucker friends give detailed information on Facebook about where they are and when they're picking up and delivering, and it wouldn't be difficult to build a case against them if their logs failed to match their Facebook trail.

Is the prospect of law enforcement monitoring our Internet presence something that drivers should be concerned about, or are we just being paranoid? A few weeks ago, Canada's privacy commissioner released a report about Facebook's privacy policies – or maybe I should say the lack thereof.

The commissioner concluded that some of Facebook's policies violated Canada's Personal Information Protection and

Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), which specifies how private sector organizations may collect, use, or disclose personal information in the course of commercial activities. For example, Facebook shares its users' personal information with some 950,000 third-party games, quiz, and entertainment developers from around the world – without the user's "meaningful" consent.

The investigation also found that Facebook keeps information from accounts deactivated by users indefinitely. Users can "deactivate" an account, but not delete it, and data such as photographs remain on Facebook servers long after an account is supposedly closed.

More troubling was the practice of providing personal information about non-users – without their consent. For example, users can tag photos and videos of non-users with their names, and provide e-mail addresses so Facebook can invite them to join the site. Ever get one of those messages from Facebook? Ever wondered how they got your e-mail address?

That kind of information in and of itself might seem innocent enough, but when it's cross-referenced and put together it can be quite revealing. We know marketers just gobble up that kind of information, and it's used increasingly by employers as an electronic background check – sort of an electronic CV. Have you ever posted anything on a social networking site you wouldn't want

your boss to read?

A recent study called *Social Networking: 2009* conducted by Ipsos Reid, a leading public opinion research firm, revealed that the majority of Canadians now have an online social network profile (over 85% of them use Facebook), and many now spend more than one-third of their Internet time each week participating in and browsing online social network sites. There's little doubt that Facebook and the others are here to stay, and they can be a great deal of fun, but we need to be careful as we post, poke, and tweet our way through cyberspace.

But, before you accuse me of being paranoid, I want to stress that the issue here is not that Big Brother – and lots of others – are watching, it's that we should be mindful of the footprint we leave after we log off. We need to find a balance between using these new communications and networking tools and revealing a bit too much about ourselves. We can't take privacy issues lightly anymore.

Some interesting discussion is still to come on this subject as the day of EOBRs, cab cams, and other electronic surveillance looms closer. You have a choice when it comes to online social networking, but DOT-mandated video cameras in your cab are another matter altogether. We can't afford to let someone else write all the rules next time. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. All a-twitter about privacy? E-mail her at jritchie@obac.ca or call toll free 888-794-9990.

HOW DO YOU SPELL TIRES WITH HIGH VALUE?

H-A-N-K-O-O-K

In the age of unlimited competition, we can agree that having the right parts is the first step in providing quality services. Therefore, many owner-operators and fleet managers turn to well-recognized brands that provide high quality products with high price tags. In the tire industry, it is no different. Many companies purchase tires manufactured by the top three companies despite high prices without considering purchasing other brands, simply because of the perception that the other brands are manufactured by overseas companies with low technology to make them cheap. Certainly, the perception is justifiable to some brands, but not to Hankook. Here is why:

Fact : Hankook Tire is a global company, not an overseas company.

Maybe you did not know this, but Hankook Tire is one of the largest tire manufacturers in the world. In fact, Hankook Tire is the 7th largest tire manufacturer in the world with one of the fastest growth rates in the industry*. With great success and satisfied customers all around the world, the company grew and transformed itself over the years. Hankook Tire now has more than 20 offices globally, multiple state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and several technical centres on every major continent including in the U.S., Germany, Korea, Japan and China. With a global network that stretches from Seoul to Toronto to Moscow, it is true that Hankook is a global company, not an off-shore tire company. Hankook products are premium imports developed to exceed the expectations of consumers.

* Modern Tire Dealer, 2008

Fact : Hankook Tires are produced with innovative technology.

Grouped with energetic, smart and consumer-oriented engineers, Hankook Tire continuously re-invests approximately 5% of its revenue into Research and Development. At the Akron Technical Center of Ohio, energetic and dedicated engineers develop tires that reflect the weather, road and drivers of North America. The dedication and effort in advancing tires has been noticed from several highly respected organizations.

First, Hankook Tire is original equipment tire supplier to International Trucks and I.C. School Buses on drive and steer positions. The tires meet and exceed the requirements of the highly respected company and continue to satisfy drivers and fleets in North America. Secondly, Hankook Tire has been recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and received EPA SmartWay certification on three truck and bus tires for reduced rolling resistance that creates a smaller carbon footprint. The recently launched AL07+ steer tire, top-seller Z35a drive tire and advanced TL01 trailer tire provide reduced rolling resistance of 3% or more to meet SmartWay standards. The certified Hankook tires provide improved fuel economy and reduced costs to drivers and fleet managers.

In addition, Hankook focuses on improving fuel efficiency and lowering the rolling resistance of current and future products with an annual investment of \$19 million on R&D to make more environmentally-friendly products that reduce the operating costs of O-Os and fleets. Certainly, you will hear about additional Hankook products being certified for the SmartWay Program.

Fact : Hankook Tires provide tremendous value to the consumer.

You now know the Hankook products are made by a global company

that focuses on providing innovative products that are high in quality. And the company's effort has been recognized and certified. But did you know the tires provide excellent value to consumers? Hankook tires are very cost effective in comparison with comparable quality products and have been well-recognized for their value. Call your local dealer today to find out how much you can save with Hankook products and how they can deliver better value. The news you hear about the price, quality and value of Hankook Tires will be some of the best news you will hear in 2009.

Fact : Hankook medium truck tires are available at your local dealer.

With thousands of dealers across Canada, Hankook truck and bus tires are available at your local dealer to help you earn more value for your purchase. From the ports of Vancouver to the lumber mills in the Maritimes, the dealers are proud to sell Hankook products and they are widely available. In addition, the new large distribution centre in Ontario can service Ontario fleets directly and help you to reduce costs, which will help your fleet in the current economic downturn. For further information, please contact Hankook Tire Canada Corp., at 1 800 843 7709.

So, how do you spell tires with high value? H-A-N-K-O-O-K



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Hybrids

Hybrids are happenin'

'There's not a customer I talk to today that doesn't want to talk about green technologies,'

— Andy Douglas, Kenworth

By James Menzies

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, Ont. – Hybrid commercial vehicles are no longer a futuristic concept, but a “mature, robust” technology, Andy Douglas Kenworth’s national sales manager for specialty markets told delegates at the Private Motor Truck Council of Canada’s annual convention.

“The hybrid world is moving at light speed,” he said, noting about 8,000 hybrid commercial vehicles were ordered in North America this year, with that market expected to balloon to 27,000 units over the next few years.

“There’s not a customer I talk to today that doesn’t want to talk about green technologies,” Douglas said. “I think there’s an opportunity for your companies to leverage your brands and go out and say ‘Hey, I’m doing my part - our company is an environmental leader.’”

Kenworth’s medium-duty hybrids use Eaton’s parallel electric-drive system, which uses an electric motor to power the truck at low speeds and assist with acceleration. It recaptures energy under braking and stores it in a battery pack for use when accelerating. Since the energy required to power the electric motor is captured while braking, Douglas said stop-and-go applications are best-suited for hybrid commercial vehicles.

That’s a natural fit for Purolator Courier, which operates delivery trucks that often make 10-13 stops per hour in downtown cores.

“That’s where the hybrid really makes the most sense,” said Serge Viola, national fleet manager with Purolator.

“If you’re running up and down the 401 all day, I don’t think the hybrid is going to be a tremendous benefit to you,” Douglas admitted. However, in urban pick-up and delivery applications, customers are realizing fuel savings in the 30% range while trucks equipped with a PTO that can be powered by the electric motor are seeing fuel savings closer to 50%, Douglas said.

While medium-duty hybrid commercial vehicles are entering the mainstream, there’s still a long way to go on the Class 8 side, Douglas admitted.

“We won’t see a Class 8 hybrid in the near term,” he said. “Yes, there are pre-production trucks out there, but they’re not ready for prime time. We’ve got more work to do on that.”

The big stumbling block is the cost and capacity limitations of the batteries, he added.

“We need a breakthrough in battery technology,” said Douglas, “both in terms of capacity as well as size, weight and maybe most importantly in terms of price.”

It costs US\$7,000-\$8,000 to replace the battery pack today – and that’s on a medium-duty hybrid. Today’s batteries have about a six year life span and once depleted, they are returned to Eaton for recycling.

Bridging the gap between the medium-duty hybrids available today and the Class 8 hybrids that will become feasible only as battery technology evolves, is a single axle tractor Kenworth recently introduced for “Big 7, Baby 8” applications. Testing has shown a 41% fuel economy improvement with GVWs of up to 55,000 lbs, Douglas

said. That was exciting news to Paul Lay of Coca-Cola Enterprises, which operates the biggest medium-duty truck fleet in North America.

“We’re really excited about the tractor,” he told delegates, adding the company plans to order 150 of the units this year.

For heavier duty applications, Douglas said fleets may want to explore alternative fuels such as natural gas. Canada has an abundant supply of natural gas, and it’s roughly \$1 per gallon cheaper than its diesel equivalent, Douglas pointed out. However, natural gas fueling stations are few and far between, so it’s really only practical for trucks that return home every night for fueling.

“Fuel is an issue,” Douglas admitted. “The overall fueling infrastructure is not that mature.”

Natural gas also produces less energy than diesel. A truck that can travel 650 miles on 100 gallons of diesel will only make it 380 miles using liquefied natural gas (LNG) and 170 miles using compressed natural gas (CNG), which is more widely used in Canada.

Natural gas-powered Kenworth trucks come with either the ISX-G engine (big power, no performance loss, higher GVWs and EPA07-compliance) using LNG fuel only, or the ISL-G (which can be run on either LNG or CNG and is EPA2010-compliant without the need for selective catalytic reduction or diesel particulate filters, but only at lower power ratings).

Back to hybrids, Purolator has been a pioneer of sorts when it comes to environmentally-friendly vehicles. Viola said the company bought its first hybrid delivery trucks with the aim of reducing its fuel costs by 50%. While it hasn’t yet achieved that target with its diesel-electric delivery trucks, it has realized fuel savings in the 32-40% range. The company is also targeting a 20% maintenance savings, Viola said.

Purolator’s hybrids are mostly produced by Azure Dynamics, but the company intends to buy some

Eaton-powered hybrids as well. It recently placed an order for 50 new hybrid vehicles – an order that would’ve been bigger had the battery supplier been able to keep up with the demand. Viola said the company’s moving from a nickel metal hydride battery system to one that uses the more readily available lithium ion batteries to avoid supply issues in the future.

In addition to hybrids, Purolator has led the charge with a couple of other green alternatives, including an all-electric delivery truck designed with Unicell and ArvinMeritor and a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle developed with Hydrogenics.

The fully-electric, plug-in vehicle, dubbed the Quicksider, was put into service running nine hours a day over seven weeks and was up to the task – despite one unforeseen productivity hiccup.

“It was supposed to be the most efficient vehicle, but it was actually our least efficient vehicle because it got stopped everywhere it went – people wanted to take pictures of it and they wanted to see the inside,” joked Viola.

Despite its many interruptions, the Quicksider proved to be viable – but at a steep price. Viola said Purolator is building a business case for the Quicksider and will challenge the manufacturer to build future versions at a specific price point.

“If he reaches that number, we’ll buy a hundred,” he said, adding full electrification represents the future for downtown delivery applications. For now, Purolator’s Quicksider is headed to Vancouver where it’ll be showcased at the Winter Olympics.

As for the hydrogen fuel cell experiment, Purolator’s partner Hydrogenics recently dumped the project which will now be handed over to the University of Waterloo for further development, Viola said. Challenges included: excessive fueling time; cold weather operability issues; and the weight added by its 24 batteries. However, Purolator isn’t willing to give up on hydrogen fuel cells just yet.

If you’re looking to add hybrids to your fleet, Coca-Cola’s Lay said it’s important to train drivers on how to drive them. A lead-footed driver will minimize any fuel savings, he pointed out.

“Make sure drivers really understand how to optimize that engine’s performance,” he suggested.

Despite improving fuel economy in stop-and-go routes from 3-6 mpg to 6-7 mpg, Lay said a payback is not achieved until the vehicle has reached its entire 15-year life-cycle at Coca-Cola Enterprises. Still, the company takes great pride in being an environmental leader and continues to purchase hybrid vehicles.

Each of the panelists agreed the biggest roadblock to bringing hybrid commercial vehicles to the next level is the price – they cost 30-40% more than conventional trucks. In the US, there’s a wide range of government funding programs available and here in Canada they’re finally beginning to catch on.

“I think you’re going to see government step up in a very big way to support this,” said Douglas. □

We’re now on twitter - and we’re pretty cocky about it.

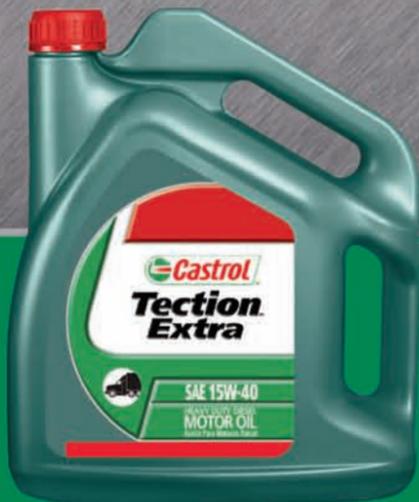


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Safety

A commitment to safety begins with compliance to the rules

To say that the trucking industry operates in a highly-regulated environment would be an understatement. When I worked for a carrier that transported dangerous goods, we determined that as many as 10 different regulatory bodies could audit our activities, and each of them contributed their own rules to the business. Progressive fleets certainly need to do more than simply “comply” with the rules – they must embrace best practices – but there is no mistaking the fact that compliance is still an important element of an effective safety management program.

Consider the value of compliance-related information that can be used as a barometer of fleet activities. While carrier profiles such as Ontario’s CVOR do not reflect every aspect of an organization’s commitment to safety, for example, the regularly updated records can be used to monitor trends and establish benchmarks. A fleet safety manager who notices an increase in behaviour-related driving violations such as speeding or following too closely could identify the employees who require some remedial training. And a spike in hours-of-service violations could also indicate the need to refine efforts that manage fatigue.

Regulators such as the Ontario Ministry of Transportation are even expanding the scope of these profiles to better reflect a fleet’s overall commitment to safety.

Rather than focusing on *if* you comply with regulations, the audit

Ask the Expert

Dave Roth



process now looks at *how* you comply with regulations.

A decade ago, the mechanical condition of a fleet was measured strictly in terms of the number of reported defects. Today, carriers need to identify the process that a driver will follow when a defect is discovered, show how the information will be communicated to the maintenance department, and determine that the repair was made.

There has been a similar shift in the monitoring of hours-of-service rules. While provincial auditors were once focused exclusively on log sheets and compliance with the related record keeping, they are now looking for initiatives such as fatigue management techniques and the remedial measures for drivers who have trouble with their logbooks.

Approaches are being refined south of the border in the process.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is expanding the scope of the information that it monitors through an initiative known as Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010.

The new Safety Measurement System that is replacing SafeStat

(the traditional online profiles) will measure roadside violations and crash data over two years. That data will be used to calculate a score in seven Behavioural Analysis and Safety Improvement Categories: unsafe driving, fatigue, driver fitness, drugs and alcohol, vehicle maintenance, cargo securement and crash history. Recent violations that are closely linked with crashes will carry a heavier weighting than others, and carriers will then be ranked against their peers to identify high-risk drivers and high-risk fleets.

In the meantime, safety managers can still use today’s carrier profiles to identify safety-related trends long before the data ever triggers an intervention or causes a shipper to question a fleet’s overall commitment to safety.

Every crash in the US should be recorded on the FMCSA’s SafeStat report within 90 days, while the results of roadside inspections should show up within 21 days. These tend to be updated on the third week of every month, and should be accessed at least once a month. In the case of Ontario’s CVOR, carriers should be accessing the information at least twice a year, if not once a quarter. During annual reviews, fleets should compare this data to the information that drivers have reported to the safety department.

Collectively, operating records such as these can be combined with data that is collected by the fleet itself. An electronic engine, for exam-

ple, can identify factors such as the number of hard braking events, excessive speed, engine revolutions and idling statistics, which could then be compared to the number of on-road violations that are found on a driver’s abstract. This can be used to identify the trends that require remedial action before an employee develops into a high-risk driver.

The loss control personnel at your insurance company will be able to leverage data such as loss runs (a statement listing all the different types of losses that have occurred) to identify the remedial training that high-risk drivers will require.

The management of compliance to other rules that govern the workplace can lead to a number of additional dividends as well.

Changes to the New Experimental Experience Rating (NEER) that is tracked by Ontario’s Workplace Safety and Insurance Board alone can be used to determine rates. It is just another reason why fleet managers should work with industry trade associations to track all of the ever-changing rules that govern so many aspects of the trucking industry. We all know that the regulators are watching. The information that they collect should be managed as well. □

– *This month’s expert is Dave Roth, Ontario regional manager of safety and training services. Markel Safety and Training Services offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers. Send questions and comments to info@markel.ca.*

Industry

Houston, we have a problem

As I write this, it is the 40th anniversary of the day man first landed on the moon. For those of us who were alive at the time, crowded around the old black and white TV set, it was hard to believe our eyes that it was actually happening. This was an amazing feat and ushered in the dawn of a new era. Growing up in the ’60s, most of us recall watching and listening to Walter Cronkite as he described the risks of what they called “moon shots,” especially if the spacecraft overshot the moon.

I’m not a rocket scientist, but you didn’t need to be one to know that overshooting the moon was a real bad thing and that mission control had to get it right or they’d have a disaster on their hands. There were a few tragedies and close shaves along the way, but we all know that things ultimately worked out.

What does any of this have to do with trucking? Well, in terms of our industry and current rates, most would say we’ve overshot the moon by a mile (or whatever the space equivalent of a heck of a long way is). We can blame shippers for being greedy and taking advantage of the desperation that some carriers are feeling. We can blame them for using load brokers who have no accountability to the actual cost of hauling a load.

We can also blame ourselves. The kinds of rates that carriers

Industry Issues

David Bradley



seem willing to haul freight for begs the question: What planet are we from? Who can realistically afford to give up 15%, 25%, 35% or more in revenue and expect to break even?

But, that is what is happening. No sector or region is immune. If you really stop and think about it, how could anyone reduce their price that much and survive?

The margins in trucking can’t support those sorts of rate decreases. Surely, it is insane to think that after 20 years of economic deregulation carriers can cut their costs by the same order of magnitude in order to preserve margin.

But, that’s not all. The rules of the game have changed. Shippers are setting new terms of payment (often 45 days plus); new mileage platforms (short miles vs hub miles); and new fuel surcharge formulae. Income from accessorial charges like waiting time or border clearance has dried up; rates are being set for extended periods (a year or more).

Shippers are tendering freight as often as they want. Sure, shippers’

businesses are also under pressure; many significantly so. Carriers know that. Still, some will say that shipper greed is as responsible for the current situation as carrier desperation.

They argue that the tender process is designed to hammer the rates of incumbent carriers – who have proven they can provide the service – down beyond reason by comparing them to at what are best suggested (if not illusory) rates quoted by unproven carriers who may or may not be willing and able to provide the service.

They feel they are being backed into a corner.

But, the fact is that right now, there is little point in blaming anyone. Shippers are making these demands and getting the rates they are, because they can. It is the way things are.

Clearly, the decline in volume that has occurred so far during this recession is still outpacing the speed at which carriers are shedding capacity. Many carriers will say that business is off 20% to 30%. Bankruptcies in the trucking industry have hit new records in each of the past two years.

While trucking job losses have in some recent months been the worst of any industry, employment is still less than 4% below where it was a year ago, which is mild compared to some other industries.

But, the industry has always been lean on employment. Moreover, this number does not include, for example, the many

owner/operators who have packed it in.

There are other factors also at play. With the glut of equipment in the marketplace some lenders/lessors are loathe to recall the equipment from carriers who are failing to make their loan/lease payments.

At some point those carriers will have to pay the piper.

There are probably a number of carriers who want out of the business and are taking a short-term view by attempting to get as many customers as they can today in the hope that it makes their company more attractive to potential buyers. Investment in the industry’s human capital as well as its trucks, trailers and other technologies has been put on hold. But it can’t stay that way forever.

The major reckoning in terms of capacity is yet to come in order to bring some semblance of equilibrium to the supply/demand equation. But, it will and when it does – maybe even before the recession is over – whatever the surviving carriers have given up in rates will have to be restored.

As fast as rates went down, they can go back up again. The question now should be *when* the correction takes place, not *if*.

Impossible? We put a man on the moon didn’t we? □

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

New Products

Components



Dana is promising to improve fuel mileage, reduce maintenance costs and increase driver comfort with its new line of **single-drive axles** for medium-duty trucks. The Spicer S140 series single reduction axles are available now, and replace all previous 17,000- to 19,000-lb Spicer drive axles, the company reports. They can be spec'd on any make and model straight truck chassis with gross axle weight ratings of up to 19,000 lbs. The new axles are 85 lbs lighter than the models they're replacing, leading to fuel economy improvements, Dana says. The Spicer S140 series axles are suited for applications with GVWs of 31,000 lbs, or 33,000 lbs under specific application approvals. For more info, contact Roadranger at 800-826-4357.



Ridewell Suspensions and Polar Tank Trailer have combined to release the **RAR-240 suspension** featuring stainless steel hangers and upper spring plates. It's suited for a wide range of tank trailers, exclusively through Polar Tank, the companies have announced. The manufacturers claim the new suspension boasts an improved appearance and durability and also lead to more efficient production at Polar Tank. It's well-suited for pretty much every kind of on- or off-highway tanker trailer and is available in under- and overslung configurations rated at 25,000 and 30,000 lbs.

Bergstrom has introduced a new battery-powered, **idle-free cab com-**

fort system for day cabs. The NITE Day Cab No-Idle System provides idle-free air-conditioning using one or two deep-cycle AGM batteries. The truck's batteries are protected from discharge by a separator, the company says. Components include a compressor and evaporator, which are installed behind the truck's seats. It comes with an optional heating system that burns about 0.05 gallons of fuel per hour, the company says. The system is CARB-approved and available now through major OEMs and Bergstrom Kysor. For more, see www.bergstrominc.com.

Walk-in vans built by Freightliner Custom Chassis (FCC) can now be retrofit with **hybrid-electric drivetrains**, according to the company. The retrofit program began last November and so far about 100 MT-45 walk-in van chassis have been fitted with hybrid components, the company says. It allows fleets to capitalize on the lower emissions and fuel consumption offered by hybrids without the cost of purchasing an entirely new vehicle. The retrofit program involves removing old powertrain equipment and replacing it with the Eaton hybrid-electric system.

Lighting

Alliance Parts has introduced a complete line of **replacement LED lights**, which the company claims will offer improved lighting performance and energy efficiency compared to traditional incandescent bulbs. LEDs are also less susceptible to damage from vibration and offer longer life than traditional bulbs. The new LED products from Alliance Parts include stop, turn and tail lights as well as others. They're now available through the company's 1,000-plus retailers in the US and Canada and are backed by a one-year, unlimited mileage warranty, the company says. For more info, visit www.alliancebrandparts.com.

Peterson Manufacturing has introduced a new economical **LED stop/turn/tail light** in 4-inch diameters. They're listed as the Piranha-branded 817-3/818-3 Series, the company announced.



Peterson says it's able to offer the new LEDs at a significant cost savings due to efficiency improvements in the manufacturing process. The company also says the long life and reliability of the lights is not compromised. For more info, go to www.pmlights.com.

Tires & Wheels

Promising the appearance of upgraded aluminum wheels at standard aluminum wheel prices, Accuride Corp. has made an **enhanced finish** standard. The new finishing process produces a semi-polished appearance on unpolished wheels, according to the company. It's now standard across the company's entire line of aluminum wheels, except for small diameter trailer wheels.

Double Coin has expanded its commercial truck tire line. New to Double Coin are a FR605, FD405 and FT105 **fuel-efficient tires** in steer, drive and trailer positions respectively. The company also unveiled a new RR202 tire for mixed service applications, which it describes as an ultra-premium five rib highway service tire. Double Coin also introduced its RR680 and low-profile RT600 to round out its regional all-position steer tire line-up. And for off-the-road applications it has come out with the 3700R57 tire for mining and other severe-service applications. Double Coin also introduced a North America-wide Government Fleet Net Pricing program, which offers special pricing for federal, state and local government entities and municipalities. For details, talk to a Double Coin dealer.

Accessories



Truck News has teamed up with KRTS Transportation Specialists to create a new **online information video series** that's designed to inform and entertain. The Driver's Seat online information video series, powered by CarriersEdge, will address safety, compliance and business topics critical to the success of both fleets and owner/operators, the companies announced. Videos will feature *Truck News* personality Adam Ledlow as he learns the correct procedures for common driver tasks such as coupling/un-coupling, air brake checks and daily vehicle inspections under the guidance of KRTS instructors. You can find out more by visiting www.TheDriversSeat.ca.



Night Moves has come out with an eye-catching night-time illumination technology for **commercial vehicle graphics**. Night Moves installs thin, true-colour graphic panels with electro-luminescent lighting to vehicles which provides excellent visibility at night-time, the company claims. The panels are as thin as a credit card yet can last three to five years, the company says. For more info, visit www.nightmoves247.com.

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New Products

At your command

Opening and closing roll-up doors has never been easier

By James Menzies

BURLINGTON, Ont. – Much like garage door openers and automatic car windows have become the norm, Jim Webb, business development manager with Whiting is anticipating that his company's CommandLIFT remote door system will be the next big thing for straight trucks and trailers with roll-up doors.

The CommandLIFT system is controlled by a small handheld remote that doubles as a keychain. Drivers simply press a button to effortlessly open or close the door and a slide cover prevents the accidental opening while in transit.

The system first caught the attention of Whiting reps while at a trade show in Europe. Webb said the company purchased the North American licensing rights and then completely redesigned the system for use here.

"Over the past two years, we've re-engineered this entire product," said Webb, while demonstrating the system at Whiting's Burlington manufacturing plant. Whiting has put the CommandLIFT through its paces in hot and cold temperature extremes and has operated it continuously for more than 50,000 cycles without any problems, Webb says.

Initially, he felt delivery truck owner/operators would be the target market, but that has since expanded to include fleets as they have recognized the potential to lower employee injury rates and ideally their insurance costs. Suitable applications run the gamut, from couriers (which can make as many as 100 deliveries per shift) to food and beverage delivery companies to furniture retailers and rental companies. Webb says the system can

even help a company comply with regulations.

Food and Drug Administration regulations, for instance, don't allow food to be placed on the ground.

"I've seen this hundreds of times, you go to a restaurant and there's a truck there delivering hamburger patties. The driver opens the door, reaches in and takes out a box of patties, puts it on the ground and then closes the door. He's violated the law, because he's put it on the ground," Webb explains.

The CommandLIFT, however, saves the driver from having to grab the strap and latch the door, as it locks even without the traditional latch secured.

The added security is also appreciated by companies that deliver cargo such as tobacco and alcohol, which always represents a high risk of theft.

Webb is confident the CommandLIFT will become a valuable driver recruiting and retention tool, as the driver shortage once again rears its head. You don't need arms the size of Popeye's to open and close the door dozens of times over the course of a shift, which will be appreciated by an aging workforce.

The system boasts a few other benefits as well, which will be appreciated by drivers.

The interior LED lights travel with the door as it opens so unlike a traditional dome light, they are not blocked by the door when it's raised.

There's also an extra 3-inches of clearance, since the door rolls all the way up and doesn't bounce back to impede on the opening like roll-up doors often do. This should help minimize damage



EASY TO USE: The roll-up door on this straight truck is opened with the click of a button, using the handheld keychain-type remote control.



BRIGHT IDEA: The interior LED lights travel along the track on the ceiling so they're not blocked by the door when opened.

while loading and unloading by forklift.

Webb also says the system will prolong door life, although by just how much is difficult to say.

"I know a lot of drivers who have arms the size of my legs and they throw that door up so hard, the door panels, hinges and rollers take an absolute beating," Webb says. "Then they take it and slam it shut – I've seen it actually come down and bounce. The abuse those doors are taking – they get beat up."

Maintenance is virtually non-

existent – the tracks just need to be periodically wiped clean with a rag, Webb claims.

The CommandLIFT is available through most bodybuilders at a recommended price of around \$2,500 installed. Aftermarket installations will take about six hours, Webb predicts, although that can be reduced to about two hours with some experience.

The system requires a 12- or 24-volt power supply and weighs about 80 lbs. More info is available through bodybuilders and at www.commandlift.com. □

MISSING

MICHAEL WAYNE DUNAHEE 2503-S



D.O.B.: May 12, 1986

Missing since: March 24, 1991

Missing from: Victoria, BC

Height: 3' 0"

(At time of disappearance)

Weight: 51 lbs.

(At time of disappearance)

Eye Colour: Blue

Hair Colour: Blonde



Photo age-enhanced to 17 years (2003)
Veillesement de photo jusqu'à
17 ans (2003)

www.ontario.childfind.ca

Michael was starting to show freckles when he disappeared. Michael was abducted by person(s) unknown from the Blanshard Street Elementary playground, Victoria, British Columbia, at approximately 12:40 pm on Sunday, March 24, 1991. There was no indication left behind as to which direction he was taken. Vancouver Island is only accessible by plane or ferry.

Anyone with information please contact:

All Calls Confidential – No Name Required

CHILD FIND 1-800-387-7962

European SCR manufacturer increases NA presence

NOVI, Mich. – A European manufacturer of vehicle exhaust aftertreatment systems is establishing a major manufacturing presence in North America as it prepares to help the industry meet new EPA emissions requirements.

Eberspaecher says it will begin production of new commercial vehicle exhaust aftertreatment systems at its Brighton, Michigan plant later this year. It recently injected millions of dollars into the facility, retooling 80% of its 120,000 sq.-ft., the company has announced. It has also installed manufacturing technology at its new 100,000-sq.-ft. facility in Wixom, Mich.

"The substantial investments we've made in our Brighton and Wixom facilities will position the company as a market leader in the production of exhaust aftertreatment systems for heavy-duty trucks from 2010 onward," said Dennis Berry, president and CEO of Eberspaecher North America.

Eberspaecher manufactures selective catalytic reduction (SCR) systems, an exhaust aftertreatment system that will be used by most engine manufacturers to meet EPA2010 emissions standards. By 2014, off-highway vehicles will also be faced with the same stringent NOx reductions and Eberspaecher says it will develop modular designs to meet the more complex packaging and serviceability needs of the off-road market.

"Today we're primarily an automotive supplier, but within the next three years we expect our commercial vehicle operations to account for 50% or more of our North American business and contribute to a substantial growth in total sales," Berry said. "Off-highway sales during the next decade will have a significant impact on future growth as well." □

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Opinion

Owner/Operator of the Year presentation a family affair

The Fergus Truck Show has come and gone for another year and it's great to see that despite some early worries about the show's future, the event went off without a hitch.

You may recall earlier this year, there was concern about whether the show would be able to continue at its current location. Some landowners were apparently feeling less than hospitable towards show-goers after their land suffered damage from previous events.

However, aside from a slightly different layout, this year's Fergus Truck Show had a familiar look and feel.

As always, one of the highlights of the show for me was taking part in the *Truck News/Truck West* Owner/Operator of the Year award presentation.

Sponsored by Freightliner, Goodyear and Castrol (with sup-

Publisher's Comment

Rob Wilkins



porting sponsors Natural Resources Canada and OBAC also pitching in), the award was presented on the main stage July 24 right before Trooper took to the stage.

The Fergus Truck Show is the perfect venue to give away this award: it's only right that Canada's owner/operator award is presented at Canada's owner/operator show.

But it does provide some added challenges when the winner comes from outside Ontario, as was the case this year. Michael 'Motor' Rosenau of Calgary was this year's winner and since he

and his wife Dana were flying in the day of the presentation, we nervously anticipated a phone call that there had been a delay along the way.

Fortunately, the good folks at WestJet got them to Toronto on schedule and they pulled into the show just on time for the presentation.

Accompanying Motor and his wife Dana were his parents Len and Jen as well as his aunt Val and uncle Gord. I knew our winner came from a trucking family, but to see this level of support was very impressive.

You can read more about Motor in this month's issue and you can also watch an interview with him in the Aug. 5 episode of *Transportation Matters* at Trucknews.com.

I watched the interview from underneath the *Truck News* tent as we all took shelter from the



FAMILY TIES: Michael 'Motor' Rosenau (third from left) is flanked by father Len, wife Dana, aunt Val, mother Jen and uncle Gord. They all made the trip from out west to celebrate Motor's accomplishment, making it a true family affair.

rain (okay, maybe I was hiding from the snake at the NAL booth that Kathy insisted I go pet), and was impressed by Motor's thoughtful responses.

It would've been great to spend some more time with Motor and his family, but unfortunately as Trooper would say they were 'here for a good time, not a long time.'

So we made sure to have an extra good time on Friday night and on Sunday morning we said our goodbyes. Congratulations go out to Motor. You're a deserving winner and you have the support of a great family! □

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

Mail

Eating healthy on the road, it is possible!

Dear Editor:

Regarding the Truck Stop Question in the August *Truck West* on whether or not it's possible to eat healthy on the road, yes you can!

I am a wife of a trucker – we live in the truck going coast-to-coast. The majority of rigs now on the road are, or can be, set up to be very friendly to living well.

I see what comes out of trucks and it scares me. To make meals in a truck is very easy. You cook at home, do it on the road with ease!

Here's how: microwave, fridge, small barbecue. The stores make it very convenient. You can buy steamer bags for the microwave, veggies in the store are ready to cook steamed, you can do what your heart and waist need.

There are even omelet makers for the microwave. Cook your meat on the barbecue.

Fruit is also ready to take and eat. I also make wraps for lunch. Soft wrap, lettuce, meat of your liking, pickles roll it up and eat. This can be done while hubby is driving.

And the money you can save! I can make a meal for two for under \$10. Just think, pork chops baby potatoes and broccoli all cooked and on the plate 15-20 minutes start to finish. □

Sunday Montour
Via e-mail

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TRUCK-OPS, an online job board for office and mechanical positions in the transportation industry, is now accepting job postings...free of charge.

The job board, owned and operated by Truck News, Truck West and Motortruck Fleet Executive, is hosted at Trucknews.com. Transportation companies can now sign up and submit their non-driving job opportunities for up to eight weeks for free.

"We realize most transportation companies are watching their costs very closely right now," said Kathy Penner, associate publisher of Truck News/Truck West and administrator of the Truck-Ops service. "However, we also know it's important to find the right people to fill important positions within your company. By offering our Truck-Ops service for free, we're giving back to the industry and helping transportation companies to strengthen their operations going forward."

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New Products

Navistar announces 2010 pricing for International trucks

Company also defends decision to avoid SCR

By James Menzies

WARRENVILLE, Ill. – Navistar announced pricing for its EPA2010-compliant engines during a recent conference call with the trade press.

International trucks with mid-range engines such as the MaxxForce 7, MaxxForce DT, MaxxForce 9 and MaxxForce 10 will be slapped with a \$6,000 non-discountable emissions surcharge. Trucks with big bore engines such as the MaxxForce 11 and MaxxForce 13 will increase in price by \$8,000, the company announced.

Unlike any of its competitors, which are each relying on the exhaust aftertreatment system selective catalytic reduction (SCR) to meet 2010 emissions standards, Navistar has developed an “in-cylinder” solution it calls Advanced EGR. It’s simply an expansion of the company’s current exhaust gas recirculation technology.

“Meeting stricter EPA emissions levels in 2010, unfortunately, comes with a higher price,” said Jack Allen, president, Navistar North American Truck Group. “Though we have given our best effort to minimize costs related to the robust design and development of 2010 MaxxForce engines to ensure pricing is manageable for our customers, prices will increase commensurate with our technology path and our effort to remain competitive in the marketplace.”

Navistar also took the opportunity to take aim at “misinformation” it says has been circulated by some of its competitors. Specifically, Navistar addressed fuel economy, SCR operating requirements, reliability and residual value.

Fuel economy: Claims that SCR will deliver better fuel economy than Navistar’s in-cylinder solution are based on Class 8 on-highway applications under optimum conditions, said Allen. He said Navistar’s 2010 engines will have fuel economy “equal to or better than” its current

offerings. He said he’s also confident Navistar’s fuel economy will rival that of any SCR engine when you factor in the cost of urea (or diesel exhaust fluid, which is actually a mixture of urea and water). Also, Allen pointed out Navistar will compensate for any loss of fuel efficiency within the engine by improving the efficiency of the entire truck package, focusing on factors such as truck aerodynamics and rolling resistance.

Operating requirements: Despite claims to the contrary, Allen said SCR will be onerous for body builders, customers and drivers as it occupies frame rail space and requires drivers to actively monitor DEF levels and seek out sources of the fluid while on the road. He also said there will be incremental repair costs for the hardware and software associated with the SCR system, all of which is avoided by using Advanced EGR.

Reliability and durability: Questions about the ability of the 2010 MaxxForce engines to deal with increased heat output are unfounded, according to Allen. He said the new MaxxForce engines inherently run cooler than their predecessors. “The combustion temperature has been lowered so the thermal stress on the engine is actually lower,” he explained. The cooling system has been improved and now features a two-stage EGR cooler. “We are putting more exhaust into the air intake but we’re not putting more hot exhaust into the 2010 engines,” Allen explained. “In fact, our air intake temperatures will be lower than our current engines.”

Residual value: Allen also confronted claims that Navistar’s engines will have little resale value as the majority of heavy-duty engine manufacturers commit to SCR. “Our belief is that the technology to meet emissions is going to continue to evolve post-2010 to a non-liquid urea-based solution,” he said. He compared SCR to technologies such

as VCRs and Walkmans which were eventually replaced with “more advanced, more customer-friendly” technologies and he pointed out “there are a number of high-tech companies today” testing technologies that would meet the required NOx levels without urea-based DEF.

Navistar officials also announced that 2010 field testing is well underway, and that EPA2010-compliant versions of the big bore MaxxForce 11 and 13 engines will have racked up more than five million miles of real-world testing before their launch.

Navistar also touched on its ongoing lawsuit against the EPA, which accuses the agency of changing the rules mid-game, benefitting engine manufacturers using SCR. The original EPA SCR guidance document issued in 2001, for instance, declared that only systems that are 100% compliant with 2010 NOx limits 100% of the time would be considered. The latest guidance issued by EPA, however, allows SCR systems to operate up to 1,000 miles without DEF in the tank and for up to 70 minutes without thawed DEF during cold starts, according to Navistar’s interpretation.

“In our mind, that’s not 100% compliant 100% of the time, that’s a loophole and it’s a loophole that in 2001 the EPA specifically said it wasn’t going to allow,” charged Allen.

Navistar’s announcement adds clarity to the 2010 engine pricing picture. In March, Volvo was the first to announce its 2010 engines would come with a non-negotiable \$9,600 emissions surcharge. As this issue of *Truck West* was going to press, Daimler Trucks North America announced trucks with the Detroit Diesel DD13, DD15 and DD16 will carry a \$9,000 surcharge and its medium-duty trucks with the Cummins ISC8.3 and ISB6.7 will be slapped with a \$7,300 and \$6,700 surcharge respectively. □



Mack, Volvo ready to roll

GREENSBORO, N.C. – The first production level EPA2010 Volvo VN (pictured) has rolled off the company’s assembly line at its New River Valley plant.

The VN670, complete with selective catalytic reduction (SCR) was completed July 2, the company reported. Full production of customer trucks will begin in the fall and Volvo is already taking orders for its EPA2010-compliant trucks.

Mack, meanwhile, says plans to start production on its EPA2010-compliant trucks are continuing on schedule.

In recent weeks, employees at the Macungie Assembly Operations plant have built Granite and TerraPro models equipped with SCR systems.

These trucks have the same components that will be installed on customer trucks later this year, Mack says. □

Manac earns ISO certification

TROIS-RIVIERES, Que. – Trailer manufacturer Manac has earned its ISO 9001-2008 certification for the quality control management system of its Trois-Rivieres facility.

The facility specializes in the manufacturing of flatbeds, dumps, transfers, loggers and lowbeds. Staff at the Trois-Rivieres plant were formally presented with designation June 16. Manac operates a second plant in Quebec and two others in Missouri. □

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Also including: the Vancouver Island Truck Show and the Northern BC Show 'n' Shine.

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Hands On Trucking

By Edo van Belkom

After a short stint as a shunt driver in a huge truck yard in the Vancouver Area where he solved a murder, broke up a smuggling ring, and gave a widow some money she had coming to her, Mark had set out on a long, long trip to California and through the southern United States. He was back now, hoping his luck would hold out and he'd get another long haul to some far flung place so he could make some money and enjoy the open road. Sounded great. Trouble was, he'd first have to get that load from his dispatcher, Bud.

So he called him up.

"Hey Bud, it's Mark."

He waited a beat, then came the inevitable, "Mark who?"

Although it had been funny at first, cute even, Mark was getting tired of this routine. "The Mark who's been working for you for 10 years now! The Mark who's name shows up on your damn caller ID each time I phone you! The Mark who's been your best driver and helped you outta more tight spots than all your other drivers combined!"

"Mark Zolinski?"

Mark was dumbstruck for a moment and couldn't say a word. But then, as he thought about it, all he could do was laugh. "Very funny, Bud."

"Oh, Mark Dalton. I thought I recognized your voice, but I couldn't be sure."

"Right," Mark said with another little laugh. "Listen, I'm back from the states and I'm looking for another long load."

Mark could hear Bud sucking air in through his clenched teeth. "I don't have much in the way of long hauls right now," said Bud. "Maybe in a week or two when a couple of plants we haul for re-open...right now all I have are loads from rail yards and warehouses to distributors. Stuff like that."

"You mean city stuff?"

"Basically."

Mark didn't like driving city routes as much as he liked the open road. Highway miles were a piece of cake compared to turning tight corners and backing up trailers into impossibly tight spaces. And with such short hauls almost as much time was spent waiting for your trailer to be unloaded as it was driving to your destination. But work was work and if Bud didn't have anything else then Mark would be out of work, and he hated doing nothing more than he hated short-haul trucking, so he agreed to take on a few loads.

"Okay, I'll take a load or two until

something longer comes along."

"Hey," Bud said. "You sure you're not Mark Zolinski, helping me out of a tight spot with all these short loads?"

"Bud," was all Mark said.

Bud laughed.

The loads were for ceramic tiles and hardwood flooring that had to be taken from a depot at the rail yards in Vaughan to a small warehouse in Mississauga. There were a bunch of loads and they had to be completed within the next two days. It was a fairly easy gig, even with most of the driving being on city streets.

By the time Mark got to the depot, it was three in the afternoon and he'd probably only be able to get a single load to the warehouse before either the depot or the warehouse closed for the day. Loading up was a snap with two forklift drivers sharing the job, fitting 12 skids of Chinese-made hardwood flooring into his trailer and putting his rig close to its weight limit. Thankfully, he wouldn't be going far, or over any scales. The sooner he could get to his destination and off-load the better.

The drive to the warehouse went without incident and even the run up to the loading dock was easy with all kinds of room to turn around in the yard and about 12 feet on either side of the loading dock.

If the rest of the loads go this easy, Mark thought, he'd be able to get them done in no time at all.

After backing up to the dock, Mark shut off Mother Load and jumped the short distance from the cab to the ground...and felt something go wrong in one of his knees. The bones seemed out of alignment when his foot hit the ground and there was a grinding feeling in the joint. Pain exploded in his knee and for a moment Mark saw stars. He gasped for breath and managed to lean up against his truck to keep himself from falling to the ground.

'What the hell happened?' he wondered. 'I didn't jump more than a foot or two.'

But the thought was overwhelmed by the pain in his knee. He couldn't move his knee and when he did, it felt as if a knife had been shoved right through his bones. He stayed where he was for several minutes, catching his breath and feeling the ache in his leg slowly subside. Soon, it was down to a dull throb. He could barely bend the knee, but at least he could put enough weight on it to walk. Suddenly, the short walk from his truck to the shipping door seemed like a kilometre or more.

He set out on his trek, putting one foot in front of the other, in front of the other, in front of the other...

Finally, he was at the steps leading up to the door. He tried to raise his bad leg to take a step but that only hurt more. Then he set his bad leg and raised the other, and was able to limp up the steps.

He opened the door and managed to step inside.

"Hello?" he said.

There was no answer. In fact, there seemed to be no-one around, at all.

"Hello?" he said again.

"I'm coming," came a voice off in the distance.

Mark found a stack of boxes piled three high and sat down. Although he'd taken weight off his leg, it still hurt, but it was a different kind of hurt. Something was wrong with his knee that wasn't going to heal itself in the next couple of hours. A minute or so later an older man with white hair and clean clothes approached.

"What do you got?"

"Hardwood. Twelve skids." Mark handed the man the paperwork without getting up from where he sat. He pointed at a large roll-up door. "I'm backed up to that door there."

The older man looked left and right and said, "You came at a bad time. All my guys are in a union meeting right now and I don't know when they'll be getting out. We close at five so your load's going to have to wait."

"You're kidding, right?" Mark said.

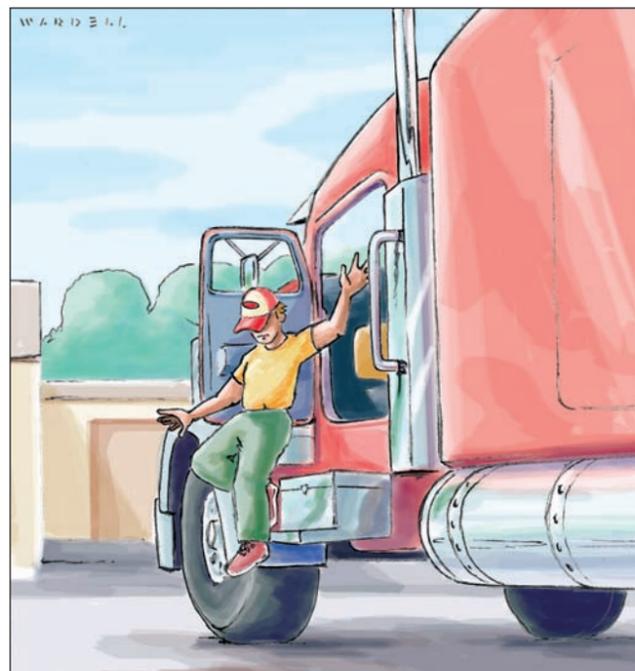
"Nope, I wish I could help you, but I'm busy in the office. I'm missing calls right now as it is."

"So I've got to leave my trailer here?"

"That, or you could unload it yourself." He paused, possibly to gauge Mark's reaction. "Get you out of here faster."

Mark was in no condition to unload his trailer when he'd be lucky to be able to walk back to his truck, climb up into the cab and use his one good leg to operate the accelerator and brake pedals.

But he had more loads to deliver and if he started waiting to get his truck unloaded, he'd be losing money. So, if they had a forklift handy and a nice



big space to put the skids, it might not be so bad.

"Alright," Mark said. "I'll do it. Where's your forklift?"

"In the shop."

"Where's the shop?"

"Brampton. It's being fixed. But we do have a couple of pump trucks you're welcome to use."

This was getting better by the minute. Unloading hardwood with hand operated lifts would be the death of him. But then, even detaching his trailer so he could drive Mother Load away would be an ordeal.

"Alright," he said, massaging his now swollen knee. "Bring me one of those hand trucks."

The shipper quickly returned with a Blue Giant. "Put them over there," he said, indicating an empty aisle wide enough for two rows of six skids each. "I'll be in the office if you need anything."

'Like some help?' thought Mark.

But by then the shipper was gone.

Mark grabbed the Blue Giant and worked through the pain.

He was done just before five. His knee felt like it was on fire and there wasn't a comfortable position for it.

"You're all done," the shipper said as he appeared just before the clock struck five.

"Where are all your guys?" Mark asked.

"Meeting just ended," he said. "So they went home."

"Nice," Mark said, wondering why there wasn't a union for truck drivers like him. □

— Mark Dalton returns next month in Part 2 of Hands On Trucking.



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BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – Texting truckers: put down those phones. A recent study by the Virginia Transportation Institute has found that truckers who text while driving are a whopping 23 times more likely to be involved in an accident than an undistracted driver. The study found that a driver's eyes can be averted from the roadway for five seconds out of a six-second window while texting. That's enough time for a vehicle to travel the length of a football field at 55 mph. According to the same study, a truck driver is 5.9 times more likely to be involved in an accident while dialing a mobile phone compared to a passenger car driver which is 2.8 times more likely to crash while undertaking the same chore. So what puts texting truckers in such a high-risk position?

We spoke with drivers at the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to see if they think truckers are at a greater risk when distracted.

Pierre Clement, a driver with Bourett Transport in Drummondville, Que., says truckers have too much to look at already when driving to be bothered with trying to send a text message.

"You have to watch your mirrors all the time. You've got to be not on the brake, but near it. You need lots of space between you and the drivers surrounding you, be it cars or another truck. Over here in Toronto on the 401 traffic is so bad you can't do nothing other than just drive," he says. "I never use (text messaging) anyway, and if I see a guy that does, I



Truck Stop Question

Adam Ledlow
Managing Editor

Are truckers at a greater risk when distracted?



Pierre Clement

make sure he's out of the way. Just trying to read some information on my paper when I have to deliver or I'm doing a pickup; it takes your mind off the road. You can't stop an 18-wheeler on a dime; they've always said that, and it's really true."

Lucien Dubois, a driver with Quality Carriers in Tampa, Fla., says it's basically impossible to text while driving and still watch the road.

"If I'm driving down the road and I've got one hand on the steering wheel and one hand on the Blackberry, I've got to read it and watch the road at the same time. You can't do it. Park on the goddamned side and do it. People

are stupid."

Dubois says he solves the issue of texting or dialing while driving by using a hands-free system.

"You put it in your ear, your phone rings, you can answer it, and you don't have to touch your phone. If I want to call my wife or I want to call the office, all I've got to do is say 'office' or 'home' and it automatically phones. It's only \$60 for this earpiece."



Daryl Moyer

Daryl Moyer, a driver with Celadon out of Indianapolis, Ind., says that texting is not the only culprit taking truckers' eyes off the road.

"I disagree with not only texting, but using the Qualcomm while

you're driving down the road, reading a map, reading a book, even holding a cell phone up to your head. If you don't have a hands-free, hang the phone up and make a phone call when you stop. Anything can change at any point in time, and as the weather gets worse, the situations get worse. I agree with that study 100%."



Ron Wallace

Ron Wallace, a driver with Wildwood Transport in Winnipeg, Man., says texting in heavy-traffic areas like the Greater Toronto Area is what he sees most – and is also the most dangerous.

"They text in the wrong places in heavy-duty traffic areas...and they just don't pay attention. The truck itself is heavy too, and it takes a lot more room to stop," says the veteran of 39 years. "The city of Edmonton has banned handheld cell phones. I think that's great. I can hook mine up to an earphone. All I do is just flip it open and I can talk." □

– Adam Ledlow is now on Twitter! Join today and follow his tweets at twitter.com/adamledlow.

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