

TRUCK WEST

October 2008 Volume 19, Issue 10

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



THE NEW ALBERTA?: Saskatchewan is thriving, but is the province's trucking industry reaping the rewards? It all depends on what sector you're involved in. — Photo by James Menzies

Election time

Fuel taxes emerge as key election issue

By James Menzies

OTTAWA, Ont. – Prime Minister Stephen Harper has announced that if re-elected, he will cut the four cent per litre federal excise tax on diesel in half.

His Liberal counterpart Stéphane Dion, meanwhile, has altered his party's controversial carbon tax scheme to make it more trucker-friendly. Both announcements came as the federal parties launched their campaigns for the Oct. 14 federal election.

Harper's tax cut would be phased in over four years, the PM announced during a campaign stop in Winnipeg Sept. 9.

The tax cut contrasts the federal Liberals' Green Shift plan, which would increase the federal diesel tax by seven cents per litre over four years. Harper said the Conservative plan would keep the prices of consumer goods in check, while helping the transportation and manufacturing industries.

"At a time when Canadians are concerned about affordability, and energy prices are rising, we should be doing what we can to lower prices," Harper said. "This tax reduction will benefit con-

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Boom or bust?

Saskatchewan's thriving. Is its trucking industry thriving as well?

By Jan Westell

SASKATOON, Sask. – Saskatchewan is booming, thanks not only to record high prices for grain, but also with a strong resource sector. Oil and natural gas development and mining for uranium, diamonds and potash, have be-

come an important part of the provincial economy.

It's an economically buoyant place to live and work, but not necessarily for the trucking industry.

Bryan Richards, vice-president of business development for the Yanke Group of Companies, is not

exactly jumping for joy about the state of the Saskatchewan economy. He indicates that the boom has not been a boon for this transport company, a 400-truck dry van fleet based in Saskatoon that services all of North America. He says Yanke has

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Progress report

A look at where each heavy-duty engine manufacturer stands in the pursuit of 2010 emissions regulations.



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- **Do it for profit:** Times are tough. But Kriska leader Mark Seymour has some advice on how to survive – and maybe even thrive – in recessionary times. Page 34
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Mark Dalton O/O



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Harper diesel tax cut would benefit industry

A federal election looms large in a time of economic uncertainty, and a trucking-related issue has emerged as a key election hot point.

Let's review what each of front-running parties have promised to do in regards to fuel taxes, if elected on Oct. 14. The Liberals have laid out their plans for a carbon tax as part of their Green Shift plan. The plan will slap seven cents per litre onto the cost of diesel by the fourth year, increasing a trucker's operating cost by about \$1,700 per year, according to the party's own figures.

On the other hand, incumbent Prime Minister Stephen Harper has promised a Conservative government would cut the federal excise tax on diesel in half – from four cents per litre to two – over the same four-year period.

When viewed in tandem, these contrasting policies represent a nine cent per litre swing in diesel taxes.

Put in real terms, if you average 40 litres/100 km (7 mpg) and run 160,000 km per year (100,000 miles – I know, most of you work harder than that) then you're consuming about 64,000 litres of diesel per year. A nine cent per litre fuel tax differential amounts to \$5,760 – that's money that goes straight in your pocket under the Conservative plan and up in smoke under Green Shift. If you operate a fleet of trucks, extrapolate that figure across your entire fleet and the number is even more staggering.

Now, in fairness, the Liberals claim their Green Shift plan is "revenue-neutral," meaning 100% of the carbon tax will be returned in tax breaks and 'green' incentives.

But truckers stand to be net losers under the deal, since they have no choice but to consume diesel and cannot greatly alter their consump-

Editorial Comment

James Menzies



tion habits.

It should also be noted that Liberal leader Stephane Dion recently modified his Green Shift plan to make it more trucker-friendly.

He said a fund of \$250 million will be set aside over four years, to help offset the cost of adopting environmentally-friendly technologies such as APUs, trailer skirts and fuel-efficient tires. But the funds will be spread across all transport modes – and the fisheries industry, to boot – so you figure it out, how much of

this moolah will actually trickle down to the owner/operator?

Maybe, as Lou would contend, I'm over-simplifying the matter. But I see it, quite simply, as two contradicting policies: one that would save truckers a significant amount of money and another that would cost them dearly.

Green Shift would require truckers, already under enormous strains in a volatile industry and shaky economy, to shoulder an unfair portion of the load in the Liberals' quest

to financially punish polluters.

It's a misguided policy, considering most truckers are already employing any and all fuel-saving tactics and devices that are currently feasible.

In a telling gesture, Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal premier of Ontario recently refused to endorse the federal Liberal party.

Instead, he urged voters to "Vote Ontario." I'd like to paraphrase McGuinty, and urge truckers to "Vote trucking."

But most importantly, get out there and vote. □

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Call off the love fest

It's no big surprise that Stephen Harper's election promise to cut the four cent per litre federal excise tax on diesel fuel in half was warmly received in industry circles. Who would argue against a cut in their taxes?

But before we get too enamoured about Harper, let's call this announcement for what it is: a politically-motivated manoeuvre crafted and timed to curry favour as the country heads to the polls.

Of course it will give carriers a better chance of surviving the sky-high diesel prices they've had to endure the last couple of years. I'm not arguing that. But if Harper was truly sincere about helping out the trucking industry, why did he wait this long to suggest the tax cut? Where was he when diesel prices were at even higher levels? Action back then may have prevented a few bankruptcies and saved some jobs.

As the Prime Minister, if he truly wanted to lead, he could have done so. Ah, but then that would not have been smart politics. Politicians – and the Liberals would have been no different – worry that people have short memories and may not remember a kindness offered too far in the past.

Viewpoint

Lou Smyrlis
 Editorial Director



And in our jubilation over this promise let's also not make it out to be any more than it is. This is not, as some have suggested, an answer to our very real greenhouse gas emissions problem. I doubt the money saved would be used to invest in new green technologies by the majority of fleets. If anything, the lower cost of diesel, may serve the opposite purpose.

While I support the proposed tax cut, I also think it misleading to characterize it as the polar opposite of the Liberal plan to introduce a federal carbon tax. True, the Liberals still have important questions to answer about their plan. For example, how high does the levy have to be to truly change behaviour? The tax grab on cigarettes is damn high, yet I still see plenty of folks happily puffing away on their cancer sticks. If it doesn't change behaviour, it's just a tax grab.

But we're doing ourselves no favours by quickly dismissing the

carbon tax proposal as "economically punishing and crippling" just because it's a tax.

A greener economy does not have to equal a weaker economy. There are many examples of forward-thinking corporations that have gone green and come out ahead. Manufacturer Johnson & Johnson reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 7%, saving an average of about \$40 million a year, while growing its business 300% in the past eight years.

Germany created more than 250,000 jobs in the green sector in the past five years, with incentives to lure foreign companies, including a \$35 million grant for an Ontario solar cell producer, ARISE Technologies. Can a green economy go mainstream in Canada if governments don't adopt both a carrot (incentives) and stick (price on carbon emissions) approach?

I don't know. What I do know is that these are important issues for the long-term future of our industry and our country. And that we need to have a sophisticated debate about them during this election rather than just throwing our support behind the party most quick to throw bucks our way. □

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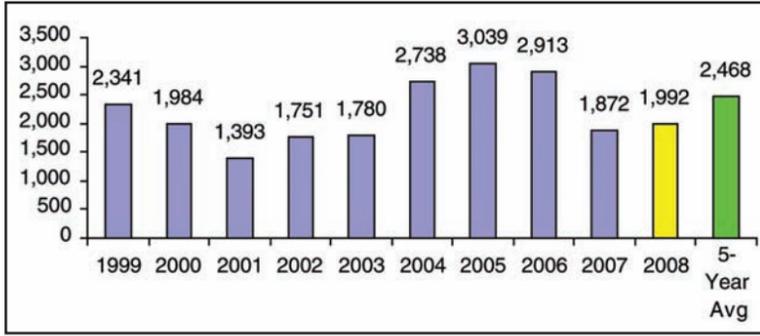
CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

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Monthly Class 8 Sales - July 08

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	332	328
Kenworth	285	455
Mack	150	321
International	496	108
Peterbilt	219	244
Sterling	192	186
Volvo	193	94
Western Star	125	136
TOTALS	1,992	1,872

Historical Comparison - July 08 Sales



Motor Vehicle Production to Jan 08

	Total Prodn	For Export
International	4,444	3,729
Paccar	4,659	3,964
Sterling	17,156	14,563
TOTALS	26,259	22,256

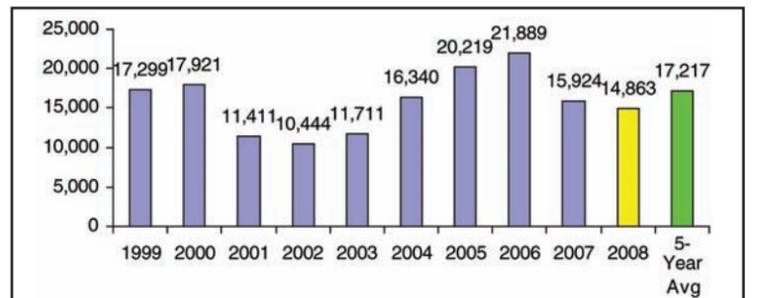
There were 1,992 Class 8 trucks sold in Canada this July, which is slightly ahead of last year's pace. Although obviously far from the industry's peak years of 2004 to 2006, this was the fifth best July in terms of truck sales over the past decade. Those three banner years, however, greatly influence the 5-year average and so July sales are about 500 units below the 5-year average. Sales started off quietly in the first quarter. However, sales for March climbed above 2,000 units, avoiding the steep declines of 2001 to 2003, April's sales were higher than last year's, May's were not far off last year's pace and June's and July's were slightly better than last year's. Can this pace be sustained into the third and fourth quarter? It wasn't last year.

With the days of coping with parts and materials shortages and record demand for new trucks nothing but a memory, truck manufacturers instead now face continuing to bring their operations in line with the reduced sales. They also are preparing for the next jump in sales volumes as fleets and owner/operators respond to the next round of engine emissions standards in 2010 and the anticipated rebound of the North American economy.

Class 8 Sales (YTD July 08) by Province and OEM

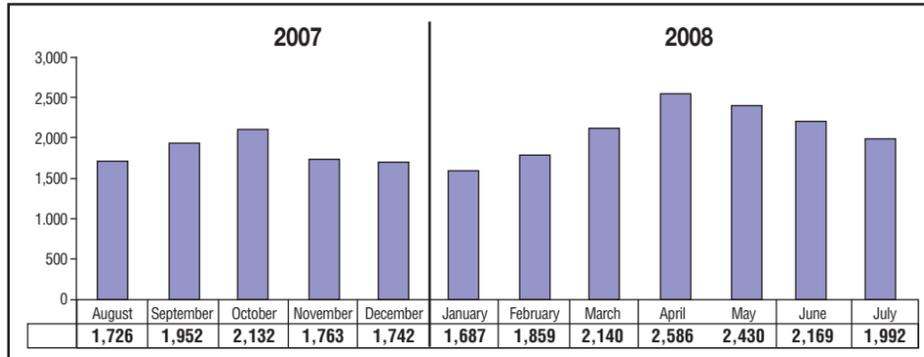
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	219	518	123	137	1,082	430	157	74	0	10	2,750
Kenworth	335	874	132	116	511	483	23	39	0	0	2,513
Mack	93	172	77	105	428	136	27	35	0	0	1,073
International	150	434	58	197	1,521	887	145	59	4	60	3,515
Peterbilt	163	500	188	95	366	200	92	37	0	0	1,641
Sterling	139	214	58	44	419	319	20	38	0	10	1,261
Volvo	92	185	89	188	516	197	41	48	0	9	1,365
Western Star	126	215	28	17	197	105	27	27	0	3	745
TOTALS	1,317	3,112	753	899	5,040	2,757	532	357	4	92	14,863

Historical Comparison - YTD



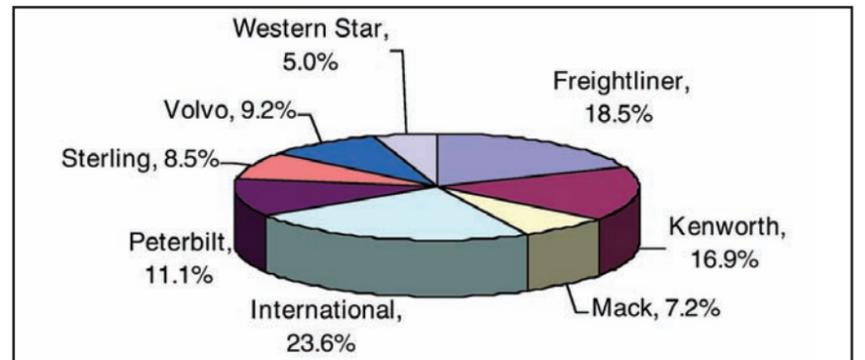
Class 8 truck sales year-to-date stand at 14,863, a bit more than 1,000 units off last year's admittedly slow pace and about 2,500 units off the 5-year average for Canada. Despite an improvement in sales starting in the spring, the market still has not been able to overcome its slow start this year and 2008 is still ranking as the fourth worst sales year of the past decade. The pre-buy strategy employed by many fleets is having its expected effect and a slowing North American economy does not bode well for hopes that even the small momentum in sales shown earlier this year will be maintained.

12 - Month Sales Trends



After four straight months of sales above the 2,000 units mark, truck sales dropped below 2,000 in July. Although July is characteristically a slow month, the drop-off in sales and sub-2,000 performance expected for August would make it exceedingly difficult for truck sales to top last year's totals. The 2,586 Class 8 trucks sold in April marked the strongest sales so far this year with May's 2,430 trucks sold the second best. The 2,169 trucks sold in June marked the third-best performance of the year and also the fourth consecutive month over the past 12-month period that monthly totals have climbed above 2,000 units sold.

Market Share Class 8 YTD



International continues to expand its lead over one-time front runner Freightliner. International, which wrestled the market share lead from Freightliner last year, jumped out of the starting blocks with a lead in the first quarter, capturing about 22% of sales. With a very strong second quarter showing, International added to that lead and now controls 23.6% of the market with Freightliner falling back to 18.5% and Kenworth to 16.9%. Peterbilt is the only other truck manufacturer with a market share greater than 10%.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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Hwy. 63 twinned for 17 km north of Fort McMurray

FORT MCMURRAY, Alta. – Truckers travelling on Hwy. 63 north of Fort McMurray will now have 17 kilometres of newly divided highway to drive on.

“The newly twinned section of Hwy. 63 north of Fort McMurray will improve traffic safety for motorists, and reduce congestion on the roadway,” said Minister of Transportation Luke Ouellette.

“We also recognize that efficient and upgraded access to the oil sands area, is vital to Alberta’s prosperity.”

According to the Ministry, northbound traffic will now be diverted to the new lanes; the southbound lane will continue on the existing alignment; and repaving and repainting work will be completed on the southbound lanes in the coming weeks.

More than 11,000 vehicles use this section of Hwy. 63 on a daily basis, according to statistics provided by the Ministry.

In addition to twinning Hwy. 63 north of Fort McMurray, the province is completing 16 kilometres of Hwy. 63 twinning south of Fort McMurray between Hwys. 69 and 881 at a cost of \$53 million.

The twinning south of Fort McMurray is expected to open later this fall, weather permitting. □

Trucker was hypoglycemic before fatal plunge

EDMONTON, Alta. – The chief medical examiner has concluded that Mark Santos was hypoglycemic when he drove a semi-trailer 15 kilometres in the wrong direction, down the Yellowhead Trail in late March, according to a recent story in the *Edmonton Journal*.

The truck narrowly missed numerous motorists swerving out of his path. His truck then tumbled off an overpass, plunging in flames to the train tracks below.

“Mr. Santos died as a result of the fire, and the only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn following our investigation, is that he was suffering from a low blood sugar, known as hypoglycemia, as a complication of his diabetes at the time,” medical investigator Ted Pretty said.

The medical examiner’s findings parallel a police investigation that concluded in June. Traffic detectives decided that Santos, 25, was suffering from a medical problem March 31 that resulted in the afternoon crash that killed him. Dr. James Shapiro, a leading diabetes researcher at the University of Alberta, said low blood sugar can have dramatic effects on behaviour.

“When it drops below a certain point, the brain stops functioning and patients become completely unconscious,” said Shapiro, director of the university’s clinical islet transplant program. Patients who have had diabetes for a long time grow used to having low blood sugar. At a certain level, some will enter a state of partial consciousness.

“In the grey-zone area, patients can do strange things,” Shapiro said. “They may experience a disconnect with their surroundings.”

Shapiro has seen this in islet transplant patients. The state can persist for hours, he said.

Santos had Type 1 diabetes since childhood. He had previous episodes of seizures when his blood sugar dropped. The medical examiner’s findings are in line with what many in Santos’ family have maintained since his death. □

Saskatchewan manufacturing exports surge

REGINA, Sask. – An economic slowdown in much of Canada seems to have skimmed over Saskatchewan, which reported manufacturing shipments 10 times the national average in June.

Manufacturing shipments in June reached \$1.1 billion, a 27.9% in-

crease the previous June. It’s the highest growth among the four western provinces, according to Statistics Canada. In the first six months of 08, Saskatchewan’s international exports surged 43.5% to \$14.4 billion over 07, the highest growth rate in Canada. □

Feds offer \$3.5M for Prince George intermodal corridor

PRINCE GEORGE, B.C. – A primary access corridor for the CN intermodal facility in Prince George, will be upgraded to improve traffic flow, according to Transport Canada.

Improving traffic flow along the River Road corridor is considered essential to the community and the businesses that uses this route.

Improvements to two concurrent sections of River Road involve: upgrading 1.9 km between Cameron Street Bridge and Foley Crescent; widening 1.7 km between Foley Crescent and the CN Fraser River Bridge; and installing left turn lanes to access the CN facility.

The total cost of the two River Road projects is \$7 million. The federal government under the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor Initiative is providing \$3.5 million, as part of a funding arrangement with the city of Prince George.

Connecting North America and the Asia-Pacific more efficiently and reliably benefits local communities, the Canadian economy as well as Canada’s trading partners, said Richard Harris, MP for Cariboo-Prince George.

“These projects will help relieve road congestion and make roads in our community safer.” □

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Resource-based economy does little for van haulers

■ Continued from page 1

reaped “absolutely zero” benefits from the economic impacts enjoyed by the agriculture and resource industry in this province.

“If you talk to the railways and anybody hauling maybe a Super-B, they might be impacted. Unfortunately, we are a full-load van carrier and that type of volume does not move via this mode.”

Richards says that the commodities in Saskatchewan that are booming really don’t contribute very much to a dry van carrier, although he suspects there may be others in the transportation industry that are taking advantage of the booming economy. Due to the demands of the present economic situation, there’s much more activity coming into the province, adds Richards, because of all the commodities that are presently required in this economically-active province such as building materials, parts for equipment, and household goods.

“But, unfortunately that contributes to the imbalance that we have because products that go out of here, – when you talk about oil, or potash, or grain, or uranium, or all the things that are booming – they don’t necessarily move in over-the-road transportation or dry van. That’s a problem, as you get more and more inbound here due to the boom, and then you’re challenged with trying to get out again. It just creates a further imbalance.”

Richards is enthusiastic about the new intermodal facility planned for Regina, a partnership with the provincial government, the City of Regina, Loblaw Companies which has a large distribution centre at the site, and CP Rail. The entire facility is one million square feet, which is equivalent to eleven-and-a-half football fields, or a total of 23 acres, according to a statement from the provincial government. About 1,400 trucks per week are expected to move in and out of the new facility, once it’s running at capacity. The government expects to generate 750 jobs within two years, and as many as 1,500 jobs in future years. Richards believes the new intermodal facility will potentially change the dynamic of freight transportation in the prairies.

“So much goes into Calgary now,” he says. “I think this will change some of that inbound volume into Calgary, which should ease some of the problem there.”

Richards has heard rumours about other tenants locating at that same facility, and he realizes that there is a push to develop a major provincial transportation hub, not unlike a successful intermodal facility in Memphis, Tenn., which is a North American hub for transportation. Such a plan for Saskatchewan would be a positive initiative for the trucking industry, he adds.

“If that was the case, that certainly would take some of the pressure off Alberta. But that would again just move the problem around, because that would be a huge amount of inbound into Saskatchewan, when

there isn’t enough outbound now to support the inbound trucks. It just sort of transplants the problem as opposed to help.”

However, Yanke has an intermodal division as well, with 350 of its own rail containers and contracts with both CP and CN. Yanke offers both modes of travel to its customers which offers flexibility.

The Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA) is much more optimistic about the provincial economy, although the executive director has a few transportation issues to iron out. But Al Rosseker’s complaints are mainly with the federal government.

“Better a boom than a bust, but we’re still hampered by regulation in terms of things like weights and dimensions, hours-of-service, (and) major issues on the immigration file at the federal level,” he says. “So

we’ve got a booming economy, but we don’t have enough workers.”

As for the resource-rich economy, Rosseker says the trucking industry is taking full advantage of providing service to the oil industry, which is developing in the south of the province. The drilling rigs run 24 hours a day, and need a constant supply of equipment to maintain that activity, such as oil well casings, drillers, and other supplies.

“The problem is that we don’t have enough drivers, and the hours-of-service regulation (restrictions). There doesn’t seem to be any movement at the federal level with any exemptions. So it’s creating problems for us. Yes, we have a boom but we can’t service the boom,” Rosseker says.

Otherwise, the STA executive director believes the Saskatchewan trucking industry is “upbeat,”

despite getting “hammered” by the high price of fuel. The STA is also supportive of the new provincial government, a coalition of Progressive Conservatives and Liberals, which were elected after 16 years of NDP rule just less than a year ago. The STA is particularly impressed by the new government’s willingness to develop a strong relationship with the trucking industry.

“We’re making good in-roads with various government departments and Crown corporations, in terms of them listening to our concerns, in terms of them saying ‘Look we can’t grant all your wishes. No government can do that. But we’re certainly prepared to look at some of your key issues, to see if there’s movement for us.’”

The STA also supports the provin-

Continued on page 8 ■



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Infrastructure receives much-needed upgrades

Continued from page 7

cial government's strategy to identify and upgrade various highways for transportation requirements, a province which has 200,000 km of roadways of various grades.

"The government wants to bring a lot of the highways in Saskatchewan up to primary weights, which is good for us, which is good for all trucking (when) this government is spending on infrastructure," says Rosseker.

The STA is also enthusiastic about the new Regina intermodal hub, and the new Loblaw's distribution centre at that site, which has great economic potential for the transportation industry, including trucking.

"It's a major size," says Rosseker. "Rail will benefit as an offload point, and we will benefit as a short-haul or even a bit, as a long-haul."

The Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Highways and Infrastruc-

ture, John Law, says the provincial highway system was originally designed, along with the vast rail network, to support agriculture in order to accommodate the movement of bulk commodities from east to west. That was before a few dramatic changes to the economy, one being the high volume of imports being shipped from the West Coast to Saskatchewan, and of course recent resource development. It's a situation that had the new government analyzing a transportation quandary for this evolving economy.

The Ministry also considered the existing pattern of truck movement, and the growth related to moving substantial commercial loads via truck. The transportation analysts realized that there was virtually no growth in that east-west movement, as Yanke's Richards attests, although it was still a significant per-

centage of the movement of transport that was taking place. But despite 0% growth in east-west movement, there was 180% to 210% growth in north-south truck traffic. This brought the Ministry to the conclusion that the road network that was built during the 1950s and 1960s for agricultural purposes, was completely inadequate for present day purposes.

"They were never built to accommodate these large trucks, the Super-Bs and the large truck configurations that are now trying to move products, in some cases oil and gas, in some cases services to support exploration activity, in some cases to support mining, and in some cases to support value-added agricultural activity as that economy itself started to change," says Law, who notes that 70% of Saskatchewan's GDP is based on exports, with only 8% of

that based on agriculture.

"There are some other value-added agricultural activities that are very important to the economy," adds Law. "But we had a significant change in our economy, (and) significant changes in the trade patterns, that we needed to connect up to get our export products out to the markets, and significant internal changes as to where the economic activity was taking place in Saskatchewan."

One of the first transportation issues the Ministry addressed, was the highway primary weight system. The Ministry of Highways identified about 1,500 km of highway that could easily accommodate an upgrade to primary weight grades.

Now that the first 1,500 km of roadway has been upgraded to primary weights, the Ministry is now considering the next step, which will involve a much higher level of investment since some of those roads being considered for upgrade to primary weight standards, need to be rebuilt.

In that regard, the province is hoping to build partnerships with municipalities that will have an economic stake in the upgrades, since there are 169,000 km of municipal roads, compared to 30,000 km of the provincial highway system.

"We're now talking to municipalities about how they can hook into that system and what sort of arrangements that we can work on collaboratively, so that they themselves can work on getting themselves connected up to that network, for (reasons of) economic performance," says Law.

Similarly, the province is promoting a short-line rail system linkage, which is intended to complement the Class 1 railways like CN and CP.

With added revenue due to the strong economy, Saskatchewan has substantially increased its investment in the transportation system – from a budget of \$290 million to \$525 million – which is intended to meet the province's immediate requirements for infrastructure, as well as plan for the future, according to Law.

"We are making record levels of investment and improvements to the transportation system, not only to catch up and close that misalignment and the gaps in the system that we think are important, but also now, the Ministry and the government is pushing us hard to look at providing for some of the large-scale growth opportunities that we are anticipating will be required in the next few years."

As for the new Regina "global transportation hub," the government has ambitious plans to attract more tenants, starting with Loblaw as the anchor tenant.

The Ministry is also considering additional infrastructure to support the facility, and designing ways to smoothly move those trucks in and out of the facility, and the city, in order to get them hooked up to the national highway system, whether it's east-west or north-south.

"Our challenge now is to broker the discussions with some of the other national transportation companies who have expressed an interest in being a part of the facility," says Law. □

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Meals on wheels

New study looks at how to transport hogs humanely and with minimal stress

By Jan Westell

GUELPH, Ont. – Transportation can be stressful on pigs, especially when confined to a vehicle on a long distance haul under extreme Canadian weather conditions. It's a situation being examined by a team of Canadian researchers who are hoping to curb transport stress for pigs. Dr. Renee Bergeron, an associate professor in the Animal and Poultry Science department at the University of Guelph, is part of a research team led by Dr. Harold Gonyou, of the University of Saskatchewan, that is studying the effects of transport on pigs in Canada. The researchers have moni-

tored the pigs before, during, and after transport, and are paying special attention to situations that might adversely affect the animals, such as distance and climate.

"There are some problems with transportation, and heat stress seems to be a major concern," said Bergeron. "We also have a concern about truck and loading facility design."

The first part of the five-year research program had the team analyze the effects of vehicle type on transport losses, blood stress indicators and meat quality in pigs. A total of 1,878 crossbred pigs were transported over a six-week period

through June and July, 2007. The pigs travelled from a commercial growing/finishing unit to a slaughter plant. It was a two-hour journey, using two types of vehicles: a 'pot-belly' trailer; and a compact double flat deck truck. A sub-population of 396 pigs was randomly chosen for the pork quality assessment.

The results indicate that pigs transported on the pot-belly trailer are more likely to die or to suffer from fatigue during transport. Overall, pork quality was good, states the research abstract presented at the last meeting of the Canadian Society of Animal Science, but the use of the pot-belly trailer increased the incidence of darker loins.

Another part of the hog transport research evaluated thermal responses to environmental conditions. The objective of that study was to determine core body temperatures of pigs during transport to a commercial abattoir using temperature loggers

(Thermocron iButton), which are slightly larger than a dime and located in the stomach. Over six weekly trials, (through June to July, 2007), loggers were orally administered to 252 trial pigs. The results indicated that pigs loaded into the top deck compartments of the pot-belly trailer are at a greater risk for heat stress than pigs in other areas of either truck. This could be due to higher heat load and/or exertion required to climb to these compartments, according to the study.

The overall objective of the research program is to identify contributors to the stressfulness of current handling and transport practices under Canadian conditions, and to develop and assess means to reduce those stressors.

Ultimately, it is the goal of the research project to develop methods of handling and transporting pigs that will improve animal welfare, and reduce losses due to death, trim losses, and poor meat quality. The research program seeks to improve the handling of pigs during marketing by:

- Assessing the stressfulness of loading pigs under current commercial conditions in order to identify critical control points for handling;
- Developing alternative handling methods to reduce the stressfulness of loading;
- Assessing the reduction in handling stress, after the application of these new methods under commercial conditions.

The research program also seeks to reduce the stressfulness of transportation during marketing by:

- Assessing the effects of vehicle design on the pigs' micro-environment during transport under various weather conditions, the behavioural responses of pigs to these conditions, and the impact on carcass and meat quality;
- Developing alternative vehicle design and/or management during transport to reduce transport stress;
- Assessing the effectiveness of these changes on the stressfulness of transport under various weather conditions.

According to the researchers, the research program will have many potential benefits for producers and the pork industry in general. First of all, better handling will help speed up the loading process and allow the trucker to do more trips per day. Better transportation conditions will likely help reduce mortality rates, especially during critical weather. Improvements in meat quality and reduction of trim losses will result in economic benefits, above that involved in reduced death losses.

"What we are trying to see here, is what the animal will feel when being transported," said Jorge Correa, a grad student who is working on the project with the research team. "It has never been done before in North America."

Furthermore, the researchers note that animal welfare concerns extend beyond the issue of death losses and carcass and meat quality. Consumer groups and international organizations such as the OIE are seeking higher standards for animal care during marketing. This research program seeks to identify means to achieve these standards within the context of Canadian conditions. □



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Conservatives, Liberals spar over fuel taxes

Continued from page 1

sumers who buy virtually anything that moves by truck, train, ship or plane.”

The tax cut would also include aviation fuel, according to Harper. The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA) has been a vocal critic of the Liberal Green Shift plan, and the federal excise tax on diesel in general.

The tax generates over \$1 billion per year. Harper’s proposal would represent a tax cut of \$600 million per year on diesel, the Conservatives claimed.

Meanwhile, the CTA has said the Liberal Green Shift plan would increase the cost of operating a truck by \$1,700 per year by the fourth year.

“This is a choice between two very different plans,” Harper said. “We want to reduce the tax on diesel a bit. Others plan to increase the tax on diesel significantly. In fact, they plan to increase the price of everything. On a policy level, the choice is a modest, affordable reduction in the tax on diesel, or a massive carbon tax that will increase the cost of everything,” added Harper. “On a broader level, the choice is between two opposite plans for the economy and for leading this country during uncertain times.”

The Conservatives’ announcement quickly drew praise from the CTA.

“Excise taxes on business inputs are an archaic and regressive form



UP OR DOWN?: PM Stephen Harper has promised to slash the excise tax on diesel in half, while Stephane Dion’s Green Shift plan would add seven cents per litre to the cost of diesel.

of taxation that should have been repealed or reformed back when the GST was introduced,” CTA CEO David Bradley said. “It’s taken a long time, but finally someone is listening.”

He added the change would bring “modest” help to truckers while lessening the “upward pressure on the price” of consumer goods.

“A two cent per litre reduction in the excise tax will not solve all our problems, but it would be an important step in the right direction,” said Bradley, adding it could result in an annual fuel savings of

\$1,600-\$1,800 per truck. Industry-wide fuel tax savings could amount to \$140 million, according to the CTA.

The association was not nearly as supportive of the Liberals promise that it would modify its carbon tax plan to earmark funds the transportation industry could tap into to pay for the adoption of ‘green’ technologies.

The Green Shift revisions would set aside \$250 million for the Green Fisheries and Transportation Fund over four years. That money would be used to encourage the use of environmental-

ly-friendly technologies such as APUs, side fairings and fuel-efficient tires.

“Through the summer, Canadians came with good ideas to improve the Liberal Green Shift plan, to make it stronger, and we listened,” said Dion.

However CTA’s Bradley said the changes fall short, especially when dispersed over four years among every transport mode as well as the fisheries industry.

“When the Liberal proposal is looked at over four years and spread across all the freight modes and the fisheries industry, it is unclear how much will really be available for the trucking industry,” Bradley pointed out.

“The trucking industry is already making the shift to smog-free engines, ultra low-sulfur diesel fuel and proven and available GHG-busting technologies and devices.”

The CTA says the Green Shift plan will add seven cents per litre to the cost of diesel by year four, and will add about \$1,700 to the cost of operating a truck.

Collectively, it would cost the Canadian trucking industry as much as \$500 million per year, according to Bradley.

When viewed in tandem, the Conservative and Liberal plans represent a nine cent per litre swing in the cost of diesel by the fourth year.

For our editors’ take on the issue, see the editorials on pg. 3. □

Liberal MP defends Green Shift from trucking industry attack

The Liberal Green Shift will help move Canada’s transportation sector towards a greener, more prosperous future. The fears recently expressed by the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association (APTA) are based on misinformation.

I applaud the steps taken by the trucking industry to reduce emissions significantly in the last several years and believe our Green Shift will encourage and foster an even more efficient and environmentally-conscious industry.

One goal in launching this green debate is to recognize how the economy, environment and social justice are interconnected. We do not have to pit one against the other. By promoting a greener economy, we are also promoting a stronger economy.

Energy costs have risen sharply over the past two years, and the trucking sector has been especially hard hit. The response from the federal Conservatives has been denial and the lack of any coherent plan. The Liberal Green Shift is forward-looking, and recognizes the need to embrace greener technologies that will save Canadians money, and make Canada’s economy more competitive.

Under the Green Shift, there would be no increase in taxes on gasoline. That’s because gasoline already has a federal excise tax of 10 cents per litre, which is equiva-



Guest Column

Geoff Regan

lent to a carbon tax of \$42 per tonne. The Green Shift plan calls for a price on carbon of \$40 per tonne, phased in over four years.

Likewise, because there is already a tax on diesel and aviation fuel of four cents per litre, the tax on these fuels will not be increased at all in the first year and will only rise by seven cents per litre four years down the road. Contrast that to the nearly 50 cent per litre spike in diesel since the Conservatives came to power two years ago.

What our plan will do is create incentives for the transportation sector to be greener. Other countries that have put a price on pollution still have a vibrant transportation sector. In the fourth year of our plan, we anticipate that freight truckers will see a 1% increase in their overall operating costs.

With such a low marginal increase, any impact on the cost of consumer goods will be minimal. For APTA executive director Peter Nelson to suggest to Canadians that they’ll be paying \$8 for a head of lettuce is simply irresponsible.

The experts agree with us that putting a price on carbon immediately, while providing broad-based income tax cuts, will allow us to cover approximately 75% of domestic emissions. At the same time, it will allow our economy to immediately begin the needed transition to clean energy, efficiency and sustainability.

There are many technologies out there to help truckers improve fuel efficiency, and we believe the federal government should be a partner with them and other industries as they go green. Corporate tax cuts and partnership programs allow companies to re-invest in new ‘greener’ technologies that will, in turn, further improve the environment, better their bottom line and create the jobs of the future.

The real economic threat to Canada is not the Green Shift – it is this government’s failure to take the necessary actions to help Canada transition to the 21st century economy.

The Conservatives can’t hide from the fact that our economy has been shrinking recently and that they have run a deficit in the first quarter of this year. Hundreds of thousands of unemployed workers and their families are suffering.

Virtually every expert group across the entire political spectrum has condemned the Conser-

vative climate change plan as ineffectual. In fact, in early August a report issued by the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy stated that the government is overestimating how much its plan will lower greenhouse gases because it is using flawed calculations.

And it is costing Canadians more. In their own document outlining their plan, the Conservatives say Canadians can expect to bear “real costs” under their Regulatory Framework.

It states: “For the majority of individual Canadians and for businesses outside the regulated sectors, these costs will be most evident in the form of energy prices, particularly with respect to electricity and natural gas.”

The difference with our plan is that we are offering corresponding tax cuts for Canadians and Canadian businesses to help offset these rising costs.

Our plan does this because we believe that shifting Canada towards a greener, more prosperous economy is an objective that we can all accomplish together. But first, we need an honest, open debate – one that includes Atlantic Canada’s trucking industry. □

– Geoff Regan, MP for Halifax West serves as chair of the Liberal Caucus Committee on Environmental Sustainability.

OPINION

Dropping the dime

When is it appropriate to report on another driver?

Trying to keep my truck from dropping off the shoulder, all I could do was watch helplessly as the trailer's tail lights diminished into the distance, my heart racing and my head steaming with anger.

A few minutes before, everything had been going along swimmingly. It was a beautiful moonless night, very little traffic on the 401 at one in the morning somewhere between Brockville and Kingston, Ont.

A tractor-trailer had pulled out to pass and I thought nothing of it. He was slowly gaining on me, but about halfway past he suddenly put his right signal on.

The thought struck me immediately: he's coming over and he's going to take out my driver's side. I stood on the brakes while swerving violently. Time slowed almost to a standstill as I gripped the wheel and waited for a collision. Somehow, the corner of his trailer just missed clipping my front end by millimetres.

I could only get a couple of numbers off his trailer. My truck only goes 100 km/h and he was probably doing 105. Nothing I could do but watch him disappear down the road while I flashed my high beams and fumed.

That would have been the end of the story except about 20 minutes later I see him pulling into the west-bound Gananoque scales, which are closed as usual that time in the morning. I couldn't just let this thing go; it was gnawing at my insides. I had to find out why he tried to run me into the rhubarb.

I pulled over past the scales and backed up. Let me tell you, I was feeling plenty of anxiety as I approached his window.

The laws of physics are predictable, but human beings are an-

On-road Editor

Harry Rudolfs



other thing. You can accurately predict how long it will take you to stop at a certain speed, but when it comes to human behaviour, anything is possible.

He opened the window a crack. "You almost killed me back there," I told him. "What's your problem?"

He was only a young man, late 20s, probably driving a broker's truck, and evidently a new Canadian with limited abilities in English. "You...was...back?"

"Why did you cut me off?" I asked. He replied with a sheepish smile and rolled up the window. Still fuming and shaking, I walked back to my truck after memorizing the licence plate.

There's a pretty good Tim Horton's in Gananoque south of the casino. I know a few drivers who stop there and who switch in the No Frills parking lot at night. My colleague James Parrish was at the counter. He suggested that I "shake it off and let it go. I have close calls out there all the time."

"Yeah, but this was outrageous," I replied.

Nothing to do but call the OPP from the phone booth (I'm one of those dinosaurs who refuses to get a cell phone). A receptionist answered and took down the information.

The OPP will tell you they try to act on every call of this nature, if they have the licence number and if they have the man-

power to respond.

Otherwise, the complaint is at least registered in a data bank.

At any rate I didn't hear back from them.

The next morning I waited until 10 a.m. and called the company the driver worked for.

The dispatcher promised to forward my concerns, and about a week later I got a call from the owner.

He operates a small- to medium-sized fleet that primarily runs the 401 between Dorval and Toronto. I went over the details again and he said he would speak to the driver.

Surprise! A few hours later, I got a call from the driver himself. "Why you call my boss?"

"Because you're a bad driver."

"You call my boss. Now I am fired. No job."

So I have to admit to having mixed feelings about this episode. I never did find out why he cut me off and an apology in broken English would have been enough. But I certainly didn't want to get him fired.

And the owner should not have given out my phone number, but he clearly had a duty to investigate my complaint.

Here's how a professional safety manager would have handled the situation: "Usually it's a motorist calling in about something a truck driver has done, but we have to take every complaint seriously," says Francois Rochon, safety preventionist for Robert Transport in Boucherville, Que.

Rochon takes a detailed report from the offended party and then approaches the driver to get his/her side of the incident.

"If a driver admits to making a mistake and it's the first complaint, we advise them to try better in the future. After all, they're driving a 53-foot business card. If another complaint is received, there could be disciplinary action.

"Someone usually calls in because they think the situation is serious," adds Rochon. "Sometimes it's as a result of something the car driver has done and a lack of understanding of how trucks operate.

Other times it's impossible to determine fault. But we are obligated to investigate every complaint and give them feedback if they want it. And we would never give out their phone number."

Informing management on another driver is never easy. I think in 30 years of trucking this is maybe the only time I've gone this far.

Though I can recall getting written up once myself, for allegedly passing recklessly on the inside lane on the 417 in Ottawa.

It should never be done frivolously, but if you are going to call in on a driver you should do it in a professional manner, providing accurate details while remaining respectful and articulate.

I'm still not sure if I did the right thing in this case and I'd like to hear from you.

When is it ethical to drop the dime on a fellow driver, and what's the best way to go about it? E-mail me at hrudolfs@rogers.com. □

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WORTH REPEATING

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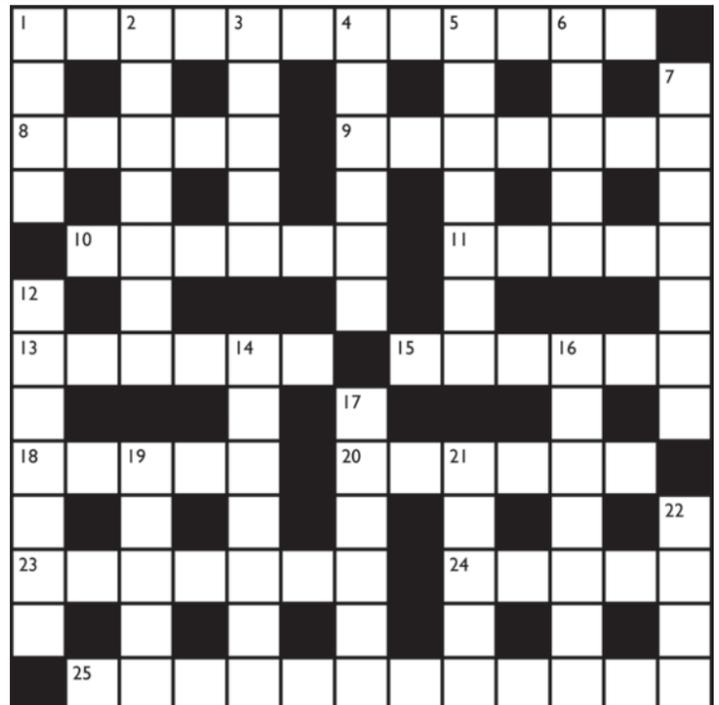
THIS MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

1. Western Star sleeper family
8. Brand on Airtronic sleeper heaters
9. Restaurant or movie-theatre adjective (5,2)
10. Big-rig fuel
11. J. Cash's Cadillac song, "One _____ at a Time"
13. Schneider-rig colour
15. Cummins offering
18. Frost _____, springtime roadway problem
20. Accelerator, in other words
23. Crustacean formerly found on Maine plates
24. Colour of UPS trucks
25. Drivers' and schoolkids' pen-pal program (7,5)

Down

1. Snowmobile, slangily
2. Scale-model truck description
3. Flat-deck cargo covers, commonly
4. Fuel-tank adjective
5. Tight-turn term
6. Four-wheeler trailer-hitch brand
7. Legendary motorcycle stuntman
12. Road-surface crater
14. Bridgestone-branded super single
16. Temporary Arctic thoroughfare (3,4)
17. Revive a flat battery
19. Red and green separator
21. Briefly, Michelin's mascot man (2,3)
22. Annual 500-mile race since 1911



Answers on page 45

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Fuel for thought

What's really behind today's unprecedented fuel price spikes and is there any hope for a reprieve in the near future? Transportation Media editorial director Lou Smyrlis recently travelled to British Columbia to host a CITT seminar on fuel price volatility and its impact on all transportation stakeholders. Following in an excerpt from the opening interview with Tony Macerollo, vice-president, public and government affairs with the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute.

TN: What is the mandate of the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute?

Macerollo: The Canadian Petroleum Products Institute does research and advocacy work for the refining sector. We start where the oil arrives at the refinery and cover all the way through to the regional station. CPPI runs the gamut from driver certification for fuel haulers straight through to advising government on issues ranging from competition, policy, climate change, air pollution, ground fuels and contamination. We also work on best practices.

TN: Fuel is an issue that touches everyone in the supply chain in one way or another and because of its importance people are very sensitive to changes in pricing and tend to speculate on what's causing these changes. One of the common beliefs is that the reason we have such high pricing right now is that oil companies are colluding to influence the price of fuel. What do you make of that belief?

Macerollo: Thank you for being so forthright with the question, because that is often the question that is raised. I've been on both sides of this issue. Since 2006 I've been with CPPI but prior to that I worked in Ottawa for the Industry Minister, who was responsible for the Competition Act. There is a wide array of administrative penalties for violating the Competition Act and you can even go to jail. But about 60% of proven reserves in the world are now controlled by governments and not by companies. We're talking about state-controlled corporations whether they be in China, Kuwait or Venezuela and these are decision makers who do not respond to market dynamics but to other priorities.

That has a big bearing on the supply of crude in the marketplace. But when it comes to the refining of crude and the retailing of the product, it is simply a case of available supply to meet demand. The added complication is that in the business planning environment for at least the last 10 years there have been fairly significant mixed signals sent by government about how business people in my industry should plan their investments. Since at least the Kyoto Protocol there has been an attempt by governments, with a fair amount of rhetoric and conviction, to reduce demand for the products that we

provide.

When you have governments telling you the intent is to reduce demand, you are probably going to have a difficult time attracting the capital to expand.

TN: Another common belief is that Canada has its own ability to control prices because of its reserves. So if we produced more and refined more ourselves we could have a made-in-Canada price that would benefit Canadians. What do you think of that?

Macerollo: We actually have the second highest proven reserves in the world behind Saudi Arabia but they're difficult to get at. It's energy intensive and expensive to extract crude from Alberta's oil sands. Back in the early 80s we had a national energy plan which was an attempt to construct a made-in-Canada energy framework. It was very controversial. But there is a more important point to discuss. Our ascension to the World Trade Organization and NAFTA means there is no unique Canadian market. In terms of refined petroleum products there are three considerations that play into this.

First is the global price of crude oil and that's a price for everywhere in the world. In 1999 the price of crude oil was trading at about (US) \$10 a barrel. In less than 13 months it went up to \$30 and then from 2000 to now it has gone from \$30 to \$125. And the largest chunk of that price increase, apart from the market manipulations of OPEC, is actually bringing people out of poverty in China and India. Because when you bring people out of poverty, they consume more. They make their first phone call, they drive their first car. They do the things we take for granted. The sheer magnitude of their populations is adding to the intensity of demand for energy.

Refined gasoline and diesel pricing, however, is determined on a continental scale. Since NAFTA these products can move with a relative ease across borders and they do. At this point in time, with a few basic exceptions such as west of the Rockies, the wholesale price is set by the New York Mercantile Exchange on a daily basis. Every Wednesday the US reports on available reserves and supplies of petroleum products in the US and the markets respond to inventory levels.

When inventory levels are up there tends to be downward pressure on pricing and when inventories are down there is upward pressure on pricing. So we start with global, then continental and then go right down to the local level.

TN: When you look at a map of where most crude is found, you immediately realize it tends to be found in areas of both political and environmental instability, such as storms and earthquakes. Can you comment on how those sources of instability are affecting the volatility in fuel pricing?



TONY MACEROLLO

Macerollo: I come back to the issue of 60% of oil crude reserves in the world being owned by governments. That does create a lot of uncertainty because you frankly don't know what a lot of the rationale is for their decisions to either increase or decrease production.

If these reserves were in the control of companies that had shareholders and had to abide by international laws and be held accountable to governance legislation there would be more of a discipline to the business decisions made.

But clearly when Iraq goes from being an oil producing nation to an actual oil importing country and you have people in Nigeria working for oil companies being kidnapped, these are shocks to the system and shocks to the system generally don't get a calm reaction. We can call it volatility but the reality of the matter is that a risk premium has been built into the market place as people try to protect themselves against future shocks.

TN: As you've mentioned, pricing at the refinery level is driven by different factors than is the case for crude. Can you elaborate further on the key issues affecting the price of refined diesel?

Macerollo: The first and biggest impact is the desulfurization of diesel. In Canada the 16 refineries involved invested somewhere in the neighborhood of \$5.5 billion, and that's just to put the machinery in place to take the sulfur out without producing an extra litre.

The biggest cost right now is government regulation. In the US they are going after each refinery with consent decrees regarding air pollution performance targets. In Canada the same kind of dynamic is occurring. I'm not saying it's for a bad reason but I can't tell you all of these refineries are going to be able to afford to comply. It takes about 10 years to build a new refinery and most of that time is spent getting environmental approvals. Most people don't want a refinery in their backyard.

On average in Canada refineries are making about 1.5 cents a litre clear profit and that's probably

going to come down if the recession deepens in the US because the price of the product does not just reflect the sum of the costs involved but also what the market will bear. The last time this happened was in 1999. There was a lot of excess capacity, a lot of environmental demands were being made and a lot of refineries closed. At that point the profit margin was about 0.4 cents a litre.

TN: As you've mentioned 10 years ago and also about 25 years ago there were issues that led to the closing of many refineries and the decision to not invest in new capacity. But, with the rise in demand we've seen the last 10-15 years and pricing at levels that probably makes it worthwhile to invest in new capacity, did refiners not miss the boat? It would seem their miscalculation is not only hurting Canadian businesses but also refiners themselves who are missing out on today's market opportunities.

Macerollo: While refineries have closed, capacity has actually increased. We've done a pretty good job of getting economies of scale. The number of refineries is not so much the issue as is capacity. There is no question that we are in precarious times.

The National Energy Board has expressed concern about the lack of incentive to build new capacity in North America, despite the high prices. There are subsidies available south of the border and no one is taking them up. It really is a function of maximizing existing operations until the industry knows what the public policy is going to be around climate change.

TN: So what you're saying is that refineries didn't miss the boat on this increased demand. In their business model, building a refinery has to make sense not only now but 25 years from now. And when they look at a carbon constrained future, they are reticent to invest?

Macerollo: Yes. At the end of the day, business has to attract capital and the investment has to provide a return that is comparable to other options out there. □

SAFETY

Everyone holds a key to anti-theft strategies

It is easy to understand why trucks and their cargo represent an attractive target for thieves. In addition to consolidating a large volume of goods in one spot, the products are already on wheels and ready to travel.

The sad reality is that truck, trailer and cargo theft continues to be big business. According to the Ontario Trucking Association, North America's related losses and claims add up to about \$10 billion per year.

But by developing a theft-prevention policy with your insurance company, you can help to ensure that your fleet does not contribute to the statistics.

The recent theft of \$140,000 of beef from a Montreal fleet yard illustrates the issues that can be overlooked. The yard had no fence

Ask the Expert

Jean Marie Gagnon



or padlock, the trailer's king pin was easily accessed, and there were no security guards in sight. The layout of the yard even allowed thieves to drive in, hook up to the load and drive out another gate that offered quick access to a nearby highway.

This fleet learned its lessons the hard way.

Today, the terminal is enclosed with a fence and gate, drivers are issued individual passes to a cardlock, and cameras monitor activities around the clock. The king pin

on every dropped trailer is also well protected by a pin lock.

Technology can also play a role in the security of a high-value load. Modern GPS equipment, for example, offers dispatchers a valuable tool for tracking stolen loads. Coupled with a "geofencing" system, the technology can even sound an alarm whenever freight strays too far away from an identified route, while sensors can be used to flag changes in vehicle weight or opened doors.

As important as these physical tools can be, however, a theft prevention strategy also needs to include management practices. Job candidates should be required to incorporate a criminal background check, while recruiters should be wary of anyone who seems to shift employers every few months. And

paperwork should be properly secured so that information is only available on a need-to-know basis.

Customers have a role to play in your theft-prevention efforts as well. While some shippers may think of signage on the trailer as a great marketing opportunity, it may also be advertising the contents of a high-value load.

Of course, some loads will represent bigger targets than others. Goods such as consumer electronics and alcohol can be easily resold by crooks, but some surprising cargo can represent a higher risk at specific times of the year. Meat, for example, is often targeted during holidays like Easter or Christmas, while aluminum and copper have recently become valued targets because of soaring commodity prices.

Any security personnel should be informed about the specific threats so they can increase their vigilance around individual loads. They should also be given a complete list of equipment that should be in the yard at any given time, so they can raise the alarm about any unusual activities or missing trailers.

The layout of a yard itself can help to discourage potential thieves if it is surrounded by a well-anchored fence that is at least six feet high, with access offered through a controlled gate. But the security efforts do not end at the home terminal – and information can be as powerful as the key to a lock.

Drivers need to be trained to protect details about their loads and destinations whenever they stop at a truck stop. The questions from a fellow driver may appear to be innocent enough, but these strangers may be probing for information that is needed to hijack a load. Equally, drivers should be sticking to well-lit and high-traffic areas of any parking area.

When loads are particularly valuable, drivers should be reporting to their dispatchers at regular intervals, and they should even know a simple code word that could be used in the event that a theft is in progress.

(Instead of having them memorize the phrase from a war movie, have them reference the name of a fictional dispatcher).

After all, an effective anti-theft strategy will be designed to protect your employees as well as the loads they carry. □

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– This month's expert is Jean Marie Gagnon. Jean Marie is the manager of Markel's Safety and Training Services, Eastern Canada (Quebec and Atlantic Provinces), and has over 25 years of experience in safety, training, and management positions. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to info@markel.ca. Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance Company of Canada, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers.

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

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 8,846-11,793 kg. (19,501-26,000 lbs.)... YES NO
 4,536-8,845 kg. (10,000-19,500 lbs.)... YES NO
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3) This location operates, controls or administers:

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

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

a) For Hire/Contract Trucking (hauling for others)
 b) Lease/Rental
 c) Food Production / Distribution / Beverages
 d) Farming
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Measured against after market sealants, DuraSeal proved superior. In tests against tires with no sealant, there was simply no comparison. Let's face it; with tire costs ranking in the top three expenditures for fleets and drivers, you need your tires to last. No matter how you cut it, you'll come out ahead with DuraSeal Technology. And so will your bottom line.

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Just vote!

Here we go again. With yet another general election looming – our third in just over four years and seven trips to provincial polls in just over a year – it's sometimes difficult to determine when the campaigning stops and the governing starts.

And here I come again, haranguing you to get off your butts and vote. There's no excuse anymore why you can't. Voting in a Canadian federal election is one of the few things that's actually easy for truck drivers to do, despite hectic and unpredictable schedules, and pretty good odds that you'll be miles from home on election day.

With our National Register of Electors, the permanent computerized database of Canadians who are qualified to vote, you're already on the voter's list, and will be mailed a voter information card by Elections Canada prior to the election. It shows that you're registered, and tells you when and where to vote.

If for some reason you don't receive a card, a toll-free call to Elections Canada (800-463-6868) will get you on the list. But even without a card, you can still register to vote at the polling station on election day by proving your identity and address.

If you can't vote on election day (Oct. 14), you can vote earlier at an advance poll (Oct. 3, 4 and 6), or you can skip the line-ups altogether and vote by mail. To do this, you'll need a special ballot which you can get from Elections Canada, either through the Web site (www.elections.ca) or by telephone. You can mail that ballot anytime, from anywhere in the world, in the envelope provided.

Promises fill the air during a campaign – some even include the word "trucking" to get us excited. But is Stephen Harper's promise to cut the federal excise tax on fuel from four cents to two cents a litre – over four years – going to solve the industry's cost-related problems? Is Stéphane Dion's second-thought addition of a bundle of rebates and incentives enough to sell us on his Green Shift plan which would *increase* the federal diesel tax by seven cents a litre?

Is any of Jack Layton's \$8 billion funding for green-collar jobs coming your way?

Most of us old enough to have a few elections under our belts are sceptical or downright cynical when it comes to election promises. It's not without reason truckers often feel invisible; our day-to-day concerns can easily get lost in discussions on key issues like the economy, the environment, leadership, and consumer confidence.

Even the promise of fuel tax cuts and green incentive programs for trucking aren't for the benefit of truckers themselves – you're supposed to pass the benefits on to consumers by lowering the price of moving their stuff by truck. Since when are truckers not consumers too?

But before I get any more cynical about being cynical, I want to point out that elections are about a lot more than which political party we'll vote into office.

Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie



The whole campaign process provides a perfect opportunity to raise trucking issues with the politicians who'll be knocking at your door looking for your vote.

Our "first past the post" electoral system means that the candidate who wins your riding will represent you in Parliament, regardless of which party forms the government. When the dust settles, that person is the one who will be sitting in the House, working on committees, debating issues, and voting on Bills.

Although trucking issues aren't likely to top the Prime Minister's priority list, an MP who understands this industry and its issues will be more helpful than one who doesn't

know trucking from page two.

While the federal government has relatively little jurisdiction over transportation compared to provincial governments, there is no shortage of issues for truckers to discuss with political hopefuls.

The environment? Canada needs a comprehensive green plan, not a mish-mash of conflicting policies and regulations. We need practical, accessible, incentive programs that will support small business truck owners who are struggling with the high cost of adopting green technologies.

Our crumbling infrastructure and lack of rest areas and truck parking puts drivers at risk on a daily basis. It's time the feds showed some leadership in addressing these problems, rather than squabbling with provinces over funding and jurisdiction. When they're laying out their plans for economic renewal, politicians need to be reminded that the economy moves by truck. And per-

haps it's time to dust off the report of the Federal Labour Standards Review Commission for another look labour issues in interprovincial trucking – including the Pandora's box of driver pay.

We're still waiting for fair treatment for sole proprietor owner/operators with respect to meal tax allowances, and we need a government with the guts to give Marine Atlantic a good shake-up rather than tax the trucking industry with rate hikes to pay for the crown corporation's inefficiencies.

And the list goes on. So when the candidates come around asking for your support, let them know what's on your mind. Talk to them about the industry and what changes you want to see, then ask them how they're prepared to support *you*. □

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

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Wait 'til next year?

If you're buying a truck, it could be a flawed strategy

A lot of truck owners are holding out for 2009 to buy new iron.

They want to beat the 2010 deadline for tougher restrictions on diesel exhaust emissions because those engines will be more expensive to acquire and maybe even to operate.

If you're serious about savings, and you're in a position to buy, think about making your purchase this year instead of waiting for 2009.

Never mind that dealers are eager to make a sale now, or that truck manufacturers are raising prices in 2009.

Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



Purchasing equipment close to the end of your fiscal year may help reduce your tax bill.

That's because the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) lets you expense a half-year's depreciation on the vehicle even though you may have had it for only a month or two.

When you purchase a new truck, CRA allows a 20% depreciation expense during the first year.

That's a good chunk of change on a new vehicle.

You could write off far more than you actually paid out during the short time you've owned it. It's a nice benefit, a "bonus" business expense you can incorporate into your tax-planning strategies.

However, this strategy only works as long as you're financing the purchase of the vehicle with a loan and not leasing it.

People in the trucking industry have used the terms "buying" and "leasing" interchangeably. But we can't anymore.

If your accountant advises you to go buy a new truck, you'd better not lease it.

Leasing your new vehicle close to year's end doesn't offer the same tax-related benefit.

In fact, if you lease your truck, it

may be better to add the vehicle at the beginning of your business year, not the end of it.

CRA considers that big initial lease payment a pre-paid deposit that you expense and write off over time.

You divide that downstroke by the number of months in your contract and expense the amount each month in addition to your regular lease payment and sales taxes.

If you put down \$20,000 in cash and/or trade on a five-year lease, you need to expense an extra \$333.34 over the next 60 months on top of your monthly payment.

If you end the lease early for any reason, you need to write off the remaining balance of the down payment at that time.

So if you trade in your leased vehicle after 48 months instead of carrying it to the full term of 60 months, you still have 12 months times \$333.34 (equaling roughly \$4,000 of value) to expense.

Of course, when you compare write-offs on leases and purchases, what you're really talking about is tax deferral, not tax elimination.

If you spend \$130,000 on a commercial truck, then you have \$130,000 to expense. The difference between buying and leasing is just in the timing of the expense.

That "bonus" expense during the year of purchase is an example. But taking the first-year depreciation amount on the Capital Cost Allowance schedule means you'll have less for later years. Heavy CCA claims in the first two years of owning equipment are great for reducing tax bills, but those smaller CCA claims for the remaining years will mean higher taxes.

That's why many people run into tax problems in years four and five of their loan and buy replacement equipment to get back to the higher CCA claims again. Leasing expenses, on the other hand, are evenly distributed throughout the term of the financing.

The write-off for your truck payment is predictable year after year.

Your accountant should be able to walk you through the tax implications of trading in your equipment.

So now, as you contemplate whether to take on a new truck this year or next, the simple rule of thumb is to contact your accountant before you proceed in purchasing or leasing equipment.

You may be ready to drop Ol' Betsy at the used truck lot and ride off in a shiny new model before the sun sets on 2008.

In doing so, you don't want any lingering doubts about the tax implications for you and 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.



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In the spirit of National Trucking Week

A look at some of the things I love about the trucking industry

Autumn is a special time for the Canadian trucking industry. The season kicks off with two of the industry's key national events – the National Truck Driving Championships and National Trucking Week.

That is followed up by several important events including a number of association conventions.

In some parts of the country, economic conditions are such that it may seem like there is little to celebrate this year, but perhaps a change in the season will also bring a change in prospects.

Every challenge presents opportunities.

And, as we know full well in the trucking industry there is never a shortage of challenges.

You have to look for the opportunities and stay positive.

For me, there are and always will be lots of positives and lots to celebrate.

Here are some of the things that I love about trucking:

Tenacious: Is there an industry whose people are more tenacious or work harder?

I don't know of one. When the times get tough, this industry shows its true mettle.

Resilient: Few industries are as susceptible to the winds that blow through the economy.

Think about it. The dollar. High fuel prices. Tightening credit. Stagnant demand. Capacity and balance issues.

Changing international supply chains.

While the road may be rocky and while the risks are sometimes significant, this is an industry of survivors.

Underdog: It can seem like the cards are always stacked against truckers. Think how many times over the past couple of decades some people have been prepared to write-off the Canadian trucking industry.

There is always someone (competitor, shipper, supplier, government) bigger and more powerful, but trucking always seems to win at the end of the day.

Competitive: If there is an industry more competitive than trucking, I'd like to know exactly what it is.

With such low concentration and low barriers to entry, this industry is a case study in textbook 101 competition.

As an association person I am always struck by how cut-throat competitors can still come together through their associations and work towards common goals.

I can tell you this doesn't happen nearly to the same extent in associations where there are only a few major players.

Knights of the Road: Okay, it's



Industry Issues

David Bradley

not the 50s or 60s, and there are lots of reasons why it's not always feasible or safe to stop and help by the side of the road anymore. And, there are some drivers who give everyone a black eye.

But, for all the criticism that is thrown their way, there is no class of driver or vehicle that is as safe, responsible, skilled and produc-

tive than the Canadian truck driver and the Canadian fleet of heavy vehicles.

They are the best.

Innovative: To the ill-informed, trucking is as simple as moving goods from A to B. But to those of us in the industry we know it's much more than that.

Even with some of the restrictive regulations that the industry must comply with, (ie. vehicle configurations, systems or strategies) some of the most innovative people in Canadian business are found in the trucking industry.

No job too tough: This is an industry that gets it done. That's the bottom line. Trucking is the definition of service.

Go for it: Trucking is one of the

last great bastions of Canadian entrepreneurship.

This is not an industry for the timid or feint-hearted. What's more this is an industry where if you're going to do it, do it right – the first time and every time. Spare no effort.

It is often said that the trucking industry is an easy one to get into, and a hard one to get out of. That once you are in, there may be easier ways to make a living, but the diesel fuel gets in your blood.

That may be true, but for me it's the people that make this industry what it is and why so many of us want to work nowhere else than in trucking. □

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

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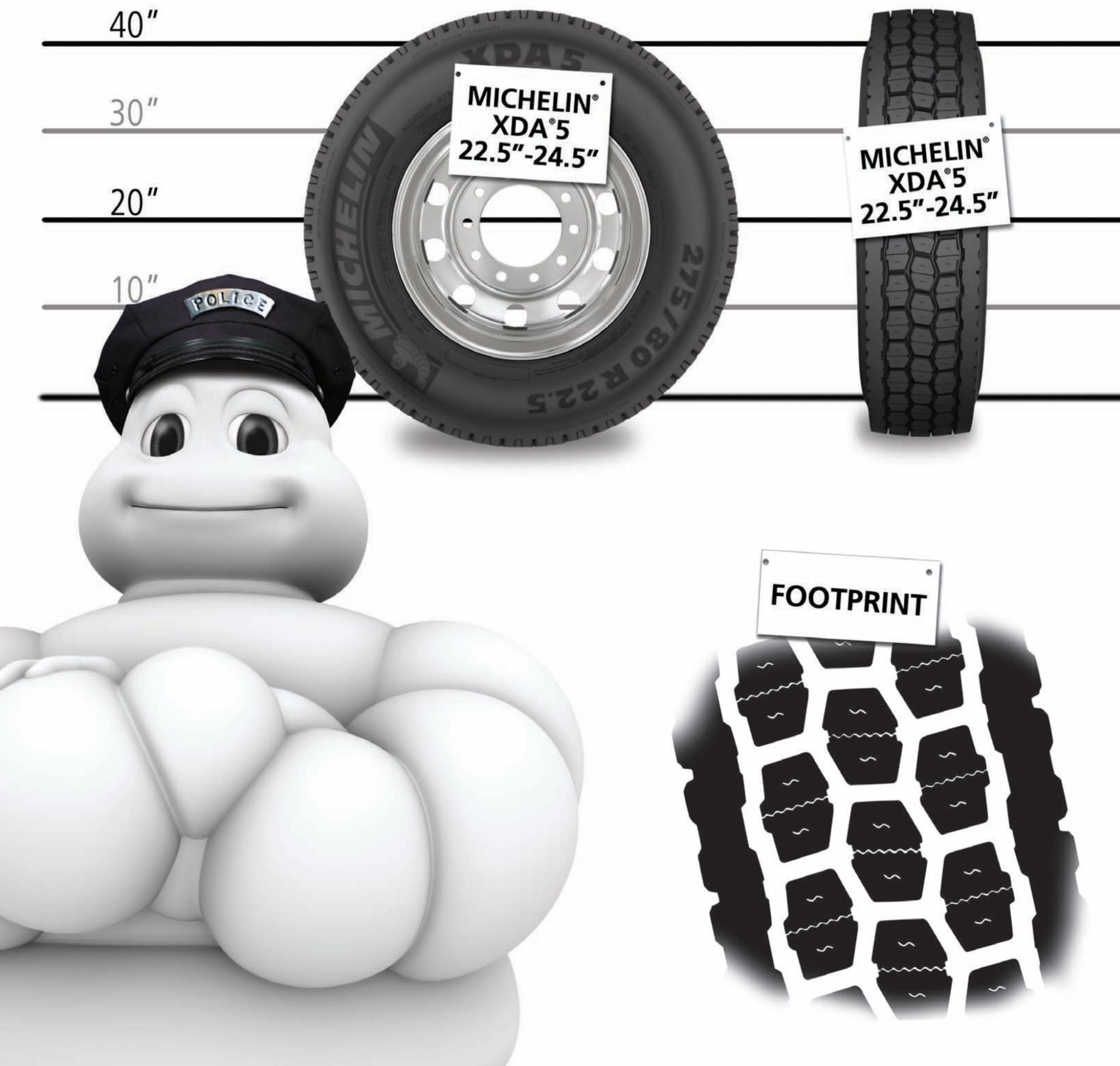
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The listeria hysteria

Recent headline stories have identified a serious food poisoning outbreak in North America, resulting from people eating organisms or toxins in contaminated food.

Although our food supply is usually considered the safest in the world, people still get food poisoning. Fortunately, serious outbreaks are rare. However, when they do happen, the very young and old, and those with a serious medical condition, like kidney disease or diabetes, or immune system weaknesses are affected the most. If you have any of those conditions, you should be extra cautious.

If you are in good health, why not exercise caution, even though your own immune system could likely fight most contaminants?

Raw foods, for example, often carry harmful bacteria. Raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, as well as spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts and melon frequently become contaminated while being grown, harvested, processed, stored, shipped or prepared for sale. Nevertheless, don't avoid them, since they carry valuable nutrients – just handle them properly. Usually, thorough washing and/or cooking is good enough.

If you're cooking your food, cook it thoroughly then eat it right away.

Leaving it on the counter at room temperature for over two hours could potentially lead to a case of food poisoning because this is an ideal environment for bacteria to flourish. Unfortunately, this bacteria growth often goes unnoticed because foods do not immediately begin to smell, look or feel rotten.

To slow down bacteria growth, refrigerate foods. To kill bacteria, thoroughly cook foods. If you've got raw meat, poultry, or fish that's been in the fridge for longer than one or two days, throw it out. Freeze anything that needs to be stored longer. Freezing slows or stops the bacteria's growth. But when the food thaws, the microbes will start multiplying again, so don't store thawed foods long. For best results, keep the refrigerator set at 40 F and your freezer at or below 0 F.

Be cautious at picnics, school cafeterias, and large social functions because in these situations food is often left at room temperature too long and is not prepared using proper food-handling techniques.

Common foods available in these settings are also at fault, such as: undercooked meats; dairy products; or food containing mayonnaise such as coleslaw or potato salad, which has become warm. Avoid them.

Both at home and on the road, foods can become contaminated. When at home, take these precautionary steps to protect yourself:

Begin by thoroughly washing your hands before touching any foods. Next, use only clean utensils, dishes and work surfaces. Include a meat thermometer as one of your regular cooking tools and then use it. When inserted into the core of your cooked meat, the thermometer should read at least 160 F for beef, 180 F for poultry, and 140 F for fish. Later, put your cooked meat

Preventive Maintenance

Karen Bowen



on a fresh plate, not the one that the uncooked meat or fish was on.

Examine what you're planning to cook. Check the expiry dates on packages, throw out expired foods.

Check packages to ensure the seal is intact – a broken seal means the food is no longer sterile. Avoid cans that are dented or bulging, this may indicate a build-up of gasses from bacteria growth. Trust your eyes and nose. If a food looks or smells unusual, don't eat it!

On the road, eat in clean, reputable establishments. If you've eat-

en safely at a truck stop for years, keep going to it. Remember where drivers complain about feeling sick at after eating there. In a restaurant, choose well-cooked meat dishes.

When brown-bagging it, wash your raw fruit and vegetables and keep them in a small fridge or cooler. Even pre-packaged foods can be hazardous; if possible, microwave them to kill any hidden bacteria.

Unfortunately, even if you're cautious, about two to six hours after eating contaminated food, you may feel the following symptoms of food poisoning: nausea and vomiting; abdominal cramps; diarrhea; fever; weakness; headache; dehydration. Don't panic. Usually, you'll get over it on your own by drinking extra fluids (not milk or caffeinated drinks).

However, you should call your doctor if: you have diarrhea, but cannot drink fluids due to nausea or vomiting; you are on diuretics and have diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting;

your diarrhea lasts for more than two or three days; you have blood in your stools; or you have a fever over 101 F.

You could be very sick and should call 9-1-1 if: you have signs of dehydration, such as feeling thirsty, dizzy, light-headed, or faint; you have excessive bleeding or your stools are maroon or black; you have trouble breathing; your heart is racing, pounding, or skipping; you have trouble swallowing; or you have symptoms related to your nervous system – symptoms, like: weakness, double vision, difficulty speaking, or paralysis.

Usually food poisoning is just an unpleasant inconvenience.

However, if you feel you need medical treatment, don't take a chance, go with your gut. □

– Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant and she can be reached by e-mail at karen_bowen@yahoo.com.



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A fork in the road

An important decision lies ahead as EPA2010 emission standards loom

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Fleets and owner/operators will have a crucial decision to make in 2010, when engine manufacturers roll out two vastly different solutions to meet the EPA2010 emissions standards.

The next round of EPA regulations calls for a reduction in NOx (nitrogen oxides) to 0.2 g/bhp-hr. One way to achieve this is through an exhaust aftertreatment process called Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR). SCR systems consist of a catalyst, a separate tank which houses urea – or diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) – and the associated plumbing. A small amount of DEF is introduced into the exhaust stream, causing a chemical reaction that breaks NOx down into harmless water and nitrogen.

This technology, which is already widely used in Europe, will be employed by Volvo, Mack, Detroit Diesel, Paccar and Cummins. However, Navistar (parent company of International Truck and Engine) does not like SCR for a variety of reasons, and has instead focused on becoming EPA2010-compliant by simply employing higher levels of Exhaust Gas Recirculation (EGR), the technology currently in use today. (Caterpillar announced

this summer that it will no longer supply heavy-duty on-highway engines for the North American market in 2010).

Those with their feet firmly planted in the SCR camp call Navistar's approach 'massive EGR'. Navistar prefers 'mature EGR.'

Tim Schick, director of marketing for International's big bore engine business, says the company will increase the amount of exhaust gas recirculated through the engine by 10% compared to today's engines. Contrary to reports, he insists EGR levels will be "way below 50%, even in the most extreme cases."

He says advances in engine technology have allowed the company to become 2010-compliant without SCR by enhancing its EGR system and developing a high-pressure common rail fuel system that will boost pressures above 30,000 psi. The International MaxxForce's durable compacted-graphite iron block will allow it to withstand the higher firing pressures, Schick says, adding the company will move to a five-stage injection cycle.

"We're taking advantage of technology that just didn't exist before," explains Schick. "Our program is going very, very well and with time

we have found more security with this path, rather than less."

Navistar was originally joined on the EGR side of the fence by Cummins, but the industry's market share leader dropped a bombshell on Aug. 13 when it announced it was switching paths in favour of SCR on its heavy-duty engine line. Cummins already was planning to adopt SCR on its mid-range engines, which should make the mid-flight reversal easier to execute.

In a conference call with the trade press, Cummins said it decided to change course for two reasons: record fuel prices, which have made fuel economy a priority; and the emergence of a new catalyst material that Cummins says eliminates NOx more efficiently than traditional materials.

By using a copper-zeolite catalyst material, Cummins found it could improve fuel consumption by up to 5% compared to its EGR solution, Steve Charlton, vice-president of heavy-duty engineering with Cummins says.

Ed Pence, vice-president and general manager of Cummins heavy-duty engine business, adds "The business case for delivering industry-leading fuel economy performance from our products was

too compelling for us to overlook, and therefore drove this decision."

It should be noted, Cummins steadfastly denies that it encountered problems in developing its in-cylinder solution.

"That product was all set to launch in January, 2010," said Charlton. "The program was performing well, the product was performing well and we were hitting all our targets." (See pg. 29 for more).

Navistar seems unfazed by the Cummins announcement. Schick says International trucks will still be available with the Cummins ISX with SCR in 2010, so the development simply broadens the options for International truck customers.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing Navistar is not meeting EPA2010 emissions standards, but fending off criticism from the SCR crowd, which continues to question the viability of an in-cylinder solution.

Randy Fleming, powertrain sales manager with Volvo Trucks Canada for one, has questioned whether an EGR solution will be able to achieve passive Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) regenerations. He points out that NOx plays an important role in facilitating passive DPF regens. Actively regenerating the DPF consumes about 2.5 litres of diesel, he says.

Eliminating NOx in-cylinder means "near-zero passive re-generations," Fleming said during a seminar at the Private Motor Truck Council's annual conference in June. With SCR, on the other hand,



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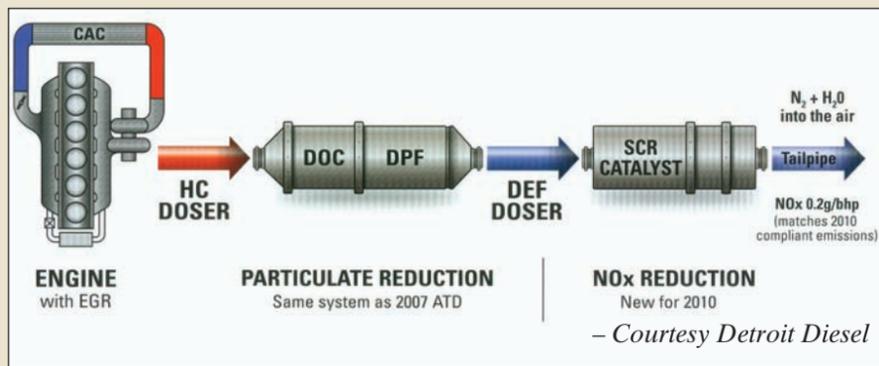
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How SCR works:



SCR: EGR will continue to be used, with less exhaust recirculated for cooling. A diesel particulate filter (DPF) will remain, to trap and burn off particulates. After exhaust gases leave the DPF, they are dosed with a Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) solution, causing a chemical reaction that produces ammonia. The ammonia and NOx react in the catalyst to form harmless water and nitrogen.

engine manufacturers can produce as much NOx as necessary within the cylinder, take advantage of its chemical properties to conduct an efficient passive DPF regeneration and then eliminate the NOx downstream in the SCR catalyst. Navistar's Schick insists International engines will continue to achieve passive regenerations.

"We don't feel we're going to have issues passively regenerating our engine for 2010," he says. "When they say you need NOx to regenerate, what they're really saying is you need heat. Yes, taken on the surface, less NOx out equals less heat out."

However, Schick adds the new high-pressure common rail fuel system will produce less NOx than today's engines in the first place and the regeneration process should not be impacted. Navistar also finds itself having to defend its use of 'credits' to become EPA2010-compliant.

"The folks not using SCR will not be meeting the EPA's tailpipe emission levels," says David Siler, director of marketing with Detroit Diesel. "They'll be compliant, but not necessarily the cleanest. To meet the 0.2 g/bhp-hr NOx tailpipe limit, the only way to get there is with SCR."

Engine manufacturers in the US have earned credits for surpassing previous emissions standards, and Navistar admits it will be cashing in some of those credits in 2010 to bring it into compliance.

The company makes no apologies for doing so, since that's why the system was put into place, says Schick.

"The inclination is there was a loophole somewhere, that it's not a good thing and we found this loophole to produce dirty engines," he counters. "We really have to back up and say that we hold, and the EPA holds, that this is a positive. They set up a program that rewards producing engines that are cleaner than they need to be at any given time. They very much promote achieving lower emissions early and they reward for that."

For its part, SCR has not been immune to criticism itself. The widespread availability of urea has been voiced as a major concern, however engine manufacturers that will adopt SCR downplay the issue.

David McKenna, powertrain sales and marketing manager with Mack, points out that urea will be

consumed at an approximately 3% urea-to-diesel ratio, so for every 100 gallons of diesel burned, a truck will require just three gallons of DEF.

"On a typical highway truck with a 13-gallon urea reservoir, at 6.5 mpg you'll be able to run all the way from New York to Los Angeles and back to Denver, Colorado on 13 gallons of urea," he says.

The amount of urea required varies slightly by manufacturer. Cummins, for instance, touts a 2% urea-to-diesel ratio, which equates to about 6,000 miles between fill-ups based on a 20-gallon urea tank.

"We will optimize that ratio for the lowest cost of operation," says Volvo's Fleming.

It's expected DEF will be available at truck stops and truck dealers across North America, both in bulk and in portable containers similar to those containing windshield washer fluid. Currently, urea costs about three-quarters the price of diesel, Fleming notes, adding more than 100 million tonnes of the solution were produced worldwide last year.

As per EPA requirements, engines using SCR will be downgraded if the urea tank runs dry, meaning the driver will have to keep on top of monitoring tank levels and replacing the fluid when required. That driver interaction will be a deterrent for some fleets, Navistar hopes.

"All the emissions controls up until now have been passive, they don't require direct driver involvement," says Schick. "Now this one is active and (fleets are saying) 'We're not sure we want to go that route and add that extra complexity – this is going to provide an inconvenience we'd rather not have.'"

Schick also contends Navistar's non-SCR approach appeals to body builders, who loathe the idea of losing frame rail space to SCR components. However, McKenna says the SCR system has been packaged "very efficiently."

At the end of the day, manufacturers using SCR say fuel mileage will drive many customers to embrace the technology, especially when fuel savings of 3-5% are being promised.

Detroit Diesel's Siler explains that without limiting engine-out NOx, manufacturers are able to better optimize their engines' operating parameters.

"So essentially we're getting better performance within the cylinder

and also better performance in the particulate regeneration cycle," he says. In testing, Siler claims Detroit Diesel's DD15 with SCR is achieving about 3% better fuel mileage than its non-SCR equivalent.

"If you can move your truck from 6 mpg to 6.3 or 6.5 mpg, if you can put three, four, five cents per mile in your pocket at 100,000 miles per year, you're not talking chump change," adds Mack's McKenna. "We're seeing improvements of about 3-4%, including the cost of urea."

Navistar doesn't dispute the fuel-saving potential of SCR, however it does question the overall cost savings.

"We would recognize that there is the potential to re-tune the engines with SCR for greater fuel economy, we don't dispute that," Schick says.

"But are the cost savings real? The fuel savings may be, but are the cost savings real? There, we do have an alternative view."

He contends the cost savings achieved by burning less fuel may be offset by the cost of urea and the added complexity SCR presents.

The other knock against urea is its tendency to freeze at 12 F, which Schick says has not been lost on Canadian fleets, and those "in the northern tier" of the US.

Volvo's Fleming says while urea does freeze, it won't be an issue.

"Europe has an environment that's every bit as cold as Canada. It'll take no more time than now to get started," he says. "The exhaust will immediately melt a few CCs, and the rest will be melted in the (heated) tank."

So while the debate rages on, customers find themselves quickly approaching a major fork in the road. For the first time since the EPA began cracking down on heavy-duty diesel engine emissions, truck owners will have to choose between two radically different solutions.

The SCR camp remains confident escalating fuel prices will drive customers towards its more fuel-efficient solution.

"We explored all three of the known technologies at the beginning: NOx adsorbers; SCR; and massive EGR," McKenna explains. "We decided to go with SCR for two reasons: number one, we can get down below the EPA2010 regulations with SCR relatively easily; and number two, we can improve fuel economy. With all that in mind, I really don't see a down side to SCR, outside it's one more thing for a driver to do. But if you have to replenish a very small SCR tank every second or third fill-up, and you can get 3-4% better fuel economy, what's the question?"

Navistar, now the lone carrier of the non-SCR torch, counters that the complexity of SCR and the necessary driver involvement will make its EGR solution a winner.

"We view that we offer a very viable alternative to SCR, which we recognize is a valid technology. Our alternative is one of simplicity versus complexity and we feel there is no real operating cost disadvantage to that," Schick surmises. □

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Where they're at

The following is a report on engine manufacturers' progress towards EPA2010 compliance:



Cummins

Despite a reversal in course for Cummins heavy-duty engines, the company expects an easy transition to producing SCR engines. Cummins was already developing SCR for its mid-range products, and it has about 200,000 engines with SCR in place worldwide, the company says. Cummins also benefits from having an offshoot of the company – Cummins Emission Solutions – that is already in the business of designing and building SCR systems.

Its 2010 engines will still use EGR – just less of it. The base engine remains the same. However, now that it can re-tune its engines for optimal performance, Cummins has scrapped plans to develop a 16-litre ISX. Steve Charlton, vice-president of heavy-duty engineering with Cummins, says the higher displacement engine is no longer required to meet all the horsepower ratings the company plans to offer.

Mark Karrasch, a division manager with Cummins, says current test engines with the in-cylinder solution can be converted to carry SCR quite easily.

Detroit Diesel

We caught up with David Siler, director of marketing with Detroit Diesel at a Sterling Trucks event in August. He said extensive field testing of Detroit Diesel engines with BlueTec (Daimler's term



for its SCR technology) is already well underway and going smoothly.

"We're going to be launching our customer demonstration units, which will put 2010 BlueTec vehicles in customers' hands by the fourth quarter of this year," Siler said. "We want to make sure we have an optimal package before we deliver them, so we're still going through extensive development and validation."

He said the DD15 will remain much the same as it is today, but EGR levels will be dialed back allowing the company to fine-tune its performance parameters.

"But there will be no hardware changes to speak of," he said. "All the changes will be electronic and downstream aftertreatment changes."



Mack

David McKenna, powertrain sales and marketing manager with Mack, described Mack's progress to us at the Great American Trucking Show in late August.

"We've got field test units right now that we've had in service for almost seven months, and I'm go-

ing to say we're averaging adding about one to 1.5 trucks into the test fleet every week," McKenna said. "We're certainly getting a comfortable number of trucks out there in various duty cycles."

Mack had yet to deploy any test trucks in Canada, however its engines with SCR were holding up well in the upper peninsula of Michigan where they were hauling loads of 160,000 lbs, McKenna said.

He said the first Mack engines with SCR would be hitting Canadian roads by the end of September. Early results are showing improvements in power and fuel economy, McKenna said, adding horsepower will be increased in some of Mack's 2010 engines thanks to its ability to produce NOx in-cylinder and tinker with engine settings to optimize performance.



Navistar

The International MaxxForce engine continues to be refined to comply with EPA2010 emissions standards without SCR. International's Tim Schick said the maturation of EGR technology has made for a smooth transition.

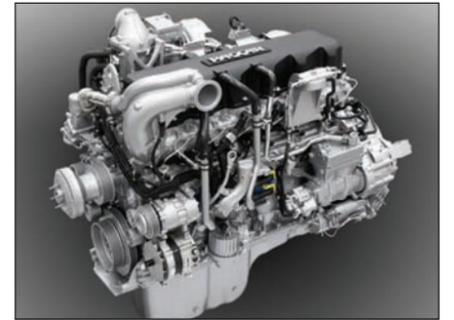
The 2010 engine will see EGR levels increase by about 10%, Schick said. The cooling capacity will be increased and in some applications the air intake will be enlarged, but highway trucks with International's 2010 engine will look the same as they do today, Schick said.

"The only thing you will notice is that it will look a lot like a 2009 vehicle," he insisted.

He noted the EGR valve will be housed in a water jacket to protect

it from overheating. He also said refinements will be made to the combustion process: a five-stage injection cycle consisting of two pre-burns, a main burn and two post-burns will replace today's three-stage injection process.

Currently, the MaxxForce's fuel pressure is about 26,000 psi. That will be boosted to over 30,000 psi in 2010, Schick said. However, the engine's compacted-iron graphite block is more than able to withstand the higher firing pressures, he added.



Paccar

Paccar will be introducing its MX 12.9-litre engine, based on the European DAF engine, to North America in 2010. Its engines will also use SCR, says Paccar's Alan Treasure.

"Our engine program is progressing on schedule," he said, adding field tests have been conducted in the Northwest Territories and the Canadian Rockies. "We have a really comprehensive testing program in many different applications and conditions, including in Canada."

Paccar is building an engine plant in the US which is designed specifically to manufacture EPA2010-compliant engines, Treasure noted. Because it's a brand new plant, "we don't have any constraints with any manufacturing or tooling limitations," he said.

Treasure said based on testing, customers will enjoy excellent fuel mileage and responsiveness as well as quiet operation.



Volvo

Volvo Trucks North America has about a dozen trucks in customer hands, spokesman James McNamara told *Truck West* in early September.

"Those are in addition to all the trucks we have in corporate testing and those are in addition to about 150,000 trucks we have in Europe running with SCR," he said.

"Right now, there's not a lot of customer comments to report, because other than when they are adding the DEF to the vehicles, it's transparent to them."

The company expects fuel mileage improvements of 3% compared to non-SCR engines. By mid-October, McNamara said Volvo will have accrued close to a million miles on SCR-equipped customer test vehicles. □

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AUTO OPTION: The Sterling Acterra can now be spec'd with an automated gearbox from Eaton.

Sterling makes UltraShift available on Acterra

REDFORD, Mich. – In an effort to optimize the fuel economy of its trucks, Sterling has made the Eaton UltraShift Highway Value (HV) automated transmission available on all Acterra trucks.

“Fuel economy is more important than ever to our customers,” said Richard Shearing, manager of product strategy for Sterling Trucks. “By partnering with Eaton to include its UltraShift HV in our popular Acterra model, we are providing enhanced fuel efficiency combined with the strength and drivability expected from our trucks.”

A third-party study using the TMC/SAE Type III fuel economy test, showed the UltraShift HV can deliver 6-19% better fuel mileage in urban duty cycles than a conventional automatic.

The UltraShift HV is designed for Class 6 and 7 trucks. It com-

bins the architecture of a traditional six-speed with automated shifting logic. It can handle torque loads of up to 660 lb.-ft. and loads of up to 33,000 lbs gross.

It also features ‘Hill Assist,’ which minimizes rollback on grades of up to 10% while the driver transitions from the brake pedal to the throttle.

Eaton claims the transmission also delivers maintenance savings, as it requires no scheduled maintenance for 500,000 miles.

The transmission also does not require an external transmission cooler, which improves reliability.

“With the UltraShift HV installed in the Acterra, our customers get the best of all worlds. Better fuel economy, enhanced safety and lower maintenance, all backed by Sterling’s extensive dealer network and award-winning customer service,” Shearing said. □

Navistar, GM opt out of medium-duty deal

WARRENVILLE, Ill. – In a short notice posted on its Web site recently, Navistar announced it would no longer acquire GM’s medium-duty truck business.

The company said it would allow a memorandum of understanding to take over the business expire, “due to significant marketplace and economic changes.”

The complete release said: “Due to significant marketplace and economic changes, GM and

Navistar have decided not to renew the memorandum of understanding to purchase GM’s medium-duty truck business, which has expired. GM will continue to run the medium duty business as it has in the past, including providing sales, service and marketing support to GM dealers for its medium duty trucks. GM will continue to review strategic options for the business, including continued discussions with Navistar.” □

Kenworth, Pete make synthetic axle lube standard

DALLAS, Texas – Kenworth and Peterbilt have announced their customers will achieve a 1% improvement in fuel mileage once the truck makers make a new full-synthetic axle lube standard on all Class 5-8 models.

The truck manufacturers, both owned by Paccar, will make the new synthetic lube standard beginning this summer. Cognis EMGARD FE 75W-90 axle lubes will be used by both companies. They claim the axle lube will offer better operating performance, increased gear life, extended drains and all-season lubrication and reduced maintenance and downtime.

In addition, the manufacturers are claiming a 1% fuel mileage improvement will result.

“Fuel economy is extremely important to customers today and an estimated gain of up to 1% in fuel efficiency can help produce significant annual savings for a truck fleet or owner/operator,” said Gary Moore, Kenworth assistant general manager for marketing and sales.

Peterbilt says a 1% fuel mileage improvement will translate to yearly savings of about \$900 per truck based on current fuel prices.

“The Cognis synthetic lube helps customers offset rising and unstable fuel costs by providing end-users significant and quantifiable fuel savings,” announced Larry Reding, assistant general manager of sales and marketing with Peterbilt. □

Volvo, Mack streamline operations

LEHIGH VALLEY, Penn. – Volvo Group has announced it will streamline its North American Volvo and Mack operations to improve efficiencies. The restructuring will cost US\$60 million but will further the company’s competitiveness, the company said in a release.

“Through hard work and substantial investment over the last seven years, Mack now has a completely revitalized vehicle line-up, an entirely new engine range, and a dealer network that’s stronger than ever,” said Dennis R. Slagle, Mack president and CEO. “But our focus is on long-term leadership in a very challenging market, regulatory and economic environment, and this demands that we continue to improve our profitability and competitiveness.”

As part of the restructuring, Mack’s administrative headquarters will be relocated from Allentown, Penn. to Greensboro, N.C. where Volvo is currently based.

Mack’s highway trucks will be assembled at the company’s Macungie, Penn. plant rather than the current New River Valley, Va. plant, beginning in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The product development and purchasing functions will be moved from the Allentown Engineering Development and Test Center to Volvo’s tech center in Greensboro. And the parts distribution network will be restructured to include a new Volvo Group North America central warehouse. Mack officials said the company will inject US\$20 million into its Macungie plant’s paint operation and a further US\$50 million will be spent to install a new engine block machining line at the company’s Hagerstown, Md. powertrain facility. □

Raydan reports loss for 2008

EDMONTON, Alta. – Canadian suspension builder Raydan Manufacturing, reported a loss of \$897,606 for its fiscal year ended Apr. 30. That was a drop from a net profit of \$220,561 the previous year. However in the fourth quarter, Raydan suffered a loss of just \$8,000 compared to a loss of \$256,000 for Q4 the previous year.

The company reported its decreasing revenue was attributable to the slowdown in North American truck sales. In Ontario, a 10% decrease in revenue was blamed on a downturn in the economy and a delay in obtaining a new location for a chassis modification facility.

However, Raydan has secured a new facility in Ontario and will begin work there in October. Raydan continues to fulfill orders for the Canadian military and to work with ArvinMeritor to manufacture and distribute the Air Link suspension.

The company says it will be unveiling several new products for the Air Link suspension which will expand the market for Raydan. □



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Cummins changes course, will use SCR in 2010

By James Menzies

COLUMBUS, Ind. – Unprecedented fuel prices and the discovery of a new copper-zeolite catalyst material have driven Cummins to change directions on its path to EPA2010 heavy-duty engine compliance.

The company explained its mid-August decision to adopt urea-based Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) during a conference call with trade journalists. Steve Charlton, vice-president of heavy-duty engineering with Cummins, explained the discovery of copper-zeolite as an improved SCR catalyst material was the key enabler.

“Copper-zeolite is the key technology that’s allowed us to make this change,” he said, noting it has a far better NOx efficiency rate and is more durable in high temperatures than the iron-zeolite alternative that’s widely used today.

The copper-zeolite material will be coated onto the honeycomb ceramic substrate within the SCR catalyst, providing improved NOx-reducing capabilities, Charlton explained. As a result, he said Cummins can now provide up to 5% better fuel mileage using SCR than it could with the in-cylinder solution it was previously pursuing.

Combine the improved efficiency offered by the copper-zeolite SCR catalyst material with record fuel prices, and Cummins felt it simply had to change course for its heavy-duty engine line. It was already developing SCR engines for its mid-range products, which should make the transition easier.

“The business case for delivering industry-leading fuel economy performance from our products was too compelling for us to overlook, and therefore drove this decision,” said Ed Pence, vice-president and general manager of Cummins heavy-duty engine business. “We believe this decision demonstrates Cummins decisiveness to do what’s right, to offer the right technology and it demonstrates our agility.”

Cummins decision to adopt SCR leaves Navistar as the only North American engine manufacturer that plans to meet EPA2010 emissions standards without exhaust aftertreatment. Cummins officials insisted they could have met the 2010 requirements with their in-cylinder solution, had they chosen to continue pursuing it. But current fuel prices have made fuel economy the top priority for customers, Cummins officials acknowledged, which made it necessary to change paths.

“The first thing (customers) want to talk about is how we can help them improve their operating cost, and primarily fuel economy,” Jeff Jones, vice-president of sales and marketing communications said. “Whether you’re a fleet or owner/operator, the value of a percentage or two fuel economy improvement is a big number.”

He pointed out that a truck consuming 20,000 gallons of diesel per year stands to save about \$1,000 each year for every percentage that fuel economy can be improved.

Charlton said the work Cummins has done to date on its in-cylinder

solution, has not been a wasted effort. Cummins 2010 engines with SCR will still use EGR, although smaller amounts of exhaust will be recirculated. This will result in less heat rejection, he explained.

The base engine will remain the same and Cummins will continue to offer a full range of horsepower ratings, he stressed.

However, plans to introduce a 16-litre ISX have been shelved, since Charlton said the company no longer needs the higher-displacement engine to meet all the horsepower ratings it intends to offer.

Charlton also pointed out that Cummins won’t be playing catch-up, since it has already been developing an SCR solution for its mid-range line, and has about 200,000 units with SCR already in use in other parts of the world. In fact, a division of the company – Cummins

Emission Solutions – is already in the business of designing and building SCR systems.

Recently, Cummins inked a deal with Daimler Trucks North America which would provide customers with an alternative to SCR. However, company officials are not concerned they will lose ground due to their decision to change paths. Pence said Cummins will continue to differentiate itself based on quality and service, if not technology.

“Differentiation comes in a lot of different forms...it’s not necessarily defined by what technology you use versus what other people are using,” said Pence.

He noted that Cummins has gained market share in both the mid-range and heavy-duty market segments since the launch of EPA07 product line, despite the fact all manufacturers employ a similar

architecture.

“Differentiation with the 07 product line was defined on the customer side by performance, reliability, durability and how we support our customers and OEM partners with our product,” he added.

When Cummins first rejected the idea of adopting SCR, it was partly due to concerns about the availability of urea. However, Jones pointed out a truck will run at least 6,000 miles before its urea tank runs dry. Visible and audible warnings will give drivers plenty of notice, as per EPA requirements.

Cummins officials say they are already working with their OEM partners to ensure they are ready to roll by January, 2010.

The company says it is already field-testing some engines with SCR and will be conducting cold-weather testing this winter. □



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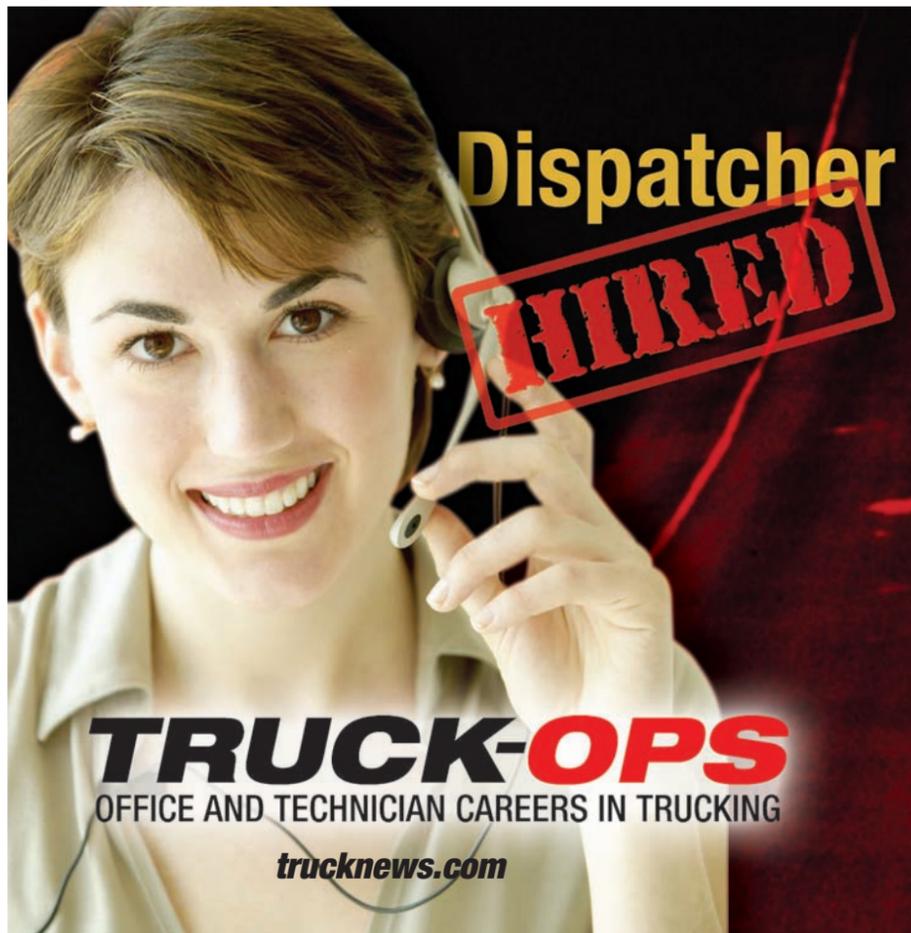


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OEM/DEALER NEWS

Volvo launches fuel management program for fleet customers

DALLAS, Texas – Volvo has launched a new fuel economy program, which takes a four-pronged approach to maximizing fuel efficiency.

Fuelwatch focuses on: vehicle spec'ing; maintenance; performance monitoring; and driver training in an effort to help fleets optimize the fuel-efficiency of their equipment. While the company has always assisted customers in properly spec'ing and maintaining their trucks, the Fuelwatch program goes a step further and will also address driver behaviour. Beginning in early 2009, Volvo will have driver-trainers available to educate fleets and their drivers on how to maximize fuel mileage through fuel-efficient driving techniques. The program is being targeted towards small- and mid-sized

fleets, which may not have the resources to assign a staff member to driver training.

“Our customers are telling us ‘I want Volvo to give me the most fuel-efficient truck possible. We need every bit of help we can get’ to survive the escalation in diesel prices,” Scott Kress, senior vice-president of sales and marketing, said at the Great American Trucking Show. “But we realized we can give them far more than the truck. Fuelwatch is our way to bring Volvo’s deep knowledge of fuel economy to customers in a way that delivers these benefits throughout the entire life and operation of their trucks.”

The four elements of Fuelwatch include:

Proper spec'ing: Volvo dealers will work with customers using the company’s Predictor software tool to select the most fuel-efficient spec’s for the job. Factors such as terrain, desired cruise speed, loads and applications will all be taken into consideration, the company says.

Maintenance: Once the truck’s on the road, Fuelwatch will help customers keep up with scheduled preventive maintenance. The company says improper wheel alignment and neglected fuel and cooling systems can each reduce a truck’s fuel efficiency by up to 3%. Volvo also says air system losses can account for another 4% reduction in fuel mileage. Fuelwatch will also involve reprogramming the engine power ratings to match changes in application.

Monitoring performance: Volvo Link and Sentry will provide fleet managers with information that allows them to monitor and measure their results, according to the company. Eventually, logged vehicle data (LVD) will allow a fleet manager to compare the performance of his trucks against an industry-wide benchmark which draws on the data of the entire population of similarly-spec'd trucks.

Driver development: It’s been said that the driver can swing fuel economy up to 30% in either direction. Volvo says its driver-trainers will provide hands-on training sessions beginning next year. The company also offers tips through its in-dash display, which uses icons that advise a driver to adjust his behaviour when required.

“We think the days of inexpensive fuel are over, and the trucking industry must adapt to this new reality,” Kress said. “Fuelwatch is not a switch that fleets can throw or a part they can bolt on a truck. This is a partnership between Volvo, our customers and our dealers involving a comprehensive approach to improving fuel economy tailored to the individual customer.”

Volvo officials at the Great American Trucking Show said there’d be a charge for the driver training component of the program.

“It’s a nominal fee and one that will pay back many, many times,” said Kress.

Owner/operators can also take advantage of the training, however it will only be offered to groups, the company said. □

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Navistar premieres trucking film to showcase LoneStar

By James Menzies

DALLAS, Texas – A film that showcases the International LoneStar as well as the truckers who drive it premiered to a packed theatre at the Great American Trucking Show in August.

The 45-minute *Drive and Deliver*, produced by Academy Award-nominated director Brett Morgen, documents the lives of three American truckers as they made the inaugural deliveries hauled by a prototype International LoneStar.

“One of the goals of the film is to showcase truck drivers as a vital and proud breed of the American workforce,” said Al Saltiel, vice-president of marketing for International’s parent company, Navistar. “It chronicles three truck drivers, in varying stages in life, yet all passionate about their profession and the role they play in the economy.”

More than 700 truck drivers were interviewed for the roles, with three being selected. They included: Steve Donaldson, a 58-year-old owner/operator with a real passion for trucking; Tim Young, a family man from Alabama; and Chris LeCount, a karaoke-singing trucker from Goshen, Ind. The film follows them on the road as they cope with the daily grind faced by today’s professional drivers.

In a press conference prior to the premiere, Morgen said “I’m a big

fan of westerns and a big fan of cowboys and to me, truckers sort of personified that part of American mythology.”

He accompanied each of the drivers on the road as they made real-life deliveries, and spent countless hours interviewing them in what he called the “floating confessional box.” The film was shot using four cameras: one aboard a helicopter; one inside the cab; another strategically set up at scenic locations; and another in a car that would follow or lead the LoneStar, sometimes shooting from as little as four-inches from its front bumper as they rolled down the highway.

For Morgen, it was the first time he travelled the country by truck, which he said was an eye-opening experience – especially having to dine on truck stop food every day.

The truckers, salt-of-the-earth-type guys, said being involved in a film shoot took some getting used to. Morgen said “These guys are all used to being their own boss and now there’s a film crew there and they’re not alone. We had to get certain shots now and again, and they’re not used to people telling them what to do.”

“I never had a boss, and all of a sudden I had 30 bosses,” Donaldson added.

Morgen admitted he got off to a rocky start with Donaldson, but they worked out their differences

after enough time spent together in the cab.

While the film showcased the call of the open road and featured breathtaking scenery, it didn’t sugar-coat the real-life challenges faced by today’s owner/operators.

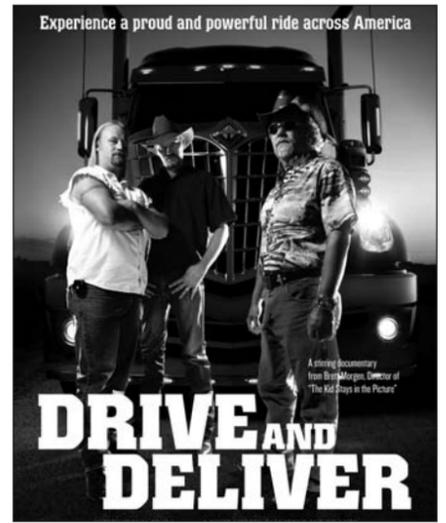
“I think people think of us as second-class citizens,” Donaldson told trucking media before the showing. “There are people who literally lay their lives down on the road to make sure people get their groceries the next day. Without us out here, the world would stand still – but we’re the most discriminated people out there.”

The fourth star of the film was the International LoneStar itself. While Morgen said Navistar gave him carte blanche in determining how much – or little – of the LoneStar to show, the truck featured prominently in the film.

The distinct-looking retro-style tractor turned plenty of heads on the road and prompted a lot of inquiries from other drivers. “It was a love-fest everywhere we went,” said Morgen.

The truckers in the film said they also fell in love with the truck.

“At first, I was skeptical of the truck,” admitted Donaldson. “I wondered ‘What’s this going to cost me to fix?’ But I fell instantly in love with that truck, especially the front air suspension with the torsion bar. I’ve never had a truck handle like that.”



FILM DEBUT: Chris LeCount, Tim Young and Steve Donaldson (L-R) star in the film *Drive and Deliver*.

He said he parked alongside the highway in the desert one night, lit up the chicken lights and slept on the ground next to the rig.

The film itself, shot at a cost of about \$3 million, will be released on DVD in early October.

It will be available for purchase online at www.international-trucks.com/shop and through online retailers such as Amazon.com.

A portion of the proceeds will go towards an American Trucking Associations program that matches military veterans with jobs in the trucking industry.

To view the trailer and find out more about the film, visit www.internationaltrucks.com/film. □

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TMTV

Mack touts disc brakes

...And dispels some myths about the product

By James Menzies

DALLAS, Texas – Mack Trucks was at the Great American Trucking Show in August, highlighting the recent availability of air disc brakes and dispelling some myths about the product.

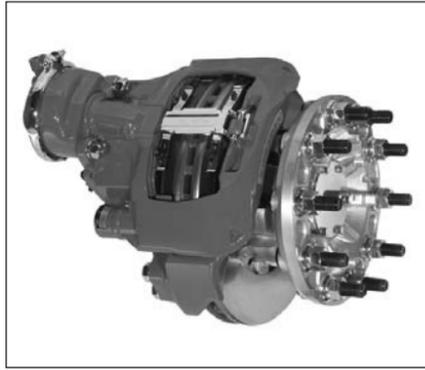
Jerry Warmkessel of Mack Trucks said there has been a lot of interest in disc brakes, especially with new stopping distance requirements under development by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

He said disc brakes can stop a truck 20-30% sooner than drum brakes, adding “The faster the truck is going, the more effective disc brakes are.”

However, he admitted customers still express concerns about the cost of disc brakes as well as the increased weight. Addressing the weight issue, Warmkessel said while disc brakes weigh slightly more than today’s drum brakes, they are actually lighter than the larger drum brakes that will be required to meet the impending shortened stopping distances.

Equipping a tractor with today’s disc brakes can save 158 lbs versus the larger drum brakes that will be required to meet the new stopping distance requirements, Warmkessel explained.

Specifically, a tractor with 16.5”x5” drums on the front and 16.5”x8.6” drums on the drive axles will carry 1,594 lbs in brake weight while the same truck with the ADB22X disc brake from Bendix on the front and rear axles will carry only 1,436 lbs, for a net



WORTH A LOOK?: Mack officials claim the latest disc brakes offer advantages over drums.

savings of 158 lbs.

Opting for the disc brake on the front axle only can still save a truck owner 47 lbs, Warmkessel said.

He said that disc brakes also result in less maintenance, a more user-friendly passenger car-type feel, improved stability while stopping and they are not subject to brake fade.

Warmkessel said one customer has found that 90% of its trucks equipped with disc brakes had the same pads on them at 600,000 miles.

As far as cost is concerned, Warmkessel admitted they are more expensive than drums, with the OEs setting the price. However, he added “In the long run, it’s well worth the value added by the products.”

Air disc brakes are currently available on Mack trucks with 12,000-lb front and 40,000-lb rear axles.

“We will be working up to the heavier axles as customer demand increases,” Warmkessel said. □

‘The faster the truck is going, the more effective the disc brakes are.’

Jerry Warmkessel, Mack



IT'S BACK: Hino hosted a recent ride-and-drive to showcase the return of its cabover engine. The Model 155 COE has a tight turning radius and excellent visibility compared to conventional-styled trucks.

Photo by James Menzies

Hino returns to COE roots

By James Menzies

TORONTO, Ont. – Hino held a ride-and-drive event here recently to re-introduce customers to its cabover engine (COE) 155.

Hino abandoned the cabover design in favour of the conventional-styled appearance in 2004, opening the door to competitors such as Isuzu and Sterling, who stepped in with COE offerings of their own. Now, Hino says it’s back in the cabover market and will continue to also offer its conventional-styled medium-duty trucks.

“We’re back to re-claim this market,” national sales manager, Brad Sproule announced at the event.

The Hino Model 155 COE is available in four wheelbases and with a gross vehicle weight (GVW) of 14,700 lbs. Hino officials say the lightweight design of the 155 gives it one of the greatest payload capacities in its class.

Hino’s latest offering is powered

by its J-Series engine rated at up to 175 hp and 376 lb.-ft. of torque. It comes standard with an Aisin four-speed automatic transmission.

Sproule said the cabover will be marketed toward courier, food delivery, greenhouse and towing applications.

It’s ideal for city driving, with its tight turning radius (44.1” tighter than its conventional-styled counterpart, Hino says) and large windshield.

The 155 also comes with a standard engine brake which will extend service brake life, according to Sproule. Those service brakes are hydraulic disc brakes on both the front and rear axles.

The Hino 155 COE will be assembled at the company’s Woodstock, Ont. plant alongside the company’s full line of conventional-styled medium-duty trucks.

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New options announced for Western Star trucks

DALLAS, Texas – A new motor, a day cab conversion kit and new stainless steel accessories were all made available on Western Star trucks at the Great American Trucking Show.

Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) announced Western Star trucks will now be available with the Detroit Diesel DD15 engine under the hood. The DD15 is known for its instantaneous torque response and excellent fuel mileage, thanks in part to a technology called turbocompounding.

Turbocompounding turns normally wasted exhaust gas into reusable power, providing 50 ‘bonus’ horsepower, Detroit Diesel officials explain. Currently, it’s only available on the DD15. Turbocompounding combines with an Amplified Common Rail Fuel System (ACRS) to provide improved fuel mileage over the Series 60, the company says.

The DD15 also boasts excellent

torque, reaching 90% peak torque in just 1.5 seconds thanks to a turbocharger and dual overhead cams, according to Detroit Diesel. The DD15 will be available in horsepower ratings of 450-560 with 1,550-1,850 lb.-ft. of torque.

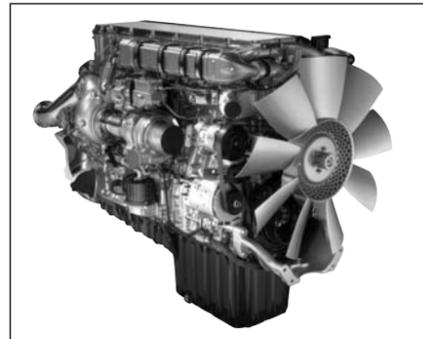
Also new to Western Star is a day cab conversion kit, which transforms trucks with a Stratosphere sleeper into a day cab.

The kit includes: a new overhead console; a new, reinforced roof cap; a new headliner; and a new back wall and trim panel as well as a rear window.

The company says the kit allows the conversion to take place while maintaining a distinct Western Star look.

It makes used Western Star highway trucks more practical for a second life in many vocational segments.

“Stratosphere sleeper owners are loyal to their trucks, so we wanted to make the trucks even



NEW POWER: Western Star trucks can now be ordered with the Detroit Diesel DD15.

more versatile,” said Richard Shearing, manager of product strategy with Western Star.

“Now owners can enjoy their trucks for new uses, or take advantage of the increased resale value that converting the trucks can provide.”

The conversion kit will soon be available for order through Western Star dealers, the company announced.

A new premium line of stainless

steel accessories was also introduced by Western Star at the Great American Trucking Show. The line includes more than 300 mirror-finish items specifically designed for Western Star.

“We are excited to offer our customers new stainless steel accessory options that match the premium quality of their Western Star truck,” said Angelique Deas, product manager for Western Star accessories. “Highly customizable for every design preference, we continue to meet our customer’s needs by enhancing our product offerings at every level.”

The accessories are constructed with high-quality non-magnetic 304 stainless steel, giving them corrosion resistant properties that even stand up to road salt and other anti-icing agents, the company claims.

The accessories will be available through Western Star dealers beginning in mid-October, the company says. □

Survival strategies

"In this type of environment and economy, if you don't plan to grow, you better plan to shrink,"

– Mark Seymour, Kriska

By James Menzies
KINGSTON, Ont. – Whether or not the US and Canadian economies are technically in recession has been the subject of much debate amongst economists. However, nobody that runs a trucking company needs an economist to tell them the transportation industry is coping with recessionary conditions.

Kriska president Mark Seymour summed up the industry's challenges at a recent Driving For Profit seminar (the third installment of a four-part series hosted by KRTS Transportation Specialists and NAL Insurance and sponsored by SelecTrucks).

The deflated US dollar has hurt cross-border carriers that are paid in US funds; the cost of fuel has reached record highs and for the first time has surpassed wages as a fleet's top operating expense; a shortage of qualified drivers remains an issue; unbalanced freight movements have created pricing challenges; and credit has become harder to obtain.

"All by themselves, these issues are big enough. But put them on top of one another and we have very difficult times," Seymour said.

Carrier bankruptcies south of the border have reached epic heights, with a truck population the size of all of B.C.'s wiped from the map. Here in Canada, recognizable names such as Al's Cartage have fallen victim in recent months and many other carriers continue to struggle for survival. However, Kriska's Seymour said there are steps fleets can take to not only survive, but prosper in a tough operating environment. It all starts with a plan.

Every year, Kriska develops a simple strategic plan. This year's plan is not unlike the ones devised in better times. It consists of an inverted triangle that features 'Service Excellence' at the top.

Service excellence

Seymour said it's important to ask customers what it is they want from your company and then to be sure to deliver it.

"We diligently follow a process of making sure we clearly know what our customers want, by asking them," he said. "If we assume we know what they want, we're putting that relationship and that business at risk."

By ensuring your company is living up to customer expectations, you protect yourself from some of the risks that are ever-present during tough times, especially rate-cutting.

"If your relationship with customers is based on price, it's a very fragile relationship," Seymour said. "It's only going to last until the next guy comes along and undercuts your rates."

Instead, Seymour said to focus on "value" when in discussions with customers.

"If you can stay away from the price conversation and talk about value proposition, you get away from comparing two numbers," he explained. "You don't want to get into a numbers war – it's too risky.

In an unsophisticated environment that's deregulated, with so many entrepreneurial wildcats out there, it's a war that you're potentially not going to win."

Business development

Second on Kriska's strategic plan is Business Development. That remains a priority for Kriska, even when most fleets are simply trying to survive, often downsizing in the process.

"In this type of environment and economy, if you don't plan to grow, you better plan to shrink," said Seymour. "Volume will be lost through attrition, customers will be lost through failure."

Downsizing is achieved through cost-cutting, which Seymour said creates an unhealthy environment. Instead, Kriska has positioned itself to grow during the current downturn, but that doesn't necessarily mean putting more trucks on the road.

"Our plan is not to grow in terms of adding trucks or adding trailers," explained Seymour. "Our plan is to grow by improving our asset utilization, improving revenue-per-mile and improving profitability. That's what growth means to Kriska this year."

Priority projects

The third item on Kriska's strategic plan is to establish priority projects. One of these involved making salespeople more accountable for retaining or developing new business.

"We know who's looking after what now," Seymour said. Under the new structure, Kriska's Paul Dean is responsible for retaining current customers while Seymour himself is charged with bringing in new business.

"He has a team, I have a team – there's no misunderstanding who is responsible for what," said

Seymour.

Meanwhile, Kriska also rolled out a new recruiting and retention strategy. Every employee must go on at least one run per year with a driver; drivers now have a driver service rep they can go to with problems; and exit interviews are now conducted with departing drivers.

Seymour said Kriska has also developed a hiring pipeline, so new drivers are constantly being developed, much like a farm system in a pro sports league.

"If you wait until your truck is unseated before you go looking for someone, you're reacting to the situation," Seymour said, adding it was much simpler back in the days when his father could just go down to the pool hall when he needed a driver. "It can be six weeks to six months before you turn somebody loose, so you better have a pipeline."

Fuel management

The current economic climate has necessitated other changes at Kriska as well, none greater than the need to reduce fuel consumption. In Kriska's case, that meant implementing strict speed and idle control initiatives.

"We have far more influence on consumption than we do cost (of fuel)," reasoned Seymour. "Fuel's our biggest cost. If we can reduce fuel by 2%, it's different than reducing toiler paper by 2%."

Kriska limits the speed of its company-owned trucks and is equipping the fleet with auxiliary power units (APUs) to reduce idling.

Since implementing these measures, Kriska has improved its fleet fuel mileage to 7.71 mpg while decreasing its idle-time from 40% to just 8%. Seymour said the company lays out its fuel economy expectations and requires its drivers

to comply.

"We don't reward for it, it's a condition of employment," he said.

On the operations side, fleets must continue to pass increased fuel costs on to the shipper, Seymour noted.

"If you have a bad fuel surcharge, it's your own fault," he said, without much sympathy. "You brought it on with undisciplined decisions along the way. You can't blame your competitor. The reality is, it's your problem. The person you blame for causing it is not going to be there to help you fix it."

When you've priced with discipline, you stand a better chance of making customers accept any necessary rate adjustments down the road, Seymour said. He pointed out southbound rates from Ontario/Quebec to Pennsylvania have dropped from \$2.85/mile in January, 2007 to \$2.35/mile in March, 2008.

"We gave back 50 cents to the market," he said. "You have got to go back to your customers and you gotta get it back."

The only way to do that is to support your position with accurate data and charts, which clearly show a customer why a rate adjustment is required, Seymour explained.

"If you show them a picture that they trust, then it's worth 1,000 words: 'You need to give me a rate increase and this is why.'"

Empower your people

Kriska has also turned to technology to find ways of empowering its employees to make real-time decisions that help the fleet become more efficient. It has a dashboard of sorts, called 'Results Now', which displays in real-time key figures such as: revenue-per-mile; miles-per-unit; empty mile percentage; truck revenue-per-day; and about a dozen other items.

Beside each item is the company's target number as well as the real-time figure for each unit. Dispatchers and other employees in operations are urged to monitor those numbers, and make adjustments as required to bring the number back on target.

According to Seymour, it's much more effective than having upper management react to data that's weeks – or even months – old before it even hits their desk. "Generally speaking, people care," he said.

"If you give them the tools, the goals, the information – there's a really good chance it's going to motivate them to make better decisions because they really do care."

While Kriska isn't immune to the current economic downturn, the company is able to weather the storm better than most, by developing, communicating and executing a simple strategic plan, Seymour surmised. Seymour and his co-host Len Anderson of KPMG Enterprise will present on this topic again at the next Driving for Profit seminar in Toronto, Oct. 21. To register, visit www.drivingforprofit.com. □



COMING TO TN.COM: Visit Trucknews.com for clips of Seymour's presentation in upcoming segments of our WebTV program Transportation Matters.

A new formula

Why revenue-per-mile can be misleading

By James Menzies

KINGSTON, Ont.— One of the keys to Kriska's success has been revisiting the way it measures profitability. Like most trucking companies, Kriska used to determine profitability using the traditional revenue-per-mile formula.

"We used revenue-per-mile until we saw what caused us to look elsewhere, when revenue-per-mile was going up and profit was going down," Kriska president Mark Seymour said at a recent Driving for Profit seminar, hosted by KRTS Transportation Specialists and NAL Insurance and sponsored by SelecTrucks. While Seymour said the traditional revenue-per-mile equation is a good place to start when measuring profitability, "It's not entirely right and it's not scientific."

Two to three years ago, Kriska set out to find a tool that would allow the carrier to measure profitability in a more sophisticated manner.

"Revenue-per-mile is not dynamic enough, it doesn't include variable costs," Seymour explained. "If you're going from A to B and they pay you \$500 and somebody else pays you \$600, one would think the

guy paying \$600 is better. But that's not true if it takes you twice as long to do the \$600 transaction."

With equipment routinely being detained by shippers and other delays encountered along the way, Seymour said Kriska needed to find a way to incorporate 'time lost' into the equation.

"Time has a value to it and a cost," he said. "If it takes you twice as long to do something, it needs to be identified in the cost. Revenue-per-mile

does not drill down to cost. Toronto-to-Montreal is very simple, it should take seven or eight hours to facilitate that transaction. If, thanks to the shippers at either end, it takes you four days, that needs to be calculated into the rate."

Kriska found a software solution called Netwise, which helped the company measure 'Yield,' the combination of all the margins along a full truckload trip.

For instance on a run from Kingston to Boston that pays \$1,500 there and \$600 back, there is a positive margin on the headhaul and a negative margin on the backhaul.

The 'yield' focuses on the net margin after the entire trip, including subsequent deliveries.

"You need that (\$600) price in the

middle to generate two very positive margins on either side," Seymour explained. "You need to minimize your negative margins, lower them, and improve your positive margins and the net effect of that is you're improving your yield. Yield measures the combination of margins so you don't just deal with the wide swings in rates."

For years, the southbound trip was what generated the positive margins, with many carriers taking a hit on the backhaul. The rise of the Canadian dollar (and the fall of its US counterpart) has reversed that trend, Seymour said. However, the principle remains the same and there are times when it's necessary to offer discount rates to get where you need to go. Seymour suggested that carriers refrain from accusing other fleets of rate-cutting when they may simply be taking a holistic approach to pricing.

"Do you know what they're doing with their truck after (the initial delivery)?" he asked. "They need to get there to get the big margin coming back. It may appear to a competitor that we've priced something very undisciplined, but that's how we price it. We may price it very low if it gets us where we need to go because from there, we're priced very high."

In the end, said Seymour, shifting focus from revenue-per-mile to yield, has allowed Kriska to better achieve the one item that matters most: profit. □

Keys to survival:

Kriska president Mark Seymour offers the following tips on how to survive in recessionary times:

- **Stay true to your corporate culture:** "Every organization has a culture and that is something that has been crafted and developed over a long time. When things get tough, you don't want to tinker with your culture and you don't want to get away from your core values. Make sure you're always in a position to defend what you're doing, against someone who may say you're compromising your core values and principles."
- **Continue investing:** "Don't stop investing in the business or the people will see it. You have to continue to demonstrate and show a degree of optimism and a degree of confidence. If you get down, depressed and pessimistic and start showing those cracks and signs of weakness, it's going to put your business at risk."
- **Prepare for recovery:** "Everything that goes down, eventually goes up. Think strategically and position yourself for recovery." □

Fuel bonus: Fuel efficiency training reaps safety benefits

By Jan Westell

GREEN BAY, Wis.— There may be a silver lining to the high cost of fuel that the transportation industry is presently coping with. Fleets such as Schneider National are experiencing safety and environmental benefits as a result of their quest to improve driver fuel efficiency.

Schneider has trained approximately 1,000 drivers in fuel management, and its vice-president of safety and driver training Don Osterberg says the company has reaped a 0.2 mpg improvement since the training. Osterberg explains that when the company monitors the mpg performance of its fleet, it also recognizes that different applications will have a different mean and median mpg result.

"So if you're a local operator doing a lot of metropolitan driving, they'll have a different mpg profile than the over-the-road fleet," he says. Schneider National has done a great deal of analysis on its fleet's mpg improvement. The company lists its drivers from the best mpg performers to the worst. As fuel prices continued to go up, Schneider identified its 1,000 worst drivers for mpg.

"With that group, we've actually measured and have seen a sustained improvement of about 0.2 mpg," says Osterberg. "While that sounds like a small number, when you look across our fleet and the number of miles that we drive, the 0.2 improvement represents a dramatic reduction in our fuel costs. We've been very pleased with that."

Part of the training program involves the use of a simulator. Osterberg says new and experienced drivers were required to spend

about 15 hours on the simulator, developing fuel-efficient driving techniques. If Schneider National used a conventional truck, that exercise would require about 2.2 gallons per hour of fuel for each student, which amounts to about 34 gallons the company saves per student trained.

"Just using simulation as opposed to putting the drivers' over-the-road for those 15 hours, has saved us almost a million gallons of fuel in the two-and-a-half years that we have been using simulation," he says.

"We burn less fuel when we're training with simulators versus in an actual truck. And the training that we conduct on fuel management has also yielded additional fuel savings for us."

Osterberg says that fuel management training by simulation "is one of those gifts that keep on giving" since the company is not only reducing the amount of fuel that it burns, but also reducing its carbon footprint.

"So we're really serving, not only the financial benefit of the organization by reducing fuel consumption and fuel cost, but we also have the second positive effect of reducing harmful emissions to the environment. So this is kind of a classic win/win from our perspective," says Osterberg. The safety and driver training specialist advises that there are a few key ways to improve fuel mileage. First, Osterberg recommends that drivers carefully spec' and understand their equipment, matching the engines and transmissions for ideal shifting.

"You train your drivers to shift in that optimal torque range," he suggests.

But while equipment spec's are an

important part of fuel management training, driver behaviour is also a consideration. Schneider recently reduced the maximum speed of its fleet, and speed measurement is now a component of the drivers' bonus program. While there's a number of key tenants to fuel management, Osterberg says the number one thing a driver can do to improve fuel consumption is to slow down.

Slowing down has also produced some impressive safety benefits.

"So far this year to date, we've had 11.43% fewer preventable accidents per million miles than we had last year," says Osterberg.

The company has enjoyed other impressive safety achievements attributed to its fuel management strategy. One of those is what the safety and driver training department calls its "preventable major accident frequency." Those are accidents that have either serious injury, fatality, or monetary exposure worth greater than \$100,000.

"We've had 59.4% fewer preventable major accidents than we had last year," says Osterberg.

Further, Schneider National has achieved: 32.56% fewer lane change accidents than a year ago; 50% fewer rollovers; and 25.29% fewer rear-end collisions.

"Let's face it, there are multiple things that contribute to that," says Osterberg. "Certainly reducing speed helps. Reduced congestion by virtue of there is less traffic helps. The sum of all those things yields the results that I just summarized, but we're certainly seeing improved safety."

Schneider National did another analysis that strongly supports a cor-

relation between fuel management and safety. The safety and driver education department compared its best 100 drivers with its worst 100 drivers, for mpg efficiency. Its best 100 drivers for mpg had 37% fewer accidents than the company's worst 100 mpg drivers. The company expanded this study to another level and compared its best 500 drivers with its worst 500 drivers for mpg. The best mpg drivers had an accident rate 23% lower than the bottom 500 drivers for mpg. The education department took the analysis to a third level, and examined the 1,000 best drivers for mpg versus its 1,000 worst drivers, and the best drivers had a 21% lower accident rate.

"I know that driving behaviour manifests itself in multiple ways," says Osterberg. "But suffice it to say, if you can improve the mpg of your fleet, you will have an ancillary positive benefit of reducing crash rates with that group of drivers. So, there's a multiplier in terms of the benefit that goes beyond fuel cost itself, (including) environmental impacts and it really penetrates into the safety realm as well."

The safety and driver training specialist is obviously pleased with the company's fuel management strategy, but Osterberg enjoys even greater personal satisfaction with the improvements the company has achieved with its safety record, especially a reduction in traffic incidents.

"In this business one is too many," he says. "One accident, one injury is too many and we strive for a goal of zero and we work hard toward that. But when you're talking about double-digit improvement year-over-year, yes I'm delighted with that." □

Now what?

Owner/operators who can't survive the downturn find few places to turn for alternative career options.

By Jan Westell

BARRIE, Ont. – The high cost of fuel is taking its toll on owner/operators, causing many to look at careers outside trucking. However, a shortage of programs to assist them with the transition has left some truckers feeling trapped.

Alternative career opportunities are slim, says the wife of one Ontario-based owner/operator, who in the past regularly hauled general freight to Quebec. Tobi and Kevin Johnson are now struggling to maintain their small trucking business, but if that fails there seems to be few opportunities available for a 43-year-old truck driver. Tobi says that employed workers in other industries might be laid off, but they have access to federally-funded unemployment insurance – and the associated government services, such as retraining programs and job placement – that are designed to get workers back into the job market.

“Well, put that mindset to our owner/operators,” says the mother of four. “They too have limited ‘talents’ pertaining only to their job.”

Tobi says working conditions are not favourable for today's owner/operators, who must cope with an erratic workday, often without scheduled breaks or meals. While regulations are in place dictating the number of hours truck drivers can work in a day, Tobi says they are often ignored in order to meet delivery schedules and pay the mortgage.

“Well let me say that (those HoS) regulations are put on the back burner,” she says.

Tobi points out that an unskilled worker, like those who work in a factory, may get a pink slip informing them about an upcoming layoff, while owner/operators are “lucky to get a 24-hour courtesy call.”

When that happens, she says owner/operators often find themselves potentially defaulting on their truck payments, losing an expensive rig to creditors. Johnson suggests the future looks bleak for those who are driven out of business due to high fuel costs, and O/Os should be prepared to face a tough reality.

“We are scared,” she says.

Her husband has been in the trucking business for 22 years, and before that her father-in-law was in the same business, but was unskilled for any other job beyond driving. The elder Johnson died recently, and at his funeral, Tobi was surprised to talk to many others from the same industry with a similar problem. Those friends of the family had experienced the same fate: suffering from an economic downturn, with high fuel prices and now facing an uncertain future with no other skills to fall back on.

“It's a tough lifestyle,” says the owner/operator's wife, who attributes the present challenges to the many expenses associated with the business – especially the fuel bill, which can't be delayed.

“The cost of fuel is killing owner/operators,” she laments.

Owner/operators don't necessarily benefit from a fuel surcharge either, she points out. That's an add-on levied by the carrier that sometimes only benefits the company the O/O is driving for.

While the Johnsons say that they have a great relationship with their company's creditor, there is no leeway about deferral of loans. Last year, Tobi worked full-time just to make the truck payments. “It's such a big expense.”

Her husband is only 43, but with one skill: truck driving, and no alternative prospects. The family has obvious concerns. “For us, it's just devastating,” she says.

Joanne Ritchie, executive director of the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada (OBAC), say she has never given much thought to the issue of retraining O/Os.

“It's usually the other way around, trying to get funding for training for those who want to get into the business, not for those seeking retraining because they've left,” says Ritchie.

Ritchie indicates that education and training are under the jurisdiction of provincial governments, although many of their programs receive federal funding through Labour Market Agreements, funded by HRSDC (now Service Canada). Ritchie speculates that the sticking point is possibly not lack of funding for truck drivers, but rather lack of retraining for owner/operators, due to their status as self-employed business people rather than company drivers or employees.

As for financial hardships during these tough economic times, Ritchie says she's heard many stories about owner/ops going under, but doesn't personally know any whose businesses have actually failed. She has, however, talked to many O/Os who have considered packing it in.

“I also know owner/operators who have parked their trucks, temporarily, and taken jobs as company drivers. There may still be a truck payment to make, but if the truck is sitting still, there are no other operating costs,” she says.

On the flip side, Ritchie also knows many owner/ops who are actually “doing quite well,” especially with shippers willing to pay appropriate fuel surcharges.

“The key is, of course, that these owner/ops are already running efficient businesses, know their costs to



WHERE TO TURN?: Some owner/operators struggle to discover life after trucking when all else fails.

the penny, and aren't moving freight that doesn't pay,” she says. “They are usually those who also have a solid customer base, or work for a carrier who has, and are able to show their customers the numbers that justify increased rates and higher fuel surcharges. But ‘doing quite well’ is relative; no one is rolling in dough. Costs are up and profits are down, but at least the good ones are still able to cover their costs.”

As for what Ritchie refers to as the “reprehensible practice of carriers collecting a fuel surcharge from their customers, and not passing it on,” the OBAC executive director, acknowledges that it happens.

“Or sometimes the carrier doesn't collect a fuel surcharge, which means they can undercut the fair market rate because they can still get

the owner/operators to take the hit. Even in today's market, there are carriers out there telling their owner/ops that the customers won't pay a fuel surcharge. I find this hard to believe. Even a year or so ago when fuel was half the price it is today, surveys indicated that the vast majority of shippers were paying fuel surcharges,” adds Ritchie.

“If the carrier can afford to haul the freight today without a fuel surcharge, are we to infer that their profits were skyrocketing when fuel and other costs were much lower? I don't think so.”

Ritchie corrects one bit of misinformation about surcharges, that “there is some kind of law that requires a carrier to pass on fuel surcharges they collect,” which she says is simply not the case.

“The only protection small business truckers have from this and other unscrupulous business practices, is their own business smarts. No one is forcing them to haul the freight. Again, it all comes down to knowing their costs, and refusing to haul freight that doesn't pay what they need. That said, they need to make sure their costs are realistic. No one is going to pay more to compensate them for inefficiencies, like poor fuel economy.”

Ritchie says she also hears from carriers who claim they're losing loads to rate-cutting competitors, so it's not just owner/ops who are struggling. However, she says carriers who are slashing rates get away with it because they're able to find someone willing to get behind the wheel and move the freight.

“As long as we continue to keep a big pool of cheap labour out there, we're keeping the bad apples in business.”

Ritchie recently discussed trucking bankruptcies with government officials who indicated Industry Canada insolvency stats aren't as high in trucking as suspected. “I pointed out that not everyone who

goes out of business declares bankruptcy, so this probably isn't a true picture of who is leaving the industry,” she says.

Linda Gauthier, executive director of the Canadian Trucking Human Resources Council, indicates that funds for training can be found in any province through community programs that offer skills development, employment opportunities, and other services.

“Most of the funds that are available may be targeted to help employers train their employees, but I believe there is potentially some small business funding available through the economic development offices in the provinces,” says Gauthier. “A lot depends on the type of retraining that is required, and which province you are in. Each province is deciding on how to help the workforce remain skilled and efficient.”

Service Canada does offer employment programs across the country, but as Johnson attests, “the skills development program provides a negotiated amount of financial support for skills training to Employment Insurance-eligible individuals,” according to the federal government's Web site on this topic. However Service Canada does offer other employment programs to the general population. □

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‘The cost of fuel is killing owner/operators.’

Tobi Johnson

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Fuel prices drive increased interest in fuel-efficient driving

By Jan Westell

SURREY, B.C. – Fuel management is a hot topic these days, and commercial driving programs are now featuring courses for professional drivers on how to improve their driving skills and save money.

Mountain Transport Institute (MTI), based in two B.C. locations – Castlegar (in the mountains), and Surrey (in the city) – has had a great demand for fuel management driver training, which has been designed for experienced drivers, as opposed to new drivers.

“They’ve been on the road for awhile,” explains MTI Surrey instructor, David Lush, who oversees a number of professional driving courses including training for winter driving and extreme road conditions.

“They may have developed some complacencies,” he adds. “They get a bit indifferent with their driving, instead of staying focused. It’s like taking a dull knife out of the drawer, and then sharpening it up. When they leave here, they’ve got a pretty good grip on what’s really expected of them as a professional driver.”

The professional courses have three parts, which include: instructor-led training; computer-based training; and finally simulator-based training. At the outset, Lush discusses the necessity of a positive mental attitude, which allows



REFRESHER: Mountain Transport Institute’s fuel management training is intended for experienced drivers who may benefit from a refresher course.

for a greater alertness to the status of the mechanical condition of the vehicle.

Second, the driver needs to pay more attention to those factors that increase or decrease fuel consumption.

Third, the driver needs to apply driving techniques that use fuel more efficiently, he says.

The students also learn about progressive shifting, proper RPM, pedal management, throttle control and the disadvantages of idling.

When the student moves into the simulator, any manner of obstacle, such as police cars, snowplows or other tractor-trailers, can be placed in the driver’s path to practically teach them fuel management techniques.

Lush may also expose the driver to wind, snow and ice from the computer control station, where the instructor can easily observe the student’s simulated driving. After that exercise, the professional driver gets a report card on his skill level, by way of a print-out.

Lush emphasizes to the student that the simulator is designed around decision-making, in this case fuel management.

“I point out to the guys that driver skill levels affect fuel by up to 35%,” says Lush, who adds that the annual savings in fuel is particularly impressive.

“For most drivers, their fuel bill runs about \$100,000 a year. If I

can save them 5%, that’s \$5,000 and that’s a vacation for them and their wife and kids to go to Disneyland or whatever, by just watching their speed, shifting properly, pedal management – what I call throttle control – no idling, and so on.”

Andy Roberts, the president and owner of MTI, is promoting the program to carriers, as well as the concept of maintaining on-going professional development for truck drivers.

Many professionals in other industries are required to complete a certain amount of professional upgrading every year, in order to maintain a professional designation, he says.

That may be attending conferences, taking courses, or whatever the profession requires.

By promoting professional development within the trucking industry, Roberts indicates that a well-trained driver can offer many economic benefits to a transport company.

“In our industry, the driver of a truck is the one person that has the single biggest impact on the profitability of that truck. Yet we have very high expectations of those people, and we put them into very challenging situations, whether it’s working longer hours than the average person, (or) working in severe conditions, depending on the time of year. Yet we expect them to perform flawlessly,” he points out.

“As an industry, and I shouldn’t say everybody, but a lot of people in this industry don’t ever give a second thought to the fact that they don’t help these people continually upgrade and maintain their professional status.”

For more information on the program, visit www.drivemti.com. □

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Q2 a mixed bag for public fleets

TORONTO, Ont. – Contrans Income Fund credits its diversity for its ability to post strong Q2 financial results in the face of a challenging operating environment. The company posted net earnings of \$10.2 million for the three-month period ending June 30, compared to \$1.5 million in the same period of 07. The six-month period resulted in a profit of \$15.2 million compared to \$9.6 million in the first half of last year.

“Contrans’ solid second quarter results are largely attributable to management’s ability to react quickly and effectively to changing market conditions,” said Stan Dunford, chairman and CEO of Contrans Income Fund. “In recent years we have acquired companies that have customer bases that are less susceptible to economic downturns. This has added to an already diverse customer base, something that has always made Contrans unique in the freight transportation industry.”

The company’s van segment was not immune to the economic slowdown, however. Van operations saw a \$6.3 million revenue decline in Q2 and for the six-month period, van revenue dropped \$11.5 million compared to 07.

Trimac down

Trimac Income Fund suffered a drop in net earnings and revenue during the second quarter and first half of 2007. Revenue for the second quarter was down \$1.2 million compared to the same period a year earlier, but net earnings for the quarter dropped from \$7.9 million to \$2.6 million. In the first half of 08, Trimac’s profit fell from \$9.4 million to \$3.2 million.

Trimac reported its total loads hauled declined due to reduced demand, however, volumes remained relatively strong in Western Canada.

“The bulk trucking operations experienced some reduction in customer demand translating into reduced loads hauled and lower profitability,” explained Jeffrey McCaig, chairman, president and CEO of Trimac. “Fuel surcharges in the current period increased by \$5.1 million or 55% over the prior period. This increase in revenue is primarily a cost recovery. When prior period one-time events are considered, consolidated net earnings are very similar to 2007 for the current period.”

McCaig said the company foresees “the continuation of the current operating environment” as it looks ahead.

Clarke remains profitable

Clarke Inc. saw its profits drop in the second quarter and first half of 2008, but its principal freight subsidiaries remained profitable, the company reported.

Overall, Clarke reported a Q2 net income of \$12.4 million, down from \$28.1 million over the same period last year. However, Clarke Transport and Clarke Road Transport “performed well despite a challenging operating environment characterized by rising fuel costs,” the company claimed. □

MacKinnon re-ups with PeopleNet

GUELPH, Ont. – MacKinnon Transport has inked a three-year extension with PeopleNet, which provides its mobile communications and fleet management systems. The 250-truck operation said it has realized significant savings since partnering with PeopleNet in 2000.

“We have been a PeopleNet customer since 2000, and everything that PeopleNet promised has always come through,” said Rick Miller, vice-president of operations for MacKinnon. “We have resigned for another three years.”

Miller said MacKinnon was able to save \$200,000 in fuel costs by using PeopleNet’s systems to monitor and reduce fleet idling time. The company also tracks driver performance using PeopleNet’s PerformX and then shares the data with them to help them reduce

their fuel consumption.

“We give them the ground rules first, and we don’t try to be Big Brother. We give them the benchmark, and they see in their truck if they are meeting the goal,” Miller said.

MacKinnon is now upgrading to the G3 system and it will deploy in-cab driver navigation systems to reduce out-of-route miles, Miller said. Meanwhile, it is also moving towards in-cab scanning, which it hopes will take four days off the traditional billing cycle to help with cash flow.

“When our trucks are spread out across the country it takes them an average of five days to get the paperwork back to us,” he explained. “Our fleet was a beta tester for PeopleNet In-Cab Scanning. We’ve seen it, we’ve used it, and it works,” Miller added. □

Schneider named top carrier

GREEN BAY, Wis. – Schneider National has been named the 2008 Carrier of the Year for Georgia-Pacific LLC. The award recognizes exceptional transportation services and is offered to carriers who haul at least 2,000 loads each year for the company.

Schneider National earned Georgia-Pacific’s recognition as a result of its performance, including on-time delivery, trailer pool, customer delivery communication, growth, ease in doing business, capacity, equipment quality and sustainability initiatives.

Georgia-Pacific has been recognizing carriers at its Carrier Recognition Conference for over 15 years. This year Schneider, who is Georgia-Pacific’s largest volume carrier, was selected as the award recipient over 70 other carriers. □

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Speed limiters mean fewer stops at Timmy's

Dear Editor:

I can not help but add my comments about the legislation of speed limiters. I consider myself to be relatively green as a driver.

I have driven long-haul since 2000. In that short time I have travelled Canada from coast to coast

and all of the mainland US, with the exception of Alaska. All the trucks I have driven were limited to 64 mph.

In my opinion, the difference between 100 km/h and 115 km/h is a few less stops at Timmy's.

It is the story of the tortoise and the hare. Many times I have left the yard, headed west on the 401 to

Toronto and have been passed two or three times by the same truck. In my travels I have found that driving a 64 mph truck in a state or province that has a higher speed limit to be no problem. As a last thought I would like to comment on an article in your August issue written by Joanne Ritchie. In her article she quotes a study made by the University of Waterloo.

She quotes the study as stating that trucks with speed limiters would cause a "reduction in safety."

The question that comes to my mind is this: If the speed limit on the QEW is 100 km/h what leap of logic brings someone to the conclusion that trucks slowed by limiters to 105 km/h (5 km/h above the speed limit) could cause a "reduction in safety."

A reduction in safety is not caused by those doing the speed limit.

A reduction in safety is caused by those who drive a phone booth for a vehicle, who do not know how to change lanes or merge, those who do not know what turn signals are and lastly those who think the fast lane belongs to them and speed limits are for everyone else.

The truth of the matter is this: By forcing the O/O to slow down, their productivity will be affected. And therefore their income. Period. Arguments about pros and cons of safety and costs are just excuses. □

Brian Reed
Mallorytown, Ont.

More on speed limiters

Dear Editor:

I first started in the transportation business in 1983 as a driver-trainer for a large school bus company. Since then I've been working as a director of safety for a large bulk TDG transport company.

I also served 15 years as a senior loss prevention representative for insurance companies. Since 2004 I have been a safety consultant with 20 clients in various areas of Ontario. I have a huge problem with the MTO and their speed limiter legislation. Any carrier today trying to survive fuel prices and the inflated costs of trucking has their fleet limited to 100 km/h.

I drove part-time for SLH Transport from 1989 to 2002 and all their company trucks were reduced to 95 km/h. We don't have a speeding problem in Ontario with large trucks. We have an enforcement problems not pulling over speeding trucks.

This speed limiter legislation is feel-good politics that does nothing to reduce bad driving behaviour.

It's time to get the OPP out on the road and pull over speeding trucks just like they do cars. □

Mark Richardson
Safety consultant

Dispelling the driver shortage myth

Dear Editor:

I read with interest, your recent column about the driver shortage. As a 27-year veteran of the trucking industry, it has been my personal challenge to expose this myth for what it is: smoke and mirrors – a myth perpetuated by our industry captains.

Is there actually a driver shortage, or simply an over-abundance of (PPF) poor paying freight? PPF in my opinion is responsible for the lack of entry-level employees in the transport industry – poor paying freight equals poorly paid drivers. Why would anyone want to join an industry that treats their employees this way?

Regulated to death, responsibility to no end and the average driver working 300 hours per month with no overtime pay and very little in the way of benefits, not even an auxiliary pension fund to contribute to.

Everything from poor pay to lack of parking contributes to the degradation of this industry and yet you don't hear the CTA, OTA or any other provincial association for that matter, saying a single word to our government about those issues. We are left on our own to contend with the never ending lack of services. There is not a driver shortage, there is a shortage of people applying for this crappy job. Importing drivers from around the world does nothing to address the root of the problem, it simply perpetuates the problem. □

Larry James Hall
The N.A. Truckers Guild
www.TheTruckersGuild.com

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Trailer Type Experience (check all that apply): Flatbed Heavy Hauling/Specialized Moving Van
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Current Drivers License: Do you have a Commercial License? Yes No
 License # _____ Exp. Date _____ Prov/State Issued _____ Type _____
 Has your license ever been suspended? Yes No Total Truck Driving Experience _____ /yrs
 Last Employer _____
 Name _____ Company City _____ Prov/State _____
 Tel _____ Start/End Date _____
 Job Description _____ Reason for Leaving _____

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Internet scammers can be found in the most unlikely of places

For years I've been receiving e-mails promising me a tonne-o-money if I helped someone a world away process his or her multi-million dollar inheritance.

The various Internet rip-off scams are everywhere and some are presented in some very clever ways.

Although I can say I've never been "taken" by the scum-suckers that generate this junk, I've learned that rip-offs can take many different forms.

A few months ago, I received a message from my Internet security software company informing me that my recent version of their software wasn't so recent.

Not wanting to let it lapse and expose myself to the various Gremlins that live in hyperspace, I clicked on the link and was taken to their site.

Publisher's Comment

Rob Wilkins



Once there, I clicked on a new and improved version, gave my credit card number and downloaded the program.

'Wonderful,' I thought. 'I'm protected for another year.'

A few days later I received my American Express bill and noticed that they had double-dipped.

They charged me \$70-odd dollars for an "auto renewal" on the old program and \$50-odd dollars for the new version I had recently downloaded.

Of course I immediately

e-mailed their customer service department and explained the problem.

One day later I received an e-mail informing me that the problem would be looked into.

The response to my second, third and fourth e-mail was that my complaint had been "escalated" and would be dealt with as soon as possible.

E-mail five, six, seven and eight told me the same thing.

Nine, 10 and 11 promised a decision would be forthcoming.

I lost it on 12.

I explained that every e-mail had been saved and was on its way to the consumer watch editors of the various Toronto newspapers and TV news departments.

I was tired of the run-around and wasn't going to surrender to their brush-off tactics.

Go figure, number 13 informed me that my refund would be processed within the next 10 business days.

Ironically, they probably got the last laugh.

Their "state-of-the-art" security program wasn't so "state-of-the-art."

It let a virus get through labeled "Antivirus XP." It ran a fake diagnostic of my computer and claimed it was full of viruses.

A pop-up window appeared urging me to click on a link, give them my credit card and download yet another new "state-of-the-art" security program.

Nice try. □

@ARTICLECATEGORY:862;

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

PEOPLE

The Hallmark Insurance Group has appointed well-known transportation safety expert **Chris Harris** to The Transit Authority, as both an account executive and safety specialist. Harris has over 16 years trucking operational management experience, 10 years in hospitality management, and for the past seven years he has been senior safety rep for a major trucking insurer.



Harris

An active volunteer in the industry, Harris is past chairman of the Career Path Committee, guest member on the Truck Driver Apprenticeship Industry Committee, member of the Safety Committee at the Ontario Trucking Association, and is a NATMI-certified instructor who still drives a tractor-trailer periodically. Harris can be reached at charris@hallmarkins.com.

RigMaster Power has announced that **Tori M. Harper** has been appointed president of the RigMaster Power group of companies.

The new president most recently served as executive director of Harper Group, the parent company of RigMaster Power Corp. and other affiliated companies.

In this capacity, Harper was actively involved in major acquisitions and business development, the company says. RigMaster Power is a supplier of stand-alone APUs.

Jones DesLauriers Insurance Management (JDIMI) has paired with fleet safety consultant **Brian Botham** to expand its services to include safety consulting.

Botham has 25 years of experience educating and resolving issues for numerous companies, including GAP, CVOR and injury analysis, proactive risk assessments, and driver training. □

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IT'S MORE THAN JUST OIL. IT'S LIQUID ENGINEERING.™

By Edo van Belkom

The Tim Horton's was like every other one in the country, except for one thing. This Tim's was located out by Pearson International Airport and was frequented by all the truck drivers who carried containers for the numerous shipping yards in the area. There were a few drivers Mark recognized sitting at one of the tables in the far corner of the shop and they nodded hello at him as he took his place in line.

He ordered an apple fritter and a medium double-double with sweetener (he had cut the sugar from his daily coffee in the name of health and fitness, but he wasn't about to go without the cream – that was the stuff that made it taste so good), then made his way over to the table to chat with his friends.

"Hi guys," Mark said, shaking hands.

"Mark Dalton," one of the drivers said, a man named Franco who drove flammable liquids like gas and propane. Mark thought he was a little different, maybe a bit off, but his personality was probably a necessary evil for hauling the loads he did.

"The Mark Dalton," echoed Manny Giron, a young driver who'd been an owner/operator for less than a year, but acted as if he'd been driving for all of his 25.

"What's going on?" Mark said.

"We were just talking about loads," Franco said with a slight jerk of his head.

"Where are you goin' next?"

"Tampa," Mark answered.

"Tampa?" Manny asked. "What are you taking there?"

"Carpet, made in Spain."

"Don't they have their own carpet in Florida?"

"How should I know? All I need to know is someone wants a truckload of Spanish carpet delivered to a location in Tampa."

Manny was shaking his head. "Florida in the winter. Nice..."

Mark shrugged. "I just drive where Bud sends me."

"Sure you do," Manny said.

"Why? What's wrong?"

This time it was Franco who spoke. "We were just talking about the kinds of loads we get. Me, I don't care. Not too many drivers like to carry explosives..." He laughed then, a sort of maniacal laugh that would be better suited to a serial killer. "So I get my pick of places. But Manny here says you get the best loads to all the best places."

"That's not true."

"And not just once in a while," Franco continued, "but all the time."

"I don't ask for any special treatment,"

Mark said.

"No, but you get it." Manny leaned forward and rested his arms on the table. "How many times you been to Florida in the past couple of months."

"Three times."

"How about California?"

"Once."

"And British Columbia?"

"I don't know. Five or six."

Manny turned to Franco. "See, I told you."

Franco turned his head to one side. "Maybe you got a point."

"Me, all I get are local runs to one side of the city and the other. You know how much time and fuel I waste sitting in traffic?"

"Maybe that's all Bud's got when you call," Mark said. He wasn't comfortable speaking for Bud, but someone had to say something in his defense. Bud was a good man and an even better dispatcher and if he was giving Manny shorter city loads, there had to be a reason for it.

"That's crap and you know it." Manny's voice was getting louder. "When I'm driving across the city in rush hour you're cruising across the Prairies putting miles under your wheels."

"Maybe you should take this up with Bud," Mark suggested.

"I have. And every time I do, he gives me a decent load, and then it's back to the same old city driving. If I lose my rig, it'll be his fault."

"Now wait a minute," Mark said. "If you lose your rig, that's nobody's fault but your own."

"I would agree with that," Franco said. "You are an owner/operator, your own boss!"

Mark took a sip of his coffee and found it had cooled. "If you don't like the loads Bud is giving you, then maybe you should find another dispatcher. I'm sure there are plenty of companies out there who would be thrilled to have a driver of your experience and...temperament."

"I've thought about it," Manny said,

Mark's insult seemingly lost on the young man. "And I've also thought about why you get all the best loads."

"Oh yeah," Mark said. "And what did you come up with?"

"I've heard Bud likes a drink now and then...Maybe you bring him back a bottle every time he sends you down south."

"Are you saying I'm giving Bud kickbacks?"

"If a couple of bottles of booze every few months are a kickback, then yeah. I wouldn't be surprised if you're paying Bud for better loads."

and it's up to me to keep track of my income and expenses. If I bring a dozen donuts to some boys on a loading dock, or give out a few bottles of wine at Christmas, that's not a kickback, it's called doing business. Companies do it all the time."

"I saw you give Bud a bottle of Glenfiddich once... in July."

"I did that," Mark admitted. "I bought it at the duty-free because Bud asked me to. He even gave me the money for it. That's not a kickback, it's just what friends do for each other. You might know that if you had some."

This time Manny caught the insult and slammed his paper coffee cup onto the table. It hit the table with a muted pop and sent a geyser of coffee shooting up through the opening in the top of the cup.

"Hey, take it easy guys," Franco said, wiping the table down with a napkin. "This is nothing to get into a fight over."

"Look at it this way, Manny," Mark said, putting added emphasis on the man's name. "I've worked for Bud for years and if he gives me a choice load or two every once in a while, then I've earned it. When you've worked for the man for as long as I have, then maybe you'll get better loads too."

Manny was still visibly upset, but at least he was listening.

"But in the end, what Bud does with the loads he gets is entirely up to Bud. I don't know why Bud gives certain loads to certain drivers. To be honest, I've never really thought about it much...that is, until I sat down at this table."

"Well, maybe I will talk to him about it," Manny said, his face contorted in a sneer.

Just then the door to the coffee shop opened up and Bud himself ambled in.

"What timing," Mark said, gesturing over to the door. "There's the man now, why don't you ask him yourself." □

- Check back next month for Part 2 of **Playing Favourites**.



Mark took a deep breath to keep himself calm.

Franco must have felt the tension around the table thicken. "Maybe you should just worry about your own business," he told Manny. "And let other people worry about theirs."

"I am worried about my business," Manny said. "I'm doing the same job he is, but I'm not making the same money."

Franco looked over at Mark in anticipation.

"First of all," Mark said, cool and even. "If I let Bud take a few extra tenths of a per cent commission, that would be my business. Other drivers do it, but I don't. But even if I did, that would be up to me. You see, my truck is my company

The continuing adventures of *Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator*
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Stayin' A-live

By James Menzies

COLEMAN, P.E.I. – Many work sites pose a two-pronged safety hazard to dump truck operators: uneven surfaces which create ideal conditions for a rollover and high-voltage overhead wires which can electrocute a driver if he contacts them with the box.

Perhaps that's why there seems to be an increasing interest in the concept of live bottom trailers, which use a conveyor system to unload material out the back of the tub, eliminating the need to raise the box.

Darrin Mitchell, president of live bottom trailer manufacturer Trout River Industries, said the market is growing by 25% per year. It's being driven mostly by safety concerns, and some tenders are now even specifying a preference for live bottom trailers.

In Canada, there are three manufacturers of live bottom trailers. Trout River began building the trailers in 1999 to address growing concerns about dump truck rollovers.

Raglan Industries began building live bottom trailers at around the same time, and now focuses on more rigorous applications, such as off-road northern mining operations. Trailers ABS, based in Quebec, also produces the trailers. In the US, the biggest player is Red River.

However, you can trace the concept back much further than the late 90s.

"For us on PEI, it has been around for a long time in potato boxes," said Mitchell. "However the design has changed greatly in the last 10 years. The trailer has become much more robust to haul big loads for a variety of applications."

Trout River's Mitchell said his company first began building the trailers for lime haulers, who were rolling over while unloading the wet, sticky substance.

"Live bottom trailers these days haul just about anything," said Mitchell. "The most unique I've seen is one customer who is using the trailer to haul cow hides from an abattoir to a curing facility. They park the trailer in the building and use it as a hopper to unload the product onto the processing conveyors."

In Trout River's case, the trailers are designed mostly for aggregate products six inches in diameter or smaller. Raglan's heavier-duty offerings are better suited for larger rocks and boulders.

The concept has gained attention right across Canada. They are being used on Olympic-related construction work on the West Coast; in the Alberta tar sands; in northern Ontario mines; and to haul gypsum in Newfoundland. You may also have seen them at work along Hwy. 401 over the past couple years, where they were being used to lay asphalt.

"They would arrive on the site, trip the tailgate, engage the conveyor and keep driving while they unloaded," explained Mitchell, who spent some time observing his trailers at work along a stretch of 401 between Windsor and London. "They did this all day long while the grader leveled it out."

Various attachments are available which help control the unloading.

"With all the attachments you can put on the rear to make them more versatile, it's come to the point where your imagination is the only thing that limits what you can do with them," said John Michel, president of Raglan Industries.

A shouldering attachment, for instance, can spread the material to the side, along the shoulder of a road. A spreader attachment on the other hand can more accurately control the dispersal of the material, allowing for a smooth layer of grav-



OUT THE BACK: Uneven terrain such as this is ideal for live bottom trailers, which don't require the driver to raise the box and risk a rollover.

el to be applied behind the trailer.

Naturally, the added complexity of the trailers does require additional maintenance.

"Any time you have a unit with more moving parts, maintenance becomes more of an issue," admitted Michel. "You have your sprocket chain, belt, motor, gearboxes and valves and all those require attention. Like anything, it's as good as the weakest link."

Trout River's Mitchell said "We have specifically designed the trailer to have off-the-shelf parts when the time comes for maintenance. You don't have to wait six weeks to order a special part."

He said maintenance is pretty straight-forward on his company's conveyor systems.

"All we ask from our operators besides regular maintenance is that they oil the conveyor chain on a regular basis and they don't drop boulders in the trailer," he said.

Live bottom trailers are naturally heavier than traditional dump bodies. However, Mitchell said customers in Ontario are still hauling payloads of up to 39.5 tonnes on a four-axle trailer.

Extreme weather does pose some issues, but most of them have been resolved, Mitchell said. If it's -30 C, customers will sometimes put a liner in the tub.

The clip-in liners are being used in Fort McMurray, Alta. and also in

James Bay.

Michel said Raglan has addressed cold weather challenges by widening the belt so it's less likely to freeze up. A conventional belt would be as narrow as 32-inches, he said, noting Raglan's trailers have belts up to seven feet in width.

The ability to operate problem-free in the winter allows customers to run year-round – well beyond road building season.

"In the summer, the trailer hauls asphalt, in the spring it hauls fertilizer, in the fall it hauls top soil to septic beds and in the winter it fills up salt and sand domes," explained Mitchell.

That versatility is allowing customers to justify the higher purchase price, which could be as much as \$15,000 more than a traditional dump trailer, according to Raglan's Michel.

Manufacturers expect to see interest in live bottom trailers continue to increase, given the safety benefits as well as the ever-increasing versatility of the trailers.

"In '99, there was a presence. In 2000-2004 there was a really massive change," recalled Michel. "You see people somewhat doubtful, then accepting them and next thing you know they're buying them. They're not quite as popular as the dump trailers, but they're getting there." □

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NEW PRODUCTS

Online driver recruitment tool launched

By Jan Westell

BROKEN ARROW, Okla. – There are three types of commercial drivers, according to the sales team at Tenstreet Trucking Industry Software. There is the “cream of the crop,” “pretty good guys,” and “not in this lifetime.”

So, how do trucking industry recruiters attract the cream of the crop, and potentially not the less qualified drivers? Tenstreet’s vice-president of sales, Dale Reagan, suggests that human resource recruiters forego an unorganized and cumbersome paper file system, and a tedious multiple fax communication process when seeking information, by using an online program that is flexible and versatile.

“We believe there is a direct correlation to the efficiency of the hiring process, the ability to identify, obviously in this scheme, the cream of the crop, or the best applicants, and get an offer to them, process them and qualify them to make sure that those are the drivers you’re winding up with, because those best drivers don’t stay on the market very long,” said Reagan, who recently spoke online in a Webinar about the company’s human resource recruiting software.

“Ideally what you want, when that best driver calls you or fills out your application or sends you

an application, you want that to be the last application that they make, or the last phone call that they place.”

One of the main challenges with the traditional method of recruiting is identifying who the ideal truck drivers are, out of a mass of applications that come via Internet applications, phone applications and other methods, according to Reagan.

The other part of Tenstreet’s technological process, is more procedural, he explained, and that involves getting the drivers to sign-off on a release using a digital signature, which will allow the recruiter to get previous employment verification information, including government documents, which can be paperwork-intensive.

“This is a digital signature, as opposed to an electronic signature, which is not allowed. This signature is unique to the applicant. It is a script signature and it can be reproduced. Our customers are using these hundreds if not thousands of times a day on their releases, to get drug and alcohol violations from previous employees,” Reagan explained.

While that may be easier in the US, due to Canada’s strict privacy laws, Tenstreet indicates that it is working with US companies that have hired Canadian drivers and

have accessed Canadian information. Yet, even in the US, this new concept is still taking some time to gain acceptance, according to one Tenstreet client.

“It’s not as widely used by the drivers right now, but it’s gaining momentum out there,” said Sherry Bass, the vice-president of capacity development for FFE Transportation Services, which offered a testimonial about that company’s experience with Tenstreet’s online program.

Internet technology also offers the ability to process job board applications, including complex situations such as managing, tracking and identifying duplicate applications from the same driver which may have been delivered from multiple job boards.

“Our Tenstreet software does that automatically,” said Reagan.

The Tenstreet program also allows recruiters to score applications, “a small, very obvious, very intuitive idea,” said Reagan, which allows the recruiter to identify the best applicants. As well, Reagan believes that every applicant that meets the minimum qualification requirements typically undergoes a screening process by the recruiter. This can be a pointless exercise if the most qualified candidate is not identified beforehand.

“When you start screening someone, you start throwing mon-

ey and time and other resources at them,” he said. “What a scoring system lets you do, is it lets you identify the best applicants that you have. You start throwing time and money at the best applicants – not everybody who meets your minimum hiring standards and minimum hiring criteria.”

Tenstreet also has an “exchange system” which manages the process of faxing requests for information from previous employers, in a simplified manner.

“In short, this process automates what used to be a very manual job in most companies,” said Reagan, who asked Bass if she had realized the same value with this particular process.

“Absolutely,” she said. “There’s been tremendous amount of efficiencies that we’ve been able to gain, by having sort of a library of information on carriers, if you will. So that (for example, if a) driver left off information about ‘XYZ Trucking Company,’ but the information is already in the system, click a couple of buttons, and fax off, and there you go.”

Bass also noted that the online file system was invaluable for maintaining existing employee information as well, such as driver history, or possibly an accident report, or any other critical piece of information that could be filed electronically. If a hard copy gets misplaced, the data can now be easily retrieved. For more info, visit www.tenstreet.com. □

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Lighting



Truck-Lite says it has introduced the world's first **LED headlamps**. The seven-inch headlamps were used initially on military vehicles, but they also hold promise for the commercial trucking industry, Truck-Lite says. Truck-Lite says the headlamps are easier on the eyes than conventional designs and should last 50 times longer than conventional lamps. The company says the LED headlamps can replace standard lamps and can be aimed using standard equipment in use today. They provide a crisper light output to improve visibility, Truck-Lite says. For more info, visit www.truck-lite.com.

Tires & Wheels

Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions has announced the availability of its **Continuum C1073 retread tire** for rigid dump truck applications. The retread has been offered on a limited scale since February and initial customer use has validated the product, the company claims. Company officials said the retreads operated in a harsh mining environment for 3,000 hours of service, compared to 3,500 which is typical of a new tire, totaling 82% of the life of a new tire at 60% of the price. For more information, fleets can call 800-233-2205, ext. 5302 or e-mail mpoirier@continuummaterials.com.



A new **DVD** has been developed to outline the operation, maintenance and service requirements of the Meritor Tire Inflation System by PSI. The DVD provides an overview of the tire pressure management system and provides details on inspection, maintenance and troubleshooting procedures, the company says. The DVD can be obtained by calling 800-535-5560 or by ordering via e-mail at arvinmeritororders@helminc.com.

Michelin has expanded its line of X One wide-base tires to include a **drive tire** that optimizes traction, an ideal fit for the Canadian market, according to the company. The X One XDN2 features corrugated grooves in the tread block which lock the tread block to minimize horizontal and vertical stresses. An open-shoulder tread design is ideal for carving through water, slush and snow, making it ideal for Canadian conditions. The X One XDN2 wide-base single will be available in November.

Tracking

TransCore has introduced CabLink, which it touts as a **100% satellite mobile terminal** with next generation technology for small- and mid-sized carriers as well as private fleets. The company says it's an economical in-cab communications and tracking system that integrates multiple components into one small unit. TransCore says CabLink will help fleets improve asset utilization while monitoring idle-time, speed and out-of-route mileage. The company claims CabLink is not capital-intensive and will deliver an immediate return-on-investment. For more information, visit www.3sixty.ca.

A new Canadian **Web site** allows drivers to track their movements via GPS using a laptop. Laptop GPS World says drivers appreciate the larger screen provided by a laptop computer or tablet PC. A typical laptop can be configured for GPS navigation for as little as \$50, the company claims, including GPS software and a USB receiver. The company claims professional drivers are the most common users of the Web site. For further details, visit www.laptopgpsworld.com.

Components

Timbren has designed new **hollow rubber springs and mounting brackets** which the company claims are more compact, lighter and more powerful than previous designs. The new design was made in response to EPA07 emission standards as well as a move towards tapered steel, composite and air springs in medium-duty and heavy-duty trucks. Timbren said it has not sacrificed ease of installation or ride quality. For more information, call 800-263-3113 or visit www.timbren.com.



Cooper Hand Tools has introduced a new **ratcheting load binder** which the company claims is easier to adjust than traditional lever-style binders. It features eight inches of take-up for a wide range of adjustments and it is approved for use with both 5/16" and 3/8" transport chains. The Grade 70 load binder has a 6,600-lb working load limit and a 26,400-lb breaking strength, according to the company. The binder also meets US DoT requirements 393.100-393.102. For more details, visit www.cooperhandtools.com.

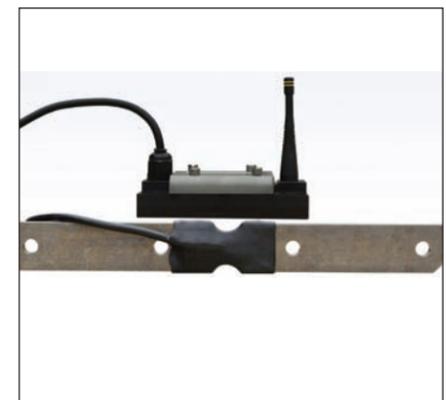
Accessories

Freightliner has introduced a new line of **chrome accessories** for the Cascadia highway tractor. Produced by Panelite, the line includes stainless steel accessories for: cab panels; marker lights; fender and grille trim; and interior lights. The new accessories will be available for order in October, Freightliner says. Talk to your dealer for more info.

Scraper Systems, a **snow removal device** for trailers, will now be distributed in Canada by Denex Industrial, the companies announced. Scraper Systems was developed to remove snow and ice from trailer-tops, which improves road safety and can also reduce trailer weights by as much as 2,600 lbs, according to the company. As a truck approaches the system, the driver gets out and lowers the blade to the roof of the trailer. He then drives through, removing the snow and then returns the blade to its original position, the company explains. For details, contact Jon Denman at 902-880-7941 or call toll-free at 866-554-6555.

A new **watch device**, the Sleeptracker Pro, has been introduced to help truckers wake up from their sleep more refreshed and alert. The company says the device detects the movements associated with a light sleep stage and then gently wakes the individual wearing the device using an alarm, vibration or combination

of the two. The result, the company claims, is a more rested driver thanks to an easier transition from sleep to wake. PC software is also available that allows a driver to upload and track their sleep data so they can analyze factors that may provide for more restful sleep. For more info, visit www.sleeptracker.com.



TruckWeight has announced that its Smart Scale **wireless on-board scale** is now compatible with mechanical spring suspensions. That opens the door to applications such as bulk distribution, agriculture, construction, forestry and containerized loads, the company says. The scale has been available for trailers with air suspensions since 2005. The system includes three components: an axle-mounted load sensor; a low-powered radio transmitter; and a small, handheld wireless receiver. The company says its load readings are accurate to within 1% compared to a certified in-ground scale. For more details, visit www.truckweight.com.

Trailers

Utility Trailer has announced the impending release of its 4000D-X Composite – a **composite wall trailer** that will be produced beginning in January. The company says the standard side wall on the new trailer will share the same durability characteristics of a common plate trailer while increasing payload, improving load securement and providing a longer life. It also boasts a lower TARE weight, the company claims. For more information, visit www.utilitytrailer.com.

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BOWMANVILLE, Ont. – It’s tough times for the trucking industry, with high fuel prices, a faltering economy and increased operating costs threatening many trucker’s livelihoods. Owner/operators are feeling an especially tight pinch on their wallets, causing many to consider leaving the industry altogether, or worse, being laid off outright by their employers. (For a story on the plight of unemployed O/Os see pg. 36).

For many, being a trucker has been a lifelong occupation and the prospect of moving into another field is daunting. But do drivers have a contingency plan if they find themselves pushed out of trucking? *Truck West* went to the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to find out if drivers have plans for life after trucking.

Leonard Ouellet, a driver with Laidlaw in Quebec, says he would do anything in his power to stay



Truck Stop Question

Adam Ledlow
Managing Editor

What would you do for work if you could no longer be a trucker?



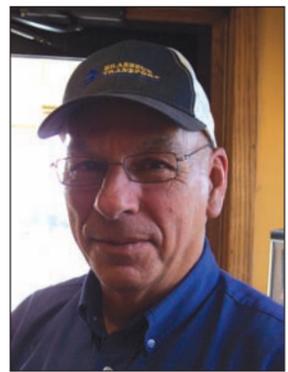
Leonard Ouellet

behind the wheel. “I’ve been driving a truck for 42 years and I still love it,” he says. “I’ve never done any-

thing else but that all my life. I don’t think I would change. I like what I do. I like to be alone. I’m my own boss, that’s my own truck.”

If push came to shove, Ouellet says he would still try to find work doing something on the road, as he still gets a charge out of the beautiful scenery he sees every day on the job.

Mario Canuel, a driver with Brasseur Transport in La Prairie, Que., agrees with Ouellet, saying the transition to another type of job would be difficult.



Mario Canuel

“I really don’t know what I would do. It’s all I’ve known all my life,” said Canuel, a driver for 31 years. Though Canuel found work as a dispatcher for seven years, he likely wouldn’t entertain it as an option and would rather continue truck driving for as long as he possibly can.

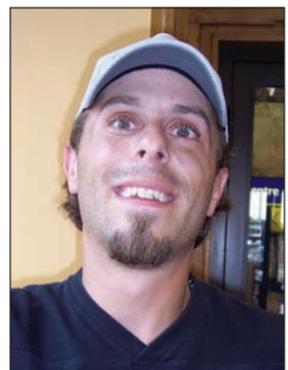


Tony Fareh

Tony Fareh, a Montreal-based owner/operator, is relatively new to the industry, having just gotten behind the wheel two years ago. If finances made it impossible to continue, Fareh says he would likely go back to his former occupation as the owner of a body shop.

Stephen Charette, a driver with WJD in Stoney Creek, Ont., has already tried to take a break from trucking, but wasn’t able to stay away.

“I did try to be a store manager for five years, but I came back to trucking,” said the driver of 18 years. However, Charette says the hassle of dealing with employees and managing a business drove him back to trucking. Like many drivers *Truck West* spoke with, Charette didn’t have much in terms of a back-up plan.



Craig Hallman

One driver who seemed to have an unending list of back-up plans was **Craig Hallman**, a trucker who hauls sensitive equipment for high-profile clients out of Ayr, Ont. “I would be a geological systems engineer, that’s a passion of mine,” Hallman said first.

But if science fell through, rock star wasn’t trailing far behind, followed by international business trade, adding that he could sit at a computer all day and trade. With the future of many truckers and trucking companies at risk, it’s nice to know that some drivers still dare to dream beyond the driver’s seat. □

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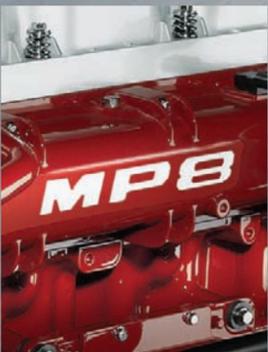
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