

# TRUCK WEST

December 2008 Volume 19, Issue 12

Delivering daily news to Canada's trucking industry at [www.trucknews.com](http://www.trucknews.com)

## Sterling brand gets axed

*Daimler to focus on two-brand strategy*

By James Menzies

**ST. THOMAS, Ont.** – Daimler Trucks North America (DTNA) shocked the industry Oct. 14, by announcing it is discontinuing the Sterling Trucks brand.

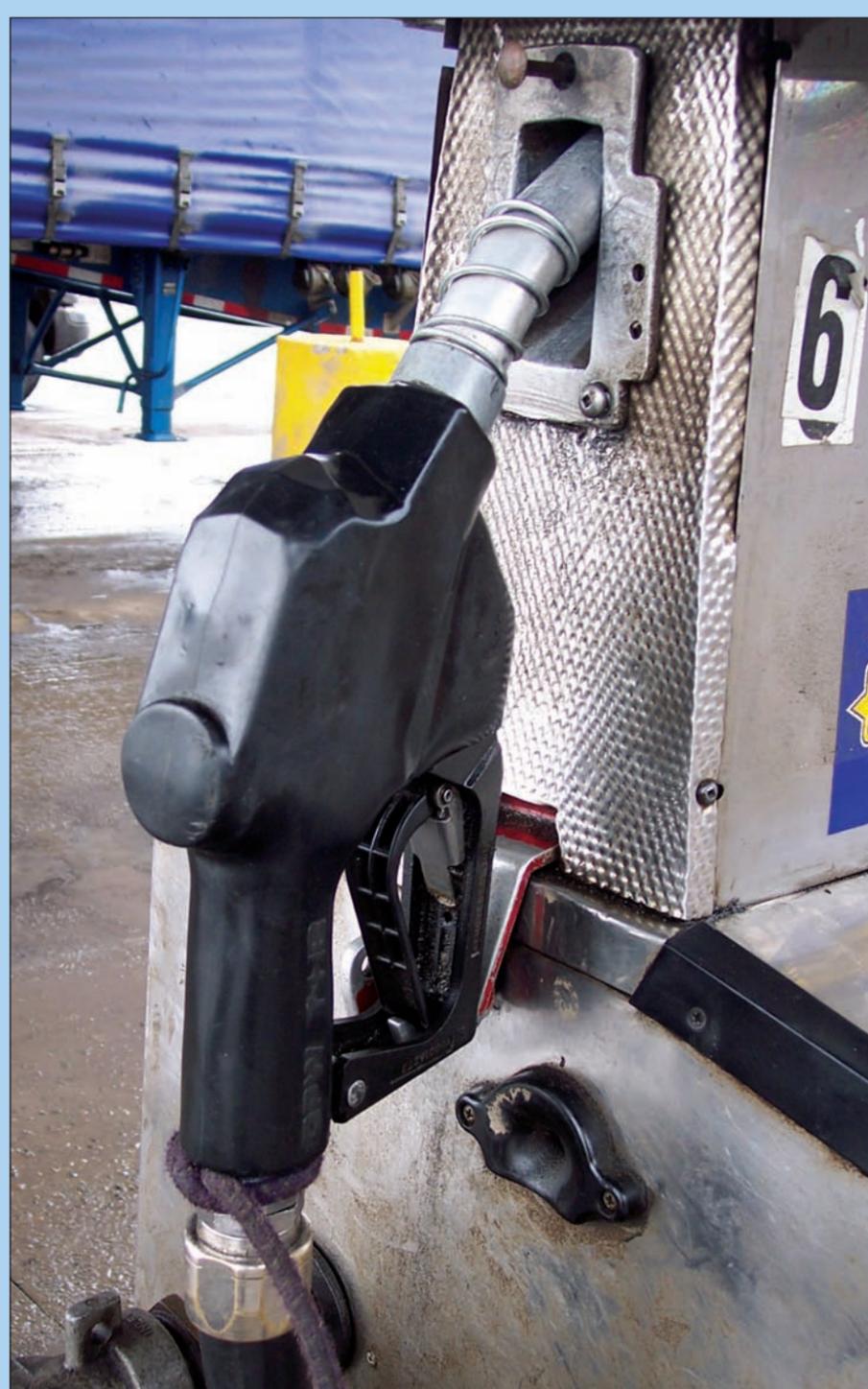
The surprising announcement came just two months after Sterling introduced a new sleeper cab and Class 8 natural gas vehicle, rounding out the most complete line of Class 3-8 trucks in the industry.

“Plans based on an expectation of brief, sharp market events driven by regulatory change, followed by periods of reasonable growth, are out of step with the emerging realities of the latter part of this decade,” Chris Patterson, president and CEO of DTNA said in a release. “We’ve examined every part of our organization in light of the changed economic environment.”

Here in Canada, the demise of Sterling delivers a triple whammy: brand-loyal customers (and there were some) must find a new truck; Sterling dealers must find a new revenue stream; and the 1,300 employees at the Sterling truck plant in St. Thomas, Ont. must find new jobs.

The St. Thomas plant will be shuttered in March, 2009 concurrent

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**GOOD IF YOU CAN GET IT:** Fuel prices are dropping like a stone in parts of the country, but in Western Canada a shortage has left some truckers facing rations and others having to pay late delivery fees to shippers.

## What next?

*As diesel prices return to normal, a shortage plagues Western Canada*

By Jan Westell

**CALGARY, Alta.** – A calamity of planned and unplanned shutdowns among at least three oil refineries in Alberta has created a shortfall of diesel, affecting the trucking industry in that province, as well as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and northern B.C. It's a situation that has been underway for a couple months, but has intensified recently.

Brett Gunderson, an owner/operator based out of Prince George, B.C. who hauls propane to the Alberta oilpatch, has had his own frustrations finding fuel. And despite reports of resumption of services with refineries that experienced shutdowns, Gunderson was still seeking fuel on Oct. 29.

“Yesterday I couldn't get fuel in any Petro-Cans all way from Edmonton down to Calgary. I stopped at UFA (in Aidrie) and found some up there,” said Gunderson.

He felt that as a long-haul driver, he had more choice on the road than a local hauler who might be stymied by lack of supply.

“There are quite a few guys

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## Spec'ing shunt trucks

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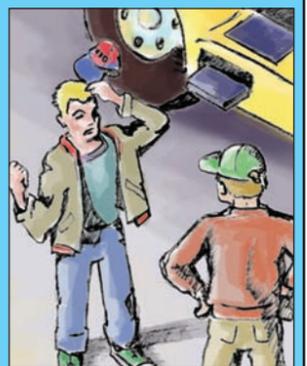
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## Inside This Issue...

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# Giving credit where it's due

A couple of months ago in this space, I took aim at the federal Liberals over their misguided carbon tax policy which would've cost truck fleets and owner/operators thousands of dollars per year.

Since that time, the Liberals have been soundly defeated in a federal election – may we never hear the term 'Green Shift' again.

In all fairness, I should also applaud their Ontario counterparts for a recently-announced funding plan that will help offset the cost of hybrid commercial vehicles and anti-idling systems. Ontario's Dalton McGuinty Liberals, cash-strapped as they are, announced the \$15 million plan last month.

Beginning Nov. 28, fleets and owner/operators will be able to apply for funding to help pay for 'green' technologies. This carrot – rather than the stick approach federal Liberal leader (what's his name again?) was endorsing – is exactly what the industry needs.

Why?

Because the Canadian trucking industry needs a nudge in adopting costly new technologies that will significantly reduce fuel consumption. It's a show-me industry, and most fleets are reluctant to shell out thousands of dollars up-front for something that may save them money down the road.

Hybrid commercial vehicles have proven to deliver enormous cost savings in the right application. But their uptake here in Canada has been slow – mostly due to the higher up-front cost.

A medium-duty hybrid truck can cost \$30,000 or more than a comparable traditional drive vehicle. Who's going to make that kind of investment without first seeing proof that the technology will do what it is said to do? South of the border, federal and in some cases

## Editorial Comment

James Menzies



state, rebates have resulted in some large volume orders of hybrid commercial vehicles, which will help bring down production costs and consequently the purchase prices of these vehicles.

Those participating in the Ontario grant program will have to monitor their fuel savings and that data will be shared with the industry. It's already been proven that in the right application, hybrid trucks can deliver a payback even without government incentives.

This program will help increase confidence that this is the case, and should result in the more widespread use of hybrid vehicles.

Anti-idling systems, such as auxiliary power units (APUs) will also be covered by the program. This is a great chance for owner/operators to offset the cost of technology that will greatly reduce their idling time and improve their profitability.

It's not the first time a government funding program has been geared towards anti-idling systems such as APUs. The feds had a rebate pro-

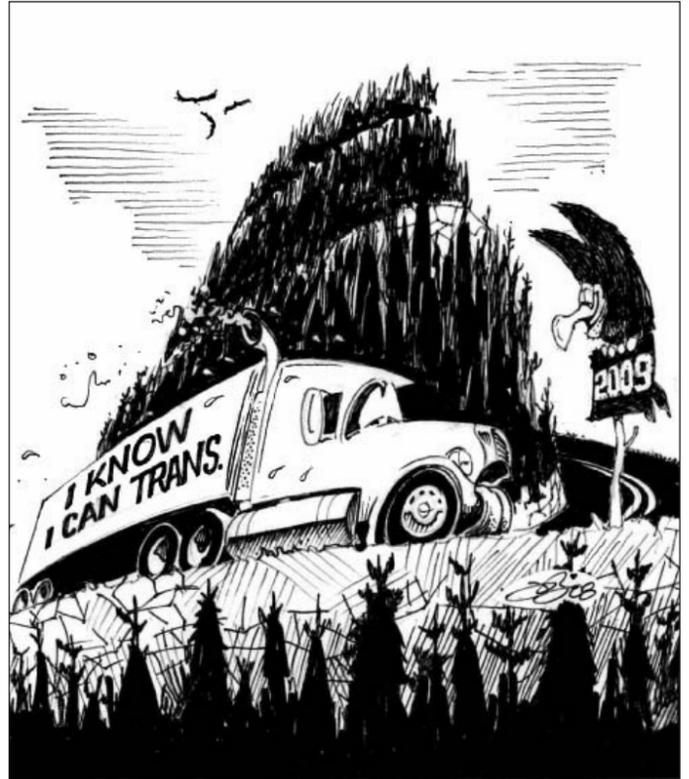
gram from August, 2003 to March, 2006 which refunded 20% of the purchase price.

It was a great program – but it may well have been underutilized. One retailer of cab comfort systems told me that based on the number of claims versus the number of units sold by manufacturers, only about 25% of customers took the time to apply for the rebate. This retailer filled out the rebate form for every customer, but others couldn't be bothered to take the time to apply for the rebate.

Hopefully, participation in the Ontario program will be greater and other provinces will follow suit.

The trucking industry isn't often the recipient of government assistance. Let's remember those famous words: Use it or lose it. □

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# We're in the soup – it's time to hunker down

There's no gentle way to say this folks: it looks like we're in the soup and we're going to be in it for a while.

Any signs of hope – the unexpectedly high volume of house sales recently reported in the US, the gain in job numbers here and the uptick in Class 8 truck sales in September, the initial reactions of the stock markets to the US stimulus package or the strong results of the US election – are just that: wishful thinking that we'll somehow avoid a long and painful recession.

Reality is North America is probably already in recession. The figures that really matter all don't look good. The North American economy is driven by consumers and they're curbing their spending. Any fleet or owner/operator picking up from any of our major ports, aside from Montreal, has already been feeling the pinch. Lower consumer spending results in importers cutting back on orders of consumer goods, which in recent years have been manufactured in Asia. For example, the amount of electronics arriving in October was down 9.6% from the

## Viewpoint

Lou Smyrlis  
 Editorial Director



previous year while clothing was down 7.8%.

Vancouver, our largest port and a significant driver of west-to-east truck traffic, has already been reporting fewer containers arriving during the critical pre-Christmas season. Prince Rupert was expanded to add much needed capacity on the west coast and can handle 500,000 containers annually. But it doesn't look like that extra capacity will come anywhere near being needed this year. After the first nine months of the year, Prince Rupert has handled just a little over 100,000 containers.

On the east coast, the Port of Halifax saw a 16% drop in cargo volumes during the first half of this year.

And although traffic originating out of the Port of Montreal is still looking good this year with a 9.9% increase in container traffic during

the first nine months and projections for continued growth next year, port authorities have now trimmed their expectations for next year's growth down to 5% from 7%.

The drop in demand for consumer goods is also now being reflected in another telling indicator of economic health: the Baltic Dry Index, which measures the cost to ship bulk commodities such as coal and grain.

The index has gained a strong reputation as a forecast of global economic activity because the level of demand to move commodities is an indicator of the demand to produce finished goods. And the Baltic Dry Index has dropped 90% since May.

If this is going to be a long-term recession, like what we experienced back in 1973 to 75 and in 1981-82, it could take more than 15 months for any sort of recovery to take root.

Now is the time to ensure your business is properly positioned to weather the coming storm. □

– Lou Smyrlis can be reached by phone at (416) 510-6881 or by e-mail at lou@TransportationMedia.ca.

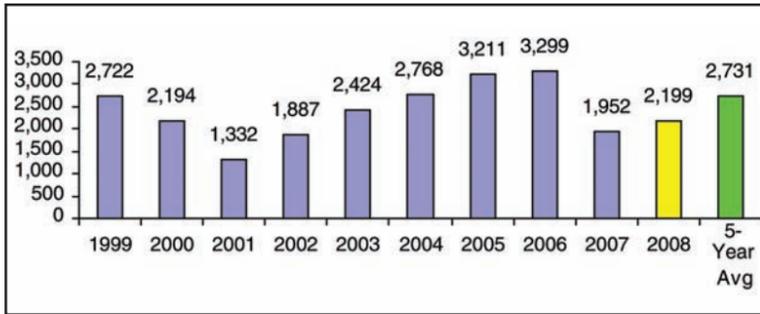
# CLASS 8 TRUCK SALES TRENDS

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## Monthly Class 8 Sales - Sept 08

OEM	This Month	Last Year
Freightliner	379	335
Kenworth	246	449
Mack	137	373
International	609	121
Peterbilt	319	258
Sterling	181	153
Volvo	230	170
Western Star	98	93
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>1,952</b>

## Historical Comparison - September 08 Sales



## Motor Vehicle Production to Jan 08

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

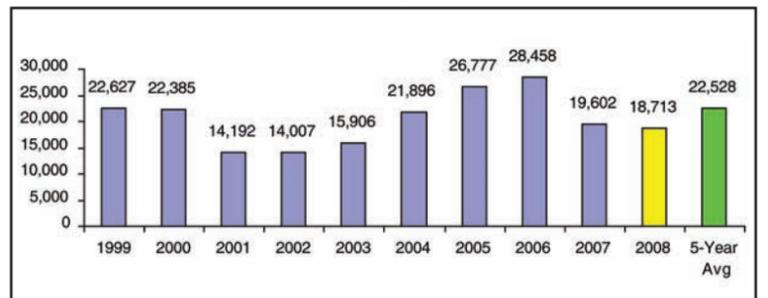
There were 2,199 Class 8 trucks sold in Canada this September, surprisingly higher than last year's total for the month. Yet it was still the fourth lowest monthly sales figure of the past decade. Sales were also about 700 units off the five-year average. It should be noted, however, that five-year average includes the industry's peak years of 2004 to 2006. It has been a roller coaster type of year. Sales started off quietly in the first quarter, rebounded in March, climbing above 2,000 units, 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. We've questioned previously if that pace could be sustained into the third and fourth quarter. It didn't last year and it's very unlikely it will this year, despite September's encouraging numbers.

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 September 08) by Province and OEM

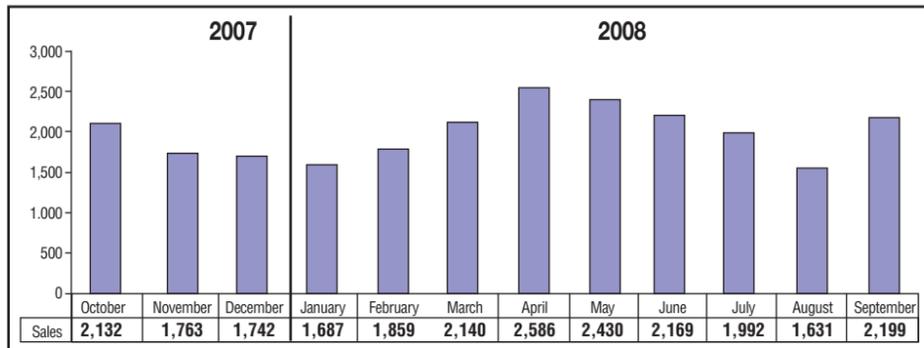
OEM	BC	ALTA	SASK	MAN	ONT	QUE	NB	NS	PEI	NF	CDA
Freightliner	271	620	176	158	1,335	563	210	93	0	17	3,443
Kenworth	399	1,105	171	134	624	589	27	53	0	0	3,102
Mack	112	199	99	142	548	159	35	37	0	0	1,331
International	198	606	67	221	1,971	1,055	175	62	4	91	4,450
Peterbilt	199	628	248	111	454	262	111	40	0	0	2,053
Sterling	174	272	97	50	555	390	25	54	0	10	1,627
Volvo	112	210	96	219	735	278	57	56	0	10	1,773
Western Star	155	280	33	22	240	126	42	33	0	3	934
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,620</b>	<b>3,920</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>1,057</b>	<b>6,462</b>	<b>3,422</b>	<b>682</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>18,713</b>

## Historical Comparison - YTD



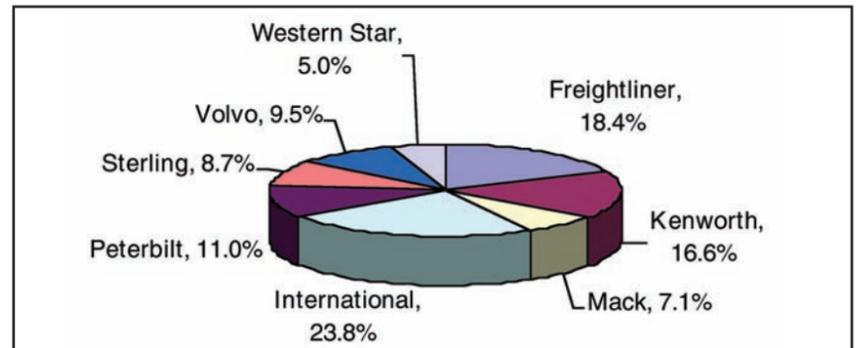
Class 8 truck sales year-to-date stand at 18,713, about 900 units off last year's admittedly slow pace and about 4,000 units off the 5-year average for Canada. Despite an improvement in sales starting in the spring, and surprisingly strong numbers in September, the market overall has not been able to overcome its slow start this year. In total, 2008 is 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 the now apparently spent North American economy does not bode well for hopes of a pickup in sales for the fourth quarter.

## 12 - Month Sales Trends



After four straight months of sales above the 2,000 units mark, truck sales dropped below 2,000 in July and even further in August. The drop off in sales this August and July, combined with the economic meltdown in North America, make it unlikely 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 2,199 trucks sold in September marked the third-best performance of the year but it's unlikely truck sales will remain at such a level the rest of the year.

## Market Share Class 8 YTD



International is entrenched in its new role as market share leader as it continues to range significantly ahead of 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 very strong second and third quarter showings, International added to that lead and now controls 23.8% of the market with Freightliner falling back to 18.4% and Kenworth to 16.6%. Peterbilt is the only other truck manufacturer with a market share greater than 10%.

Source: Canadian Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association

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# Dealers, customers caught off-guard by Sterling announcement

■ Continued from page 1

with the end of an agreement with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), DTNA announced.

It will also close a truck plant in Portland, Ore. in June, 2010, with Western Star production moving to a plant in Santiago, Mexico. Top-ranking officials from the CAW met with Daimler executives Oct. 21 and appealed for them to keep the truck plant open, but to no avail.

“We are confident that this forward-looking strategy for DTNA is the right measure to address the challenges in the North American market,” said Andreas Renschler, member of the board of management with Daimler AG.

Daimler said it would continue producing Western Star trucks, focusing on a two-brand strategy. Sterling had “substantial overlap with offerings in the Freightliner Trucks product line,” the company said. Meanwhile, Sterling was only able to reach one-quarter of the market penetration that Freightliner achieved.

The company said it will add to the Freightliner and Western Star product lines to fill any holes left by Sterling’s demise.

Daimler also said Sterling dealers will continue to accept orders up until Jan. 15, 2009 and new truck

sales will continue until stocks are depleted.

The dealer network is expected to continue performing warranty repairs and maintenance services as well as provide replacement parts and technical support.

John Nelligan, dealer principal for Harper Truck Centres, said “While we are terribly disappointed by the news, our organization is committed to stand behind the products we have sold and to continue to service our customers with the products that we represent.”

When all is said and done, DTNA expects to realize annual savings of US\$900 million by 2011. It will cost the company about US\$600 million to eliminate the brand. All told, 2,300 workers at the St. Thomas and Portland plants will lose their jobs while 1,200 salaried employees will also be let go.

“We are very mindful of the effects these decisions will have on the lives of many of our employees and on our Sterling dealers’ businesses,” said Patterson.

“We are committed to taking measures to ease the transition for all those affected and to emphasize the support offered to those owning and operating Sterling Trucks in the wake of this announcement.” □

‘Our organization is committed to stand behind the products we have sold.’

John Nelligan

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LEFT OUT IN THE COLD: Sterling’s lacklustre market penetration was cited as one reason the brand will be cancelled. Photo by Adam Ledlow

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## Cover story

## ■ Continued from page 1

around Grande Prairie that aren't moving at all. I have a friend that hauls fuel out of Prince George. He actually had a guy that runs some drill rigs in Grande Prairie call him and ask him to haul fuel (from Vancouver to Alberta). You can get fuel in (Vancouver) B.C., but you can't get it in Alberta."

Gundersen understands the need for periodic shutdowns, but he questions shipping oil to the US, when that country is enjoying a surplus.

"It's so wrong. We don't have enough refinery capacity in Western Canada, for one, to deal with what we're doing. No one wants to build new ones because they don't make the same profit."

Mayne Root, the executive director of the Alberta Motor Transport Association, indicated that the situation has been building since late summer with the planned shutdown of one of the major producers for renovation/upgrades to their refinery in Edmonton.

"Some unexpected glitches occurred and they have been working to get back in operation, but do not anticipate getting up to full production for at least another couple of weeks," he said in late October. "Combined with this, one of the other major refineries had a planned maintenance shutdown during some of this time, and another producer had to go offline for unexpected problems as well. In addition, according to the producers there was a higher than expected demand for diesel due to a late harvest season. As there was no reserve fuel, and the fact that the producers have closely matched production with demand on almost a daily basis, there is now beginning to be a real shortage of fuel for trucks, equipment and machinery in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba."

For the Alberta trucking industry, this means that some carriers are being rationed as to how much fuel they can purchase on a daily or weekly basis and some of the smaller carriers are literally running out of fuel as they search for a facility that has fuel to sell, added Root.

"They are also taking additional time and (using more) fuel to find fuel supplies and the cost of diesel has not gone down as it has in the rest of the country (as much as 14 cents per litre). Fortunately, the weather has not turned cold as additional fuel is required to keep the vehicles operational during very cold weather (-20 C and below)," said Root.

David Bradley, president and CEO of the Canadian Trucking Alliance is incredulous that diesel fuel would be rationed in oil-rich western Canada.

"Carriers were seeing their fuel supplies rationed by as much as 10-50%," he said in a mid-October news release. "The cardlock privileges for all new accounts were suspended by at least one oil company, and the hours that cardlock service was being made available to existing customers were being restricted. We were being told that things would not be returning to normal for at least several weeks, if not for the rest of October and November."

Given the current economic fragility, this is something Canada can ill afford, added Bradley, since

# Diesel dilemma

## Truckers have plenty of questions following fuel shortage that stymied the industry

the trucking industry is being put in the "unenviable and untenable" position of deciding which of its customers will be guaranteed service and which will not.

"How could this happen?" asked Bradley. "It is our understanding that this situation is a reflection of both planned and unplanned refinery outages in the region. The Petro-Canada refinery in Edmonton had been closed for over a month for planned maintenance. However, the company conceded that it was caught off-guard by an unexpected jump in demand. It was also being reported that difficulties restarting the refinery were being experienced. The Suncor plant in northern Alberta had been down since August due to an equipment problem. Imperial Oil had reduced production while it makes repairs at its Edmonton refinery. Problems at other refineries had also been reported."

This is not the first time parts of the country have experienced significant shortages of commercial-grade diesel fuel, noted Bradley.

In February, 2007, the Ontario trucking industry suffered an acute shortage of diesel fuel that came "perilously close to a full-blown economic crisis."

Western Canada also experienced a shortage last spring, though not as serious as the current situation, he added. "In each case, refinery issues were the cause or at least major contributing factors," stated the CTA CEO.

Bradley suggested that the time has come for the Canadian trucking industry, and the government of Canada, and the Canadian Petroleum Producers Institute (CPPI), to sit down and seek answers to this ongoing problem.

According to a spokesperson for Petro-Canada, the fuel producer has been dealing with a planned shutdown at its Edmonton refinery, which was scheduled to begin mid-August, and publicized a year ago to other producers in Alberta – a situation which may have been misinterpreted.

"The industry would call it a turnaround, but it really is a planned shutdown," said Snehal Seetal. "The shutdown for the Edmonton refinery was to hook up some large equipment because that facility has been reconfigured to take an oilsands diet, as opposed to the conventional crude that it was processing before."

Otherwise diesel supply in western Canada is currently "tight," added Seetal, a situation brought on by industry supply issues.

"For example, there have been

some unplanned outages in the industry in western Canada, that have reduced the availability of supply. In addition, for Petro-Can, it largely was a demand issue, because there has been an unexpected increase in demand, based on our historical records and current estimates."

Seetal indicated that demand for diesel has been increasing steadily, primarily because there has been some significant growth in the industrial sector in western Canada.

As a result, there was an unexpected increase in demand for Petro-Canada, based on what customers may have used historically, and what it estimates would be required in the future.

'Carriers were seeing their fuel supplies rationed by as much as 10-50%.'

David Bradley, CTA

ments to serve its customers, according to the spokesperson. However, some of those third-party supply arrangements fell through, as a result of unplanned outages. Otherwise Petro-Canada's shutdown shouldn't have been noticeable to the industry, stated Seetal, because Petro-Canada had made "appropriate arrangements and contingency plans" to provide product.

The Petro-Canada refinery is now in a planned start-up, and the company is bringing that plant back into production. However, as it is a newly reconfigured facility, it's going to take some time since there are a number of new units or revamped units, said Seetal. "Anytime you start a large facility, it's a complex, lengthy process. It's not like it will be something that will happen overnight."

Petro-Canada has a three-part plan for that execution, which involves: continuing to bring in product from outside the region; focusing distribution on the larger, more efficient Petro-Pass sites, which is affecting large commercial customers.

"The reason we're focusing distribution on the larger, more efficient sites, is it enables us to serve a greater network of customers," explained Seetal.

The final step in that Petro-Canada plan is managing how much and when customers can fill up, so as to spread out what diesel is available among more customers, and also aid in their ability to replenish inventory at the respective Petro-Pass sites, a strategy that appears to be effective, according to Seetal.

"We are seeing some traction in terms of getting product into the market and meeting some customers' needs. But definitely, as a retail organizer, we recognize the value of a customer, and that's why we're communicating with our

customers frequently so that they know what's happening, and what to expect."

A fuel producer that did have an unplanned shutdown is Suncor Energy. Shawn Davis, a spokesperson located at the Calgary-based head office, emphasized that SunCor's situation is just "one of the pieces of the puzzle" that's gone into the recent diesel shortage.

"There are certainly other contributing factors," she said in reference to other producer shutdowns which were related to maintenance. "So it just kind of all came together at once, unfortunately."

Davis said that Suncor had a breakdown on Sept. 2 at its oilsands upgrader located north of Fort McMurray, Alta., but the repairs to its hydrogen plant's "hydrotreater" are now complete. She said that Suncor has off-road spec' diesel being sold now in both Edmonton and Fort McMurray, and its on-road diesel is being put into inventory, via the pipeline. "So, as soon as it reaches the terminal, where it can be sold to customers, it will start being sold and we anticipate that to be Nov. 1."

Imperial Oil also had a "required maintenance" program, which caused a shutdown at its Strathcona refinery in Edmonton, a situation which exacerbated the recent diesel shortage problem. Work there began Oct. 17, and was expected to last "a period of weeks" according to Imperial spokesman, Jon Harding.

Imperial has experienced continuing strong demand driven by the solid economic growth it has experienced in western Canada, said Harding. He noted there was already a situation of tight supply, given the industry turnaround and given the high demand. "We regret any inconvenience and appreciate the patience and understanding of customers," added Harding.

Like Alberta, and similar reports from Manitoba, the Saskatchewan Trucking Association is feeling pressured by a low supply of fuel. Al Rosseker, executive director of the STA, has heard sporadic anecdotal reports of cardlocks in Manitoba running dry, and other cardlock systems operating at reduced hours.

"We had some of our carriers phoned on two hours notice (and less) saying that you're going to be impacted by a fuel shortage. These are from the producers phoning them. It basically gives our carriers enough time to phone the shippers and other customers, to say 'Your load is not going to be there on time.' It's not good."

The B.C. Trucking Association has reported that B.C. carriers in communities from Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Chetwynd, Terrace and Kitimat have all felt the pinch, given that Northern B.C. gets its diesel from Alberta suppliers. However, the BCTA reports that B.C.'s Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island has remained unscathed, because these regions are supplied by the marine terminal in Vancouver. The CTA has recently informed its members that there has been a telephone meeting with CPPI. A discussion was held about the necessity of regular communication among oil companies, CPPI and CTA, in particular on the current shortage of fuel, and as an ongoing preventative strategy in general. □

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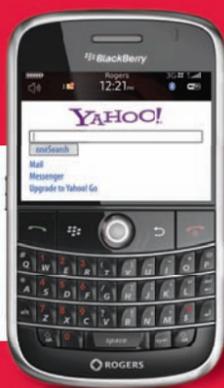


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## Canada

# First female-only truck convoy a huge success

By Jan Westell

OTTAWA, Ont. – A woman at the wheel of a semi tractor and trailer is still an unusual site in North America – and a convoy of female drivers is particularly rare.

Last July, Rachele Champagne was part of a three-truck female convoy, while driving along Hwy. 401, a prominent corridor between Quebec and Ontario. At that time, Champagne decided that a greater celebration of female truckers was in order. Within three months, she organized what she believes is the first female convoy, and decided to hold the event in concert with an appropriate female cause – breast cancer awareness – which is annually promoted during the month of October.

The first Female Convoy departed from the Fifth Wheel Truck Stop in Cornwall, Ont., at noon on Saturday, Oct. 18, following a complimentary



**A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONVOY:** Rachele Champagne, organizer of the first all-female truck convoy led the pack for a stretch of the event, which featured 29 trucks.

Photo by Joanne Ritchie

breakfast. After a distance of 62 km, the 29 trucks all piloted by female drivers arrived at the 730 Truck Stop in Cardinal, Ont., where they were

greeted by friends, family, and event sponsors.

Participating drivers raised a total of \$15,000 for breast cancer re-

search. Champagne also raised a total of \$10,000 from sponsors, which she used to provide the female drivers a celebratory barbecue and gift bags containing various treats, including jewelry, gloves and coffee mugs.

Other sponsors also provided free fuel, a truck wash, and other perks. A breast cancer survivor, Anna Capobianco-Skipworth, rode with Champagne for the duration of the convoy, and later spoke about her recovery.

“You could have heard a pin drop while she was speaking,” says Champagne. “For half an hour she spoke about the importance of (breast cancer awareness): how to prevent it; how to deal with it if it happens; and how to ask for help. She tells her story in a humorous way that actually keeps people interested.”

Sylvie Ouellette raised a total of \$1,600, the highest donation raised by any member of the convoy. For her part in supporting the convoy initiative, Ouellette drove the lead truck. However, considering Champagne’s extensive involvement with the event, including soliciting sponsors, she had one small request: to be temporary lead truck before and after Ouellette’s turn.

“Exiting and entering the truck stop, that’s all I wanted,” says Champagne, a single mother of two who lives in Gatineau, Que., when she’s not driving for a trucking firm in Ottawa.

When the female truck drivers arrived at the Cardinal truck stop, it was inspirational for all involved.

The convoy organizer remains amazed at her accomplishment, especially with putting together such a complex event over such a short period of time.

“I still have goose bumps,” she says, of a scene that had drivers greeting friends, family and sponsors, in true trucker fashion – by honking their horns and rocking their vehicles from side-to-side non-stop for about 15 minutes. The drivers were also very appreciative of the greeting party’s tribute to female truck drivers, a scene that caused a great deal of emotion, not only from drivers but also from those who understood the momentous event.

“Tears are coming down their faces, because they can’t believe what they’re seeing,” says Champagne. “They can’t believe they are looking at 30 females behind the wheel, who just all came together for an amazing cause. To me, that was the most powerful moment of my day.”

Even Capobianco-Skipworth cried during her drive with the convoy, not only for this unusual support for breast cancer research, but also as a reaction to her new friends, especially when the horns were blasting and the trucks were rocking. “She could not believe the girl power between us,” says Champagne.

The dual purpose of the event, not only for breast cancer research, but also to promote gender equality, was intentional, according to Champagne. She emphasizes that she is not only proud to be a woman, she is also very proud to be a truck driver – maybe even more so. Champagne says she chose the breast cancer cause, because it’s a disease that touches thousands of

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**CONVOY FOR A cure:** Participants from the first ever all-female truck convoy for breast cancer research gather for a photo during the festivities.

women every day.

“It just made sense to have a cause that really relates to women. It does touch men as well, but mostly women.”

Champagne says she is appreciative of the support that she received, especially the donations and the sponsors that were so generous about supporting the convoy. She plans to organize another female convoy next year, but with the help of a small committee, and possibly on a national level.

“I just have to find 12 people motivated like me. It would be really amazing, if in a year on the same date, we could have a convoy in hopefully every province, eventually and make it the biggest female convoy for sure.”

For more information, refer to [www.convoyforacure.com](http://www.convoyforacure.com).

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## Regina trucking firm calls it quits

**REGINA, Sask.** – A Regina trucking company has closed its doors, leaving its drivers wondering what happened and when they’ll get paid, according to a story published by CBC.

SynLogistics is one of the province’s bigger trucking firms, with about 60 employees.

SynLogistics was formed when Prud’homme Trucks merged with Schneider’s Trucking last year.

No one from SynLogistics was available for comment. The Saskatchewan Trucking Association (STA) scrambled to find work for SynLogistics’ employees after hearing of the bankruptcy. Some office staff, mechanics, and drivers had not been paid for two to three weeks, according to the STA, which also noted that some owner/operators were as much as two months behind in being paid.

STA past-president Denis Prud’homme has taken up the cause of SynLogistics’ workforce, and has been busy placing workers with other companies.

The STA also reports that Prud’homme has worked diligently and at his own expense, to find employment for SynLogistics’ workers. In this effort, the STA indicates that he has canvassed various companies, many of which are currently interviewing the workers.

“I just wanted to see them treated right,” said Prud’homme. “I know many of these people. They’re decent and hardworking; they’re (now) on the street with no paycheques.” □

# Happy New Year!

## Speed limiter laws to take effect Jan. 1

By Carroll McCormick

**QUEBEC CITY, Que.** – In what appears to be a virtual *fait accompli*, Ontario and Quebec say they will simultaneously bring laws into force on Jan. 1, 2009, that will require heavy vehicles to drive with their speed limiters set at 105 km/h. After a grace period that will likely last six months, police can start levying fines for non-compliance.

In Quebec, a Draft Minister’s Order, published Oct. 29, 2008, sets out which vehicles must comply and which ones are exempt: “Heavy vehicles whose speed limiter must be activated and set at a maximum speed of 105 km/h are the heavy vehicles assembled after 31 December 1994 and whose gross vehicle weight rating is at least 11,794 kg, except emergency vehicles, tool vehicles,

buses, trailers, semi-trailers, detachable axles and vehicles used for personal purposes.”

The Order does not specify the fine for non-compliance, but one source expects it will be \$300.

The Order is subject to a 45-day comment period, plus 15 days.

“We are in a position to state officially that the 105 km/h speed limiter law will be put into force on January 1, 2009,” says Transport Quebec’s Gervain Corbin. The exact date does, however, depend on the advice of the Minister of Transport.

“The way I read it is that the law will be in force on January 1, but I think sanctions will start on July 1,” says Quebec Trucking Association president and director general Marc Cadieux.

In Ontario, says Bob Nichols, who

is with the communications branch of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, “We are preparing our speed limiter regulations. They have not yet been approved (as of Oct. 31). Subject to approval, the legislation will take effect on January 1, 2009. Following implementation of the law it will then be followed by a six-month education period.”

During the education period there will be no fines for non-compliance.

Details remain to be sorted out concerning the readiness of the equipment Quebec’s enforcement officers will use to check trucks’ speed limiter settings, but one thing is for sure: if a truck is clocked going faster than 105 km/h, it’s a fair assumption that its speed limiter is not set correctly and the driver may be speedily fined.

The announcement of a Jan. 1 implementation date angered the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA), which said it would legally challenge the law once enforcement begins. □

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# Reducing the risk

**High-Risk Driver program allows fleets to determine which drivers are most likely to be involved in an accident – before it happens.**

By James Menzies

**TORONTO, Ont.** – Imagine being able to predict which of your drivers are going to be involved in an accident and then intervening before it occurs. According to Markel Insurance, a groundbreaking new program offered by the company allows fleets to do just that.

Rick Geller, national manager of safety and training services with Markel, says the company has completed two years of benchmark testing that has validated the program. One Canadian test fleet has realized a savings of about three cents-per-mile due to a reduction in crash costs, Geller claims.

The program allows fleets to determine a driver's likeliness to be involved in an accident, based on his or her previous moving violations and at-fault accidents. It draws upon extensive past research as well as forecasts conducted by Markel's actuaries. Geller says in two years of testing, Markel has determined its ability to predict the number of crashes a fleet will experience, as well as the drivers that will be involved to be about 80% accurate.

According to the program, a driver with a reckless driving violation, for instance, is 325% more likely to be involved in a crash over the next 12 months than a driver with an unblemished record.

"That individual is virtually guaranteed to have a crash," Geller explains.

Under the High-Risk Driver Program, fleets identify the highest-risk drivers and then provide them with defensive driver training to correct the behaviour that led to the charge, before an accident occurs.

"The High-Risk Driver Program is really a revolutionary way of administering safety in the trucking in-

dustry," Geller says. "Historically in the trucking industry, nothing happens until there's a crash."

Markel has developed a Crash Likelihood Chart, which places drivers with a past moving violation or accident into one of three categories: Category 1 is used to describe the drivers most at-risk, those convicted of a careless driving violation; Category 2 includes a number of less severe moving violations as well as a past accident; and Category 3 includes violations ranging from 'driving too fast for conditions' (which increases a driver's likelihood of being involved in a crash by 62%) to an 'out-of-service violation' (which the chart shows only increases the chance of being involved in a crash by 16%).

According to Markel's research, about 35% of drivers fall into one of the three risk categories.

"As long as we know how many drivers a carrier has, we can predict the number of drivers that are going to fall into this high risk category, the number of crashes and the types of crashes they're likely to be involved in, the carrier's associated costs and the overall impact on their bottom line," explains Geller.

The insurer has developed a fictional case study to drive home the benefits of the program. A company with 37 drivers would typically have 11 that fall into one of the three high-risk driver categories. Based on that, 11 collisions are forecast: seven property-only accidents; three injury-related crashes; and one involving a fatality.

Assuming an insurance deductible of \$5,000, the fleet is going to pay \$55,000 in deductibles alone – not including all the related costs. With a profit margin of 3%, that fleet would need to generate more



**PREVENTIBLE?:** According to Markel, it's possible to pinpoint which drivers are at the highest risk of ending up in an accident.

than \$1.8 million in revenue to offset the costs. (And that is to say nothing of the life lost in the accident involving a fatality). While it may be a fictional example, Geller says the most the model has ever been out compared to real-life case studies is 6%.

So where does a fleet begin?

Geller says in the fictional case study, "There are three guys you've got to get in front of right away," referring to the drivers in categories one and two.

"Any driver who falls into those top two categories really needs a hands-on defensive driving course, something where there's an over-the-road component," he insists. "Very often what you're talking about here is simply a bad habit that's crept into somebody's driving. But that little bad habit that got them that speeding ticket in a restricted speed zone has increased their likelihood of a crash by 35%."

Now that Markel is confident its High-Risk Driver Program delivers a payback for its customers, it is rolling out the program to the industry. There's a cost to join, as Markel plans to train a fleet's safety reps on how to administer the program themselves. For more info, contact Markel at 888-MARKEL-1 or visit [www.markel.ca](http://www.markel.ca).

## High-Risk? Who, me?

What exactly constitutes a high-risk driver? According to Rick Geller, national manager of safety and training services with Markel Insurance, "The way we define a high-risk driver, is someone who consistently engages in safety-averse behaviour that increases the probability of a crash."

Safety-averse behaviour includes actions such as speeding, tailgating, lane-hopping and running red lights, Geller explains.

He also says fleets should be wary of drivers that refuse to accept responsibility for their actions and those who delay reporting violations and incidents to their carrier.

Geller said fleets should draw on every possible source of information to identify high-risk drivers, including: driver abstracts (which should be checked twice per year); carrier profiles; electronic on-board recording devices; ECM downloads; violation notices; public complaints; and maintenance records.

He also notes high-risk drivers all have one thing in common – they think they're great drivers. □

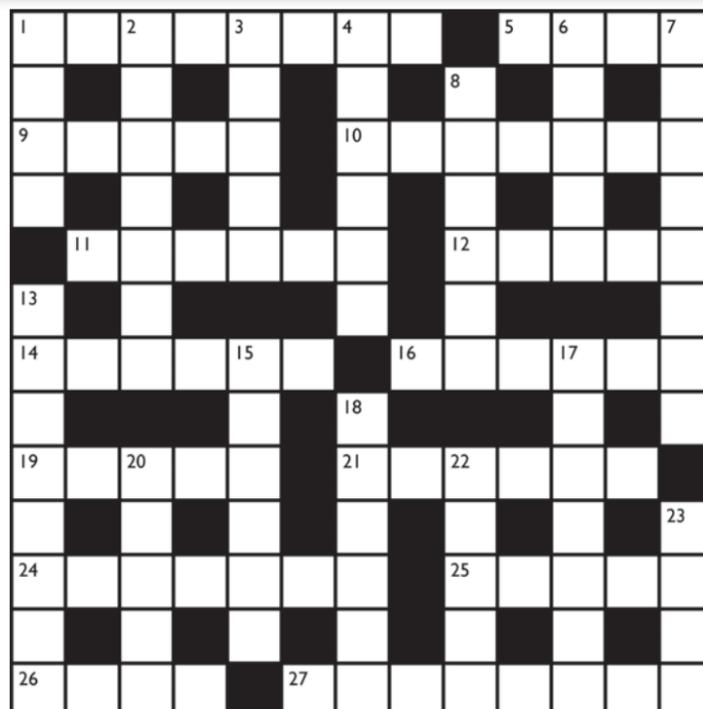
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## Across

1. Retro-style International model
5. Tire portion that contacts rim
9. Heavy-duty '70s Kenworth model
10. State with peach on plates
11. Really boring hand tools
12. Gear protrusions
14. PEI component
16. Trucking company based in Eastern Ontario
19. Unwanted items in tire treads
21. Deep-voiced truck-stereo speaker
24. Cow Town
25. Chevy's "American Pie" destination
26. Right, on a road map
27. One-way-out streets (4,4)

## Down

1. Oil or grease, briefly
2. Shifter selection
3. Brand on Rotella oil
4. A Freightliner cabover
6. International-tractor trim level
7. Haul an empty trailer
8. "Dukes of Hazzard" tow-truck driver
13. Mack tractor, debuted in '06
15. US stock-car-racing association
17. Local-delivery truck, often (4,3)
18. Patrick \_\_\_\_, star of "Black Dog" truck-action movie
20. Breaks a truck-stop rule, perhaps
22. Applied lubricant
23. It's in LTL



Answers on page 27

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# MTA honours its finest

By Jan Westell

**WINNIPEG, Man.** – After 6.6 million collision-free kilometres over a 40-year period as a commercial truck driver, Burton “Bud” Rush, was named the 2008 CTA/Volvo Trucks Canada National Driver of the Year at a recent Manitoba Trucking Association (MTA) awards dinner.

The Oakbank, Man. resident, who drives for Armstrong Moving and Storage (a division of United Van Lines Canada), was introduced to trucking as a young man – during a period when he also anticipated a hockey career.

He was drafted by the Los Angeles Kings in 1969, but was sidelined by a heart condition. That caused him to return to Winnipeg, and trucking, after buying a tractor-trailer and contracting out to United Van Lines.

During his 40 years on the road, Rush has not only earned an outstanding safety record, he has also shared his knowledge of first aid with the travelling public.

The truck driver has been the first to arrive at many accident scenes, and more than once saved a life or provided comfort to an accident victim. Rush’s road stories include a time he saved the life of a man thrown from a vehicle, and another incident when he provided comfort to a trapped accident victim, who ultimately did not survive the wreck.

Rush credits his training as a volunteer firefighter with knowing how to be effective in roadside emergencies. The generous driver has also provided assistance both to the motoring public and to fellow transport drivers, when mechanical problems have stranded them on the roadside.

“Bud Rush exemplifies the outstanding truck drivers with whom Canadians share the road,” said David Bradley, CEO of the CTA. “It is a great honour to recognize him with this highly-coveted award.”

## National Dispatcher of the Year

A Manitoba dispatcher was also recognized with a national award at the same ceremony. Janet Murray of Warren, Man., an employee with Payne Transportation, was selected as the CTA/Shaw Tracking National Dispatcher of the Year.

Murray got her start in the road transportation industry 13 years ago when she obtained her truck driving licence so she could join her husband, a long-distance truck driver, on the road as a team driver. After a period of time as a truck driver, the one-time nurses’ aide and administrative assistant, moved into the operations side of the trucking industry, where she earned the respect as a dispatcher.

“Janet has successfully grown revenue-per-mile (for) five consecutive years in her division, yielding higher margins each of those years,” said Tom Payne Jr., president of Payne Transportation. “Janet has a complete understanding of what it takes to survive in our industry especially in the

dry van market, where typically margins are very low and considerably tougher in our current economy.”

Murray credits her professional satisfaction to the people she works with and to the time she spent on the road as a truck driver. “I’m glad I drove for a while, because I know what the drivers are going through,” she said. “I understand where they are coming from. I like the challenge in making things work, (and) making the drivers and customers happy.”

## Service to the Industry

Three other MTA members were also recognized for professional excellence at a provincial level.

The MTA’s 2008 Trailmobile Service to Industry award was presented to Don Streuber, president and CEO of Bison Transport. Streuber was described as the epitome of a “true Manitoban” by MTA general manager, Bob Dolyniuk. He was born and raised in Manitoba; he attended and completed elementary, secondary and post secondary education within the province; and he spent his entire working career in the same province.

Streuber’s arrival into the trucking industry was timely. He came in “at a time of challenges and a never ending litany of changes” said Dolyniuk, who indicated that under Streuber’s direction, the company became a leader in the industry not only at the provincial, but also at the national and international levels. His firm has embraced innovative technologies that “have contributed to improving our environment and providing a safer environment for their driver force, and the general travelling public,” added Dolyniuk.

Environmental issues have challenged the trucking industry, and in response Streuber has led by example, stated the MTA. Through various commitments to automated transmissions, auxiliary power units, and aerodynamic aftermarket products, to name a few, he has led his company to become environmentally-friendly. These efforts have contributed to over 15.6 million kg of greenhouse gas emission reductions annually.

Streuber and his firm have supported the MTA for many years, and have been committed to other industry associations in Canada as well, including the Canadian Trucking Alliance, where Streuber represents Manitoba on the board of directors and executive committee.

## Associate of the Year

The Payne Transportation LP’s Associate of the Year award went to Wayne Hartle, manager of Reimer Express Driver Training Institute, who is considered to be well-known and respected in the Manitoba trucking industry. Having held many positions in the industry throughout his career, he is described as a “hard worker,” “dedicated,” “entrepreneurial,”



**DRIVER OF THE YEAR:** Bud Rush receives his award as the Volvo Trucks/CTA National Driver of the Year.



**MAKE IT TWO FOR MANITOBA:** Janet Murray of Payne Transportation took the nation’s top honours as CTA/Shaw Tracking National Dispatcher of the Year. It’s the first time the Driver of the Year and Dispatcher of the Year hailed from the same province.

and an “industry jewel.”

“Our recipient has spent most of his career in our industry and during that time, he has demonstrated a strong desire to participate and contribute to our industry,” said Dolyniuk. “He has, in a quiet and unassuming manner, consistently provided support to our association and industry, year after year.”

Hartle started his career in the trucking industry over three decades ago as a dock worker and city driver.

He has since remained in the industry as a line-haul driver, owner/operator, driver supervisor, which led him to become a driver trainer and eventually manager of a driver training institute – a position he held for over 12 years.

For the past 13 years, Hartle has been strongly committed and extremely involved with the MTA’s Professional Driver Championships.

He has held the position of chairperson, where he has represented the association at both the provincial, and at the national level. He has also been the manager for the Manitoba team.

“He has been a dedicated and hard worker for not only his employer, but also for the MTA, its membership, and our industry. Both he and his employer can only be described as staunch and loyal supporters of our industry and association,” stated Dolyniuk.

## Provincial Dispatcher of the Year

Local dispatcher Robert Ellison, who is employed by Con-Way Freight, received the 2008 Shaw Tracking Manitoba Dispatcher of the Year award. Ellison received four nominations from management at Con-Way Freight, which indicated that some of the traits Ellison possesses are his strong reliability and commitment to all staff and drivers, and his exceptional customer service skills.

Brian Hrabarchuk, a driver sales representative with the company, described Ellison as “a steady rock which anchors the driver staff in Winnipeg.” The co-worker also said: “Because of Rob’s reliability and commitment to us, this reassurance extends to our families as well, as they have seen how he always does his best for us. Every driver in Winnipeg knows that we can reach him at any time – and have plenty of times – whether it is due to a breakdown, an accident, or an out of hours issue.”

Debbie Coverdale, a senior account executive with the company, admired the dispatcher’s commitment to his profession. “Rob has exceeded all demands placed on him. Many times Rob has had to hop in a truck and make that pick-up or delivery to meet these expectations.” □

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# Time to winterize

Cold weather is upon us, and it's time to make sure we are ready for the season.

You've already gone over your rig and made the necessary mechanical adjustments, but have you taken the same care with your body to ensure a healthy transition from fall to winter?

Inside and out, your body needs special care to remain in tip top shape over the next few months. So, give your body the healthiest base you can by continuing to maintain a healthy diet of fruits, vegetables, protein and starches.

Additionally, consider the following common winter complaints and some suggestions to avoid experiencing them.

**Heart attacks:** At this time of year, heart attacks are more common.

In our northern climate, deaths and hospitalizations for heart disease and stroke may increase by more than 50%.

Why? Perhaps unaccustomed exertion while shoveling, but according to the *Harvard Health Letter*, another reason may be that heart-related hormones get thrown out of whack by winter's short days and long nights, making the heart muscle less resilient.

To protect yourself, pay attention to your body's signals when you're attacking the snow.

Stop shoveling immediately if you feel any heart-related pain.

To help your heart hormones, some recommend you use full-

## Preventive Maintenance

Karen Bowen



spectrum light bulbs to trick your body into thinking the days are longer.

**Flu:** Some flu experts think that winter triggers the flu virus to multiply rapidly after lying dormant throughout the summer and fall seasons.

As well, since we stay inside more, we have more opportunities to share our flu bugs with our family, close friends and fellow drivers.

To protect yourself, wash your hands frequently.

Wipe down your steering wheel and any other place another driver may have touched with germ hands with a bleach wipe.

**Vitamin D deficiencies:** Eat fish more often and/or consider taking vitamin supplements such as fish oils.

**Dry and irritated skin:** To maintain healthy, strong skin, drink plenty of water.

Drinking eight 250 ml glasses of water per day will supply your body with enough moisture to keep hydrated.

Because of the wind and cold, moisture loss can not completely be prevented, so drink additional liquids for your skin to draw upon to prevent dryness. Next, take short warm showers instead of long hot ones.

Even though they feel great at the time, long hot showers strip your skin of its natural oils, making it more prone to chap and flake.

In the shower, use a mild soap to cleanse but leave your natural oils intact.

As soon as you get out of the shower, moisturize your skin. Apply it while your skin is still damp to allow the skin to absorb some of the moisture before it evaporates.

Switch to an oil-based moisturizer and moisturize frequently. The more oil a moisturizer contains the more it protects against moisture loss.

Moisturizers that come in ointment form contain the most oil because an ointment is 80% oil and 20% water.

This forms a protective layer on the skin and makes it more "moisturizing" than creams and lotions. Ointments are especially good when humidity is low.

**Sun and windburn:** To protect yourself use sunscreen.

Apply a heavy layer of moisturizing broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher to your face, hands, and any other exposed skin, especially if you're going to be outside for a long time.

Sunscreen is as important in winter as the summer.

The sun's reflective powers are

great no matter what season it is.

They are 17% on the sand and 80% on the snow and ice.

Today, several products are available that combine oily, moisturizing cream with sunscreen.

Remember your lips; avoid chapped lips by using a lip balm with the same strength sun block.

Since the skin on your hands is thinner than in other areas of your body, it needs extra protection and care. So, pack mitts and gloves.

Protect your hands from the cold air and low humidity.

Be sure they are made from a material that does not bother your skin.

Some people layer their glove, putting a cotton mitten next to the skin and a woolen mitten over the cotton one to keep their hands warm and dry.

**Body temperature fluctuation:** Layer your clothing so you can take off or add layers to maintain a comfortable temperature.

If your clothes or shoes get wet, take them off as soon as you can.

Otherwise, your skin will become irritated.

Wearing wet clothing can also contribute to hypothermia because it wicks away body heat.

It's inevitable, the snowflakes will fall and the roads will become slick, even so, you can keep your health on track by following the above hints. □

— Karen Bowen is a professional health and nutrition consultant and she can be reached by e-mail at karen\_bowen@yahoo.com.

# What is E.coli bacteria anyway?

If you have been paying attention to the news lately, you will have noticed that E.coli has been mentioned often.

So, what exactly is E.coli? Basically, it is the short form for a group of bacteria called *Escherichia coli*.

Most of the strains of E.coli are harmless and normally live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals.

However, there are a few strains of E.coli that can have very serious effects on people and even cause death.

The majority of cases of E.coli infections are caused by eating contaminated food such as undercooked ground beef or unpasteurized milk.

Healthy beef and dairy cattle may have E.coli present in their intestines.

Thus, it is possible that the meat or may become contaminated during the slaughtering process.

That being said, it is important not to undercook your beef even if you like it rare.

Using a meat thermometer is a good way to make sure that your meat has reached a suitable temperature.

Another common way to acquire an E.coli infection is from

## Back behind the wheel

Dr. Christopher Singh



person to person.

If someone has this infection and fails to wash their hands well with soap after using the wash-room, they may pass along the germs to other people when they touch things such as doorknobs or food.

Again, we see how important it is to wash our hands frequently and thoroughly.

By far the most dangerous source of E.coli infection is contaminated water.

This was the case in the town of Walkerton, Ont. in 2000 when the water supply was contaminated by farm runoff.

It was reported that at least seven people died from E.coli infections and another 2,500 people became ill.

The symptoms of an E.coli infection begin about seven days after you are infected with the germ.

Normally, the first sign is severe abdominal cramping which begins suddenly.

Shortly after that, watery diarrhea which may be bloody begins.

At this point, some people experience fever, nausea and vomiting.

If you have any of these symptoms it is important to seek help from your physician as soon as possible.

If your physician suspects an E.coli infection he/she will take a stool sample to see if any of the bacteria are present. Currently, there are no specific medications for E.coli infections.

In fact, most doctors will not recommend taking any medications to stop the diarrhea as they will not allow the body to get rid of the bacteria.

The best treatment is drinking plenty of fluid and rest.

The main complication of this type of infection is dehydration. If you are severely dehydrated, you may have to go to the hospital and have fluids administered through an IV.

In order to reduce your chances of being exposed to E.coli, you can follow a few simple precautions.

Firstly, wash all raw produce thoroughly using running water and a scrub brush.

It is not necessary to use soap or commercial cleaners to wash

produce, plain water is fine.

Similarly, wash your hands, utensils and kitchen surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after handling fresh produce or raw meat.

Keeping raw foods away from foods that are about to be eaten is also a good idea.

When eating ground beef, make sure that it is well done and cooked to at least 160 F.

There should be no pink showing in the centre.

Never place cooked hamburgers on the same plate you used for the raw patties.

Finally, avoid drinking unpasteurized milk or untreated water. Swallowing water from lakes, streams and even swimming pools is not recommended as it can be contaminated with feces.

As you can see, E.coli bacteria can lead to very serious illnesses and should not be taken lightly.

As professional truck drivers you are constantly on the move and come in contact with many people on a daily basis.

Thus, it is even more important for you to keep in mind these simple hints as they will help to reduce your chances of getting and E.coli infection.

Until next month, drive safely! □

— Dr. Chris Singh, B. Kin., D.C., runs Trans-Canada Chiropractic at 230 Truck Stop in Woodstock, Ont.

**Safety**

# Set benchmarks and measure your progress

It's probably safe to suggest that most fleet managers measure their success against a series of financial benchmarks. Unless they tracked any changes to income and freight volumes, it would be impossible to determine whether the business was growing or shrinking at any given time.

The number and severity of collisions should be tracked in the same manner.

By using a history of collisions to establish a series of related benchmarks, fleets can put themselves in a position to measure the effectiveness of any proactive safety initiatives. The information can even be used to predict the cost of future losses.

The importance of establishing these reference points cannot be over-stated.

After all, it is impossible to measure any progress without understanding where you began.

Each operation should base its benchmarks on factors that reflect the related business. Most over-the-road fleets, for example, will compare crash frequency per million miles travelled.

In contrast, urban fleets may want to measure their exposure by comparing crash frequency per power unit.

The important thing is to establish a benchmark that will not be affected by any changes in the size of the fleet. (An overall shift in the number or severity of collisions could simply reflect a change in the number of power units).

Once these numbers are established, meanwhile, fleet managers will likely recognize some trends.

In general, about 30% of all crashes involve the high-cost incidents that lead to the most injuries and fatalities.

Head-on collisions, the T-boning of vehicles, and collisions with pedestrians, cyclists or the rear of other trucks fall into this group. These high-cost incidents also include rollovers, jackknife situations or a general loss of control.

The frequency of this category of collisions is particularly important to determine because it can account for an astounding 75% of collision-related financial losses.

The leading cause of truck driver fatalities continues to include impacts with the rear of another vehicle.

In contrast, cases in which drivers sideswipe other vehicles, hit stationary objects or back their way into a collision will account for about 40% of all crashes.

But it is also important to remember that they can lead to significant financial losses of their own.

A sideswiped vehicle may tend to lead to a loss of between \$10,000 and \$50,000, but it can also lead to a million-dollar claim.

The remaining group of losses will encompass situations that are more challenging to control, such as cargo claims, acts of God or a costly collision with a moose.

Once a fleet establishes its own benchmarks, it will be in a position to determine the impact of

## Ask the Expert

**Albert Zimbalatti**



safety measures that target the specific challenges.

Indeed, the root cause of most crashes can certainly be addressed.

As the industry's general experience might suggest, most issues fall within a driver's control. Rear-end collisions and rollovers are often linked to factors such as driver fatigue. And many T-bone incidents could be avoided if drivers were more aware of their surroundings.

The use of a defensive-driving course that embraces a system such as Markel FACTS will en-

compass every aspect of the decision-making process that takes place behind the wheel.

Trainers will focus on proper visual skills, the need to scan the environment around a truck, and the perception of risk.

After that has been addressed, it is a matter of comparing changes in the collision rates to the individual benchmarks. That will determine whether a safety program is achieving its desired effect.

The benchmarking process can even be expanded to include any type of loss. A fuel hauler, for example, may also want to track the frequency at which tanks are contaminated with the wrong grade of fuel.

Information such as that can be used to measure the effectiveness of any programs that are designed to reduce cargo losses.

Just remember that regardless of the established reference points, any ultimate objective also needs to be realistic.

A goal of eliminating every collision may appear to be admirable, but it is better to channel your efforts into steady reductions in the overall figures that exist. It is all about taking a journey – and measuring your progress along the way. □

– Albert Zimbalatti is the manager of special risks, safety and training services for Markel Insurance Company of Canada and has more than 31 years experience in providing loss control and risk management services to the trucking industry. Send your questions, feedback and comments about this column to [info@markel.ca](mailto:info@markel.ca). Markel Safety and Training Services, a division of Markel Insurance, offers specialized courses, seminars and consulting to fleet owners, safety managers, trainers and drivers.

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## Tax Talk

# The bulletproof tax return

Do you feel it? You may not (yet) as the weight of the world seems to be on trucking's shoulders already, but there's something else clinging to your back: a target. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has determined that the trucking industry should get more scrutiny from auditors this year. I questioned an audit supervisor recently and she said the industry is on the hot seat.

When the CRA focuses on a specific industry or group, it's called a special project audit. Unfortunately, trucking has a history of non-compliance and mistakes. If you're a small fleet or owner/operator, there's a good chance a CRA auditor one day will set his sights on you. When he does, you want to be bulletproof.

## Audit types

If you've ever received a letter from CRA asking for information to support an item on your tax return, congratulations. You've been audited. This is called a desk audit. Open the envelope, read the letter, have your accountant review it, and respond before the deadline.

The second category is the field audit, where you're asked for your full accounting records. In some cases, an auditor may want to meet in person. Always involve your accountant as the first step in responding to a field audit.

The auditor will want to match your carrier broker settlements or

## Tax Talk

Scott Taylor



sales journals to your bank records and check expense receipts against cancelled cheques and credit card statements. He'll look to see that you did in fact pay for the items you've claimed and that your expenses are reasonable.

It's important for the auditor to understand what is "reasonable." His caseload probably includes lots of different businesses, so don't assume that he understands trucking. Explain what you do, where you travel, and safety requirements, carrier requirements, and customer requirements so he has the perspective he needs.

## Grey Areas

Now begins the fun of supporting expenses as legitimate business expenses. For the CRA, there are no grey areas here, only black, and they will aggressively challenge these types of expenses:

**Meals:** Meal claims are one reason CRA has been auditing trucking operations so intently. The requirements have changed in recent years and there's still some confusion.

As a sole proprietor, your meal claim must be based on receipts. If you're claiming sole-proprietor meal expenses based on logbooks, here's what the CRA's audit letter will say:

*'The simplified method for meals is a CRA policy for transport employees set out in the Income Tax Act. This way of calculating meals is not allowable for truckers/inter-liners that are self-employed. Self-employed individuals are allowed to claim meals for their travels under the Income Tax Act, but you have to keep full records of your trips including receipts for meals consumed and logs recording each trip, total distance traveled and time spent away from home.'*

Both the TL2 form and the CRA information circular describing meal claims are for employees only. For years, CRA allowed the sensible argument that if employee truck drivers can claim meal expenses with the simplified method of reviewing logbooks, then sole proprietor truck drivers should be able to do the same. Not any more.

The only way to claim meals without receipts is to incorporate. By incorporating, your meal claim is safely and legitimately calculated on the TL2 form based on your away-from-home time recorded in your logbook.

Again, the CRA's position on meal claims for sole proprietors: receipts, receipts, receipts.

**Service vehicle:** To fully support your claim you must keep a record of the total kilometres you drive in a

year (ie. your Jan. 1 and Dec. 31 odometer readings) and detail the kilometres you drive to earn business income. You must list the date, destination, purpose, and the number of kilometres you drive for each trip. What about leased service vehicles? I hear it over and over: 'I lease my service vehicle so I can write the whole thing off.' Or 'I got a pick-up so I can write the whole thing off.'

Not true. You can claim 1% to 100% of your service vehicle expenses if your actual business use supports it. You must back up your claim with details on how you used your vehicle for the business.

**Expenses at home:** Home phone, cell phone, satellite radio, uniforms – you can deduct these expenses or a percentage thereof only if they were incurred to earn income. You must be able to show that you spent the money as part of your business operations.

An experienced tax advisor specializing in trucking can show you how to substantiate these and other deductions so they're not denied. No one likes the feeling of a target on his back. But it's much less of a concern when that target is taped to a Kevlar vest. □

– 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](http://www.tfsgroup.com) or call 800-461-5970.

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**TMTV**

# Preventive maintenance

Many drivers take better care of their trucks than their own bodies. Maybe we need to rearrange our priorities?

Most of us could be accused of taking our health more or less for granted. We work a little too hard and probably don't get as much sleep as we need. We eat too much of the wrong kind of food, and gauging by the size of the T-shirts I've been selling lately, it's pretty obvious that we don't get as much exercise as we should.

I say we, because I'm as guilty as any of you. I work into the wee hours of the morning, then get up to join the rest of the world for the start of the business day. I seldom eat a proper breakfast, and I certainly don't exercise as much as I should. And my excuses are pretty weak: I can't spare the time, the gym is closed...

So, my jeans are getting tighter, and I often need an afternoon nap to help pay down some of my sleep debt. No big deal, right? Well, I can tell you that the older I get, the bigger deal it becomes. As we age, the impact of a unhealthy lifestyle is more likely to manifest itself in something worse than an expanding waistline, afternoon drowsiness, or aches and pains that we never used to have.

I was reminded of our relative frailty recently when I got involved in the Convoy for a Cure, the first all-woman truck convoy which, incidentally, raised \$15,000 for the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation during breast cancer awareness month. I know many women who have battled breast cancer, some successfully, some not. In fact, the day of the convoy was the anniversary of the day my mother lost her life to the disease.

I felt it was important for OBAC to get involved in this awareness-raising effort not only because breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Canada – men can contract breast cancer too – but because the convoy spoke to the need for all of us to do a better job of looking after ourselves.

OBAC sponsored a post-convoy speaker who shared her own story of survival. Anna Capobianco-Skipworth of Montreal, who endured two mastectomies and lost both her ovaries to cancer over a 13-month period, moved the crowd to laughter and to tears as she took us on a journey from the discovery of a lump, through fear, denial, hope, and finally triumph. As a survivor, Anna works to promote breast health and to encourage wellness and healthy lifestyle choices.

Anna's story left me thinking about all the things drivers can do to decrease the risk of going down the same path. The sedentary life of an over-the-road driver is a litany of compromises in diet and sleep routines, and some downright bad habits.

Professional drivers are at a higher risk than the general population for things like diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, and a variety of musculoskeletal ailments, many of which can be traced back to the

## Voice of the O/O

Joanne Ritchie



difficult and unhealthy lifestyle that is trucking.

But like Anna's breast cancer, and so many other nasty diseases and conditions, early detection greatly increases the chances of successful treatment and even survival.

It's all well and good to talk of improving lifestyle, but the challenges of keeping well on the road are significant. Don't get me going on adequate rest and exercise or improving nutrition on the road – that's a column in itself – just think about regular PM medical exams. Scheduling doctors' appointments

around limited and unpredictable home time is difficult, and arranging medical visits on the road is almost impossible.

Which is why I love Bob Lodge, owner of the 730 Truck Stop in Cardinal, Ont. Thanks to his lobbying efforts and an arrangement with a Community and Primary Health Care team out of nearby Brockville, an RV full of medical expertise sets up shop in his parking lot once a month to dole out medical help and advice to visiting truckers.

The mobile health unit, which is the only one I know of in Canada, offers basic check-ups that could detect early signs of high blood pressure and diabetes. The clinic also does immunization and blood work and dispenses prescriptions, if necessary. The unit has been in operation for about a year and has recently extended its service to include evening visits.

South of the border, long-time truckers' health advocate Dr. John

McElligott and his supporters founded the Professional Drivers Medical Depot (PDMD) and opened the first clinic in Knoxville, Tenn. almost two years ago.

There are now a half-dozen PDMD facilities at truck stops in the US with plans to build a nationwide network of walk-in health care facilities geared to meet the needs of professional drivers on the road.

What trucking needs is more folks like Bob Lodge and Dr. John, and we need more truckers to start thinking of regular medical check-ups as the kind of insurance you can't live without. When was the last time you paid a visit to your doctor? I don't want a confession here, just a promise that you'll make it a priority. □

– Joanne Ritchie is executive director of OBAC. Are you ready to check it out? E-mail her at [jritchie@obac.ca](mailto:jritchie@obac.ca) or call toll free 888-794-9990.

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## Feature

By Julia Kuzeljevich

**OTTAWA, Ont.** – Between telemarketer calls, retailers' requests and government forms, it seems that barely a day goes by without some representative asking for bits of pieces of personal information from the general public.

Now consider a trucker, who faces background checks and requests to show identification on a daily basis. It should come as no surprise that truckers are more than a little concerned about how that information is being used.

And that concern, it would appear, is not misplaced.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC) is charged with overseeing compliance with the Privacy Act, which covers the personal information-handling practices of federal government departments and agencies, and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA), Canada's private sector privacy law.

In June 2008, the Privacy Commissioner of Canada released a report on PIPEDA, stating that too many data breaches are occurring because companies have ignored some of the most basic steps to protect personal information.

"Many companies need to do more to prevent inexcusable security breaches," said Privacy Commissioner of Canada, Jennifer Stoddart. "Too often, we see personal information compromised because a company has failed to implement elementary security

# Mind your business

## Just how much personal information are drivers required to relinquish to shippers?

measures such as using encryption on laptops."

Interprovincial transport companies are covered by PIPEDA as well as by provincial laws. With respect to employment data, depending on your situation you will be governed by PIPEDA.

According to the OPC report, almost nine in 10 people whose data was compromised by a self-reported breach in 2007 were put at risk because their personal information was held in an electronic format that was either not secured or lacked adequate protection mechanisms such as firewalls and encryption.

Other breaches occurred because employees had not followed established company practices.

For the trucking community, with the increased security that surrounds border crossings and access to ports and yards, the need to reveal one's personal information has always meant a certain vulnerability and reliance on the trust factor.

Some truckers have been left uneasy about information they are being asked for, calling into question what situations warrant what kinds of requests?

Trucker Shawn Nieforth contacted *Truck West* about his concerns with the increasing number of shippers that ask for a driver's licence upon arrival at yards and then record the info.

While Nieforth said that it was already common to be asked for picture identification to confirm the photo matched the driver, upon a recent trip to a terminal in Etobicoke, Ont. he was asked by a security company for his driver's licence and then the number was written down.

"There was no official form or notice they wrote it on, just a yellow notepad," he told *Truck West*. "One night I refused to give it and they asked for my health card number."

The incident was sparked, he said, by the fact that apparently there had been a truck and trailer stolen out of the yard.

"Through the week they were just writing plate numbers down but at night and on weekends they were asking for more. At first it seemed to be the one security guard doing this and then all of them were. There was a letter from the (third-party) security company asking them to get this information," he recounted.

Nieforth went to his company to question why they didn't have a company ID card, like some of the regular drivers delivering to the terminal, but was told it was a big deal to set up.

For Nieforth, the big issue was that his personal information was being handled so informally.

*Truck West* queried the shipper, which Nieforth identified as Nestle, and the yard property owner, CP Rail, about procedures required for security purposes.

CP Rail spokesman Mike LoVecchio said that while the company does not elaborate on its security processes, "Canadian Pacific has robust security measures in place, and I can confirm we take an integrated approach to security with our partners," he told *Truck West* in an e-mail.

At press time, Nestle had not responded to queries regarding security procedures.

Are truckers, by nature of their employment, more subject to an abuse of their personal information?

Ariane Siegel, a partner with Gowlings Toronto, is a specialist in the field of data protection and privacy.

"I haven't seen greater issues of misuse but there is heightened sensitivity around this area," she said of

the trucking industry.

"It's the area where you have the most immediate use of new technologies," Siegel noted, and "a resulting continual tension created between security needs and identification."

Siegel said that companies are now spending a lot of time and effort on privacy compliance gathering.

"The trucking industry is very interesting because of the interaction between the employer and third-parties but there's a continual push and pull in terms of what is personal info and what is reasonable use of it," she said.

She noted that some of the earliest decisions in privacy law have focused on the transportation sector.

"Trucking companies need to be working very closely with the parties with whom shipments are being carried to make sure there is a continual interchange about what is appropriate, and what are the safeguards. A lot of the problems arising are in this context. Obviously truckers need to have been told in advance what to expect. Pre-clearance is a helpful step in dealing with identification," said Siegel.

She cited a couple of cases that went through the OPC that have shed a lot of light on the privacy issues in the trucking sector, with regard to what was found to be reasonable.

In a 2003 case, two individuals (both truckers) complained when a railway company asked that all drivers entering and exiting its intermodal terminal provide their driver's licence numbers and fingerprints as part of its new driver identification system.

One of the truckers was also concerned that the company had not taken adequate measures to safeguard the personal information it collected under this program.

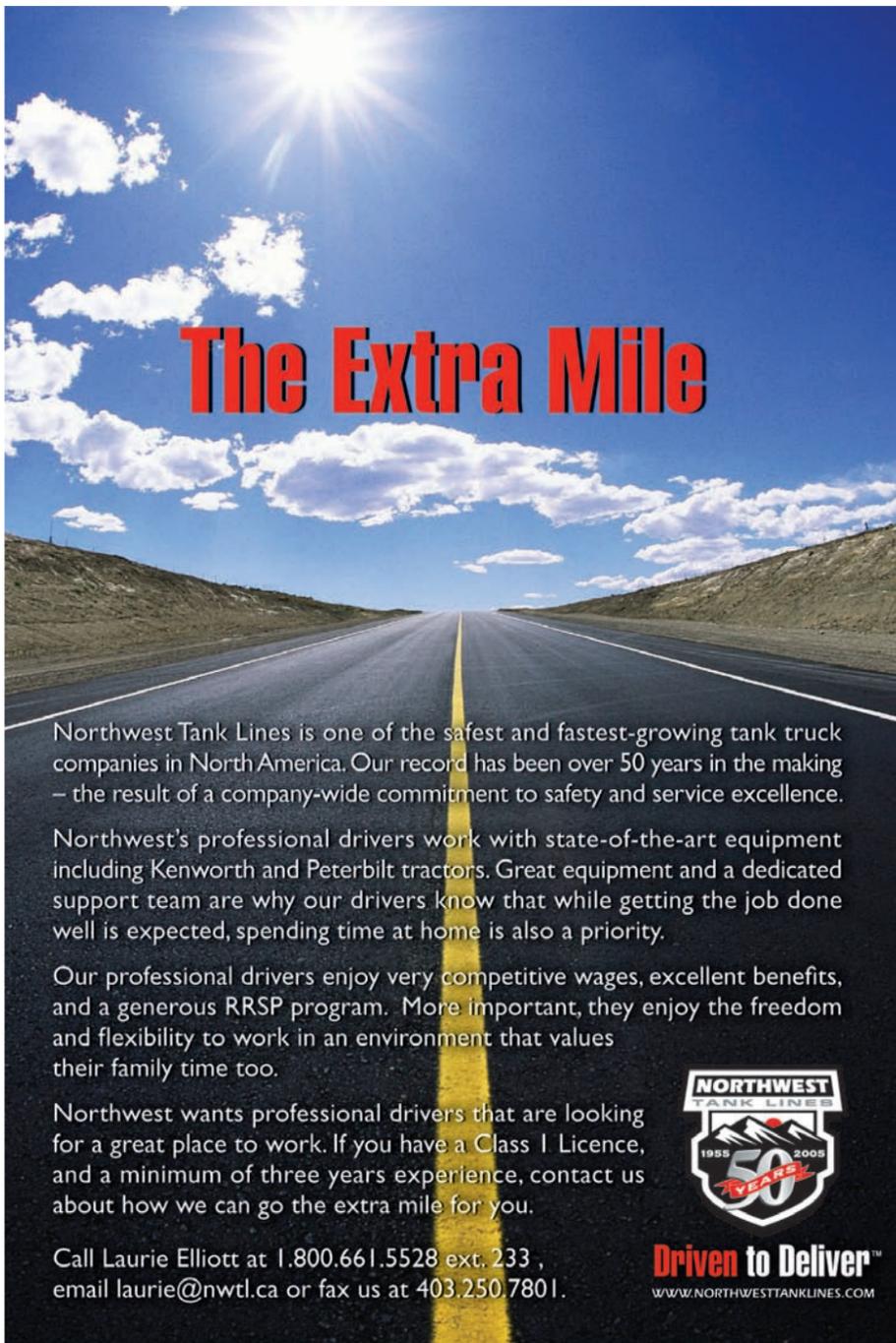
The Privacy Commissioner found that the company's purposes for implementing the new system were appropriate since it: "allowed the company to better handle the large volume of trucks entering and exiting the terminal, minimized liability for damage to railway containers, and reduced the potential for vandalism and acts of terrorism to property and cargo."

The Commissioner also determined that the railway had taken the appropriate steps to inform drivers of the new measures and to obtain their consent through a driver registration form and through encryption of the collected driver's licence numbers, accessible only to approved railway personnel.

In a later 2006 case, at issue was the use of GPS technology and its effects on employee privacy.

Several employees of a telecommunications company complained to the OPC when they learned that their employer was installing GPS in their work vehicles. They believed that the company was improperly collecting their personal information, namely their daily movements while on the job, without their consent and without identifying the reasons for the collection of the information.

While the Assistant Privacy Commissioner cautioned organizations about "function creep" and



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the negative cumulative effects of various forms of technology on privacy, her ruling in this case accepted most of the company's purposes for collecting and using personal information gathered by GPS and found that implied consent was present for these purposes.

The company, meanwhile, agreed to develop and communicate a policy on the utilization of the data and to train its managers on the appropriate use of GPS.

While the cases cited seem to weigh in heavily on the need for information-gathering in the workplace, despite "function creep" and the "negative cumulative effects of technology on privacy," in the face of these demands, which won't go away, the best measure of protection would appear to be information and better communication.

According to Joanne Ritchie of the Owner-Operators' Business Association of Canada (OBAC), it would appear that in some cases there is an increased need for dialogue or written communication between shippers and truckers about security requirements and expectations around the use of personal information.

"I have been getting calls in the last year (around this issue) but I don't know if it's on the increase," she said.

"I've talked to drivers who have been in the business for a lot of years and it's not unusual to be asked for ID such as a driver's licence with photo. They want to make sure that they're giving the load to the right person."

Ritchie said that especially when there's been double brokering, and you make your arrangements with "XYZ" company, and someone else is picking up the load, it's understandable to exercise caution.

She has also heard of truckers being asked for their health card numbers "although I can't see why it would be necessary unless it's for the photo."

Inconsistency from one shipper to the next, and often from the same shipper, around identification, is not uncommon.



**DO YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW?:** Truckers have been voicing increased concerns about the amount of personal information requested by shippers. Could it come back to haunt them? *Stock photo*

"Our position on all these credentials is it would be nice to see the industry pick one and that be the platform for what ID needed to be shown," she said.

"Also, if you have a regular customer and there's security issues, it would seem that the carrier/shipper would have some sort of understanding or agreement in place."

Ritchie said OBAC is currently working on developing its own privacy policy, with a toolkit of information for truckers on their rights and responsibilities under the Privacy Act.

Stateside, according to Norita Taylor, of the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, questions about privacy rights are also increasing.

"We've had a complaint from a driver about a driver's licence being put on a bill-of-lading to Mexico. The driver said he did not get a satisfactory answer from the company," said Taylor, who added that

some members have also been asked for social security numbers as identifiers.

OOIDA is participating in a trucking security program as a subcontractor with the HMS Company, chosen by the US Department of Homeland Security.

"This is more about what you're watching for as homeland security," said Taylor.

While this program wouldn't directly address the release of personal information for the purpose of homeland security, that would certainly be something that could arise as an issue, noted Taylor in a phone call with *Truck West*, especially as in the interest of anti-terrorism, truckers can only expect security measures to get stricter.

In many cases and circumstances, such as deliveries during off-hours and such, truckers may feel that they cannot refuse a request for identification, however odd.

"Very few have gone back to the

carrier and said this is what our customer is asking for and is this something that's been agreed upon? I think at some point as an immediate fix that they should have a discussion with the carrier about how to handle this," said Ritchie.

Carriers and shippers have a mutual role in helping employees understand how their privacy rights meld with the job requirements. It's just a question of meeting in the middle with truckers, who could use a better handle on their rights in the context of the transportation sector.

"Shippers I have talked to have said we just want to verify that the person who is picking up the right load is the right person, in the case of a matching name, for third-party carriage. What kind of credential is appropriate to confirm that? The problem is not having to have credentials, it's the issue of having to have many and not a consistent one that works for everybody," said Ritchie. □

## What is personal information?:

"Personal information" under Canada's *Privacy Act* means information about an "identifiable individual."

It includes your: name, age, weight, height; medical records; income; purchases and spending habits; race, ethnic origin and colour; blood type; DNA code; fingerprints; marital status; religion; education; and home address and phone number.

"Personal information" does *not* include the: name, job title, business address or office telephone number of an employee of an organization.

How does the Act protect your personal information?

The law gives you the right to: know why an organization collects, uses or discloses your personal information; expect an organization to collect, use or disclose your personal information reasonably and appropriately, and not use the information for any purpose other than that to which you have consented; know who in the organization is responsible for protecting your personal information; expect an organization to protect your personal information by taking appropriate security measures; expect the personal information an organization holds about you to be accurate, complete and up-to-date; obtain access to your personal information and ask for corrections if necessary; and complain about how an organization handles your personal information if you feel your privacy rights have not been respected.

An organization may not need to obtain your consent if collecting the information clearly benefits you and your consent cannot be obtained in a timely way; or if the information is needed by a law enforcement agency for an investigation, and getting consent might compromise the information's accuracy. □

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# Spec'ing shunt trucks

*They're small, but highly-specialized. Why spec'ing shunt trucks should not be taken lightly.*

By James Menzies

**TORONTO, Ont.** – A shunt truck is a seemingly simple piece of equipment. Its sole purpose is to shuttle trailers from one spot to another. But when you think about it, isn't that also the purpose of a highway tractor – only on a grander scale? So why is it that only a fraction of the attention that goes into spec'ing a highway tractor is usually afforded the lowly shunt truck?

Spec'ing a shunt truck can be every bit as complex as spec'ing a highway rig, notes Mike Hignett of Capacity dealer Glasvan Great Dane.

For starters, customers must decide whether their shunt truck will ever put rubber to pavement anywhere other than the company's own yard. If the vehicle will be operated on public roads – even just to fuel up or shuttle trailers between facilities – then it must be spec'd with all the emissions controls found on today's highway tractors.

That's a costly upgrade, but one that most Canadian customers are willing to pay for the added versatility.

Hignett estimates about 70% of his customers opt for the road-worthy version.

John Uppington, sales manager for Kalmar (maker of Ottawa) shunt trucks at Woodbine Truck Centre, says "Historically, we always sold more of the automotive (on-highway) ones because of the versatility that they have. With a road-legal truck you can go down the street to get fuel and you can use it to reposition trailers between facilities, which is not uncommon."

Because shunt trucks are powered by the same Cat and Cummins mid-range engines found on medium-duty highway trucks, the emissions controls are also the same. That means exhaust gas recirculation and diesel particulate filters (DPFs) today. Cat will no longer produce road-worthy engines for 2010, but Cummins will use selective catalytic reduction (SCR).

Just where shunt truck manufacturers will mount all the additional components required of SCR remains a mystery, but Uppington assures that it is possible, and that field testing is already underway.

The spec'ing process doesn't end at selecting an on- or off-road version. Canadian shunt truck dealers tend to offer highly-customized vehicles, capable of handling the harsh environment typical in Canadian operations.

"If you take a truck that is working in the Port of Los Angeles and stick it up here, that truck is not going to last," points out Hignett. "We spec' trucks that are going to last longer in the rain,

snow, salt and all the stuff they put on the roads nowadays."

The options for Canadian shunt truck customers are seemingly endless, and many of them stem from discoveries made by Canadian customers and dealers themselves. You can specify: rear air suspensions to reduce wear and tear; driver-controlled traction locks for maintaining grip on snow and ice; trailer counters to measure productivity; and auto greasing systems to reduce maintenance requirements, just to name a few options.

"All the trucks we bring in are custom-ordered," says Hignett. "We don't take off-the-shelf trucks because they're not going to work up here."

He says Glasvan Great Dane takes pride in the fact it has been recognized by Capacity as offering among the most specialized shunt trucks across the OEM's dealer network.

"We tell them we have unique customers – there's no point in bringing up a truck that's not going to work," Hignett responds. He says one thrifty customer once made the mistake of buying a shunt truck from a US Capacity dealer, because the price tag was about \$10,000 cheaper.

"They spent \$15,000 retrofitting it in order for it to work up here," he adds. "You can get a cheaper truck somewhere, but you're not going to like yourself in the morning when you do that."

Among the most recent enhancements to Capacity shunt trucks is a multiplexed wiring system that eliminates the rat's nest of wires that



**ASK BEFORE YOU BUY:** Spec'ing shunt trucks for the lowest cost of ownership can be a detailed process. It's best to speak to a knowledgeable dealer to find out how to maximize efficiency in your own operation. Photo by James Menzies

previously powered its vehicles.

"It used to take a tremendous amount of hours to diagnose electrical problems and it also caused electrical fires," Hignett recalls of the old system. The current multiplexed wiring eliminates about 60% of the wires and simplifies troubleshooting, he claims.

"You can basically figure out what a problem is within 10 minutes," says Hignett. "Before, you could spend a whole shift just tracing wires to find out what the problem is."

Uppington takes pride in a solution Woodbine created for a customer that was suffering landing gear damage due to dropped trailers.

"We were able to devise a system where the fifth wheel would only open when below a certain height," recalls Uppington. "We do all kinds of stuff like that."

Dealers have been largely successful in preaching the efficiency benefits of a shunt truck, compared to moving trailers with day cabs – a once-common practice that's fast becoming obsolete.

"The days of buying a new tractor and putting an ele-

vated fifth wheel on it are virtually gone," Uppington says.

"We sell shunt trucks to guys who only move two or three trailers a day," adds Hignett. "The reason they buy it, is that it's more efficient."

It's easy to see why, when you crunch the numbers.

Hignett points out a driver can move five trailers with a shunt truck in the time it takes to move one with a day cab.

A typical shunt truck, meanwhile, consumes just 1.5-2 gallons of diesel per hour whereas a day cab will use about four. A typical shunt truck running 3,000 hours per year can deliver annual fuel savings of \$30,000 over a day cab, Hignett explains.

And there are maintenance advantages as well, he adds.

"Everything about a shunt truck is designed for efficiency," says Hignett.

"A day cab is designed to hook up to a trailer and move it across the city or province – it's designed to be backed up two to five times a day. A shunt truck is designed to be backed up two to five times in a 10-minute span. The components on a Class 8 truck are designed to go forward. All components on a shunt truck are heavy-duty because every minute that truck's getting slammed into the back of a trailer."

Even a well-spec'd shunt truck has its limits, however, and a careful driver can greatly extend the vehicle's life expectancy.

"A lot of drivers get into it, see how heavy-duty everything is and think it's a battle tank," says Hignett, painfully recalling a time he visited a customer's yard only to find drivers having bumper-to-bumper pushing contests during a lunch break. "That kind of stuff will destroy the efficiency of the truck."

A well cared for shunt truck can last for as much as 40,000-50,000 hours of use, says Hignett. But, he adds "If you don't maintain the truck, you can throw it in the scrap bin after 5,000 hours." □





Artist: Sukhpreet Singh - Age 11

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## Economy

# Cash or credit?

**The good news is that OEMs' financial branches have good access to credit. The bad news is that this credit is likely to get more expensive.**

**By Eric Berard**  
**MONTREAL, Que.** – We've been hearing a lot about the financial crisis that struck the US before the entire world's markets sunk as well. At the root of the problem were hazardous housing loans, but the transportation industry would not be immune as the financial crisis evolved into a global credit crisis. Is there any credit out there available for trucking companies?

According to Eric Starks,

president of FTR Associates, an American consulting firm specializing in transportation forecasting, the answer is yes.

He made the following comment during a teleconference call held recently, when *Truck West* asked him if the financial branches of the North American truck makers would continue to have access to credit: "In general, I think that they'll have access to credit. I don't think that they're

gonna have as much issues as some other people. What it really comes to is what's the cost for them to access that credit? (OEMs) will be able to lend to people who need pieces of equipment but it might not be at the most desirable rate. I don't think it's a significant issue for these guys to access capital."

The question was worth asking, because one of the main problems with the current credit crunch is that banks are reluctant to lend money to each other. And, in many aspects, companies such as Volvo Financial Services, Mack Financial Services, Paccar Financial, Navistar Financial or Daimler Truck Financial are very similar to banks, as their main source of revenue and profit is the interest on the loans they provide to their customers.

But to lend money, you need to have access to it. Yet, a question remains – are there any new truck purchases to finance out there with carriers struggling with low freight volumes? Yes, but not a lot.

#### Freight volume: worst since 1992

During the same conference call, Noel Perry, managing director and senior consultant, FTR Associates, said that he forecasts 2009 to be the worst year since 1992 in terms of freight demand, underlining that profit margins were down for three consecutive years in the trucking industry.

On the other hand, his partner Jon Starks, transportation analyst, truck, trailer and rail equipment market, thinks that most large fleets are generally very well-managed and that aging truck fleets will have a huge impact on new equipment demand.

"The small guys will be disproportionately impacted. Cash flow and asset purchases will be more difficult as credit lines become stricter, become smaller or simply not available. Larger fleets on the other hand will continue to have access to capital, though for them it may cost more to get less," he said.

FTR Associates president, Eric Starks, thinks that 2009 will be a tough year for truck dealers.

"You buy a truck, a trailer or a rail car for one reason: because you have freight to move. If you don't have freight to move, you don't buy the equipment, it's pretty much that easy."

On a more optimistic note, he added: "But the upside is that if the recession is not too long, some fleets might do some pre-buy in 2009 to avoid EPA2010. But it's gonna be tough to do so because of the credit environment." He concluded by saying: "There are good years to come. If people can get through this time, then they can make good money beyond 2010."

#### OTA survey confirms US trends

It's important to remember that FTR Associates is an American company and that it prepares its forecasts from a US perspective. That being said, a recent survey conducted by the Ontario

Trucking Association (OTA) – among 90 carriers of all sizes, from 10 or less power units to more than 250 – seems to confirm that Canada's trucking industry is living a very similar reality. The survey – for the entire results, contact OTA at [www.ontruck.org](http://www.ontruck.org) – indicates that 24% of respondents are generally optimistic, 34% are pessimistic and 41% are unsure about the economical environment. The good news is that 90% of them say that their customers are paying a reasonable fuel surcharge.

Sixteen per cent of the surveyed carriers think that over the next six months, freight volumes southbound will improve, while 26% think the same way about northbound US freight. The more pessimistic carriers feel that these volumes will decrease by 52% and 28% respectively. Back to equipment buying (and financing), 20% say they plan to buy more tractors in the next three months, 21% of them also want to increase the number of trailers in their fleet within the same period. But it might not be easy, as 72% say they feel that credit is tightening.

#### Access to capital

When speaking to companies such as Volvo Financial Services, Mack Financial Services, Paccar Financial, Navistar Financial or Daimler Truck Financial, one notices that some of them are walking on eggshells when discussing the credit crisis' impacts on their own operations.

And it's quite understandable as, like in all markets, consumer confidence is key.

When *Truck West* asked if credit availability was an issue for Paccar Financial, Robin Easton, Paccar treasurer and spokesman replied: "Paccar's excellent AA-credit rating helps the financial services business to consistently access the capital markets for its funding needs."

Commenting on the situation on behalf of Volvo Financial Services, Jim McNamara told us that "In general, obtaining financing to purchase trucks has been a challenge for some customers, particularly new businesses.

"But Volvo Trucks is still in a position to offer financing to customers with strong credit profiles through our captive finance arm, Volvo Financial Services. And our offerings in this regard are comprehensive and competitive. Volvo Financial Services' finance policies are comparable for the US and Canadian markets. It maintains a consistent approach to lending and leasing throughout a business cycle which allows VFS to remain active during the current period. Also VFS's rates are comparable to other lending sources in the Canadian market."

McNamara added that "VFS does not take unwarranted risks to foster sales, and it remains in a position to offer financing to customers with strong credit profiles. As always, Volvo Financial Services continues to exercise due diligence throughout its US and Canadian financing operations."

Yet, Volvo's sister company, Mack, has been very aggressive on

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## MISSING



### ZAINA TALIB 5620-P

**D.O.B.:** April 14, 1999

**Missing since:** November 11, 2005

**Missing from:** Toronto, Ontario

**Height:** 4' 6"

**Weight:** 80 lbs.

**Eye Colour:** Brown

**Hair Colour:** Black

**Characteristics:** Hair long, straight, usually kept in a pony tail

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the financing front and “sales fostering,” announcing three different packages from Mack Financial Services to incite US customers to buy or lease Mack trucks through its in-house financial arm.

Many may not know this, but Canadians who buy International trucks get financing through GE Capital. But south of the border, customers are taken care of by Navistar Financial, whose vice-president, CFO and treasurer Bill McMenam, said about GE’s approach in Canada: “GE has always been very supportive of our dealers and customers in providing the financing to help them be successful.” About the US market, he said “Navistar Financial continues to have access to capital to help finance our dealers and customers. We have recently completed two important deals: the early renewal of our \$800 million dealer floor plan funding facility; and the extension of our \$100 million retail accounts conduit funding facility. We were able to obtain this funding because our expertise in the transportation industry has built the trust of our lenders.

“We’ve been doing this for nearly 60 years, and we know our industry inside and out. This expertise allows us to make sound credit decisions and to maintain the strong portfolio performance our banks require. That said, accessing liquidity is never easy – nor should it be. Regardless of market conditions, we always undergo a rigorous due diligence process to prove ourselves credit-worthy to our lenders.”

#### Higher interest rates

Our understanding of McMenam’s answer to *Truck West’s* question is that, yes, credit is available, but prepare to pay higher interest rates. He confirmed this.

“Yes, the cost of funding has risen dramatically across the board. Like all lenders, we need to



**CAN YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON IT?:** Credit for buying equipment is still available, but it could cost you more as the global credit crunch continues.

achieve a profitability threshold to ensure our continued access to capital, and that means pricing our rates in line with the marketplace. So, yes, as the cost of financing increases for all companies, we are going to need to share some of the increase with our dealers and customers.”

But the good news is that Navistar Financial is going to offset some of the impact.

“We are in business to help dealers and customers purchase International trucks, and we always consider absorbing as much as possible of the fees we are charged, regardless of market conditions. But at the same time, our lenders have always required us to strike a balance between supporting sales and maintaining

profitability,” said McMenam.

We heard similar comments from Steven E. Goodale, vice-president of credit at Daimler Truck Financial.

“As the captive finance company supporting the sales of Daimler Trucks North America, we support our manufacturing partners, our dealers and our customers for the long haul, in good times and in difficult times such as we are experiencing now. Obviously, the current economic situation affects Daimler Truck Financial as well, but we continue to support our dealers and our customers.”

And when asked about a potential increase of interest rates for Daimler Trucks’ customers, he added that dealers and customers

should not be overly impacted.

“We need to strike a balance that supports our dealers and customers during this time of volatility in the credit markets. The volatility has its costs, but we have taken the position not to pass on the cost of the volatility to our dealers and customers because we are partners for the long haul.”

But what about financing criteria? Daimler Truck Financial claimed, “We continue to buy deals that meet our lending criteria. We have seen more challenges with owner/operators and small fleets because of a decrease in revenue. We evaluate the ability of the customer to make payments. Many lenders have exited the owner/operator segment because of the economy.”

On the subject of tightening the financing criteria, especially for owner/operators and smaller fleets, Navistar Financial’s spokesperson said that it will not occur in the immediate future.

“The criteria we’ve been using to make credit decisions remains effective, as evidenced by appropriate levels of repossessions and losses within our portfolios. Our credit parameters remain about the same, but interest rates have risen as we have been forced to pass on our higher borrowing costs to our end customers.”

Underlining that Daimler Truck Financial has been in business for many years, Goodale offered a comparable answer when discussing credit criteria.

“We look at credit-worthiness, the ability to pay, and cash flow. There have been no fundamental changes in our credit positioning. We are in the market for the long-term.”

For most companies we spoke to, the financing strategies (interest rates, exposure to risk, etc.) are no different in Canada than in the US. So, cash or credit? If you picked credit, prepare to pay more cash for it. □

## Trucking analyst expects economic turnaround in late 2009

By James Menzies

**HALIFAX, N.S.** – Ray Mawhinney, chair of RBC Asset Management, delivered a refreshingly optimistic overview of the US economy and its trucking industry during the Atlantic Provinces Trucking Association’s first ever International Transportation Summit here.

Although he began with a disclaimer that he’s not an economist, Mawhinney’s role is to analyze US economic conditions and specifically the health of the US trucking industry for investors.

While he acknowledged the US economy is on its way into recession this quarter, he said “it’s not insurmountable.”

He pointed out the current economic meltdown pales in comparison to past events because the losses (US\$1.5 trillion and counting) represent a smaller percentage of overall GDP than during events such as the Great Depression or even the Japanese banking crisis in the 1990s.

“We’re going to have a difficult spell first, then we’re going to

come out of it in 2009,” predicted Mawhinney.

While the US still has not technically slipped into recession, Mawhinney noted the economic stimulus package passed in May, 2008 artificially buoyed GDP growth in the second quarter and kept it from recording two consecutive quarters of negative growth.

“(US consumers) had money in their pockets, and it buoyed the economy artificially for at least one quarter,” he explained.

Much of the economic problems plaguing the US stem from the sub-prime mortgage crisis. Mawhinney said that only 10% of US mortgages were held by sub-prime borrowers in early 2005. That number ballooned to 40% by the end of 2005 and in 2006, nearly half of all US mortgages were sub-prime. Today, said Mawhinney, 20% of all sub-prime mortgages in the US are in default.

“It ends up being toxic throughout the system,” he said.

Another side effect is that the

housing market has collapsed. Year-to-year, Mawhinney said the US housing market is down 15% and it could fall by another 10%. However, there are signs the worst may be over, he said.

“The good news is, on a month-over-month basis, the rate of change is slowing,” he explained. Instead of dropping by as much as 3% each month, US house prices are now falling by only about 1%. Mawhinney predicted the housing market could begin to recover by the latter part of 2009.

Mawhinney said his group is predicting GDP losses in the US of: 1% in Q3; 4% in Q4; and 2% in the first quarter of 2009.

He said that should be followed by positive growth of 1% in the second, third and fourth quarters of 2009.

“Our feeling is that it’s not going to be a major rebound, it’s going to be a modest recovery,” Mawhinney said, noting US consumers are still struggling with heavy debt loads.

As far as the Canadian dollar is concerned, Mawhinney said it was

overvalued by 20% when it peaked last November.

“We think it may see some renewed strength as we enter 2009, but we don’t think it gets back to the 60 cent range and we don’t think we’ll see \$1.10.”

On the trucking side, Mawhinney noted several trends in the US which he expects to continue, such as a decrease in average length of haul and rising bankruptcies.

He said an increase in US truck tonnage earlier this year may have been misleading, since it had more to do with a rise in exports and flooding in the US mid-west that put rail lines under water, than any economic rebound.

He also said while freight rates have risen in the US, again it’s deceiving because much of that is due to the fuel surcharges which will be reduced as diesel prices decrease.

The overall verdict? Mawhinney said he expects the US to emerge from a recession in late 2009, paving the way for a better 2010. □

# New tool provides in-cab coaching for drivers

By Jan Westell

**REDWOOD SHORES, Calif.** – Technology originally created to control teen drivers may have found a home in the trucking industry.

GreenRoad inventor Ofer Raz was driving home from work one night and noticed some teenagers who were driving very aggressively and dangerously. He approached this problem with his friend Hod Fleishman. The technologically astute pair subsequently designed a safety monitoring device which would monitor driving maneuvers of all types, whether it was driving too fast, following too close, handling corners aggressively, making inappropriate lane changes or heavy braking.

The driving maneuver is recorded by a tiny monitoring device, which displays the safety level of a particular driving action, with lights of green (safe), yellow (moderately aggressively) and red (severe).

The small device sits on the side of the dash, and provides immediate feedback to the driver for each maneuver, which can be used independently by the driver or shared with fleet management. Drivers are offered additional safety reinforcement tools through a link to the company's Web site.

That information is collected wirelessly, and the driver can later be alerted by e-mail or with more detailed reports, through the company Web site. GreenRoad is considered a "coaching tool" and designed to improve driver behaviour, according to Pete Allen, the vice-president of North American sales for GreenRoad.

"They designed the initial concept of the product to measure every working driving behaviour that a driver can make, with any type of vehicle, and do it in a way that you could provide positive feedback to the driver immediately, and give them reinforcement tools to reinforce how they drive."

After the pair built the product from their design headquarters in Israel, they put the new technology into trials with the initial intent of focusing on teenage drivers, a strategy that eventually expanded to include truck fleets.

Formerly known as Drive Diagnostics, the company was launched globally about a year ago, with an office in the U.K., an office near San Francisco, and a subsequent name change. GreenRoad Technology is now directing the bulk of its marketing efforts towards the commercial fleet industry.

Allen states that North American fleets that are using the product have been extremely positive about the monitor.

"There hasn't been a company that has tried our product and decided not to continue forward," he says. "They all love the product. It does exactly what we say it does."

Arctic Glacier, which has a head office in Winnipeg and a private fleet of between 800 to 1,000 vehi-

## Safety Center Weekly Report 2008 March 1 - 2008 March 8

### Personal Score:

Current	Previous week	Change since previous report
49	155	↓ Well done! Keep on improving

### Fleet Score:

Average	Best Driver
44	2



**Please pay attention to your braking patterns.**  
Remember, allow at least a two-second gap between you and the vehicle in front.

**FLEET REPORTS:** Fleet managers can generate reports to see which drivers are at the highest risk of being involved in an accident, based on their driving behaviour.

cles that deliver from 90 facilities across Canada and the US, is more than pleased with the results.

The manager of health and safety says the company has had a successful pilot project with GreenRoad since May of this year, with 100 trucks based in the US connected to the technology. Walter Kruk adds that Arctic Glacier has allowed the system to work independently with the drivers, without corporate interference.

"We don't really interact with our drivers at this point in time for the trial purpose, because we've backed off and said this isn't going to be a big brother approach," Kruk says.

"We've let the drivers basically handle it themselves. We've seen some pretty amazing results just doing that. We have more than cut our risky driving behaviours by 50%, and this is just within the trial period, from when we initially put the equipment in the truck until today."

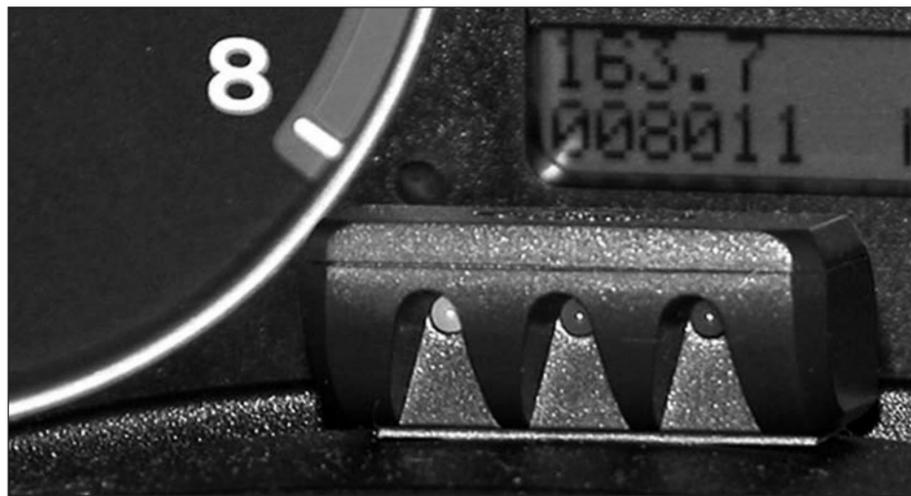
More specifically, here's how the technology works: GreenRoad puts an accelerometer (or sensor) in the vehicle, which measures G-forces on an X and Y axis, essentially measuring forces front, back, and side-to-side of the vehicle and everything in between.

What makes GreenRoad unique is an ability to accurately identify risky maneuvers as the incidents occur, according to Allen. Using proprietary algorithms, the software determines what type of maneuver was made.

Feedback is then sent to the driver via the in-vehicle device on the dashboard, and later via e-mail, and through GreenRoad's Web reporting.

"It can tell you if you've had an aggressive lane change, for example, and if it was to the left, or to the right," says Allen. "It can tell you at what speed you were going, and what time that happened."

The idea behind GreenRoad's technical and philosophical approach to preventing accidents, is that if information about risky be-



**INSTANT FEEDBACK:** A dash-mounted device uses colour-coded lights to signal whether or not a maneuver was safe.

haviour is provided to a potentially over-confident driver, the end result would be a personal adjustment of driving habits. Also, the driver or fleet would not only operate the vehicle safer, but the vehicle would also achieve greater better fuel economy.

"The fuel is intuitive," says Allen. "If you drive the vehicle properly you automatically get better fuel economy."

In better understanding how GreenRoad is effective, Allen suggests examining human behaviour. If 10 people were asked if they were a good driver, he says that eight or nine of those questioned would respond that they were, "because everybody thinks everybody else is a bad driver."

But, if there was a tool that told a driver how good he or she actually was, or what particular areas the driver had problems with, such as corner handling, braking, lane handling and acceleration, there might be an adjustment of that behaviour.

"If you knew what your problem area was, and it was constantly reinforced to you while you were driving, and through e-mails, and different (wireless) means, if you wanted change, you would change your behaviour," he reasons.

The green, yellow and red lights on the small monitor that sits on the dash are considered no more intrusive than a turn signal. All that information is captured by

software and sent to the GreenRoad safety centre Web site, where the driver and fleet manager can review that data.

Fleet managers can create reports by driver, fleet, trip, department, maneuver, etc. to identify trends over time. GreenRoad scores drivers on each action, and offers a final score for all maneuvers during a particular driving period.

"Eighty per cent of fleet drivers change their behaviour by themselves. So, there's very little management involved. And then the other 20% is what the management focuses on, to reduce the risk even further."

The GreenRoad system doesn't monitor where the operators drive, nor does it track them or invade their privacy by putting a video camera in the driver's face, Allen says. "So once drivers understand what it does, they're actually very receptive to it."

Allen is reluctant to divulge how many companies have endorsed GreenRoad's product, but he does indicate that globally it has 2,500 units installed with "several very large well-known companies."

While GreenRoad has not aggressively pursued the Canadian market, according to Allen, it is waiting for a substantial installation to make the effort worthwhile. For more info, visit [www.greenroad.com](http://www.greenroad.com). □

# Shell Lubricants earns spot in Guinness Book of Records

By Jan Westell

**HOUSTON, Texas** – Shell oil was recently involved in a collaborative test that set a fuel economy record for the Guinness World Book of Records, using a Mercedes-Benz Actros Class 8 truck that ran on Shell premium diesel fuel and a synthetic Shell lubricant.

The truck's fuel economy went from approximately 6 MPG, to 12.1 MPG, or 19.44 litres per 100 km – a new European record.

"We provide lubricants to Mercedes and the product that we were using over there was a product called Shell Rimula R6LME, and that is a 5W30 engine oil that was designed for use in these Mercedes engines," Dan Arcy, Shell Global Solutions' OEM technical manager, explained during a recent media technology event.

According to the Guinness World Records, the record was set last spring. It took place at the Nardo Technical Centre, a testing facility with a 12 km (7.46 mile) circle track. The truck, fully-loaded to 40 tonnes, was driven in both directions for an entire week, 24 hours a day. During this time, it stopped only to refuel, change drivers and change driving direction. One week and 12,728 km (7,909 miles) later, the average fuel consumption of the truck was established as being 19.44 litres per 100 km – a new record.

As result, the Mercedes-Benz Actros earned "The most fuel-efficient 40-tonne truck" record by Guinness, a test that had the truck haul over 25 tonnes of payload at an average speed of 80 km/h around the track. The test vehicle had an automatic transmission, wide-base tires, full fairings and other aerodynamic devices, according to Arcy.

Driving conditions were optimum at the track, including perfect weather, noted the technical manager. "There were a lot of things that were all in place, along with the lubricants, the fuel, and the way the truck was outfitted. They still outperformed and set the record," he said.

Rimula R6LME was designed for Mercedes with a lower phosphorous level than what is typically desired in the US, according to Arcy.

However, that product is not available in North America, "at this time," according to Arcy, who noted that a similar product, the Shell Rotella T Synthetic SAE 5W-40, is the closest lubricant that Shell can offer on this side of the Atlantic. He noted that the two products do share some similarities.

"They're similar in the fact that they are both full-synthetic products, but they do differ in the fact that they are SAE 5W-40, versus Europe (requirements) which is SAE 5W-30, and they do differ in their chemical composition."

Synthetic lubricants are in greater demand in Europe than in North America, and Arcy indicated that this mindset is likely to change on this continent, eventually. He says part of the European preference for synthetics is a difference in the way fleets operate in Europe versus the US.

"One fleet (operator) told me, 'Hey, we want to see these trucks



**GO WITH THE FLOW:** Shell demonstrates the cold flow properties of its synthetic lubricants. Conventional lubes are on the left with new and used (far right) synthetic lubes pouring much more freely after chilled to -35C.

every 90 days. We don't want to be seeing them only twice a year, or something. We'd rather see them every 90 days, and be able to fix lug nuts that are broken, or seals that are leaking, or broken mirrors, or such, so the driver doesn't have to worry about dealing with that when he's on the road," Arcy recalled.

There are also a number of areas where synthetics have some benefits over conventional oils, and one of the key benefits is that synthetics offer a wider viscosity range, according to Arcy. The Shell Rotella T SAE 5W-40 Synthetic can meet the low temperature performance of a 5W, while still retaining high temperature performance of an SAE 40 grade, he added.

"Because of having that wider range of performance, it actually gives you the ability to pump easier," he said. "Again, it may only be 1%, but we claim up to 1% benefit, and 1% in a Class 8 truck right now, is somewhere around \$800 a year savings in fuel, if you're going 120,000 miles a year."

In addition, he added, synthetics offer better oxidation stability.

"So low temperature performance and high temperature performance are gained through our product. I'm not going to say that that's indicative of all synthetics out there, but it is with our product, on the high temp side. That's really your main reason for improved performance out of the synthetics."

Shell demonstrated a number of lab tests at its Houston facility, to show the benefits of synthetic lubricants, including a four-vial pour test, with one vial each of new and used synthetic lubricant (SAE 5W-40), and one vial each of new and used conventional oil (SAE 15W-40) af-



**A CLOSER LOOK:** Brian Papke, tribologist with Shell Lubricants, inspects wear and tear on metal from within the engine.

ter the product had been exposed to cold temperatures, at -35 C. Shell's formulator tribologist, Jason Brown, explained the purpose the test.

"We're trying to simulate temperatures in really, really cold climates, because we want to make sure that when you start your engine, the oil pumps and flows," said Brown. "If all goes well, then our synthetic SAE 5W-40 sample should flow better than the conventional SAE 15W-40 sample. As well, if you look at the comparison of the new and used synthetic SAE 5W-40, they should flow about the same – which is a testament to how robust synthetics are, versus how non-robust conventional oils are. But it's a different formulation feature that we have in our SAE 15W-40. One of the nice things about synthetics is, they do very well for oxidation and temperature control, so they tend to keep more consistent viscosity."

Shell's conventional SAE 15W-40 new and used lubricants, both spread out in the pour test, covered the width of the test pan, and

thickened to a gel.

"Imagine if you're in the middle of winter, and you trying to start an engine, and it's a Class 8 rig with 15,000 to 20,000 miles on it. You need that oil to flow, because what it has to do is lubricate the parts. If it's not doing that, you have high wear. You want something with excellent cold temperature flow, like synthetic SAE 5W-40 oil in there, because even when it's really cold, it's going to pump. So you're going to get oil protection," explained Brown.

The new synthetic SAE 5W-40 flowed easily, while at the same time the used conventional 15W-40 was barely out of the vial, unlike the synthetic used lubricant which also poured faster than the conventional new or used lubricant, a result which did not surprise the tribologist.

"We've got the same kind of pour characteristics (with used synthetic lubricants) which is a testament to the same kind of performance we had at new state." □

@ARTICLECATEGORY:855;

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**BIRD'S EYE VIEW:** First Truck Centre is expanding into the Vancouver area, with the 60,000 sq.-ft. facility seen here.

## First Truck Centre expands into Vancouver area

By Jan Westell

**SURREY, B.C.** – After an unassuming start in Lloydminster, Alta., First Truck Centre is now 30 years old, with a dealership network that has grown to include four locations: the original in Lloydminster; two branches in Edmonton; and most recently, an expansion to the west coast.

In October 2008, First Truck Centre added the B.C. Freightliner dealership to its network. The new facility is located within the Metro Vancouver region, at 18688-96th Ave. in Surrey, B.C.

First Truck Centre Vancouver provides seven day a week support to Freightliner Trucks, Thomas Built Buses, American LaFrance Emergency Vehicles and E-One Emergency Vehicles product lines.

With a staff of 129, First Truck Centre Vancouver operates out of a 60,000 sq.-ft. facility, on an 11-acre property, offering a full line of services that include a body

shop, a heavy-duty frame straightener, and a 60-ft. down draft paint booth.

The centre offers parts, service and bodywork to Class 3-8 trucks, among other vehicles, the company says.

First Truck Centre will integrate its commitment to customer service within the new Vancouver dealership, according to a spokesman for the organization, who notes that this commitment has garnered First Truck Centre the coveted Freightliner Aspire Award as one of the top 10 dealerships in North America for three years running, from 2004 to 2006.

“The desire of the team in Vancouver to be the premier heavy-duty truck dealership in the Lower Mainland, makes it a natural fit with our culture, and the synergistic potential is exciting,” says Patrick Ozirny, president of First Truck Centre.

For more information about the new location, call the company at 604-888-1424. □

## Getting to know SCR

By James Menzies

**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – During a recent visit to Volvo Group's North American headquarters, a group of trade press journalists was challenged to identify which of two seemingly identical trucks was equipped with selective catalytic reduction (SCR). Short of guessing, there was no way to get it right.

It certainly wasn't possible to visibly discern the difference between the two vehicles, one of which was rigged with an EPA07 emissions system and the other with SCR, which Volvo and most other OEMs will use to comply with the more stringent 2010 emissions standards.

The same could be said for the way the truck operated on the highway – the truck with SCR looked, felt and sounded the same as any other Volvo VN.

Outside having to keep an eye on diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) levels, the transition to SCR-equipped vehicles in 2010 should be seamless for the driver.

Volvo's Jim Fancher removed the side fairings from the SCR-equipped VN on display to reveal what exactly will comprise the system that will be used in 2010.

“The system will consist of three major components,” Fancher explained.

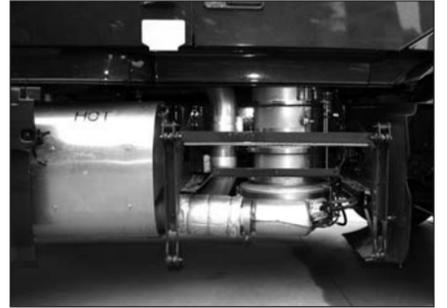
On the driver side is a heated DEF tank, which is easily-identified by a blue cap. Volvo will offer two tank sizes: 10 gallons for day cabs and straight trucks; and 13 gallons for long-haul. In long-haul applications, a truck should be able to run 4,000 miles between DEF tank refills, Fancher said. DEF will be consumed at about a 2-4% DEF-to-diesel ratio. (Two to four gallons of urea will be required for every 100 gallons of diesel the vehicle consumes).

The DEF tank features a narrow filler neck, to prevent a driver from mistakenly filling it with diesel.

The other two SCR components are an injector and an SCR catalyst, which are both located on the passenger side of the vehicle. The diesel particulate filter (DPF) will not change in 2010, except at the outlet where the DEF injector is located.

The injector doses DEF into the exhaust stream as it leaves the particulate filter.

It then travels into the SCR cata-



**TAKING A PEAK:** The SCR catalyst is located on the passenger side of the truck, but hidden from sight by the side fairings.

lyst where a chemical reaction occurs, converting NOx into harmless nitrogen and water vapour.

The engine itself will look the same, but since NOx will be eliminated downstream in the SCR catalyst, Fancher noted Volvo will use less exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) and reprogram the engine for improved performance and fuel economy.

“We will continue to optimize our software and the engine operations even long after we release (SCR engines) with January, 2010 production,” Fancher said. Reducing EGR levels is good for fuel economy, and also has the added benefit of allowing the engine to produce more NOx in-cylinder, which allows for a more efficient DPF regeneration cycle, the company claims.

“NOx is one of the major elements used in the regeneration to clean out the carbon,” Fancher explained. “So by putting more NOx out of the engine, we enhance the passive regeneration of the DPF.”

One drawback of SCR is that the system occupies a considerable amount of frame rail space.

“We're trying to maintain as much workability with the vehicle as possible even though we are taking up some of that critical frame rail real estate,” Fancher said.

The system will also add weight, but just how much weight is still up in the air as Volvo continues to tinker with the layout of the system.

But from a driver perspective, there appears to be little to worry about.

Unless you're accustomed to running more than 4,000 miles at a time, you may never even have to seek out DEF, which should be widely available at truck stops and dealers by 2010. □

## Raydan moves into Ontario facility

**EDMONTON, Alta.** – Raydan Manufacturing, maker of the Air Link suspension, has moved into its new Baden, Ont. facility and closed its Alberta parts and service centre as part of a restructuring initiative.

The Baden facility, northwest of Kitchener, will be home to the company's work on twin steer axles and chassis modifications for the vocational truck market. The company said the new, 10-bay facility will shorten wait times for customers in eastern and central markets.

Raydan management also said the “added convenience of servicing OEMs and end-users in their own backyard will provide opportunities for the company to maximize the potential of its engineering team.”

The company blamed the poor performance of its Edmonton parts and service centre for recent operating losses.

The closure of that facility will free up funds for ongoing operations, the company said in a statement.

“The convenience for our customers is now secure no matter where they are located,” said Ray English, president and CEO of Raydan. “Focusing on our core values in product development, manufacturing, chassis modifications and military applications in both Alberta and Ontario allows us to maximize our resources to deliver our products to our customers in a timely and cost-effective manner.” □



**GIVING BACK THROUGH GOLF:** Barbara Palmer, marketing coordinator with Chevron Lubricants (left), presents Ellen Campbell of the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness with a cheque for \$8,500. This was the money the Truck West/Chevron Annual Golf Event raised for the charity this past summer. The Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness is dedicated to eliminating child abuse through advocacy, education, public awareness and prevention programs, and to providing accessible support, healing and individual empowerment for children and adult survivors, their families and caregivers.

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By Edo van Belkom

**The story so far...**

**Mark has a coffee with two other drivers who work for Bud. One of the drivers, a constant complainer named Manny Giron, wants to know why Bud gives Mark all the best loads while he's getting only local runs. Mark can't speak for Bud, and takes offense to Manny's assertion that Mark is paying Bud kickbacks. Just as the conversation starts to get heated, Bud enters the coffee shop.**

**Bud admits that Mark gets better loads than Manny and he explains why. Mark takes whatever Bud gives him without complaint. Mark's reliable while the same can't be said for Manny. But Manny's not listening, he wants what Mark has, even though Mark's been working for Bud for years and Manny's still on his first. Mark decides to teach Manny a lesson by switching loads with Manny. Manny will go to Tampa, while Mark gets the load to Buffalo...**

"Are you sure you want Manny to take that load into Tampa?" Bud asked outside the coffee shop after everyone had gone their separate ways.

"Why? Don't you want him to take the load?"

"No, I don't."

Mark put a hand on Bud's shoulder. "Relax, Tampa's not that far away, really. He'll be there in no time."

"It's not the distance I'm worried about, it's the getting there."

"You want him to learn, don't ya? He needs to gain some experience, you told me that yourself."

"Yeah, I suppose."

The two men started walking, Bud toward his car and Mark toward Mother Load.

"But I'm warning you," Bud said. "If there's a penalty for whatever reason... you're paying it."

Mark thought about it and agreed. "Sure, it'll be worth it."

Mark took his time getting underway. Manny had been eager to get to Tampa and had left an hour earlier. Even so, Mark had a feeling he'd be catching up with Manny at the Queenston-Lewiston Bridge. It was just after seven in the evening when Mark reached the bridge. He took his time pulling up to the crossing, searching for Manny's rig on the other side of the border. Although it was dark out, Mark had no trouble finding Manny's bright yellow Volvo parked in the US Customs and Border Protection's secondary inspection lot.

"What a surprise," Mark said under his breath. He pulled up to the booth and presented his invoice and his bill of lading. He was hauling Manny's original load – a trailer load of Canadian beer to a distributor in the US. He'd made this run several times before and the distributor had been in business forever and had worked out all the Customs issues years ago.

"Go ahead," the CBP officer said, waving Mark into the United States.

But instead of heading for the distributor's warehouse in Buffalo, Mark pulled up alongside Manny's truck and parked Mother Load.

"Mark!" Manny said. "Mark is that you?"

Mark climbed down from Mother Load and did his best to look concerned.

"What's wrong, buddy?"

"Everything," Manny said, the frustration evident in his voice.

"It can't be that bad?"

"But it is! You gave me a load of carpet made in Spain. It came into Canada through Montreal..." He lifted his hands. "Why on earth didn't they just bring it into the US through an American port?"

"I don't know," Mark lied, knowing exactly why, because he'd been through this before. The company that imports the carpet into Canada has the rights to this Spanish carpet for all of North America. They house it in their warehouse a few days to mark up the price, then ship it to the US so they can take their cut. The problem is that carpet is a textile which is a complicated import, especially when it's designated for resale – like this carpet. There's also a question about quota, which might or might not be a factor with this particular load.

"The guy in there..."

He indicated the CBP building with a job of his thumb, "...it's like his second day on the job and he's trying to impress his boss with my load."

"Yeah," Mark said flatly. "Some loads to the US can be tricky."

"Tricky? This is more like unreal."

Manny sighed. "He's asking me what the purpose of the carpet is, like I would know that."

"What'd you tell him?"

"To put in a room and walk on."

Mark said nothing at first, but he was thinking, bad answer. Finally, he asked. "What'd he do then?"

"He started getting real nasty with me, asking me if this was a formal consumption entry and if it was, did I file a formal warehouse entry? Then he asked if I'd filled out an entry summary and acquired a CBP Bond?"

"Well, did you?"

"I think so. I don't know. I've filled out so many forms my fingers are aching."

"You don't have to fill out all that many forms," Mark said. "Just the right ones."

Just then the CBP officer exited the building and started walking toward Manny and Mark.

"Here he comes," Mark said.

Manny looked left and right, like a scared animal at the business end of a

shotgun. "Let me hide in your truck."

Mark shook his head. "I don't think that's a good idea."

And then the officer was on them.

"Hi there," he said. Then he noticed Mark was there too and he waved. Mark returned the wave, then gave his friend a wink.

"What now?" Manny asked.

"These carpets may be subject to quota restrictions," said the officer. "I'm wondering if you know the carpet's Harmonized Tariff Schedule classification number."

Manny looked at Mark, and then at the officer. "Shouldn't you know that?"

"Yes, normally I would, but our computers are down and it would have been a lot easier if you knew the number." A shrug. "No worries, I'm sure it's somewhere in the office in some book." And with that he spun on his heels and walked away.

"I don't believe this," Manny said.



"Could be worse."

"Yeah, how?"

"You could be hauling a load of knock-off Gucci bags and Steve Madden shoes that would be confiscated along with the trailer they're sitting in."

"Okay, so it could be worse...that doesn't make this situation any better."

"I suppose," Mark said, "but I'm wondering why this is happening to you at all. Didn't you use a Customs brokerage for this load?"

"I did."

"Which one?"

"The one I always use."

"The one that quoted you the cheapest price?"

Manny's eyes swept the pavement. "How'd you know?"

"You know the saying, 'You get what you pay for?' Well, it's an old adage because it happens to be true."

"But they're a big company."

"Nothing wrong with that, except big companies deal with lots of clients and they don't always have the time to spend on one trucker's single load."

"Well, this one could have used a little

more attention," Manny said, defeat in his voice.

Mark put a hand on Manny's shoulder. "Next time you'll be better prepared."

A sigh. "I supposed you got through with no problems?"

"Buddy," Mark said, enjoying the moment for all it was worth. "They couldn't let me in this country fast enough."

"Why am I not surprised?"

"You've got to look at the bright side of things."

"How's that?"

"I'd been driving over eight years before I learned everything you're learning today. How long have you been driving for?"

"Ten months or so."

"So you should consider yourself lucky, being seven and a half years ahead of me on the learning curve."

"I don't feel lucky."

"Believe me, you are," Mark said, saying good-bye and walking off toward Mother Load.

As he got into his rig, Mark took one last look at Manny. The man was sitting on a concrete curb, holding his head in his hands and looking as if he didn't have a friend in the world.

But of course he did have a friend, a friend named Mark Dalton.

When Mark was on the outskirts of Buffalo, he took out his cell phone and made a call.

"US Customs and Border Protection,

Fillinger speaking."

"Hey Joe, this is Mark Dalton calling."

"Hi Mark, I saw you there, but I didn't want to say anything. But I did get the right guy, right?"

Mark had met Joe Fillinger in a steakhouse in Niagara Falls, New York a few years back when Mark was on a stopover and Joe was just starting with the CBP. They'd kept in touch, talking about sports and US Customs whenever they could.

"That's him."

"Most of his paperwork's okay. There's not a lot more I can do."

"Hang onto him for another hour or so, then cut him loose. I think that should be enough to give him the full border crossing experience."

"Will do."

"Thanks again. I really appreciate this."

"Hey, if it makes him better prepared the next time he enters my country," said Joe, "then I'm just doing my job." □

**– What's next for Mark Dalton? Find out next month.**

The continuing adventures of Mark Dalton: Owner/Operator

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# Focus on fuel efficiency

## Volvo taps into logged vehicle data to help customers optimize fuel economy

**By James Menzies**  
**GREENSBORO, N.C.** – Information is power...if you know what to do with it. But there's little value in having reams of data if you don't know how to interpret it.

Volvo Group says it is able to tap into logged vehicle data (LVD) to establish benchmarks and remotely monitor the performance of its vehicles around the world. This allows the company to identify vehicles that aren't reaching their fuel mileage potential and then proactively work with the trucks' owners to improve how those vehicles are operated.

Performance-related data is automatically collected every time a Volvo engine is plugged into a diagnostic tool for service. The raw data is stored in a central data repository and then scrutinized by Volvo engineers using proprietary analytical software, explained Bill Dawson, senior vice-president of customer satisfaction with Volvo Trucks North America.

"We're able to show our customers what the performance (of their vehicles) is on a gross, aggregate and individual vehicle basis," he explained during a recent demonstration. "To be able to address and understand what is causing those operational results and how to improve them on a vehicle-by-vehicle basis is unique to us."

Previously, Dawson said Volvo spent "an inordinate amount of time" trying to determine what was causing certain vehicles to underperform. Now, the company can simply run the LVD through its software and within minutes determine if a vehicle is being poorly operated or whether it was properly spec'd for its application.

"How we chase problems and how we solve problems has totally changed from what we used to do to what we do today," said Dawson.

Peter Blonde, aftermarket engineer with Volvo, is one of the folks who is specially-trained to interpret the reports generated through Volvo's LVD. Often, he can tell by

a glance whether a truck is idling too much, running too fast or being driven too aggressively.

Volvo can generate customized reports for fleets that show how efficiently their trucks are being operated in comparison to similarly-spec'd vehicles across North America. The data can even be broken down within a fleet, so a customer can create their own benchmarks.

In some cases, fleet owners may even receive an unexpected call from Volvo, alerting them to performance-related issues they didn't even realize they had.

"We go in (to a fleet) proactively and say 'The performance isn't there and this is why,'" explained Dawson.

The collection of LVD to measure vehicle performance has provided the foundation for Volvo's new Fuelwatch program, which is aimed at helping small- and mid-sized fleets optimize their fuel economy. The aptly-named Fuelwatch focuses on four key areas: proper spec'ing; maintenance; monitoring results; and driver development.

### Proper spec'ing

Seth Gruber, director of business solutions, marketing with Volvo, said dealers have always helped their customers spec' their trucks for optimum performance. But with fuel overtaking labour as the largest cost of operating a vehicle, the spec'ing process is evolving.

Volvo dealers have been equipped with software that generates colour-coded reports highlighting components that may not be best suited for the customer's specific application.

"There's no one size fits all," said Gruber. "There's always something unique."

The spec'ing process takes everything on the vehicle into account, from the powertrain to aerodynamics and even the trailer gap.

"Ten inches of additional trailer gap equals a 1% degradation in fuel economy," noted Gruber.

### Maintenance

Through Fuelwatch, Volvo will also work with customers to ensure they're properly maintaining their trucks. Factors such as tire pressure, wheel alignment, faulty fuel systems and air system leaks can all hinder fuel mileage, said Gruber.

Volvo helps customers develop maintenance schedules, including daily, weekly and seasonal checks.

### Monitoring results

Volvo customers receive a free two-year subscription to Volvo Link's Sentry service when they purchase a new vehicle, which generates weekly reports on vehicle performance. Volvo Link has proven to be particularly popular in Canada, where it's used by about 96% of customers, said Gruber.

### Driver development

Spec'ing, maintenance and monitoring will all contribute to improved fuel mileage, but it's still the driver that has the greatest impact on fuel economy. It's often been said there can be a 30% fuel mileage gap between a fleet's best and worst driver.

"You can do all these things correctly, but drivers are still the biggest piece of the puzzle," Gruber said.

Over the last two years, Volvo has offered an on-board coaching system dubbed Performance Guide via its driver display. Icons provide real-time advice to driv-

ers, alerting them when to let off the throttle or decrease RPM. Dollar signs appear when a driver is running in the sweet spot and a trophy can indicate when a certain fuel mileage target has been met.

Fuelwatch, however, will also involve driver training by Volvo-certified representatives. Fuel management consulting services will be offered by Volvo in the second half of next year in what's being referred to as Phase 3 of the program's roll-out. (Other driver development services will be launched earlier, in the first quarter of 2009. Phase 1, including spec'ing assistance and dealer training is already underway). Courses will be delivered by certified driver-trainers or dealer reps and an e-Learning option will also be available.

There will be a charge for the consulting portion of Fuelwatch, but Gruber said "it's a quick return on investment."

A 5% fuel mileage improvement, which Volvo officials said is easily attainable through Fuelwatch, will save a fleet about US\$3,692 per truck each year. Over a four-year lifecycle, that's a savings of US\$14,768 per vehicle. Even a 1% fuel mileage improvement will save a fleet US\$738 per truck each year, Volvo pointed out.

Medium-sized fleets that don't have their own full-time fuel manager on staff stand to gain the most, according to Volvo. □

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Opinion

# Ontario incentive program is a step in the right direction

The recent announcement of the four-year, \$15 million Ontario anti-idling technologies grant is a great beginning.

If any of you have purchased an APU retroactive to August 2007, you'll be able to apply for a hunk of that money back.

An APU can run up to \$10,000 so this will go a long way in achieving a quick return on your investment.

(Providing of course that the infrastructure is in place in order to process claims in a reasonable length of time. In the beginning, passenger car rebates took months. Maybe this time they will get it right).

Applications for this rebate will be available Nov. 28.

Ontario's action plan on reducing greenhouse gas emissions is aggressive.

## Publisher's Comment

Rob Wilkins



By 2014 they plan on cutting back by 6% compared to 1990 levels.

By 2020 (this guy hopes to be retired), that reduction moves to 15% below 1990 levels and by 2050 (this guy will be long gone), that number screams to 80% below 1990 levels.

I suppose 1990 should be deemed "the year of gas" or something along those lines.

It is being used as the benchmark of environmental irresponsibility.

All of the above reductions

refer to megatonnes.

In 2014 a 6% reduction will be equal to 61 megatonnes "relative to business-as-usual."

In 2020 the reduction moves to 99 megatonnes "relative to business-as-usual," etc.

Of course, my next question is just what exactly is "business-as-usual?"

I couldn't find that answer from the report I read. (I do admit, it was 45 pages long and not exactly bedtime reading, so if it was there and I missed it, please accept my apologies).

In all probability, it's based on an internationally accepted standard that a group of environmental experts deem safe.

Love it or hate it, the recent legislation mandating the use of speed limiters is also part of the same provincial initiative.

It is estimated that an APU can save up to 7,200 litres of diesel annually.

Do the math.

Even without the rebate, under normal operating conditions that unit is going to pay for itself within a year to 18 months.

Take advantage of this offer if you can.

If you don't have an extra 10 grand hiding under your bed (I wouldn't get out of bed if I did) it may be worth financing the investment.

It's not often our politicians open their checkbook, so let's take advantage. □

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— Rob Wilkins is the publisher of Truck West and he can be reached at 416-510-5123 or by e-mail at [rwilkins@trucknews.com](mailto:rwilkins@trucknews.com).

## New Products

### BBTS publishes tire fuel economy guide

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Now that fuel has become the top operating expense for most fleets, Bridgestone Bandag Tire Solutions (BBTS) is releasing its fourth comprehensive fuel economy guide for large trucks. *Tires and Truck Fuel Economy – a New Perspective* looks at what BBTS has learned over a quarter-century of studying the relationship of tires to large truck fuel economy.

"Our customers have told us that trucking is a business of pennies. And the same is true for fuel economy," said Singh Ahluwalia, president of sales and marketing for BBTS. "There's no one single thing you can do to be a financial success in the trucking business, and there's no one single thing you can do to maximize your fuel economy."

"The good news is, practically everyone can do a better job of getting the most out of a gallon of fuel. *Tires and Truck Fuel*

*Economy* provides fleet customers with practical recommendations that take into consideration the real-world factors that affect fuel economy."

While the cost of fuel has certainly changed since the fuel economy guide first appeared in 1984, the questions fleets ask haven't, BBTS officials say. In addition to focusing on how tires fit into the overall fuel economy picture, *Tires and Truck Fuel Economy* addresses how speed affects fuel economy, how to select the best tire for a fleet operation, and how to balance the cost of tires over their lifetime with their affect on fuel economy.

This guide is a special edition of BBTS' award-winning *Real Answers* magazine.

Fleets who wish to receive a copy can ask their Bridgestone Bandag sales representative, call 888-694-0469 or visit [BridgestoneTruckTires.com](http://BridgestoneTruckTires.com) and click on the "Catalogs and Reference" button to fill out the "mail to me" e-mail form. □

# UPS makes landmark purchase of hydraulic hybrids

By Jan Westell

ATLANTA, Ga. – UPS has announced its first purchases of hydraulic hybrid vehicles – which is designed to produce both dramatic fuel savings and environmental benefits.

The technology, originally developed in a federal laboratory of the Environmental Protection Agency, stores energy by compressing hydraulic fluid under pressure in a large chamber and then using that pressure to help launch the vehicle.

UPS asked to road test the technology two years ago and now becomes the first delivery company to place an order for hydraulic hybrid vehicles (HHV).

“There is no question that hydraulic hybrids, although little known to the public, are ready for prime time use on the streets of America,” said David Abney, UPS’s chief operating officer. “We are not declaring hydraulic hybrids a panacea for our energy woes, but this technology certainly is as promising as anything we’ve seen to date.”

Disclosing the results of its road testing on Detroit routes for the first time, UPS and the US EPA said the prototype vehicle had achieved a 45-50% improvement in fuel economy compared to conventional diesel delivery trucks. UPS says it believes similar fuel economy improvements and a 30% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> are achievable in daily, real-world use. The EPA believes the technology can perform equally well in other applications such as shuttle and



**EARLY ADOPTERS:** UPS is the first company to purchase hydraulic hybrid delivery vehicles such as this one.

transit buses and refuse trucks.

Abney was joined by representatives of the EPA, Eaton and Navistar at a news conference in Atlanta’s Centennial Park in announcing UPS’s decision to place an order for seven of the hydraulic hybrids. UPS will deploy the first two of the new HHVs in Minneapolis during the first quarter of 2009. Eaton, which helped develop and refine the vehicle’s hydraulic hybrid power system, will monitor the vehicle’s fuel economy performance and emissions in the Minneapolis area. The additional five HHVs will be deployed later in 2009 and early 2010.

With a diesel “series” hydraulic hybrid of the type being purchased by UPS, a high efficiency diesel engine is combined with a unique hydraulic propulsion system, replacing the conventional drivetrain and

transmission.

The vehicle uses hydraulic pumps and hydraulic storage tanks to capture and store energy, similar to what is done with electric motors and batteries in a hybrid-electric vehicle.

In this case, the diesel engine is used to periodically recharge pressure in the hydraulic propulsion system. Fuel economy is increased in three ways: vehicle braking energy that normally is wasted, is recovered; the engine is operated more efficiently; and the engine can be shut off when stopped or decelerating.

The EPA estimates that when manufactured in high volume, the added costs of the hybrid components can be recouped in less than three years through lower fuel and brake maintenance costs.

Eaton began working with the EPA in October 2001 under a Cooperative Research and Development Agreement involving hydraulic hybrid systems and components.

As part of Eaton’s role in designing and developing hybrid technologies, the company’s engineers were co-located at the EPA’s Ann Arbor facility. Eaton also earned a number of hybrid power system patents and continues to work on a number of other hybrid vehicle initiatives with UPS and others.

“We continue to be pleased with the progress and potential of the hydraulic hybrid system,” Eaton chairman and CEO Alexander M. Cutler said at the press conference. “The market for this technology is truly global, and it can provide significant improvements in fuel economy and emission reductions for trucks, buses and off-road vehicles of many shapes and sizes.”

“EPA and our partners are not just delivering packages with these UPS trucks, we’re delivering environmental benefits to the American people,” added EPA administrator Stephen L. Johnson. “With this investment in fuel-efficient technology, UPS is doing what is good for our environment, good for our economy, and good for our nation’s energy security.”

“The diesel hydraulic hybrid vehicle has the potential to offer our truck customers something very unique – performance and reduced emissions with dramatic improvements in fuel economy,” said Steve Guillaume, general manager of Navistar’s medium trucks division.

UPS’s current “green fleet” totals more than 1,600 low-carbon vehicles, including all-electric, hybrid-electric, compressed natural gas (CNG), liquefied natural gas (LNG) and propane-powered trucks. In addition to the hydraulic hybrid, UPS has road-tested hydrogen fuel cell delivery trucks. UPS began deploying alternative fuel vehicles in the 1930s with a fleet of electric trucks in New York City.

The HHV vehicle order follows the company’s May purchase of 500 hybrid-electric and CNG vehicles and the April deployment of 167 new CNG vehicles in Atlanta, Dallas, Los Angeles, Ontario, San Ramon, Fresno and Sacramento.

With UPS’s new purchases, the company’s “green fleet,” already the largest private fleet in the transportation industry, will total more than 2,100 vehicles. □

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## Mackie Group turns 80

By James Menzies

OSHAWA, Ont. – The Mackie Group of Companies celebrated 80 years in business in October, hosting a customer and supplier gala that attracted a who’s who of the industry as well as municipal, provincial and federal dignitaries. Other events were held earlier in the week to honour the company’s 400 employees. The Mackie Group was founded in 1928 by Charlie Mackie, who hauled lumber, produce “and just about anything he could” around South River, Ont. (near North Bay), Norm Mackie recalled. Charlie’s son Merle carried the torch and in 1934, his own son Ross was born.

Ross Mackie was all smiles at the gathering, greeting and reminiscing with past drivers, managers and partners. Norm recalled how his grandfather Merle would haul lumber and tomatoes in the Greater Toronto Area, and then convert his stake-and-rack truck on weekends, placing bench seats in the back and driving skiers from downtown Oshawa to the ski club in Raglan.

Merle dabbled in household moving in the early 40s and began trading loads with other independent household moving companies across Canada, Norm explained. In October, 1952, Mackie Moving Systems became part of the North American Van Lines network, a relationship that still exists today. Ross grew up, married and had four sons: Norm; Paul; Dean; and Scott. All are active in the company today.

In the 1960s, Mackie Moving Systems opened a branch in North Bay, providing household moving for families serving the National Department of Defense. The company also began hauling for General Motors that decade. Dean Mackie said he and his brothers began driving for the company in the 70s. At this time, Mackie began hauling expedited parts for GM as the concept of just-in-time delivery was born. The result was the formation of Mackie Transport Ltd., which is still one of the group’s largest businesses today, Dean noted.

In 1988, Mackie moved into its current headquarters just off the 401 in Oshawa. In 2003, the Mackie family continued to grow its business, opening Mackie Harley Davidson across the highway from its headquarters. The company has also added an 80,000 sq.-ft. warehouse in Mississauga and a 40,000 sq.-ft. warehouse in Montreal to its stable. It also runs 500 pieces of equipment, employs 200 drivers and offers a range of services including: warehousing and inventory management; open- and closed-vehicle transportation; high-value goods transportation; general freight hauling; trailer rentals; and commercial and household goods relocation.

Today, Ross has 14 grandchildren, some of whom work for the company in the summer. □



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**BOWMANVILLE, Ont.** – There’s no getting around it, the global credit crisis has had an effect on Canada and all industries are feeling the crunch.

The current economic downturn has investors running, stock markets plunging and insiders saying that we’re on the brink of a recession. But what does this mean for the trucking industry here in Canada?

*Truck West* went to the Fifth Wheel Truck stop in Bowmanville, Ont. to find out how the trucking industry is coping with the current financial crisis.

After 35 years of driving, **Paul Hamilton** has been on the road long enough to know these market trends are cyclical. “Right now the housing industry in America is very slow so a lot of the building products we used to haul to the United States we don’t anymore because the mills are closed,” said the Plaster Rock, N.B.-based K&T

## Truck Stop Question

**Jason Sahlani** Special to Truck News

### *How is the current economic crisis affecting your job?*



**Paul Hamilton**

Transport driver. “A lot of mills in New Brunswick are closed, but they’ll probably re-open them when the exchange rate and the market get to be favourable. So as

soon as the housing starts coming back, I’m looking for a big upturn in the flatbed business.”

**Mario Duval**, a driver for Ste-Anne-de-Prescott’s Charlebois Transport, points out another problem for Canadian truckers that is a result of the tanking American economy.

“We’re getting less work, I mean it’s been really slowing down since September,” said the veteran driver. “I haul shingles, and I only do Ontario and Quebec, but it’s still showing over here because people not hauling

to the states take loads we normally do.”



**Claude Loiselle**

It isn’t just more drivers competing for the same loads. As Windsor, Que.-based Transport Michel Marcotte driver **Claude Loiselle** notes, the need for a strong American housing industry is just as important for many Canadian companies as it is for those to the south.

“I know one thing, we depend on the US because all of our exports go there,” he said. “I’m not a politician, but I know if things stay this way, something will have to be done before long. Everything’s closing up all over the place, but I guess time will tell.”

**John Clearwater**, who has been driving for 15 years and is currently with Winnipeg-based Arnold Bros. Transport, echoes Loiselle’s concerns.

“We rely a lot on cross-border shipments and if the Americans aren’t going to be buying our freight it’s going to be harder for us to get trips down there,” he said. Clearwater did make note of the positive effect the state of the economy has had on fuel prices, but added that dropping fuel prices aren’t enough to balance the effect of the economy industry-wide.



**Kevin Bimm**

Not all the drivers we spoke with have been feeling the crunch of the economy.

“I’m not out there on the edges as an owner/operator who’s going to take the full hit with the fuel prices, and it hasn’t affected my runs as of yet, so I’ve been quite fortunate that I haven’t really felt it,” said **Kevin Bimm**, a driver with Bison Transport, based in Mississauga.

“As a company driver I’m insulated, Bison being a big company, and I think they have some locked in contracts, so the downturn really hasn’t affected me.” □

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– Jason Sahlani is enrolled in Humber College’s Accelerated Journalism program and will be working this fall as an intern at Business Information Group. He can be reached at [jsahlani@bizinfogroup.ca](mailto:jsahlani@bizinfogroup.ca).

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